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MINNESOTA



# Embrace Green Urban Space:

## *Parks/Green Space as Vital to Urban Livability*

*Jenna Fletcher – The Trust for Public Land*

LUAC

November 15, 2012



The Trust for Public Land  
*conserves land for people*  
to enjoy as parks, gardens and  
other natural places,  
ensuring livable communities for  
generations to come.



# Providing neighborhood park access...



Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary – St. Paul

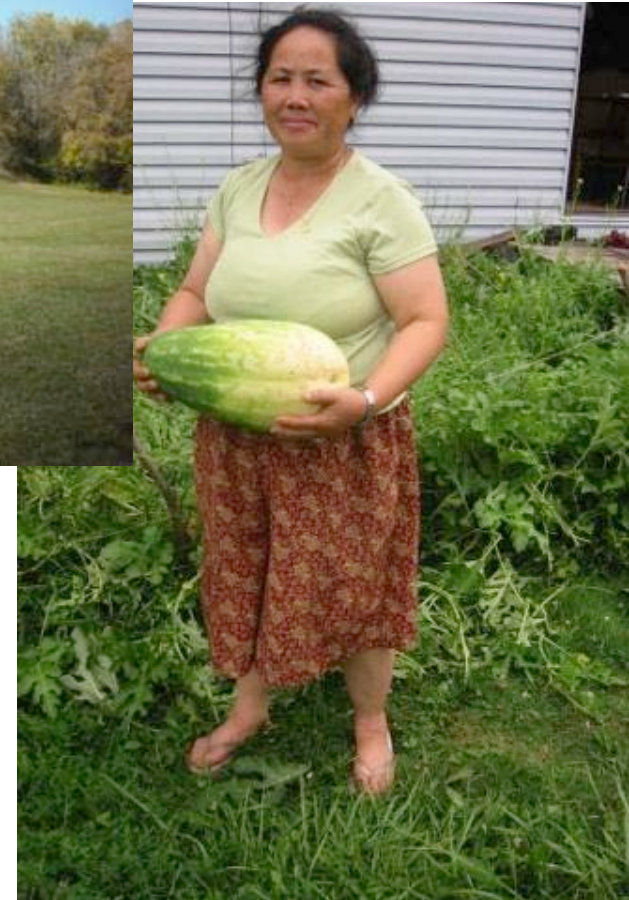
## ...greening our Downtowns



Vision for The Gateway in Minneapolis



# ...urban farming: Frogtown Park and Farm



Opportunity for urban agriculture to transform a St. Paul community...



## ...Fitness Zones



Providing free outdoor  
adult exercise equipment

# Urban Context - where we are today...

## Challenges

- Wring the most benefit from public (and private) investment
- Attract jobs and retain talent
- Metro region competition

## Emerging Trends

- Demographic shifts
- Pent up demand for a variety of housing options
- Increasing diversity
- Rising obesity rates
- Disconnected from nature

