

Small Area Plan for  
the  
City of Edina's  
50<sup>th</sup> & France  
Mixed Use Center



*Draft Plan:  
April 2, 2019*



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# Acknowledgements

## City Council Members

James Hovland            Mayor  
Ronald Anderson  
Mary Brindle  
Mike Fischer  
Kevin Staunton



## City Planning Commission Members

Jo Ann Olsen            Chair  
Ian Nemerov\*          Vice-Chair  
James Bennett  
Sheila Berube  
John Hamilton\*  
Susan Lee  
Lou Miranda  
Gerard Strauss  
Todd Thorsen

(\*Co-Chairs of the 50<sup>th</sup> & France Small Area Plan Work Group)

## Small Area Planning Team Work Group Members (Volunteers)

Mark Arnold  
Jen Augustson  
John Breitingner  
Patrick Huss  
Thomas Koon  
Christine Pecard  
Ede Rice

## City of Edina

**4801 W. 50<sup>th</sup> Street, Edina, Minnesota, 55424**

Cary Teague            Community Development Director  
Kris Aaker              Assistant City Planner  
Mark Nolan             Transportation Planner

## Consultant Team Members

William Smith          Biko Associates, Inc.  
Daniel Lubben          Biko Associates, Inc.  
Aida Strom              Biko Associates, Inc.  
Dan Cornejo            Cornejo Consulting  
Dan Edgerton          Zan Associates, Inc.  
Coal Dorius             Zan Associates, Inc.  
Tom Holmes,            Zan Associates, Inc.  
Tim Griffin              Tim Griffin, LLC  
Joseph Hang            Joseph Hang Proprietor  
Janna King              Economic Development Services, Inc.  
Haila Maze              Bolton & Menk, Inc.

# Executive Summary

## Overview

The area now known as “50<sup>th</sup> & France” has, over many decades of change, grown organically and with planning by the City of Edina to take its current form as a leading commercial district in Edina and Minneapolis that includes stores, services and housing to meet its customers’ daily needs and unique lifestyle experiences. There are very few places in the metropolitan area that have aged as gracefully. It is the envy of other metro cities.

50<sup>th</sup> & France is unique among similar districts with a large critical mass of commercial activity (approximately 400,000 square feet) anchored by daily needs and specialty retailers and the support of dense population with substantial purchasing power in all four directions. Tremendous investment is required to create new shopping and residential districts similar to 50<sup>th</sup> & France, but new developments would not have the feeling of authenticity that has been generated by 50<sup>th</sup> & France over a period of nearly 100 years.

West 50<sup>th</sup> Street is a major east-west street and France Avenue is a major north-south street in Hennepin County, Minnesota. West 50<sup>th</sup> Street is a major thoroughfare between, at its western end, Highway 100 in Edina to, at its eastern end, Lyndale Avenue in Minneapolis. France Ave. runs along the eastern border of the City of Edina and the western border of the City of Minneapolis, running from its northern end at the major road of Excelsior Boulevard in Minneapolis through the Southdale district in Edina to its southern end at Old Shakopee Road in Bloomington. Along its route, it crosses Minnesota Highway 62 and Interstate Highway 494. Each of the three highways that connect with or cross West 50<sup>th</sup> Street and France Avenue are among the busiest highways in Minnesota, and West 50<sup>th</sup> Street and France Avenue serve as major feeder roads for those highways. Excelsior Boulevard, at the northern end of France Avenue, is the legacy of a streetcar route that took riders between the popular destinations of Bde Maka Ska (formerly Lake Calhoun) and Lake Minnetonka, and to this day is a busy road with many commercial districts.

For nearly 100 years, at least since the metropolitan streetcar lines were extended to

**The 50th & France Work Group’s Mission**

**This Small Area Plan was prepared by a Work Group of citizens with different backgrounds and perspectives. The Work Group’s mission was to develop a vision for the continued success of the 50th & France District in the face of inevitable change, while helping it maintain and grow its current vitality.**

**During the course of developing this Small Area Plan, the Work Group was provided information from experts in economic development, traffic, parking and community development, and received extensive community input. The Work Group reviewed the history of 50<sup>th</sup> & France, lessons from similar areas around the country, information about the current challenges faced by similar districts in the Twin Cities, transportation plans by Metro Transit, and traffic studies done by the Minnesota Department of Transportation and consultants for private developers. While recognizing that many pieces of input were focused on one specific issue, often presenting very real concerns, the Work Group strove to balance all silos of information in developing its vision for the district. The pages that follow describe in detail the work group’s thoughts about the future of 50<sup>th</sup> & France.**

the intersection of West 50<sup>th</sup> Street and France Ave. in 1925, the 50<sup>th</sup> & France district has been a site of commercial activity, supporting local consumers from Edina and Minneapolis and also drawing many customers from the greater Twin Cities region and beyond. Before the extension of the streetcars, 50<sup>th</sup> & France was primarily farm land. Newspapers in the 1920s advertised poultry and household pets for sale from a farm at the intersection, with 100 white leghorns available for \$5, and 4-1/2 acres of land was listed as being for sale at the price of \$650 per acre.

Commercial activity in the 1920s included a hardware store, pharmacy and dairy, among other commercial enterprises, supporting the daily needs of local customers. The 1930s saw the opening of services and entertainment, such as Edina Realty and the Edina Cinema, as well as landscaping and garage businesses. The 1940s saw more growth and organization as a commercial district, with retail expanding beyond daily needs to offer restaurants and a fur studio. The area advertised under the theme, “Shop the 50<sup>th</sup> and France Way.” Of course, the relatively non-commercial origins of 50<sup>th</sup> & France remained, with a lumber yard offering its goods for the construction business.

In the 1950s, in the face of competition from the newly opened and revolutionary Southdale Mall, located just over a mile to the south of 50<sup>th</sup> & France and offering indoor shopping surrounded by acres of free parking, the streets around 50<sup>th</sup> & France were reconfigured to better establish the area as a shopping district and the district branded itself the “Edina Shopping Center.” Growth of retail stores beyond daily needs continued. Arthur Murray Dance Studio opened to take advantage of that era’s trends, and a savings and loan, a Hasty Tasty, a camera store and an electrician were among the businesses in the district.

During the 1960s and 1970s, while still facing strong competition from Southdale and the growing commercial engine that was growing around it, the 50<sup>th</sup> & France district saw refinement and change in its commercial mix, with stores and businesses that included Bachman’s, First Edina National Bank, Windsor Gallery, Fifty West Coiffures, Peterson’s TV and Appliance Center, Travel Advisors, Chateau de Jean and Betlach Jewelers. One of the biggest annual highlights today, the Edina Art Fair, began in 1966, in a different format from what is experienced today, and Belleson’s and Lunds were well-established district anchors of the district, with Lunds moving to its current location in 1970 and Belleson’s opening the Belleson’s building in 1971.

