



OPUS STATION

Park Vision Plan

Context and Community Report

Late Summer 2026



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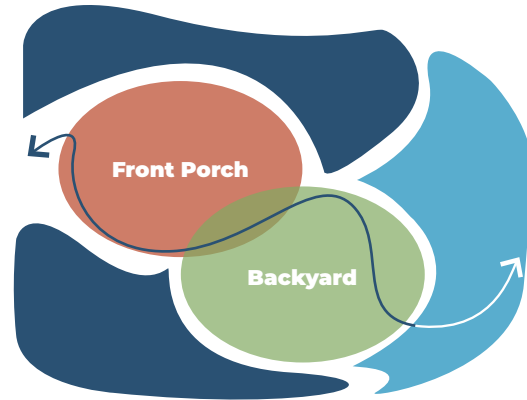


This Project's Significance

The creation of a new public park in the Opus area represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity for the City of Minnetonka. As the district further evolves into a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood anchored with the anticipated opening of the new Green Line Extension, a future park in this area has the potential to become one of the region's first public spaces intentionally designed around the intersection of transit, employment, housing, and nature. This place will serve a diverse and growing population of residents, employees, visitors, and transit riders, creating a destination that reflects the unique character and future of the Opus district.

Decisions made today will shape the community for decades to come. This moment presents an extraordinary opportunity to establish a park that not only enhances quality of life but also strengthens economic vitality, celebrates the area's natural systems, and reinforces Opus as a regional destination. Achieving that vision requires a thoughtful, collaborative planning process grounded in meaningful engagement with community members, property owners, businesses, and other stakeholders.

This Vision Plan will ensure this new park becomes a lasting civic amenity that serves both today's community and future generations.



A Backyard for the Community

For the growing residential population of the Opus area, the new park will serve as a shared backyard: a place for everyday life, recreation, and connection. As new housing continues to transform the area and the community becomes more and more richly diverse, the park will provide much-needed access to nature, play, gathering spaces, and quiet places to relax, extending residents' living space beyond their front doors. Whether enjoying a morning walk, meeting neighbors, bringing children to play, or attending a community event, the park will become an essential neighborhood amenity that supports health, well-being, and a strong sense of community.

A Front Porch for the Region

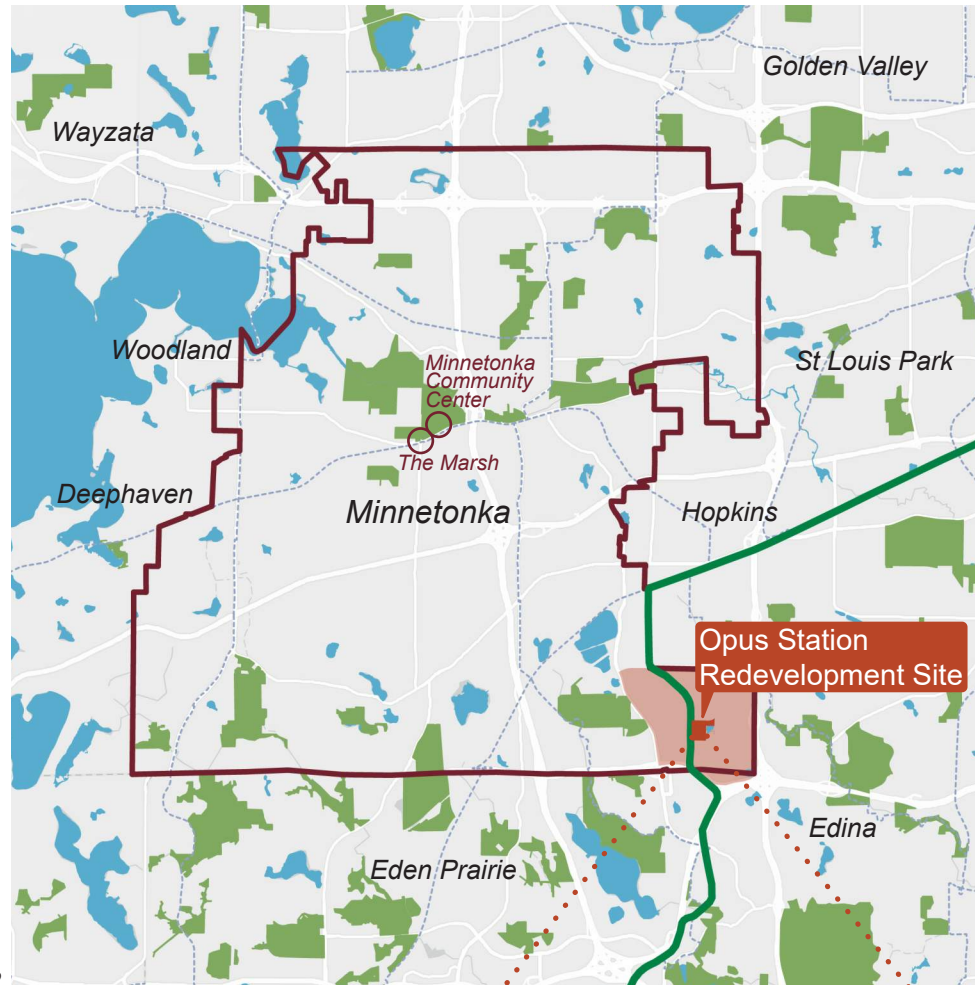
At the same time, the park will serve as the front porch of the Opus area: a welcoming public space that creates a memorable first impression for visitors arriving by light rail, bicycle, car, or on foot. Positioned at the center of a rapidly evolving mixed-use district, the park has the opportunity to showcase Minnetonka's commitment to high-quality design, ecological stewardship, and vibrant public life. As a gateway to Opus, it can become a regional destination where residents, employees, transit riders, and visitors gather, explore, and experience the unique identity of the district, helping establish Opus as one of the Twin Cities' premier transit-oriented communities.