***Combination of forces are driving market demands for more dense, walkable urban places***

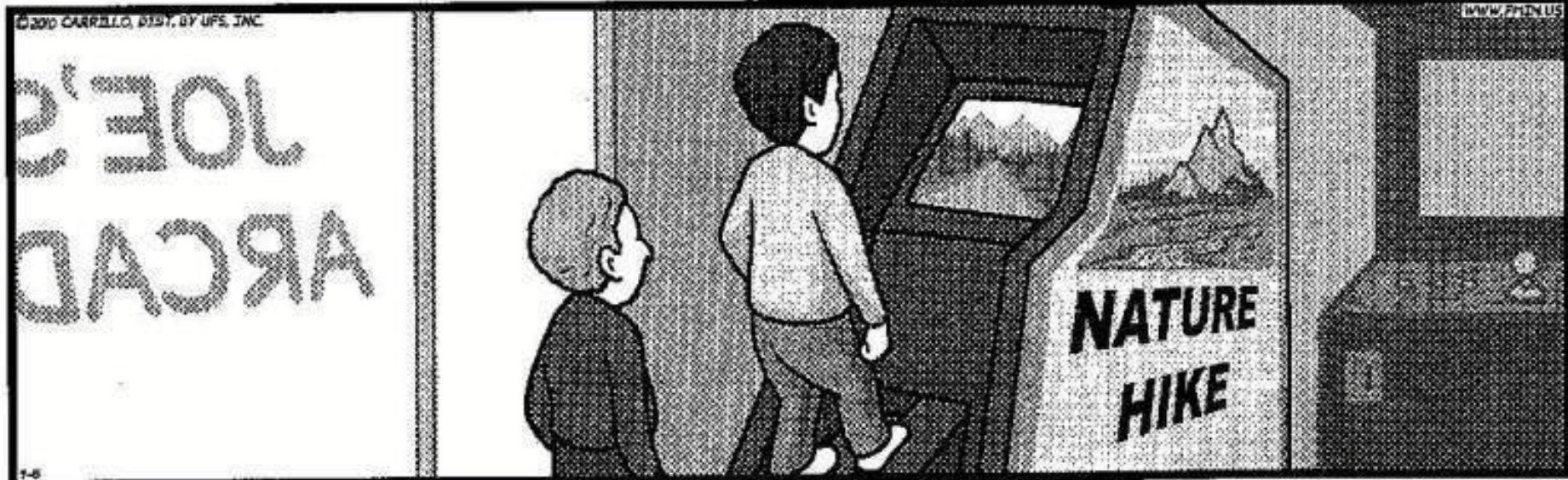




# Problem: Lack of access to green space

Nationally, as many as 2 out of 3 city residents do not have access today to a nearby park, playground, or open space

F MINUS TONY CARRILLO



# Benefits of Parks/Open Space

1. Spurs economic development
2. Builds sense of community/region competitiveness
3. Enhances property values
4. Enhances livability
5. Provides access to healthy living
6. Protects healthy habitat
7. Protects water quality





# Example: Economic Development Benefit

## *Minneapolis Riverfront District*



Public investments of \$289M (of which \$35M for parks & trails)...

...GENERATED private investment of \$1.6+ billion



## Example: Metro Region Competitiveness



Vision for the Gateway in Minneapolis





Gateway  
will connect  
CBD and  
light rail  
station to  
Mississippi  
River

## Example: Enhanced property values

### *Summary of national studies*

- Parks have a significant impact on home values: premium ranges from 3 - 30%
- Parks in urban areas and more densely populated suburbs typically show greater premiums than those in more sparsely-populated areas
- Generally natural areas have largest premiums - larger than urban parks