In response to the challenges to the area and historical resistance to change by community members, City leadership authorized a study, which was completed in 1974, to identify ways to strengthen the district. The executive summary of the 1974 study stated the following:

“Traffic congestion, lack of adequate parking, underused land area, faulty building arrangement, and commercial encroachment on residential areas are current problems in the 50<sup>th</sup> & France area. While many urban shopping areas, with the exception of shopping centers, presently suffer from these maladies, the 50<sup>th</sup> and France area is unique in that these problems have existed and been recognized over a 30 year period. During this time a wide variety of studies and plans have been presented to city officials, merchants and residents, with an equally wide range of possible solutions. Most of them have been discarded because of financial considerations, the lack of initiative on the part of merchants to support certain proposals, or the zealous attempts by surrounding residents to halt the spread of commercial encroachment in the area.”

Important outcomes of the 1974 study were to develop three municipal parking ramps to support the parking needs of visitors to the district and to improve the ring roads on West 49-1/2 Street and

West 51<sup>st</sup> Street in order to alleviate traffic concerns on West 50<sup>th</sup> Street. The City also commenced a parking program under which parking would be provided for free, with local property owners assessed for the costs of developing and maintaining the parking ramps. Construction of these improvements was completed in the early 1980s.

Municipal development of the parking ramp and ring roads can be considered the first step in creating the current feel of 50<sup>th</sup> & France. Further important steps occurred during the 1990s, with the closing in 1993 of the last gas station in the Edina portion of 50<sup>th</sup> and France, at 5000 Halifax, where condominiums now stand, and the replacement in 1999 of a gas station with a brick two-story office/retail building at the northeast corner of West 50<sup>th</sup> Street and France Avenue in Minneapolis. Another key step occurred in 1999, when, after significant and lengthy public debate, the City of Edina became one of the last communities in the metropolitan area to allow onsite sale of liquor. This ordinance change ushered in an era when restaurant options at 50<sup>th</sup> & France changed from fast food, such as Arby's and Red Barn, to the numerous sophisticated dining opportunities that are an important part of the character of 50<sup>th</sup> & France today.

This Small Area Plan, while recognizing the high esteem for 50<sup>th</sup> & France held by many people in Edina and throughout the metropolitan area, also recognizes that past is prologue, that while experiences that were desired in the past are not likely to return, desired experiences of today are just as likely to fall away in the future as those of the past, and new experiences are likely to be desired in the future. Just as 50<sup>th</sup> & France has evolved to date to continually meet the demands of the surrounding community, new types or configurations of stores and services are likely to be desired by customers in the future. An analogy can be made to the charming commercial districts of small towns from years gone by. Just as the 1980s and 1990s saw small town shopping districts wither in the face of growth of regional megastores, affecting the vitality of many small towns and the types of businesses that had decades of success selling to local customers, global changes in the ways that people shop and the types of things they wish to purchase are today challenging even premier commercial districts like 50<sup>th</sup> & France. Current challenges include how growth in online shopping is causing permanent changes in what is called bricks and mortar retail and how remaining stores need to change their ways of business to remain viable. Current changes include how, nationally, the number of people employed by restaurant and food preparation businesses is skyrocketing, while employment numbers in traditional grocery services is remaining static, and the desire for services like personal training is creating new businesses at locations that formerly may have been occupied by premium clothing stores.

Today, 50<sup>th</sup> & France is a well-regarded regional destination for shopping and dining as well as a district that meets the daily needs of area residents. It is Edina's historic downtown, with the highly visible Edina Theater sign and a well-groomed streetscape. It is a place where people gather for the Edina Art Fair, Fourth of July parade, Christmas tree lighting, and other holiday celebrations. The district's pedestrian friendly environment, strong demographic profile and mix of small locally owned shops and reputable national chains has been highly successful over the decades.

Looking to the future, it is expected that demand for physical stores will remain, but the purposes are already changing. Among common reasons for physical stores are the following:

1. Convenience – this is a matter of quality of life. People want to live near shopping - especially for their daily needs.
2. Service – some elements of service cannot be delivered over a wire or via a UPS truck.

3. Curated Experiences – many manufacturers and retailers benefit from the ability to curate an experience and interact with customers in person, and many customers want to interact with the goods they are considering.
4. Community – people want to be in places where other people are gathering

With that said, the footprint of retailing is definitely shrinking. Even those who are committed to brick and mortar stores, are leveraging technology and just-in-time delivery to work with less space. This means that we need to find other complimentary primary uses like office / studio space, co-working, residential and entertainment. More people at more hours of the day will make our public places more appealing.

Fortunately, this coincides with new demand for urban housing that is located within walkable districts and new forms of work space.

### Setting

This small area plan was developed for the City of Edina’s 50<sup>th</sup> & France commercial district. The primary study area, outlined in red to the right, is entirely within the City of Edina, and while the planning study recognized and accounted for the Minneapolis side of France Avenue, the Small Area Plan itself does not recommend or propose any improvements or developments in Minneapolis.

The 50<sup>th</sup> & France commercial district is known throughout the Twin Cities metropolitan area as a highly successful, upscale shopping destination. The district (Edina and Minneapolis combined) features over 175 retailers and professional services. The Edina side of France Avenue (currently zoned as a Mixed-Use Commercial Node) is home to five existing multi-family residential buildings, including owned and rental properties, and 95 businesses. The businesses include both small, independent shops and nationally known franchises. Businesses within the study area include a grocery store; a bakery; a municipal liquor store; clothing stores for men, women, and children; jewelers; specialty luxury and lifestyle boutiques; restaurants; salons and spas; and a movie theater. Parking within the study area is free and located within ramps on both the north and south sides of 50<sup>th</sup> Street.



Additionally, along the north and south sides of Market Street, which was formerly 49-1/2 Street, a new project, Nolan Mains, is under construction. Expected to be completed in fall 2019, it will be a mixed use development with commercial uses on the ground floor and residential (apartment) uses

above. It will provide 100 dwelling units (dus) on 1.50 acres of land for a residential density of 67 dus/acre, exceeding the current density limit of 12 dus/acre. Its height will be six stories high, exceeding the four-story height limit in the City's zoning regulations and making it the tallest building in the study area.

### **50<sup>th</sup> & France: Past and Future**

The history of 50<sup>th</sup> & France is documented in the Heritage Preservation chapter of this Small Area Plan. Two things have been consistent throughout time. First, 50<sup>th</sup> & France has always been a commercial activity center. Second, while maintaining its focus on commercial land uses, the intersection has always changed and adapted itself, often in front of the curve, in order to remain current, vibrant and successful.