Future Park Location

LEGEND

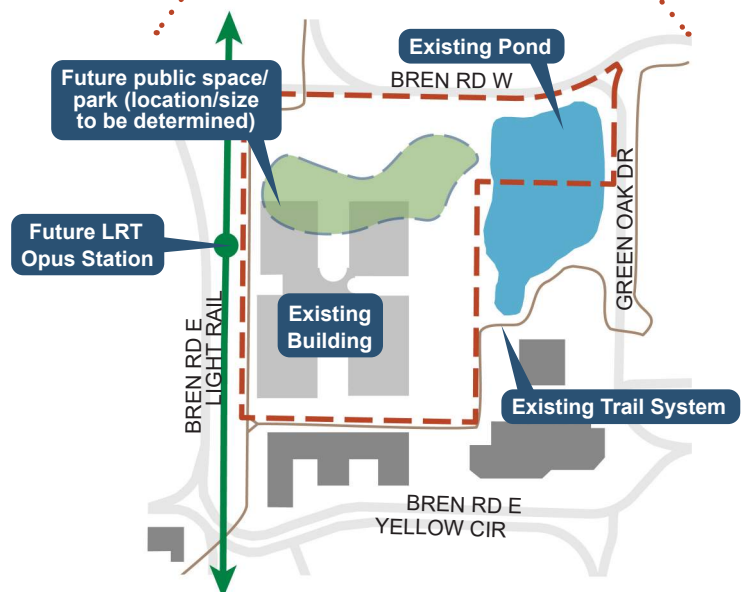
-  Minnetonka City Limits
-  Opus Campus
-  Opus Station Redevelopment Site
-  Parks
-  Lakes
-  Green Line LRT Extension
-  Regional Trails

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MILES



Within Minnetonka, the Opus Area is a unique master planned development home to businesses, residents, and nature.

The Opus Station Park Vision Plan will focus on defining a new public park within an identified parcel within Opus that is currently undergoing re-visioning as a whole. **The park will occupy only a portion of the site rather than the entire property.** Through this planning process, the project team will evaluate the appropriate location, size, and program for the park to ensure it complements surrounding development while meeting community needs. The resulting vision plan will establish a clear framework for the park's footprint, key amenities, and overall character, creating a shared direction for future design and implementation.



How We Got Here

Why a Park Here?

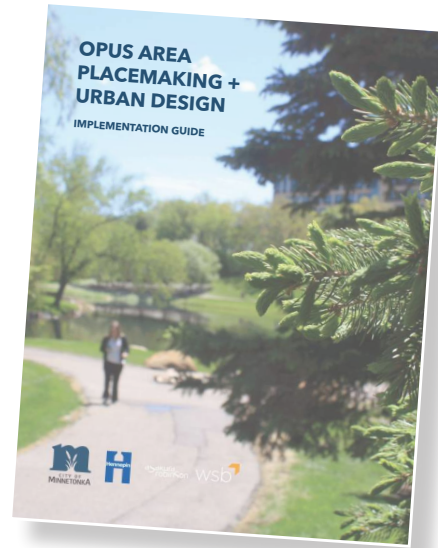
Building on previous studies and planning efforts, the Opus Light Rail Station area was identified as a priority location for new parkland due to its higher-density development pattern and need for accessible public open space. With the future light rail station, the site is poised to become a gateway to Minnetonka as a welcoming civic space that serves residents, employees, and visitors alike. The park has the opportunity to create a unique destination within the Minneapolis–St. Paul metropolitan area, while providing enhanced access to Minnetonka's extensive trail network, natural resources, and open space system.

Informed by Previous Plans

Opus Public Space Study

This Implementation Guide serves as a planning and design framework for the future public realm of the Opus District, including parks, plazas, streetscapes, trails, and connections surrounding the Opus Station area. Intended for a range of stakeholders, including developers, property owners, businesses, designers, and City staff, the guide establishes a cohesive vision for the district's identity, branding, wayfinding, and public spaces.

The guidelines are designed to provide both consistency and flexibility, ensuring a recognizable district character while allowing for site-specific and context-sensitive solutions. Included within the guide is a framework for improvements that stakeholders can select from, adapt, and build upon to create unique yet coordinated public realm improvements that collectively advance the vision for Opusrealm improvements that collectively advance the vision for Opus.



Key Takeaways

Key elements to guide the transformation of Opus into an area of complementary built forms and development projects include:

- » Establishing a mixed-use community
- » Connecting the light rail station to the surrounding community
- » Enhancing the existing trail network
- » Enhancing the district's natural features and functions
- » Developing a community level park/plaza
- » Complementing the area's existing businesses



POST Plan

The Parks, Open Space and Trail (POST) System Plan is a long-range framework for the Minnetonka park system and recreational network, guiding how parks, natural areas and trails are planned, connected, improved and maintained over time.

A central theme of the plan is balancing natural resource protection with public access and recreation. Community feedback showed strong support for conservation, with nearly 90% of respondents favoring conservation or an equal balance between conservation and recreation. As a result, the plan emphasizes environmental stewardship, climate resilience, and water quality protection. The plan also prioritizes equity and accessibility by expanding access to parks and trails, improving connections, and ensuring facilities and programs serve the needs of diverse community members.

Key Takeaways

Community input collected through the POST Plan revealed several priorities that will help shape future park planning, design, and investment decisions.

Key community priorities from the plan:

- » Expanding trail connections within and beyond the city
- » Providing more natural-surface trails, boardwalks, and opportunities to experience nature
- » Increasing nature-based programming and outdoor learning opportunities
- » Creating spaces that support social gathering and community events
- » Adding or improving recreational amenities such as pickleball courts, accessible playgrounds, skate parks, swimming facilities, pump tracks, and off-leash dog park



A Brief History of the Opus Area

The Opus area has been a defining employment center in Minnetonka since its original development in the 1970s as a forward-thinking planned walkable community where people can live and work. Unlike conventional office parks of the era, the Opus area was intentionally designed to integrate buildings with the surrounding landscape through curvilinear roads, preserved wetlands, mature woodlands, and an extensive network of trails that separated pedestrians and cyclists from vehicular traffic. This naturalistic planning approach created a campus that embraced the site's topography and ecological features rather than imposing a rigid urban grid. Housing was also contemplated, and many areas of housing were developed in the 1980s.

Today, as the district evolves into a transit-oriented mixed-use neighborhood with the arrival of the Green Line Light Rail Extension, the area's legacy of integrating development with nature provides a strong foundation for the vision of a new public park. The park has the opportunity to reinforce the Opus area's original identity by celebrating its landscape character while creating a central civic gathering space for residents, employees, and transit users.

Key Takeaway: Build on Opus' Legacy of Nature-Based Design



Today's typical character of the Opus area: lush wooded and wetland covered landscapes, with evidence of wildlife.



Site plan from the original Opus 2 brochure.



Image from the original Opus 2 brochure.



Image from the original Opus 2 brochure.

Community Understanding

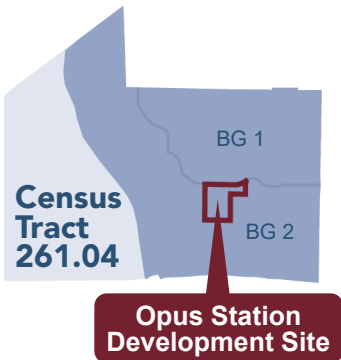
Demographic Context

Who is Here?