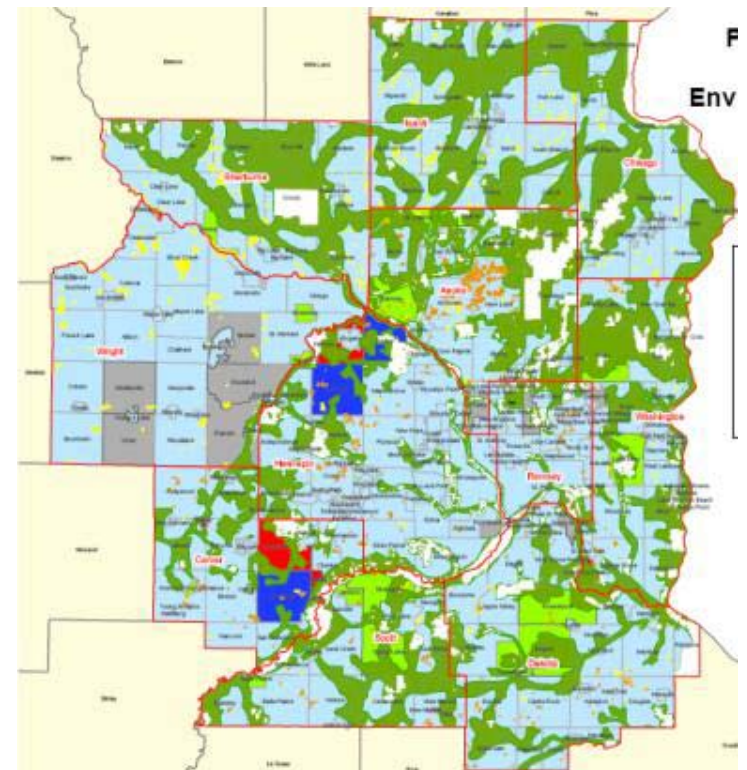


## We've done MN-specific studies...

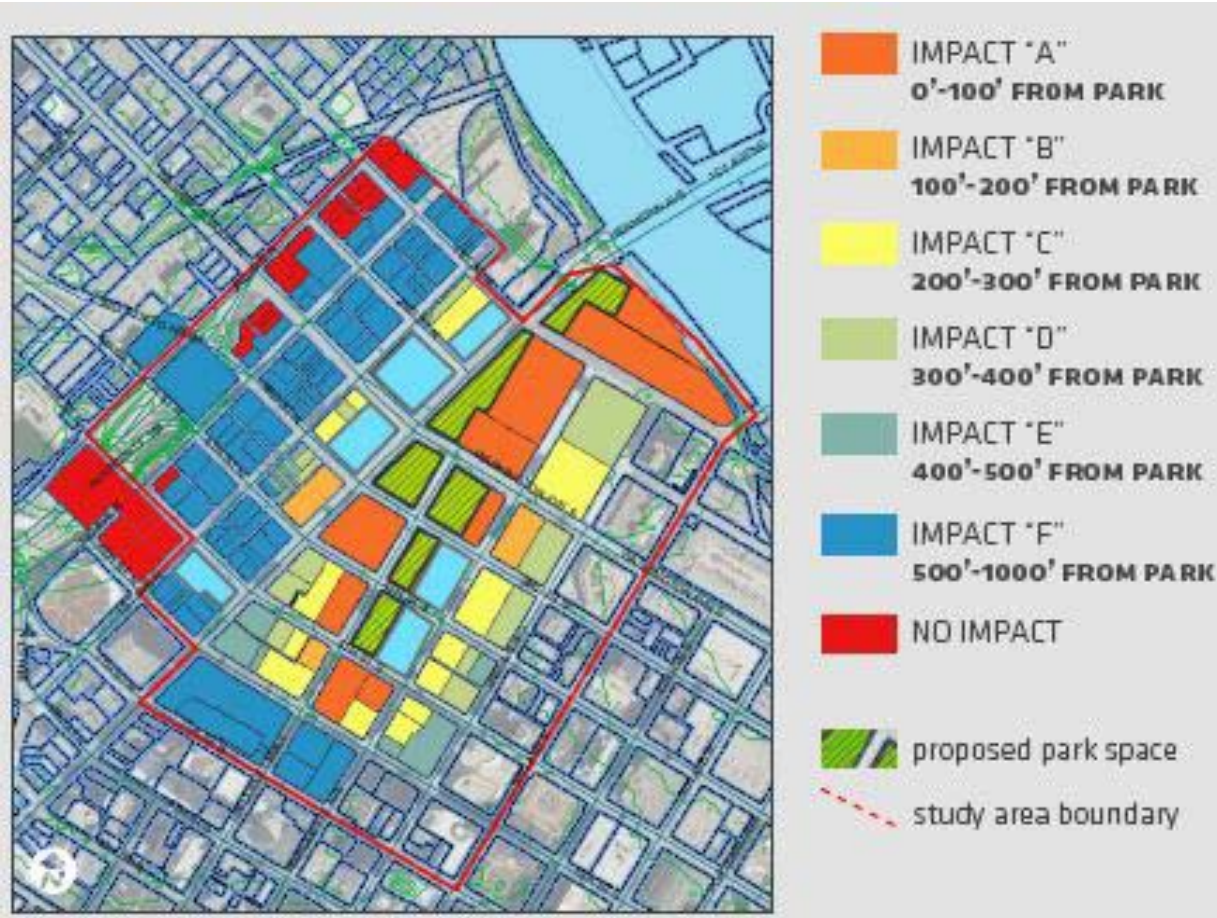
...to address common local concerns about land conservation's impact on local finances