During the study, property owners and businesses reported a variety of potential challenges to the study area's future vitality as a commercial district. These challenges include perceived high land valuations and associated property tax rates, as well as changes in customer purchasing behavior due to online shopping trends.



*1913 plat map showing small commercial parcels of land at intersection of 50th & France surrounded by farmsteads*

In comparison with similar shopping districts in the region, such as Uptown in Minneapolis and Grand Avenue in St. Paul, the 50<sup>th</sup> & France appears to be relatively healthy. Additionally, some retailers in the district are reported to have sales that are significantly higher, on a per square foot basis, than similar retailers elsewhere in the Twin Cities or nationally. As a result of the challenges facing the district and other factors, however, property owners report that, despite an otherwise strong economy, empty storefronts within the study area may be remaining vacant much longer than they have historically, with some spaces being available for as much as eighteen (18) months. Further, anecdotal reports are that some stores are experiencing traffic that is lower than historical levels. In response, some landlords are reporting that they are either giving partial rent abatements or losing tenants to nearby areas, such as 44<sup>th</sup> & France and the Miracle Mile Shopping Center in St. Louis Park, where rents are significantly lower, and charges for taxes, despite Edina's generally lower tax rates, are also lower due to lower property values.

Property owners also expressed concern about the additional retail space that will become available with the Nolan Mains project.

### **Critical Concerns for the District**

The planning process for this Small Area Plan included development of a Work Group made up of seven community volunteers and two Edina Planning Commissioners. Representatives from the Work Group met with study area property owners and business owners/operators and residents from adjoining neighborhoods. The Work Group also held three Community Meetings to give community members an opportunity to define issues and concerns at 50<sup>th</sup> & France and review and comment on findings and recommendations as they were being developed.

Public notice of the community meetings was posted on social media, including the City’s website, City Extra, Nextdoor, Facebook and Twitter. Additionally, press releases were issued to local media and invitations were sent to various neighborhood organizations and community groups, including the following:

- 50th and France Business and Professional Association
- Edina Chamber of Commerce
- Edina Chinese Association
- Edina Community Foundation
- Edina Historical Society
- Edina Housing Foundation
- Edina League of Women Voters
- Edina Lions Club
- Edina Morningside Rotary Club
- Edina Senior Center
- Morningside Neighborhood Association
- The Wanderers
- Volunteers Enlisted to Assist People (VEAP)

The dates of the community meetings and the number of community members who attended them are as follows:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Attendees*</u>
July 10, 2018	20
August 22, 2018	25
October 23, 2018	18

The number of attendees is based on the number of people who signed the attendance sheet. It is believed that several additional attendees participated in each community meeting without signing the attendance sheet.

Residents were asked about their wishes and concerns at the Community Meetings. Wishes included the following:

**General:**

- A thriving commercial district
- Safe and inviting
- Consider sustainability and environmental issues
- Attract all ages, including more stores that attract people under 18
- Healthy food options

**Land Use:**

- Mix of uses - retail, restaurants, entertainment, housing, and open space
- Mix of local stores and stores that provide basic needs
- Respect adjacent neighborhoods
- Opportunities for seniors to remain in their communities
- Underground parking



*Participants review open house material at the October 23, 2018, Community Meeting.*



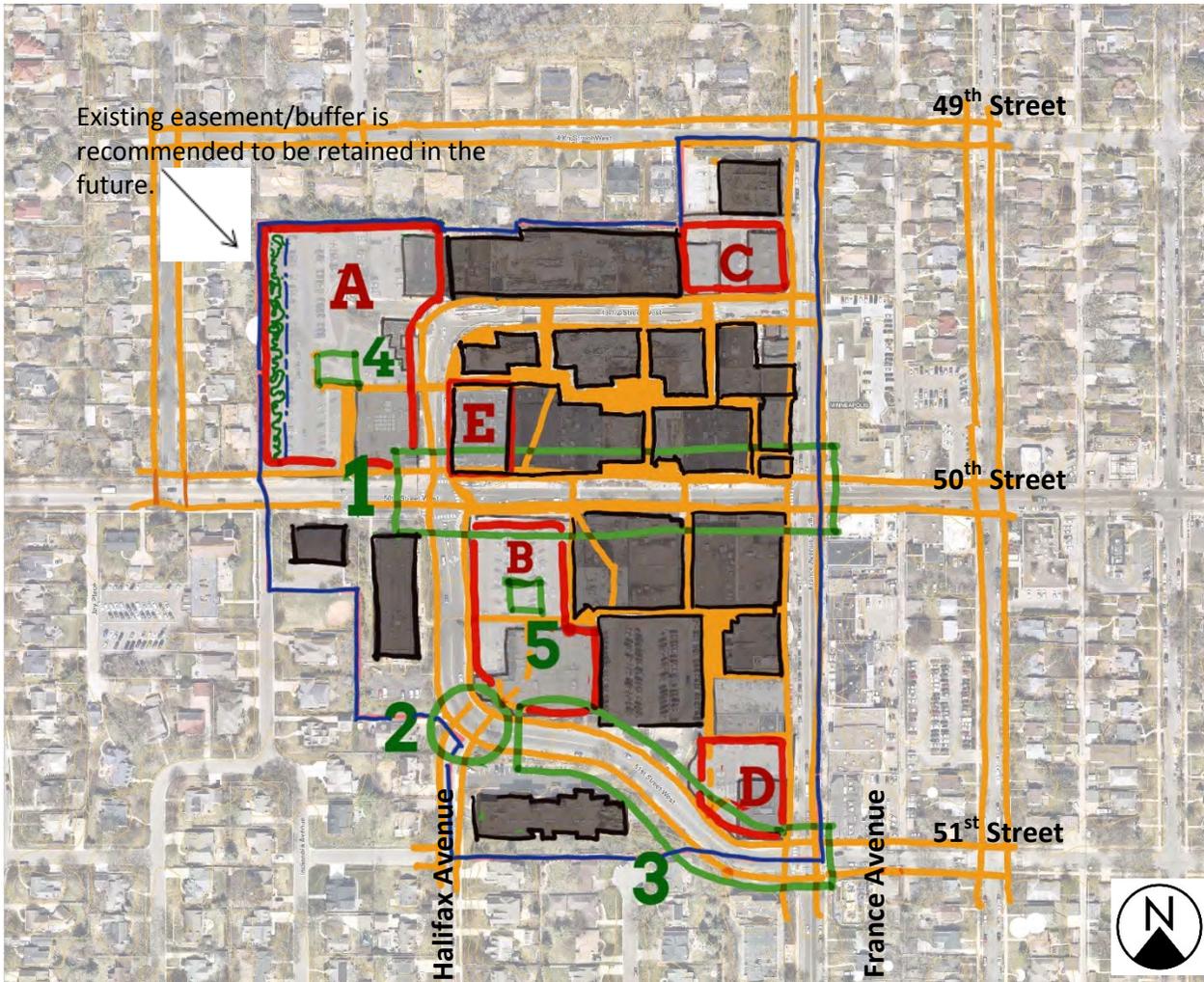
base of customers, to encouraging retailers to operate more collectively on promotional activities, sales, and events. It is expected that these ideas can be well addressed by the 50<sup>th</sup> & France Business and Professional Association working in concert with the City of Edina.