The Opus area is one of Minnetonka's most unique districts, distinguished by a demographic profile that differs significantly from the rest of the city. While much of Minnetonka is characterized by established single-family neighborhoods, Opus functions as a dynamic mixed-use district where people live, work, and increasingly gather throughout the day. **Today, the area is home to more than 15,000 employees and an estimated 7,343 residents*. 36% of the newest 2,000 units are designated as affordable.**

The arrival of the Green Line Extension will further expand access to the district, creating opportunities to welcome employees, residents, students, and visitors from across the region. This unique blend of employment, housing, transit, and recreation creates a diverse user population with evolving needs, underscoring the importance of a public park that serves as both a neighborhood amenity and a regional destination.

Key Takeaway: Design With a Unique Community in Mind



Working Here

over 15,000 employees

140 businesses

by 2040, over 4,100 more jobs are projected to be added

Living Here

7,343 current residents*

mix of market-rate and affordable housing

Demographic Profile

Opus Area**	Minnetonka
White (non-hispanic) 66%	White (non-hispanic) 81%
Asian 2%	Asian 7%
Black 20%	Black 4%
Hispanic/Latino 4%	Hispanic/Latino 4%
Two or more Races 8%	Two or more Races 7%

Languages Spoken at Home***

English: 85.0%
Other Language: 9.2%
Other Indo-European Language: 2.8%
Asian Pacific Island Language: 2.3%
Spanish: 0.7%

*Source: Minnetonka Housing Dashboard. 2.2 persons per household with 3,338 units

**Source: 2024 ACS Five Year Estimates for BG1 and BG2, Census Tract 261.04

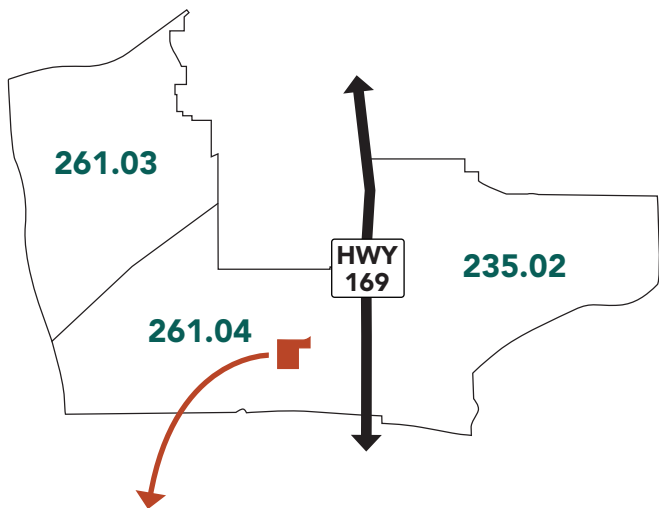
***Source: US Census data from Census Tract 261.04 which the Opus area resides within. Note that the Opus area is only a portion of this census tract, and this demographic data at this scale is not available.



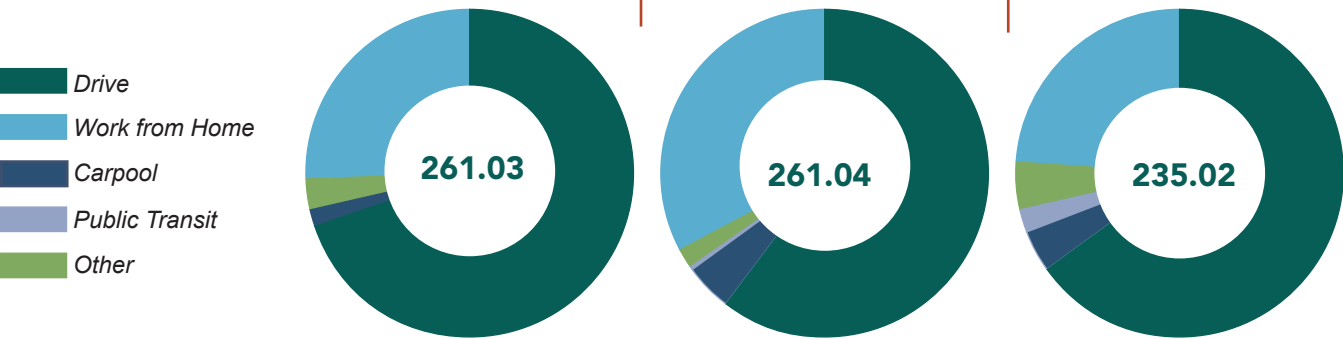
Moving Around

How do People Move Around?

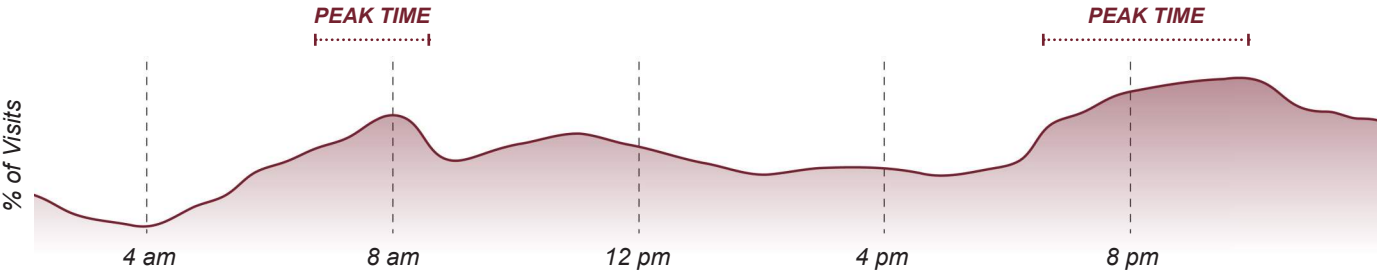
Understanding how people travel to and through the Opus area is key to designing a successful park. As the district evolves into a transit-oriented mixed-use neighborhood, the park will become part of many people's daily commute, not just a destination. Understanding current and future travel patterns will help shape connections, amenities, and gathering spaces that support residents, employees, and transit riders while creating a park that is seamlessly integrated into everyday life.



Most people who live in this census tract drive to work or work from home.