**Concern:** *"We lose tax revenues when the land is not developed"*

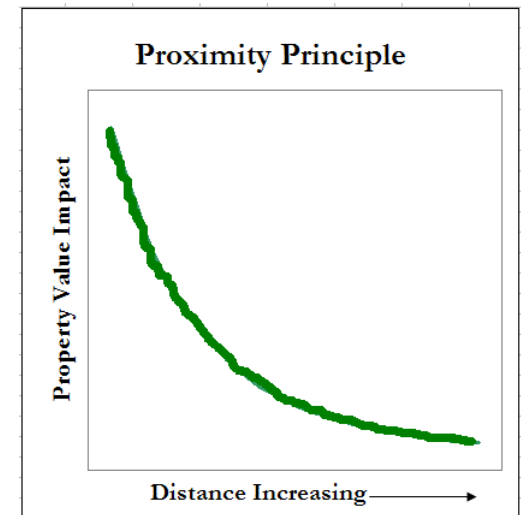
**Counter Argument:** The lost tax revenue can be offset in part if homes adjacent to open space have greater value and produce higher property tax revenue



# Enhanced Commercial Property Values



The Trust for Public Land has led analysis of enhanced commercial property values in Downtown Minneapolis





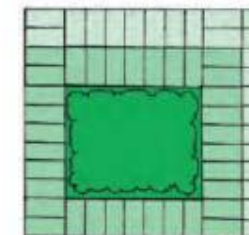
# Enhanced Home Property Values

## Washington County, MN (2006):

- Average home value premium - \$16,750 (~ 6% increase)
- 13% of single-family homes benefit from open-space premium
- Increased countywide property valuation - \$148 million



### The Economic Impact of Proximity to Open Space on Single-Family Home Values in Washington County, Minnesota



A report on the findings of a study commissioned by  
**Embrace Open Space**

May 2007

Source: *The Economic Impact of Proximity to Open Space on Single-Family Home Values in Washington County, Minnesota*, by Embrace Open Space

# Enhanced Home Property Values

## Hennepin County, MN (2009):

- Average home value premium - \$16,300 (5.2% increase)
- 81% of single-family homes benefit from open-space premium
- Large open spaces (Three Rivers Parks District) have farther impact (up to ½ mile away)





# Transit Corridors, TOD and Parks

- TOD initially focused on housing, and new consideration for locating jobs within TODs. However, parks/open space are not typically discussed in TODs.
- *But, for compact, walkable communities to thrive, they need contrast. The intensity of human settlement must be offset by areas for recharge - both environmental and emotional.*
- Municipalities are tempted to table investments in parks due to costs. But, that ignores livability, economic and other benefits of open space in high density settings.