Another suggestion of property owners and businesses was to increase the number of residences within walking distance of the study area. It was felt that, in the face of “shop local” trends and the reported decrease in the numbers of customers entering the stores, increasing the number of local residents and ensuring that a significant focus of their businesses would be devoted to the needs of local customers would have a positive impact. Further, it was felt that having additional local customers, who would walk to stores and throughout the district, would increase the activity level within the district and that, in turn, more pedestrian activity would increase the attractiveness of the district to customers commuting from other areas. These factors would all contribute to a further strengthening of the economic vitality of the study area. It was also noted that local residents, who would walk to destinations within the district, would increase activity without adding to traffic congestion on 50<sup>th</sup> Street and France Avenue.

Other solutions are outlined in the chapter on Economic Vitality in this Small Area Plan.

The 50<sup>th</sup> & France Small Area Plan Framework shown below illustrates the Work Group’s most current understanding of opportunities to develop/redevelop in the 50<sup>th</sup> & France district, based on information provided by property owners.

**50th & France Framework Diagram  
(Highlighting Potential Development Sites)**



**Potential Redevelopment Opportunities:**

- A. US Bank and Post Office Site**
- B. Lunds**
- C. Walgreens**
- D. BMO Harris State Bank**
- E. D'Amico's Site**

**Public Realm Opportunities:**

- 1. Reimagined 50<sup>th</sup> Street from Halifax Avenue to France Avenue**
- 2. Revise pedestrian crosswalk on Halifax Avenue**
- 3. Calm traffic on 51<sup>st</sup> Street by adding on-street parking**
- 4. Current US Bank site**
- 5. Current Lunds site**

**Pedestrian System:**

- **Improve walkways and develop linkages within the district and to adjacent neighborhoods**



**Buildings most likely to remain**



**Buildings least likely to remain**



## Vision Statement and Guiding Principles

In response to the wishes and concerns expressed by property owners, business, and residents, and with a desire to help guide future development and public investment at 50<sup>th</sup> & France, the Work Group defined a vision for the district. Based on the vision, the Work Group defined principles to guide future development in the district.

### *Vision Statement*

The Vision Statement reflects the Work Group's analysis of the study area, including public feedback received at the first of three community meetings. The Vision Statement recognizes the historical and current importance of 50<sup>th</sup> & France in the City of Edina and describes a high-level direction for continuing the district's vitality. The Vision Statement also recognizes how the study area has changed over time and will continue to evolve to remain a leading commercial district.

**50<sup>th</sup> & France is the heart of Edina and will continue to be an energetic mixed use district in the future. Its vibrancy and energy will stem from activity occurring at street level, which will be enhanced by its walkability, tree-lined streets, public areas, and linkages within and between buildings and public areas. Its buildings will be pedestrian-oriented and of the highest architectural quality.**

**Even while evolving, as it always has, 50<sup>th</sup> & France will continue to be a year-round meeting and gathering place that is inviting to wide ranges of people who will enjoy living, shopping, working, and being entertained in the district. The district will value street-level pedestrian activity, which will combine with the placement of buildings to enhance movement through, to, and within the district.**

### *Guiding Principles*

Eight principles developed by the Work Group are intended to guide future development and redevelopment in the study area. Developers, City representatives and residents can all use these principles.

- A. The principles provide written guidance to developers about requirements for projects in the study area.
  - B. The principles provide City staff, Planning Commissioners, Council members, and residents with written criteria against which project proposals can be evaluated.
  - C. Residents can use the principles to understand City goals for new projects in the study area and the resulting benefits to residents as end users of the study area.
1. **CONNECTIVITY:** Improvements within the district should strengthen the connection between this area and surrounding neighborhoods. Pathways and public areas should encourage and promote year-round use and a safe and convenient walking and biking experience throughout the district and between the district and adjacent neighborhoods.

2. **BUILDING DESIGN:** Buildings should maintain the upscale aesthetic and traditional main street experience of the 50<sup>th</sup> & France district through use of high-quality materials, notable attention to detail, and variety in design. Buildings should strive to enhance conservation of energy and include features like green roofs to improve the district’s aesthetics and protect the environment.
3. **DENSITY AND SCALE:** Increased density and mixed-use development will support the district’s economic and environmental sustainability. Building massing and stepbacks will take into consideration access to daylight, human scale at the street level, and potential impacts to surrounding neighborhoods.
4. **ECONOMIC VITALITY:** A range of housing and commercial uses should support living, working, shopping, and playing within the district. Emphasis should be placed on promoting a strategic commercial mix, ranging from basic goods and services to entertainment and boutique shops that continue the economic success of the district.
5. **PUBLIC REALM:** Public spaces at the street level, such as sidewalks, restaurant patios and building entrances, should incorporate vegetation, ambient lighting, landmark elements, art features, and enhanced materials to enhance the welcoming atmosphere of the district.
6. **URBAN DESIGN:** Developments should include spaces that are safe, inviting, walkable, support life-long learning, and mix well with the unique character of 50<sup>th</sup> & France. Design should promote year-round public gathering and provide spaces for events for diverse groups of residents and visitors, to enable formal and informal events and social interaction.
7. **SITE SUSTAINABILITY:** Open green space, canopy tree coverage, and green roofs should be encouraged to reduce the heat island effect in summer months. Landscaping material selection should prioritize use of native, low-maintenance plant species and natural methods of stormwater management, such as rain gardens, should be utilized where appropriate.
8. **ACCESS, PARKING AND MOVEMENT:** Parking lots, buildings, and pedestrian and bike infrastructure should support residents’ and visitors’ ability to arrive at one location and comfortably walk to destinations within the district. Development within the district should create a welcoming face for surrounding neighborhoods and support convenient movement within the district and between the district and adjacent neighborhoods. Added transit options will enhance movement through the district.