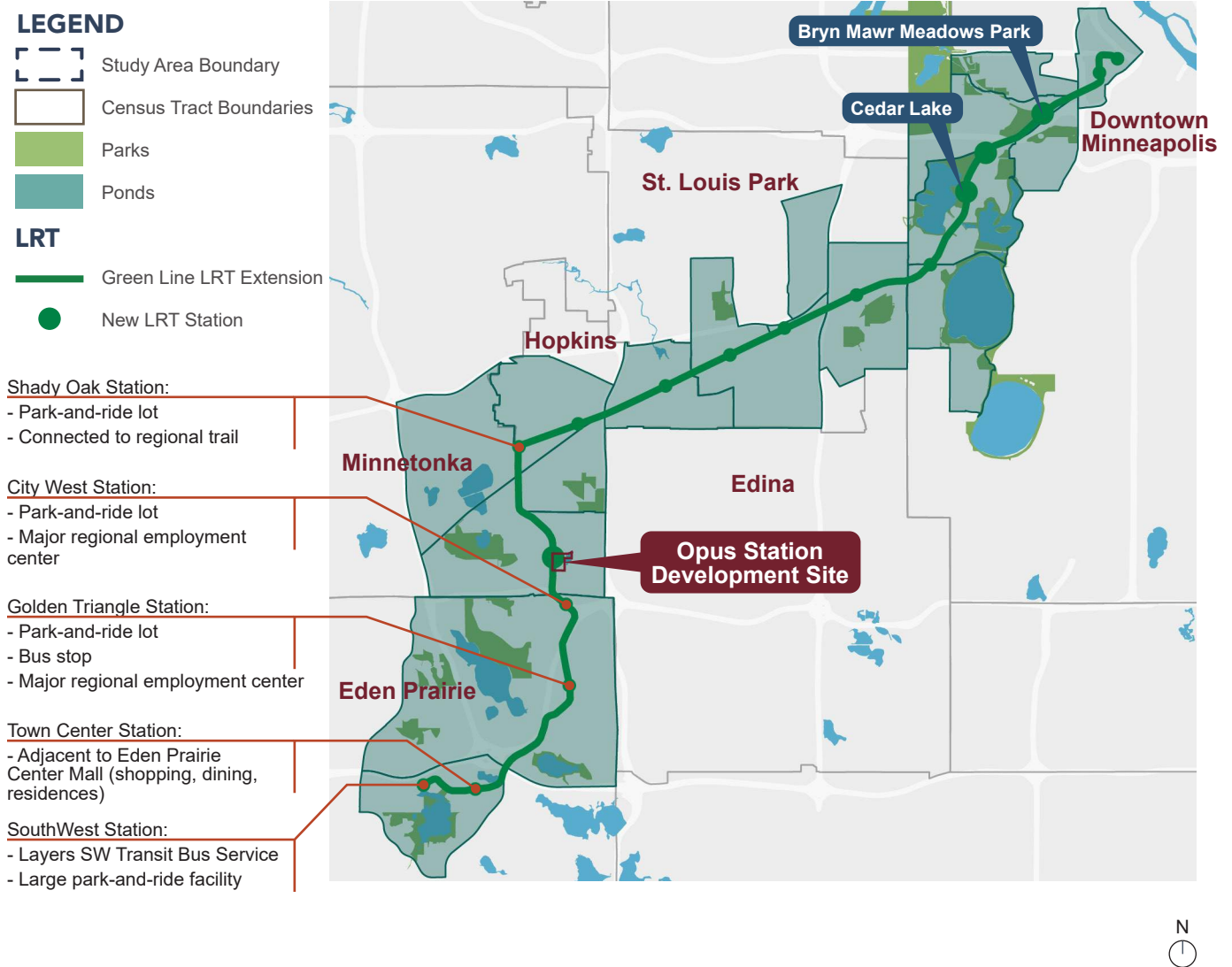
The average daily pattern of activity within the Opus area indicates peak visit times in the morning around 8am and in the evening around 6-10 pm. This presents an opportunity to consider how this future park can provide for folks during these peak times.



Sources: 2024 Census ACS Report; 2025 Visitor 360 Foundational Report, Opus Area, Minnetonka, MN