## Parkland in Metro Transit Corridors

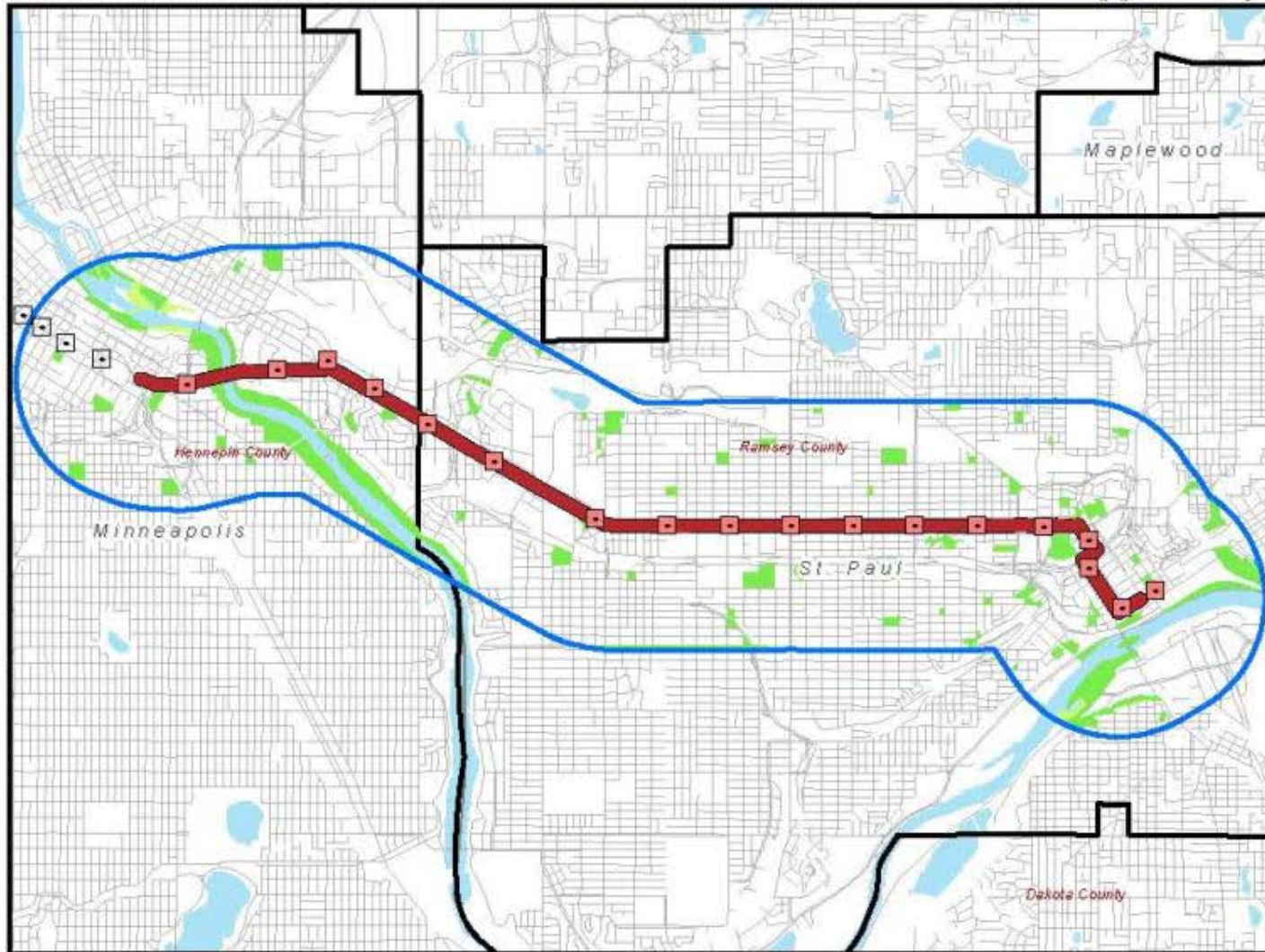
Transit Corridors	% current parkland
Northstar	12%
Central Corridor/Green Line	<b>6.6%</b>
Southwest	12%
Bottineau	9%
Cedar BRT	13%
Gateway (east metro)	12%



## Parkland in Central Corridor – St. Paul

- Currently:
  - Only four parks (~13 acres) between Prior and Marion
  - Iris Park (1.8 acres) west of Fairview Avenue
  - Dickerman Park (2.4 acres) – must be reclaimed and restored as a linear park
- Planning shows need for more parks & open space:
  - Existing neighborhoods between Prior and Marion
  - Need for an additional park between Hamline and Victoria
  - New residential concentrations as part of redevelopment

## Parkland in Central Corridor LRT Corridor of Opportunity



**Legend**

**Central Corridor LRT Stage**

- █ Complete
- █ Develop Other
- █ 1-Mile Buffer

**Central Corridor LRT Stations**

- Central LRT only
- Shared with Hiawatha LRT

**Metro Area Parks**

**TYPE**

- █ State Park or Recreation Area
- █ Park Reserve
- █ Park or Recreation Area
- █ Regional Park
- █ Special Recreation Feature
- █ Wildlife Refuge