# Small Area Plan for the City of Edina's 50<sup>th</sup> & France Mixed Use Center



## Chapter 1 Introduction



# 1. Introduction

The 50<sup>th</sup> & France Small Area Plan is part of the 2018 Edina Comprehensive Plan. This Small Area Plan outlines the City's Vision and Guiding Principles for how the study area may develop over an extended period of time. However, this Small Area Plan, even though it may describe specific types of developments or changes, should not be read as requiring any type of development or action (or inaction), which should be determined by City leadership with community input at the time a development is proposed. Instead, readers should consider any specific development or action mentioned in this Small Area Plan as an example of how something could occur.

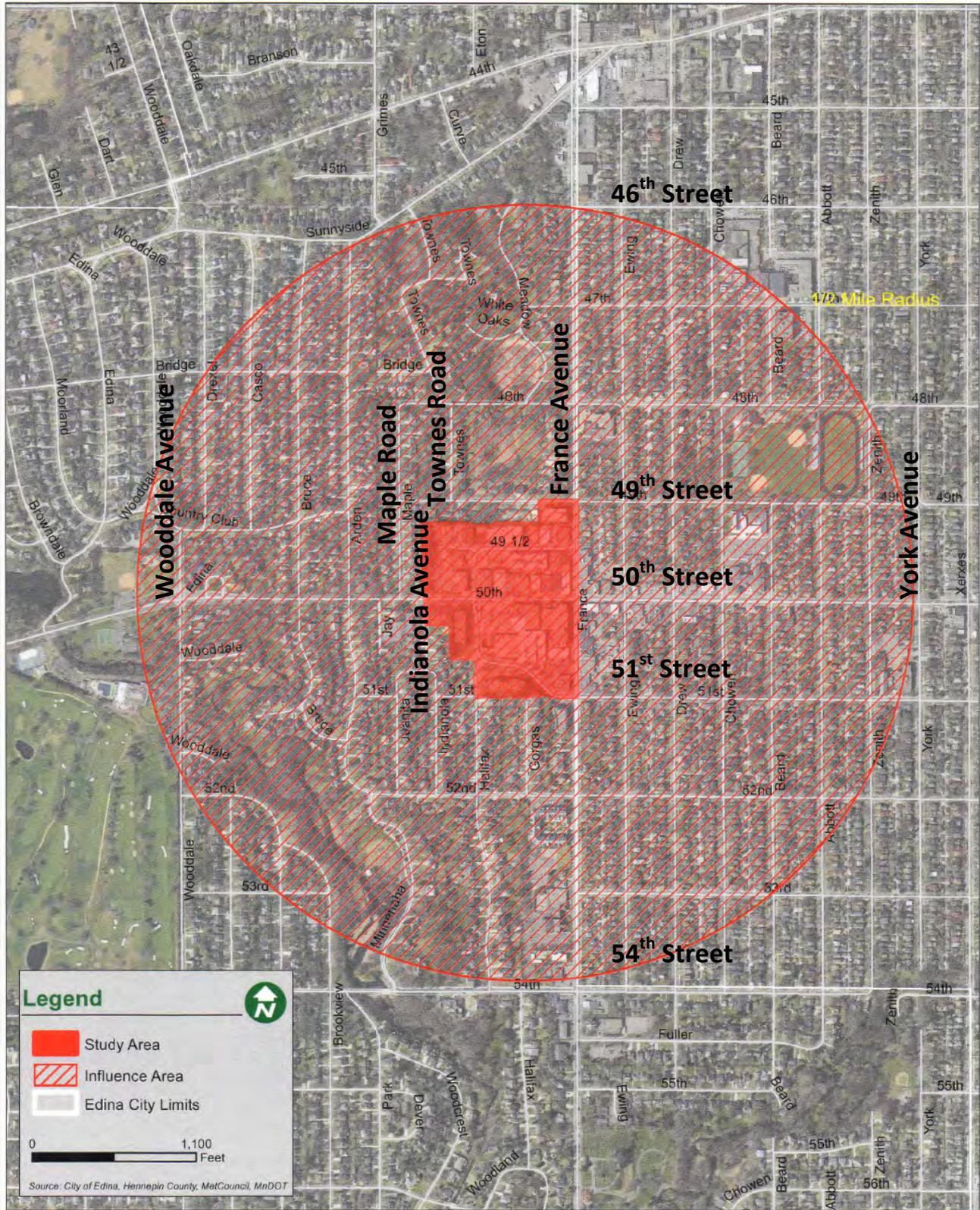
The 50<sup>th</sup> & France Small Area Plan provides detailed guidance in the areas of Land Use and Urban Design; Heritage Preservation; Economic Vitality; and Transportation. The Small Area Plan is subject to the Comprehensive Plan, so any topics not discussed in this Small Area Plan will be guided by the Comprehensive Plan.

This Small Area Plan provides guidance for the study area, which was identified as “an area of potential change” in the 2008 Edina Comprehensive Plan.

## Study Area

The study area includes the public street rights-of-way and several land parcels in the immediate vicinity of the intersection of West 50<sup>th</sup> Street and France Avenue South, particularly to the west of the intersection. Figure 1 shows the Study Area, which is defined in red.

As shown on Figure 1, a one-half mile radius was identified to describe the study area's influence area. The influence area extends north to 46<sup>th</sup> Street, south to 54<sup>th</sup> Street, west to Wooddale Avenue, and east to York Avenue in Minneapolis. The influence area took the City of Minneapolis into account (on the east side of France Avenue) for two reasons. First, the commercial district at 50<sup>th</sup> & France actually crosses France Avenue and is in both cities. Second, residents in Minneapolis shop and park in Edina. Therefore, the border between the two cities at France Avenue is a political and jurisdictional boundary that, in all likelihood, is rarely of concern to consumers.



**Figure 1: 50<sup>th</sup> & France Small Area Plan Study Area**

## How the Small Area Plan is Structured

The 50<sup>th</sup> & France Small Area Plan is organized similar to the Comprehensive Plan, with chapters on Land Use and Urban Design, Heritage Preservation, Economic Vitality, and Transportation. Each chapter discusses existing conditions, trends and challenges, and concludes with recommended goals and policies for the relevant issues. Goals identify future ambitions and desires, specifically focused on the resolution of chapter-specific issues, and policies state intentions regarding the development of the study area, which should be used to guide decisions by City staff, Planning Commission, and Council.

## Purpose

### *Why the Small Area Plan Was Developed?*

The 50<sup>th</sup> & France neighborhood commercial district (also known as France Village) was first identified in the 2008 Edina Comprehensive Plan as an area of potential change. The 2008 Comprehensive Plan noted that the district had already experienced some redevelopment and was evolving toward mixed use while continuing to operate as a commercial center. The plan further noted that its “potential for the addition of new compatible uses” was greater than in other areas of the City. Pursuant to that end, City Council directed the Planning Commission and City Community Development Department to undertake a small area planning process to provide additional guidance for future development.