40% of visitors traveled 10-30 miles to get to the Opus Area

Light Rail Projections

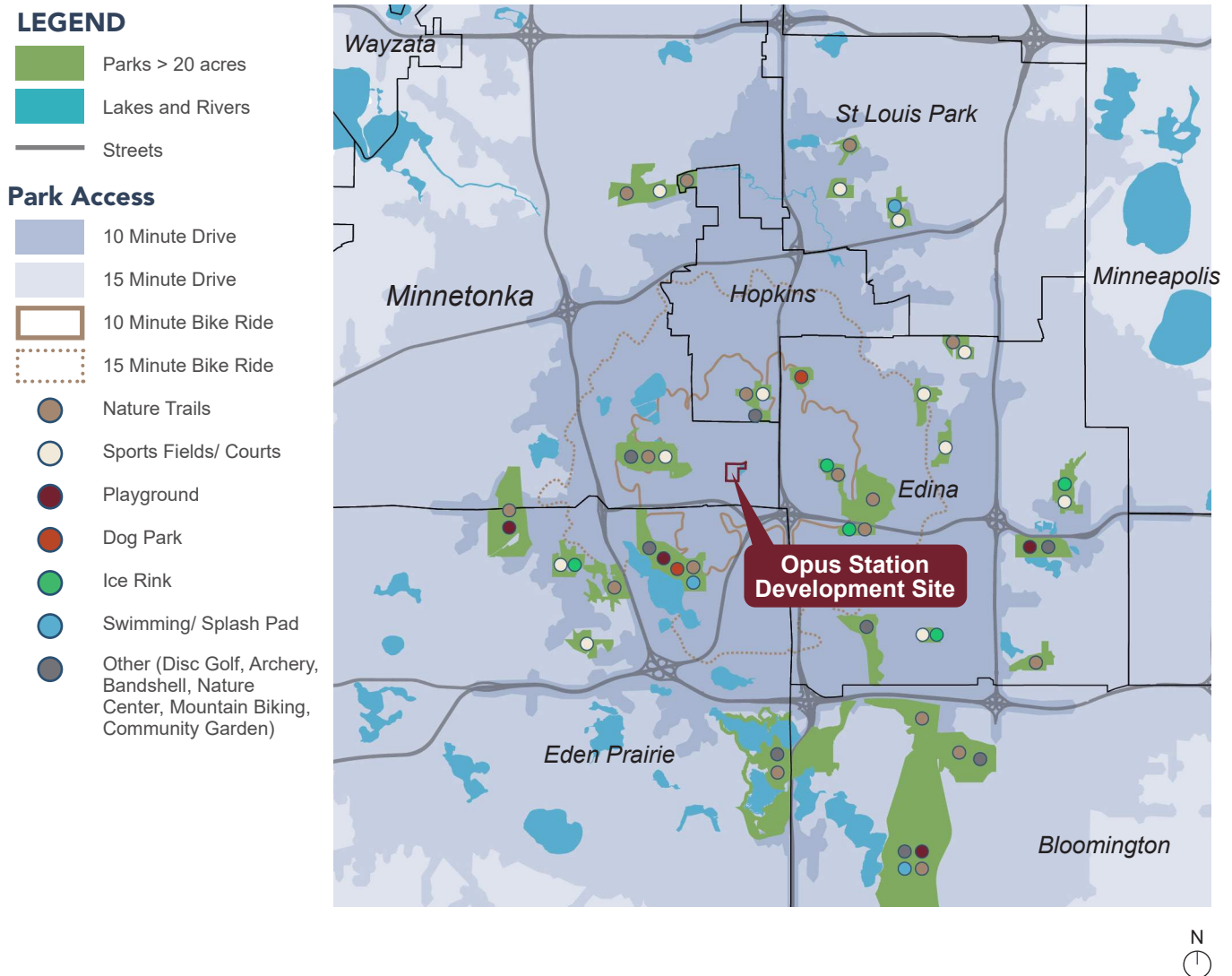


Future projections along the soon-to-be-opened Green Line Extension helps inform this park planning process of the volume of people who will be exposed to the Opus Station and new public space as they commute to and from work and events on the light rail. In January 2026, the Metropolitan Council reported that nearly 56,000 people live within a 10-minute walk of the extension corridor. Additionally, the LRT extension opens opportunities for 81,000 jobs along the corridor and 145,000 jobs in downtown Minneapolis.

Additionally, understanding the context of station development around the Opus station and areas in the outer suburbs provides insight into the volume of riders that may pass by the Opus station park area during their daily commute. The visibility of a unique and intriguing design of this space would encourage travelers to get off the train or re-visit during other times to enjoy and explore this new public space.

Key Takeaway: The Park Should Serve Both Daily Life and Regional Visitors

Park Access



The map above includes parks over 20 acres with in a 20 minute drive of the site. Understanding the destination amenities offered by nearby parks is essential to creating a park in the Opus area that complements, not competes with, the regional park system. Evaluating the unique experiences, recreational opportunities, and gathering spaces available throughout Minnetonka and neighboring communities helps identify gaps in the park network and opportunities to provide amenities that are currently underserved.

Key Takeaway: Provide Amenities that Fill a Regional Gap

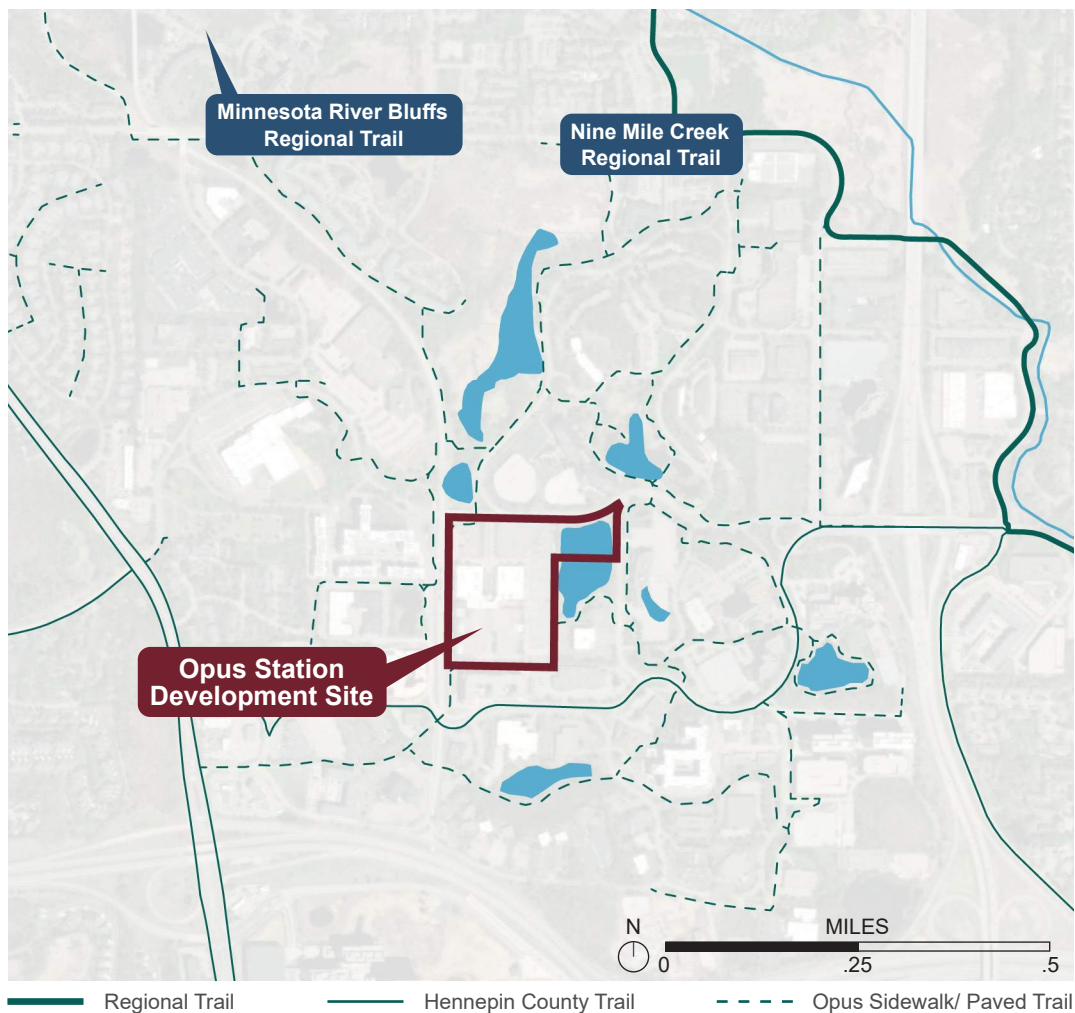
Potential gaps:

- Destination play
- Water play
- Community gathering



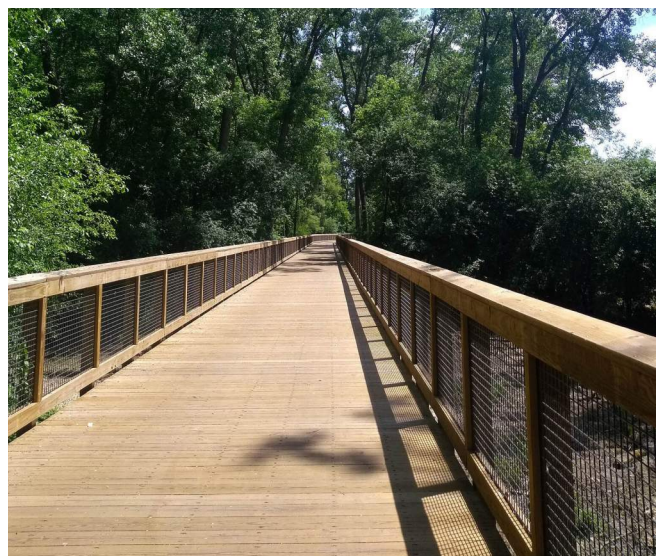
Access to parks and green spaces has been linked to lower stress, improved mental health, and stronger social connections.