- █ Corridor Cities
- █ Counties
- █ Local Roads
- █ Lakes and Rivers

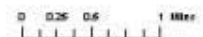
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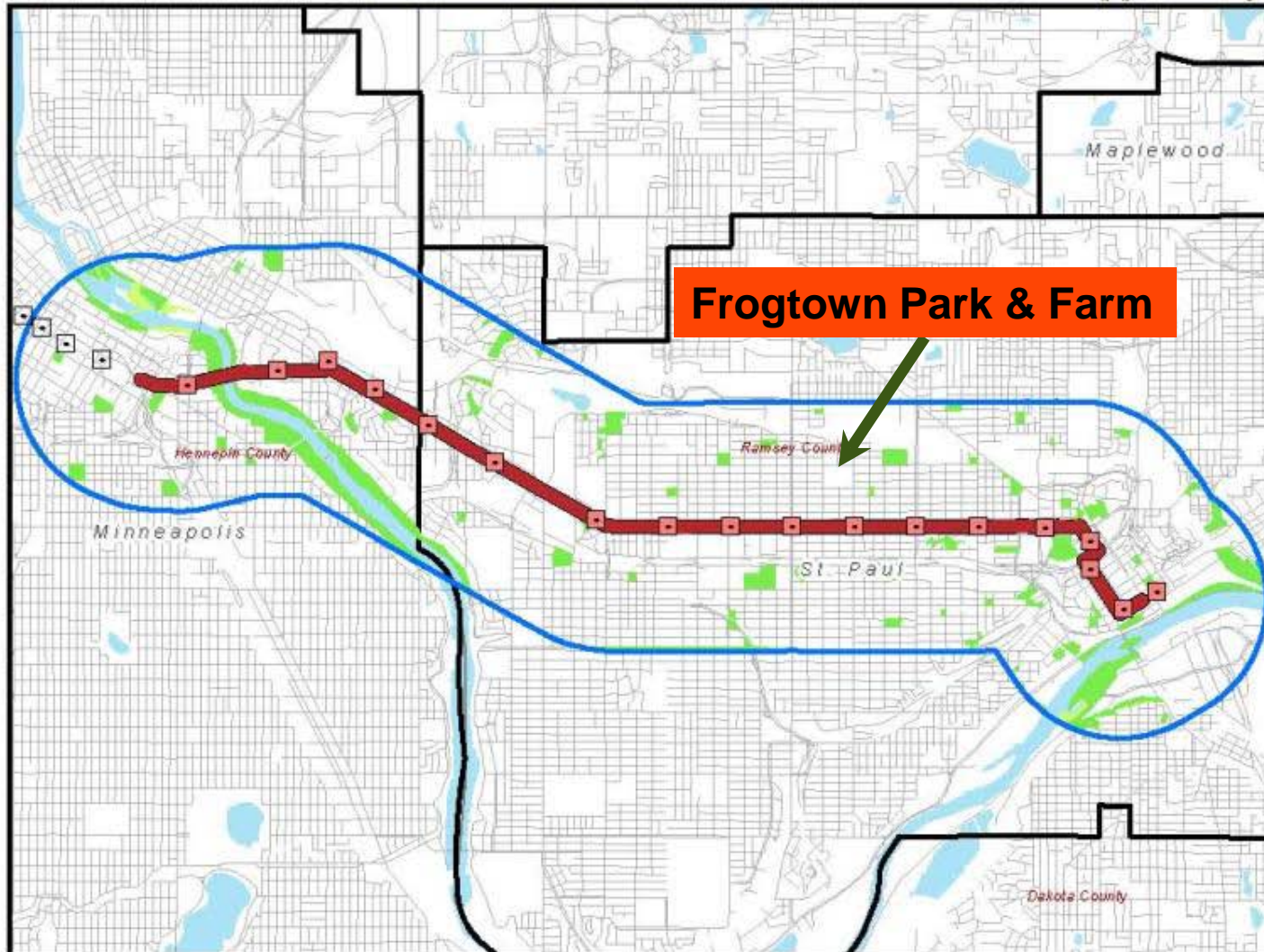
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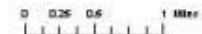
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## Hamline Station Area

*“The Hamline Station Area suffers from a lack of pedestrian amenities and usable public open space”*