This Small Area Plan creates a framework for long range decision-making, planning, and design and should be applied to future proposals for private development and improvements to the public realm.

### *How the Small Area Plan will be Used*

Table 1, below, details how the 50<sup>th</sup> & France Small Area Plan will be used when development and redevelopment proposals are presented to the City.

**TABLE 1**  
**USE of the SMALL AREA PLAN in DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS**

Use of the Plan	By Whom	How
<b>A.</b>	<b>Landowners and developers</b>	The Small Area plan provides guidance to landowners and developers who are conceptualizing and preparing development and redevelopment plans for submission to the City for approval. Reviewing the Small Area Plan during the early stages of project development will inform developers of City-adopted directions, standards, and guidelines and will streamline the development review process.
<b>B.</b>	<b>City Staff</b>	The Small Area Plan’s principles, goals, and policies should be used to assess and evaluate the degree to which a proposed development adheres to City directions, standards, and guidelines. The Small Area Plan should also be used to assess the impact of variances and other City actions for the development and to identify appropriate infrastructure improvements in connection with the proposed development and in the study area generally.
<b>C.</b>	<b>Planning Commission and City Council</b>	The Small Area Plan should be used as a guide in determining how requested variances and/or rezonings, as well as proposed public realm investments, meet the vision of the district.

**Relationship of the Small Area Plan to Zoning**

Zoning regulations are included in the City’s Municipal Code of Ordinances. These are laws, and, by comparison, the Comprehensive Plan and any small area plan are guides. The authority of zoning regulations, however, is based on and derived from the Comprehensive Plan. Zoning regulations are specific to each land parcel while the comprehensive plan is sometimes more open to interpretation. In the Seven County Metropolitan Area, zoning regulations are required to be consistent with the comprehensive plan but may, and often do, provide a more detailed level of control over the use of each land parcel.

**Use of the Plan in Development Applications**

Any owner or prospective developer who is interested in making a development in the study area would be directed by staff to review the 50<sup>th</sup> & France Small Area Plan to learn what the City has envisioned and is requiring for the study area. Table 2 outlines how the Small Area Plan may be used to review an application for development, variance, or rezoning in the study area.

**TABLE 2  
USE of SMALL AREA PLAN in DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS**

<b>APPLICATION</b>	<b>HOW USED</b>
A. Remodel Existing Buildings in Conformance with Existing Zoning	For proposals to remodel existing space, the application would have to conform to current zoning regulations, including the permitted uses and the dimensional standards, such as setbacks, building coverage, floor-to-area ratio and building height. The Small Area Plan, however, could be referenced to identify guiding principles, goals, and policies (developed specifically for the 50 <sup>th</sup> & France neighborhood district) that must be met in order for any requested variances to or deviations from (e.g., planned unit development) the zoning regulations to be considered.
B. Expand Buildings by Less than 10 Percent in Conformance with Existing Zoning	To expand an existing building, conformance would be required to the current zoning regulations, including the permitted uses and the dimensional standards, such as setbacks, building coverage, floor-to-area ratio and building height. The Small Area Plan, however, could be referenced to identify guiding principles, goals, and policies (developed specifically for the 50 <sup>th</sup> & France neighborhood district) that must be met in order for requested variances to or deviations from (e.g., planned unit development) the zoning regulations to be considered.
C. Expand Buildings that Do Not Conform to the Zoning Ordinance or Expand Buildings by More than 10 Percent	To expand an existing building that meets zoning regulations, such as setbacks, building coverage, floor-to- area ratio or parking requirements, a “variance” would be required. To expand a building by more than 10 percent, a Site Plan Review is required. Necessary variance application(s) must be reviewed by the Planning Commission and approved by City Council.  The Small Area Plan would be used as a reference tool or guide during this review process. Guiding principles, goals, and policies) recommended in the Small Area Plan could be required of the applicant.
D. Tear Down and Rebuild or Change the Use of Land	If a variance or rezoning is required to replace an existing building with a new structure, conditions stated in this Small Area Plan would have to be met. The Small Area Plan would be used as a tool during the review process by the Planning Commission and City Council.

Source: City of Edina Zoning Code

## Community Engagement and the Planning Process

The planning and design process was led by the 50<sup>th</sup> & France Small Area Plan Work Group (SAPWG), which was appointed through an open application process by the Edina Comprehensive Plan Task Force (Planning Commission), at the direction of the Edina City Council. Many good candidates applied and seven members of the community were selected as members of the SAPWG, along with two representatives of the Planning Commission, who were co-chairs. The planning process included a community engagement program, which was developed and directed by the SAPWG to ensure that to the extent realistic and feasible, the plan's outcomes would reflect values and expectations of the public.

Figure 2 illustrates the planning and design process, as well as roles and responsibilities of the SAPWG, Comprehensive Plan Task Force, City Council, and the public. Specific efforts were made to engage a representative cross-section of the community, including residents, neighbors, land owners, businesses, visitors, customers, employees, and city residents at large.

The SAPWG was tasked with overseeing major aspects of the plan's development, such as identifying major planning issues, determining how to take advantage of opportunities, developing the plan's findings and recommendations, and leading community engagement events. Moreover, the SAPWG's ultimate responsibility was to make recommendations about the long-term future of the study area.

Information considered by the SAPWG included:

1. Community input received through three Community Meetings;
2. Input received from property owners and business owners/operators;
3. Technical information prepared by planning, architectural, and economic development consultants;
4. Their familiarity with physical characteristics of the site;
5. Their growing knowledge about: a) development trends in Edina and other communities throughout the metropolitan area, b) development finance trends, c) trends in commercial development, and d) retail market behavior patterns;
6. Overall guidance provided through *Vision Edina*, a City of Edina study conducted in 2015 that identified an overall vision for the city and brought attention to the development/redevelopment of the city's nodes; and
7. Guidance provided by the City of Edina *Living Streets Policy*, *Bicycle Master Plan*, *Affordable Housing Policy*, and *Parks Strategic Plan*.



**Figure 2: 50<sup>th</sup> & France Small Area Plan Planning and Design Process**

## Planning Process

Three Community Meetings were held during the planning and design process, to allow the SAPWG to describe the small area planning process, present its current understandings of the area, and receive community feedback regarding the SAPWG's work and obtain input from the community about other issues that it considers important. Generally, each community meeting included presentations by consultants to the SAPWG regarding three topics:

1. Planning and design issues within the study area;
2. A future vision for the study area; and
3. Concept-level plans and designs developed by the SAPWG and its consultant team.