Trail Connections



Connection to Nine-Mile Creek and Trail Systems

The Opus area is one of Minnetonka's most connected destinations for walking and bicycling, with an extensive network of local trails that seamlessly link neighborhoods, employment centers, parks, and transit. These local connections extend beyond the district through regional trail corridors, providing access to destinations throughout the Twin Cities, including the Nine Mile Creek and Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trails. With the addition of the Green Line Extension and the future park, this area will become an even stronger multimodal hub where walking, biking, and transit come together to support recreation, commuting, and everyday connections to nature.



Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail, Photo credits: TrailLink.com

Site Understanding

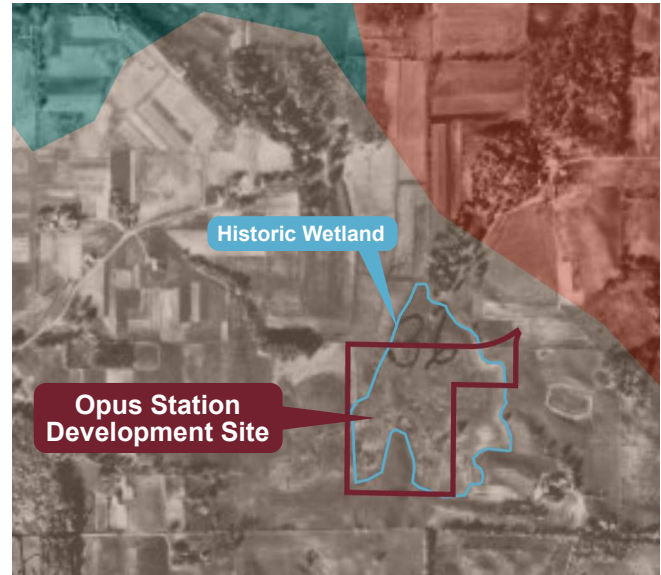
Environmental Context

Historical Ecology and Land Cover

The Opus site is situated on the eastern edge of a large morainal system within the Big Woods Ecological Subsection. The presettlement vegetation was described as Oak Openings and Barrens with an area of Conifer Bogs & Swamps to the north, and a large swath of Wet Prairie dominating the lowlands adjacent to Nine Mile Creek. Prior to urbanization, a large wetland occupied a majority of the study area. Before modern development, this area was mainly farm land, and was historically a seasonal landscape used for hunting, gathering, and travel by the Dakota Nation as their ancestral homelands.



Less than 2% of the original Big Woods forest remains, with Sugar Maple, Basswood, and Oak trees once dominating the Big Woods



- Oak Openings and Barrens
- Conifer Bogs and Swamps
- Wet Prairie

Current Ecology and Land Cover

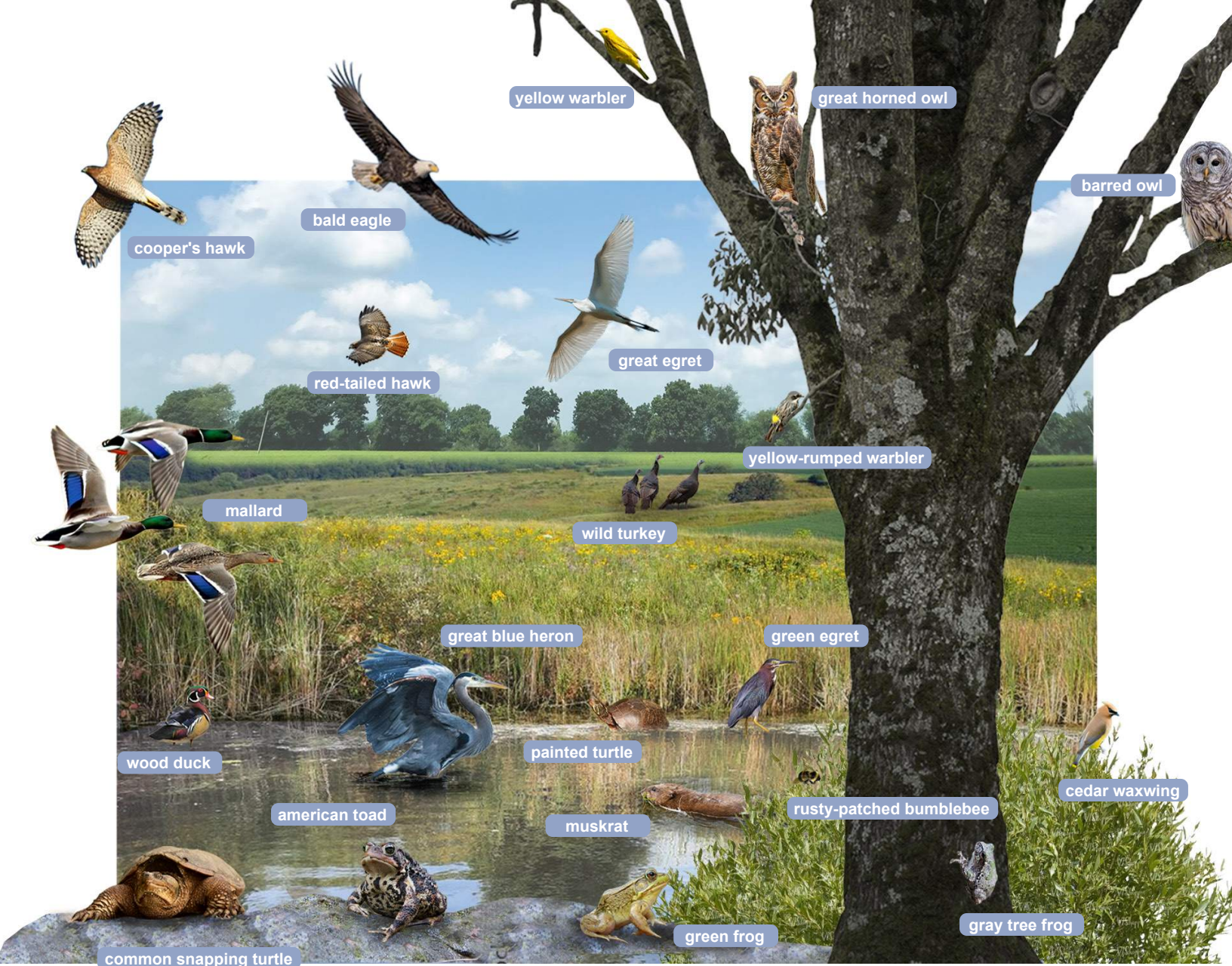
Today, the Opus area's natural landscape plays a critical role in managing stormwater generated by the district's extensive impervious surfaces. Thanks to the area's forward-thinking planning and preservation of wetlands, marshes, and open water systems, these natural features capture, store, and filter runoff before it enters Nine Mile Creek. As the district continues to evolve, future development should build upon this legacy by expanding interconnected forest and grassland restoration efforts while incorporating stormwater management strategies that exceed minimum regulatory requirements. By working with natural systems rather than against them, the Opus area can continue to improve water quality, strengthen ecological resilience, and protect the health of the Nine Mile Creek watershed for generations to come.