# Hamline Station – New Plaza

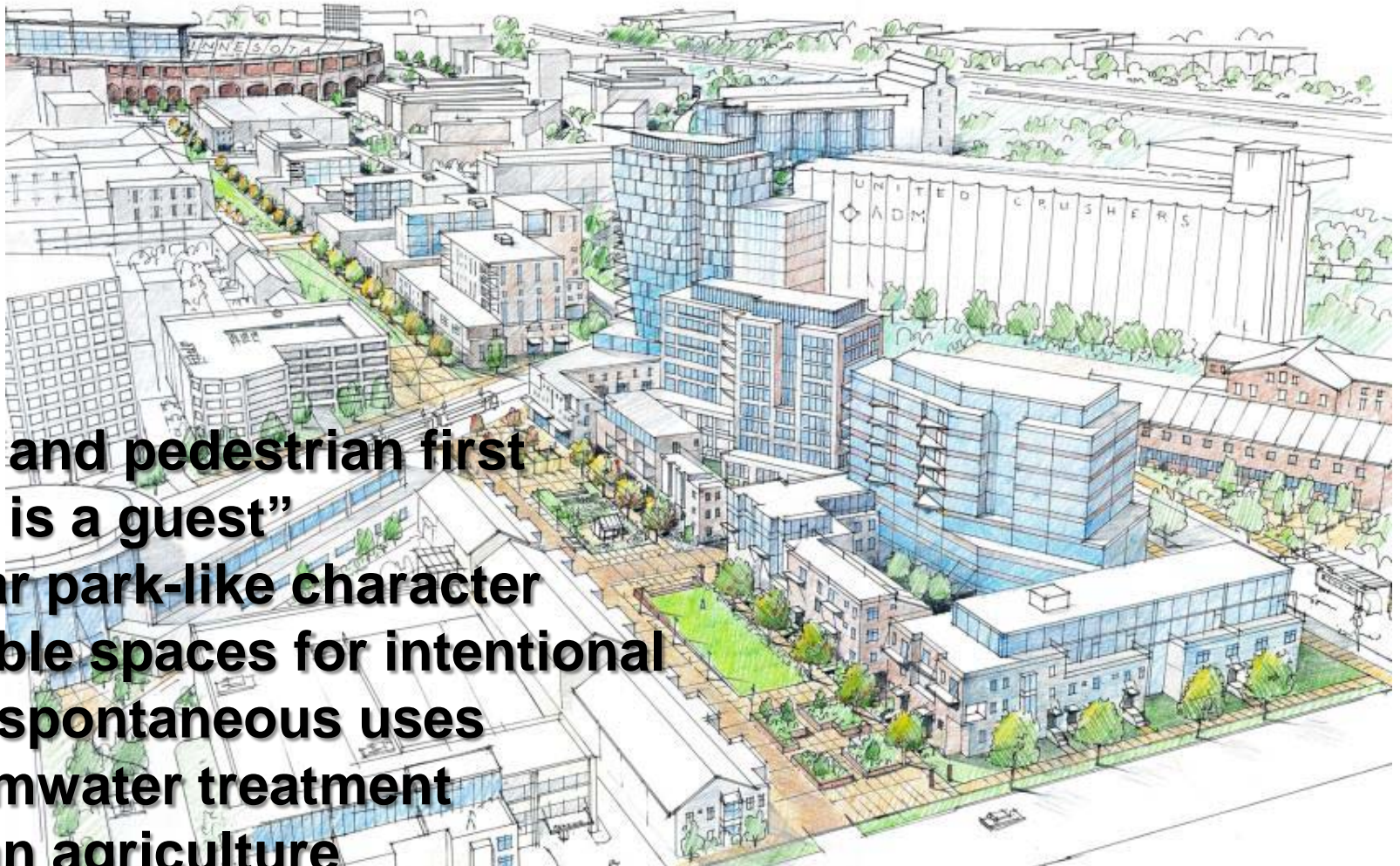


# Prospect Park Station Area





# Prospect Park Station: Green 4th Place



- bike and pedestrian first
- “car is a guest”
- linear park-like character
- flexible spaces for intentional and spontaneous uses
- stormwater treatment
- urban agriculture

## Take aways...

- Need to understand parks as critical assets, not just amenities (***parks and squares are the civic glue***)
- Local planners, decision-makers, developers and citizens should advocate for mixed use development with appropriate park/green space included
- Make prudent public investments in parks/open space can spur development that meets the market demands for more dense, walkable urban places





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