Because community members who reside in the vicinity of the small area will be among some of the most affected by planning and design outcomes, it was important to ensure that they were able to help the SAPWG:

- Understand community attitudes, values, and ideas about the study area; and
- Develop a Vision Statement and Guiding Principles that would have a major influence on goals and policies developed for the 50<sup>th</sup> & France Small Area Plan.

In addressing identified planning and design issues and preparing future growth and development plans for the study area, however, the SAPWG was obligated to gather and consider information from a wide range of interest groups. The SAPWG understood that the majority of community members attending the Community Meetings would be residents in the immediate vicinity of the study area, and while their interests and concerns are very important, they were not the only interests and concerns to be considered during the planning and design process. Other interests and perspectives included the concerns of property owners, business owner and operators, developers, and Edina residents who do not live near the study area.

## Vision Statement

The SAPWG reviewed comments received at the first community meeting and developed a Vision Statement for the study area in response to input from meeting participants and the experiences and understandings of the members of the SAPWG. The Vision Statement was reviewed at the second community meeting.

***50<sup>th</sup> & France Vision Statement:***

***50<sup>th</sup> & France is the heart of Edina and will continue to be an energetic mixed use district in the future. Its vibrancy and energy will stem from activity occurring at street level, which will be enhanced by its walkability, tree-lined streets, public areas, and linkages within and between buildings and public areas. Its buildings will be pedestrian-oriented and of the highest architectural quality.***

***Even while evolving, as it always has, 50<sup>th</sup> & France will continue to be a year-round meeting and gathering place that is inviting to wide ranges of people who will enjoy living, shopping, working, and being entertained in the district. The district will value street-level pedestrian activity, which will combine with the placement of buildings to enhance movement through, to, and within the district.***

## Guiding Principles

Good planning and design begins with the development of guiding principles that reflect and balance considerations such as the following:

- Community preferences;
- Historical and cultural influences;
- Design precedents;
- Financial feasibility and market realities;
- Environmental stewardship and sustainability; and
- Advances in technology.

The Guiding Principles that follow were developed by the SAPWG and were reviewed at Community Meetings. They were used in the development and evaluation of concepts for land use and design for the study areas to reflect the unique character of the study area and, at the same time, guide future development.

1. **CONNECTIVITY:** Improvements within the district should strengthen the connection between this area and surrounding neighborhoods. Pathways and public areas should encourage and promote safe and convenient walking and biking experience throughout the district and between the district and adjacent neighborhoods.
2. **BUILDING DESIGN:** Buildings should maintain the upscale aesthetic and traditional main street experience of the 50<sup>th</sup> & France district through use of high-quality materials with a proven 50-year life span, notable attention to detail, and variety in design. Buildings should strive to enhance conservation of energy and include features like green roofs to improve the district's aesthetics and protect the environment.



*The 5000 France Building is an example of how high quality materials (brick and stone) can be used to heighten the aesthetic appeal of an entire district. This building, at four stories, was controversial when it was proposed and constructed. It is now viewed as an asset where its setback and design features (e.g., windows that permit transparency and “eyes on the street”) positively affect the pedestrian experience at street level.*



*Luxury condominiums are featured in this handsome, six story pedestal building. Stepbacks in the upper stories enable the sense of human scale at street level and increase access to daylight in the public realm*



*The façade of this building is broken up into smaller shop fronts, encouraging an eclectic and interesting boutique main street aesthetic.*

*The entrance of this building is accentuated with a canopy. Decorative planters, architectural detail, and high-quality exterior building materials further enhance this building's appeal at street level.*





*The timeless design of this building utilizes low-maintenance, high-quality finishes such as brick and stone. Facades are shorter in length, emphasizing the boutique “main street” feel of the district, and use of multiple building materials provides variety within the design.*

**3. DENSITY AND SCALE:** Increased density and mixed-use development will support the district’s economic and environmental sustainability. Building massing and stepbacks will take into consideration access to daylight and human scale at the street level.

*Mixed use developments can help solve a large number of the issues facing the district.*

- *The cost of land in Edina requires developers to build higher in order to see a return on investment.*
- *Ground level uses would be devoted to commercial (retail and office) uses, which will help ensure that the streets are vibrant and well used.*
- *Residential uses occupying the upper levels of buildings will bring additional customers to the district to patronize the businesses.*
- *Residents within the district will not use their cars when they patronize restaurants, see a movie, buy their groceries, etc.*





*Mixed use developments with ground floor retail and upper floor office or housing help off-set peak parking and traffic times, while activating an area with people throughout the day/evening. Housing and office tenants help support neighboring local businesses.*



*Building massing steps back at upper stories to keep pedestrian centric scale at street level. Provide green roofs, roof gardens, or landscape terraces for active upper floor outdoor space.*

4. **ECONOMIC VITALITY:** A range of housing and commercial uses should support living, working, shopping, and playing within the district. Emphasis should be placed on promoting a strategic commercial mix, ranging from basic goods and services to entertainment and boutique shops that continue the economic success of the district.



*The 50<sup>th</sup> & France Business and Professional Association supports the businesses in the district and is open to the notion that the mix of retail shops and services will need to adjust in order to survive.*

*According to business owners/operators in the district, additional dwelling units (roof tops) within walking distance will contribute to a larger customer base.*



*A unique combination of restaurants, daily consumable goods, luxury items, destination entertainment, top-of-market salon services, reliable medical services and a very large employment base are found at 50<sup>th</sup> & France. There are hundreds of professional employees in the district that provide reliable day-time traffic for the merchants.*



*Community members desire access to healthy food options.*



*Restaurants are already an important component in the district's economic vitality. Adding outdoor patios and entertainment will make the district feel more active.*



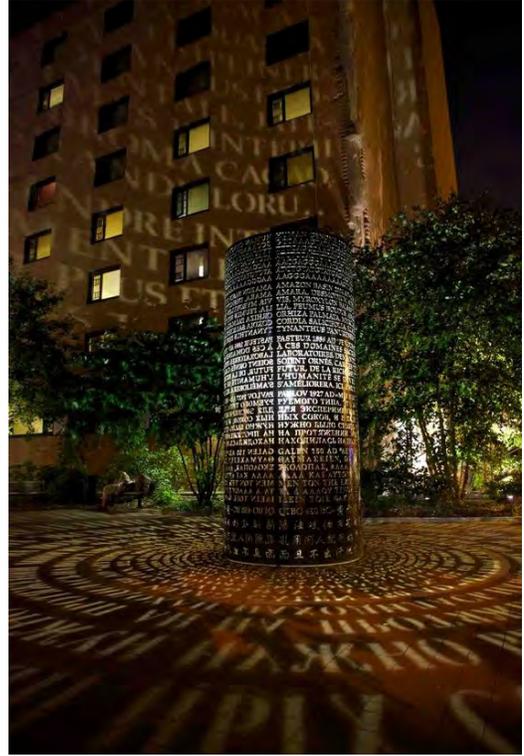
5. **PUBLIC REALM:** Public spaces at the street level, such as sidewalks, restaurant patios and building entrances, should incorporate vegetation, ambient lighting, landmark elements, art features, and enhanced materials to enhance the welcoming atmosphere of the district.