Key Takeaway: Embrace Water and Natural Features as a Defining Design Feature



- >50% Impervious Surface
- Forest or Grassland
- Marsh / Flooded / Open Water





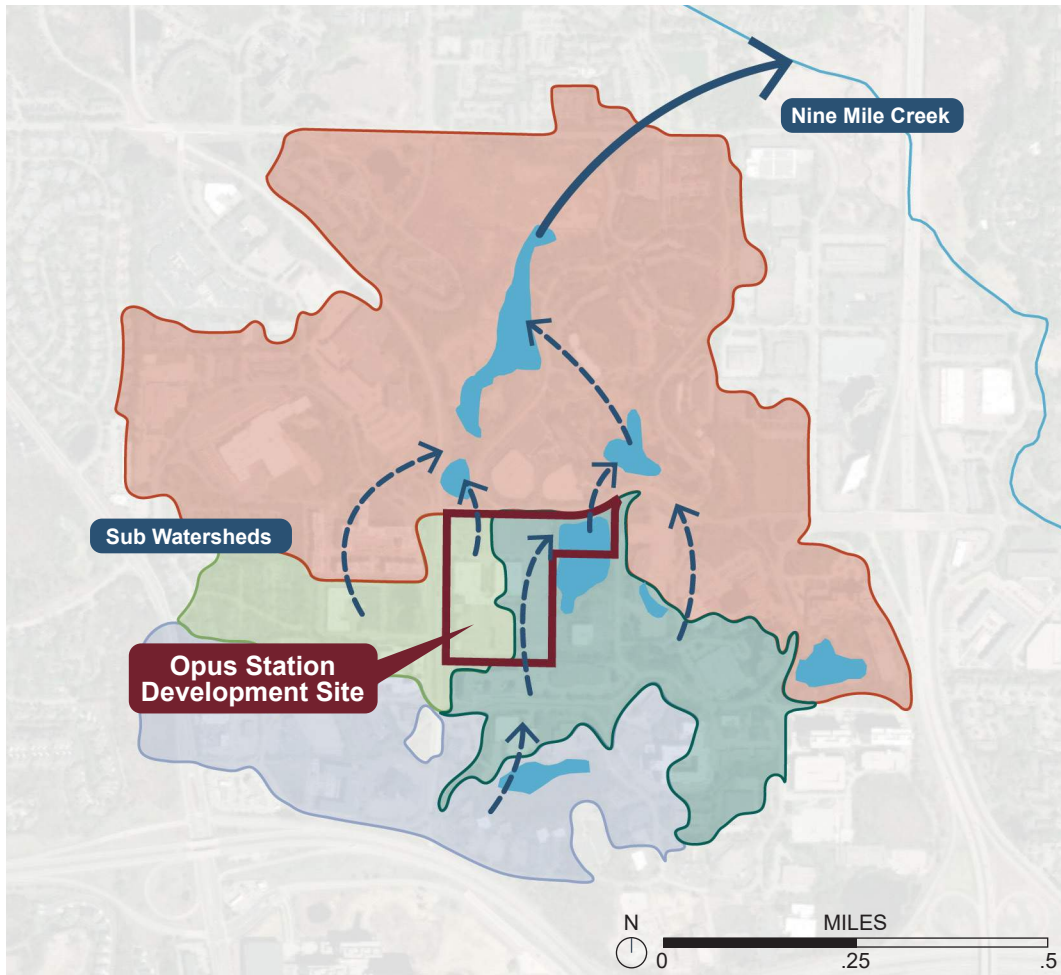
Animal Species

121 Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) are known to occur in the Big Woods Subsection. The **Rusty Patched Bumblebee** (Endangered) and the **Monarch Butterfly** (proposed Threatened) are two special status species that are known to exist in Minnetonka and could benefit from habitat improvements in the Opus area.

In addition, there are many common beloved species that are known to exist in the neighborhood and would benefit from habitat enhancements and greater connectivity, including:

- whooping crane
- wood duck
- mallard
- great egret
- green egret
- great blue heron
- painted turtle
- common snapping turtle
- green frog
- gray tree frog
- American toad
- wild turkey
- cedar waxwing
- yellow warbler
- yellow-rumped warbler
- muskrat
- tricolored bat
- Cooper's hawk
- red-tailed hawk
- bald eagle
- barred owl
- great horned owl

Water Flow



The future park site occupies a pivotal location within the Nine Mile Creek watershed, where three subwatersheds flow through this site before ultimately reaching Nine Mile Creek. As a result, the site's landscape influences water quality well beyond its boundaries. By preserving and enhancing natural systems through ecological restoration and green infrastructure on this site, the future park can serve as a critical watershed asset, improving water quality, increasing resilience to changing precipitation patterns, and protecting the health of the broader Nine Mile Creek watershed.

Managing stormwater as close to its source as possible is one of the most effective ways to protect downstream water resources. By capturing, infiltrating, and filtering runoff where it falls, natural systems such as rain gardens, wetlands, native plantings, and permeable landscapes reduce the volume and velocity of stormwater while removing pollutants before they enter our waterways. This improves water quality, reduces erosion, replenishes groundwater, lessens the burden on storm sewer infrastructure, and increases resilience to more frequent and intense rainfall events.



What happens on one property affects everyone downstream. Every rain garden, wetland, and native planting helps improve the health of the entire watershed.

Soils and Floodplain



The presence of a high water table, hydric soils, and regulated floodplain areas presents an opportunity to work with the landscape's natural systems rather than against them. These existing conditions indicate that portions of the site are naturally suited to storing, infiltrating, and filtering stormwater, making an ideal location for passive recreation, habitat restoration, and green stormwater infrastructure such as wetlands, native plantings, and bioswales.

The hydric soil presence layered with floodplain extents in the northwest portion of the site is the area most indicative to avoid major structural components within.

The eastern edge of the development site features a floodplain supporting the open-water pond. Because floodplain areas must be carefully designed to maintain their natural flood storage capacity and comply with regulatory requirements, this area offers an opportunity to integrate resilient, nature-based park amenities that embraces periodic flooding. Concentrating more intensive development and active amenities in areas with better soil conditions while preserving and enhancing these naturally wet landscapes will improve long-term sustainability, reduce construction challenges, strengthen watershed health, and celebrate the ecological character that defines the Opus area.

The map illustrates the proposed Opus LRT Station and its development site. The station is located on a north-south transit corridor, indicated by a yellow line. The development site is outlined in red. Key features include:

- Opus LRT Station:** The proposed station location, marked with a yellow line.
- Opus Station Development Site:** The area designated for the station's development, outlined in red.
- Existing Trails:** A network of trails shown as red lines, including a trail crossing the transit corridor.
- At-grade Trail Crossing:** A specific crossing point for the trail over the transit corridor.
- Bus Stop:** An existing bus stop located near the station, marked with an orange dot.
- Water Features:** Several ponds and a larger lake are shown in blue.
- Land Use:** The map shows various land uses, including green spaces, residential areas (white buildings), and commercial areas (grey buildings).
- Transit Corridor:** The main transit route, shown as a yellow line with black arrows indicating the direction of travel.
- Local Roads:** Several roads are shown with dashed yellow lines and black arrows indicating traffic flow.

- **Opus Light Rail Transit (LRT) Station**

- **Route 38 Bus Stop**

20  **City of Minnetonka OPUS Public Space Master Plan**

Opportunities

City of Minnetonka Strategic Priorities



How do the opportunities and understanding of the site and the Opus area in this report become a framework for the goals for this Vision Plan?

The City of Minnetonka has several strategic priorities that are rooted in the City's Strategic Plan. These are:

- Financial Strength
- Safe and Healthy Community
- Sustainability, Resilience, and Natural Environment
- Livable and Well-Planned Development
- Infrastructure and Asset Management
- Community Inclusiveness

All investments, policies, and plans the City develops must enhance progress toward these priorities, this Vision Plan for the Opus Station Public Space included.

Goals for this Vision Plan specifically speak to these priorities, as noted within each goal as they are outlined here.

View the City's Strategic Priorities and the Community Dashboard:



Vision Plan Goals

How do our key understandings of the site and its context merge with development goals and overall goals for the City's expansion of parks and recreation services?

These project goals will help guide design direction and decisions, and will be refined and verified by community input throughout the project process.

Goal: Centering a Nature-Based Urban Park Experience

There is a strong interest in creating a park that embraces the site's natural assets while offering a unique urban park experience unlike other parks in Minnetonka. This includes:

- protecting and enhancing the pond and embracing the lush character of the Opus area,
- creating long-loop nature trails and connecting to the greater Opus trail network,
- showcasing ecological restoration,
- and leveraging green stormwater infrastructure as an educational and demonstration opportunity.

Rather than a highly programmed civic plaza or event venue, the park should become a destination where nature, recreation, and environmental stewardship are integrated into a memorable urban setting.

Strategic Priorities Served:

- *Sustainability, Resilience, and Natural Environment*
- *Livable and Well-Planned Development*
- *Infrastructure and Asset Management*
- *Community Inclusiveness*

Goal: Creating a Regional Destination for Families, Play, and Recreation

The park has the opportunity to fill a unique gap within Minnetonka's park portfolio by becoming a premier destination for families and active recreation.

There is interest in a premiere feature, such as a destination playground, adventure-based play experiences, family-oriented amenities, and facilities that support longer visits. The goal is to create a park that draws visitors from across the city and region while providing experiences that cannot be found elsewhere in the park system.

Strategic Priorities Served:

- *Financial Strength*
- *Safe and Healthy Community*
- *Livable and Well-Planned Development*
- *Infrastructure and Asset Management*
- *Community Inclusiveness*



Goal: Addressing Environmental and Site Constraints

The park's design must respond to significant environmental conditions that influence both development potential and long-term maintenance.

Flood-prone areas, a high groundwater table, and the presence of invasive species will require thoughtful planning, ecological management, and resilient design solutions. These constraints present opportunities to showcase environmental stewardship while ensuring the park remains functional, sustainable, and adaptable over time.

Strategic Priorities Served:

- *Financial Strength*
- *Sustainability, Resilience, and Natural Environment*
- *Livable and Well-Planned Development*
- *Infrastructure and Asset Management*

Goal: Enhancing Connectivity, Access, and Wayfinding

The surrounding transportation network and overall Opus area can be difficult to navigate, creating challenges for future park visibility, access, and user comfort.

The park must establish itself as a clear destination through intuitive wayfinding, strong multimodal connections, and a legible identity that helps users confidently access and move through the area.

Strategic Priorities Served:

- *Safe and Healthy Community*
- *Livable and Well-Planned Development*
- *Infrastructure and Asset Management*
- *Community Inclusiveness*

Goal: Supporting an Inclusive, Connected, and Culturally Vibrant Community Place

The vision for the park extends beyond recreation to create a welcoming gathering place that reflects the diversity of the surrounding community. Opportunities for the future park include:

- integrating public art and storytelling,
- providing accessible experiences for people of all ages and abilities,
- fostering social interaction among nearby residents,
- and prioritizing walking, biking, and trail connections over automobile access.

This lens focuses on creating a park that is equitable, connected, and representative of the community it serves. The design process for the future park must be grounded in an equity-based approach. Building trust through engagement, communicating the value of public investment, and designing spaces that encourage positive social interaction will be critical to the park's long-term success.

Strategic Priorities Served:

- *Safe and Healthy Community*
- *Livable and Well-Planned Development*
- *Community Inclusiveness*