*Trees and vegetation can enliven a streetscape and lend it character. This image shows a tree-lined walkway where pedestrians can stroll without concern for automobiles.*



*Trees, vegetation, quiet walkways, and public art are appreciated features and contribute to the delight of living, working, and playing in an urban environment.*





*Consider ambient site lighting, public art, water features, etc. Such treatments could be installed to enhance pedestrians' experiences as they visit and walk through the district.*

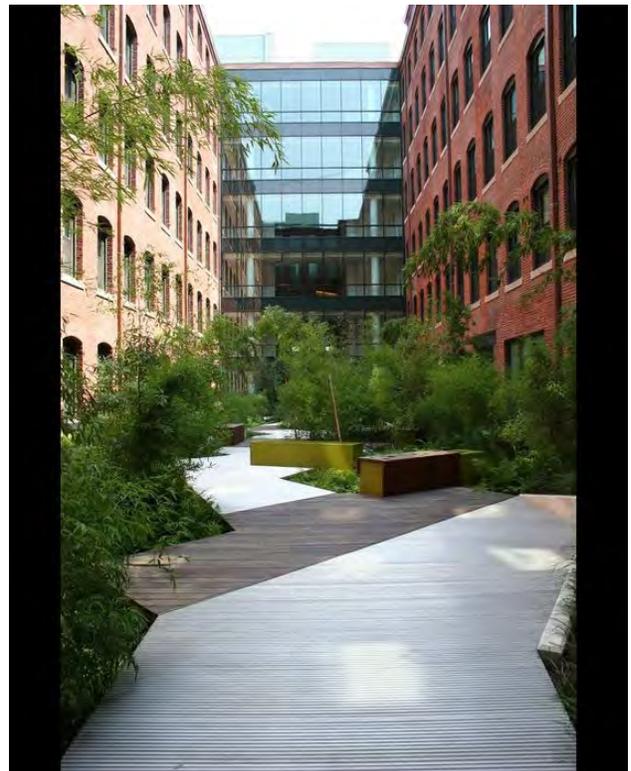
- 6. URBAN DESIGN:** Developments should include spaces that are safe, inviting, walkable, support life-long learning, and mix well with the unique character of 50<sup>th</sup> & France. Design should promote year-round public gathering and provide spaces for events for diverse groups of residents and visitors, to enable formal and informal events and social interaction.



*With land and space limited in the 50<sup>th</sup> & France district, public spaces will have to be developed as opportunities present themselves, such as incorporating attractive, comfortable spaces for public gathering between buildings.*



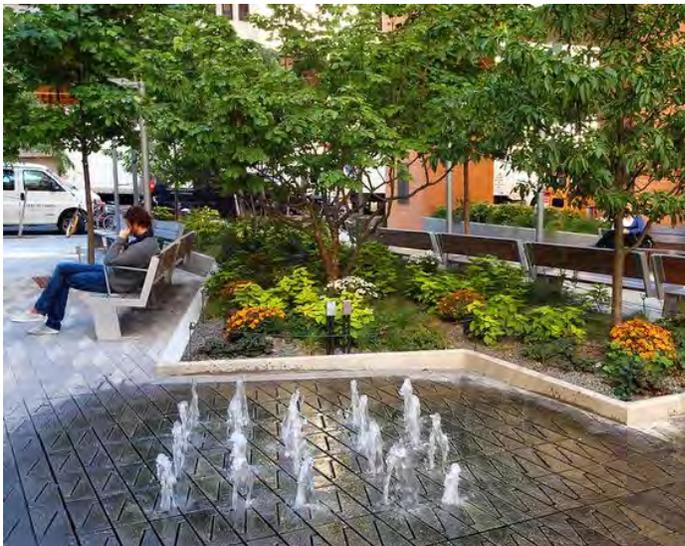
*Thoughtful design of space between buildings and opportunities for connectivity between them. Transparency, lighting, landscaping, art features, and seating help to create a safe, inviting, and useful corridor throughout the site.*





*Provide a variety of public gathering spaces for users of all ages. Enhance small areas with water features, signage, and decorative elements.*

*Seek opportunities for public gatherings throughout the year.*



7. **SITE SUSTAINABILITY:** Open green space, canopy tree coverage, and green roofs should be encouraged to reduce the heat island effect in summer months. Landscaping material selection should prioritize use of native, low-maintenance plant species and natural methods of stormwater management, such as rain gardens, should be utilized where appropriate.



*The ability of plants to absorb and evaporate storm water, reduce a building's energy use, and clean air pollution makes green roofs effective as a sustainable-building technique. Active roof terraces with green roofs, meditation gardens, community garden plots, herb or vegetable gardens or landscaping and planters act as both an amenity to residential tenants and a sustainability feature to the building. Solar panels on roof tops will produce electricity and help the City reach its energy independence goals.*



*Boulevards that are sufficiently wide enough to support healthy trees are a design element at 50<sup>th</sup> & France. Trees provide shade, which contributes to lower energy costs and cleaner air.*

*Surface parking lot with canopy trees to provide shade and light colored permeable pavers to reduce heat island effect and stormwater run-off.*



*Use of native vegetation for landscaping reduces irrigation demands and provides year round appeal.*

*Urban, curb-side rain gardens add interest to an area and reduce stormwater run-off.*



*Rain gardens and bioswales remove pollutants from storm water run-off and reduce demand on city utilities.*



*Permeable surfaces with decorative pavers and vegetation reduce stormwater runoff. Decorative surfacing allows a surface lot to be used as a public plaza during annual gathering events.*



- 8. ACCESS, PARKING AND MOVEMENT:** Parking lots, buildings, and pedestrian and bike infrastructure should support residents' and visitors' ability to arrive at one location and comfortably walk to destinations within the district. Development within the district should create a welcoming face for surrounding neighborhoods and support convenient movement within the district and between the district and adjacent neighborhoods. Added transit options will enhance movement through the district.



*Covered or enclosed public bike parking encourages site access for bicyclist.*

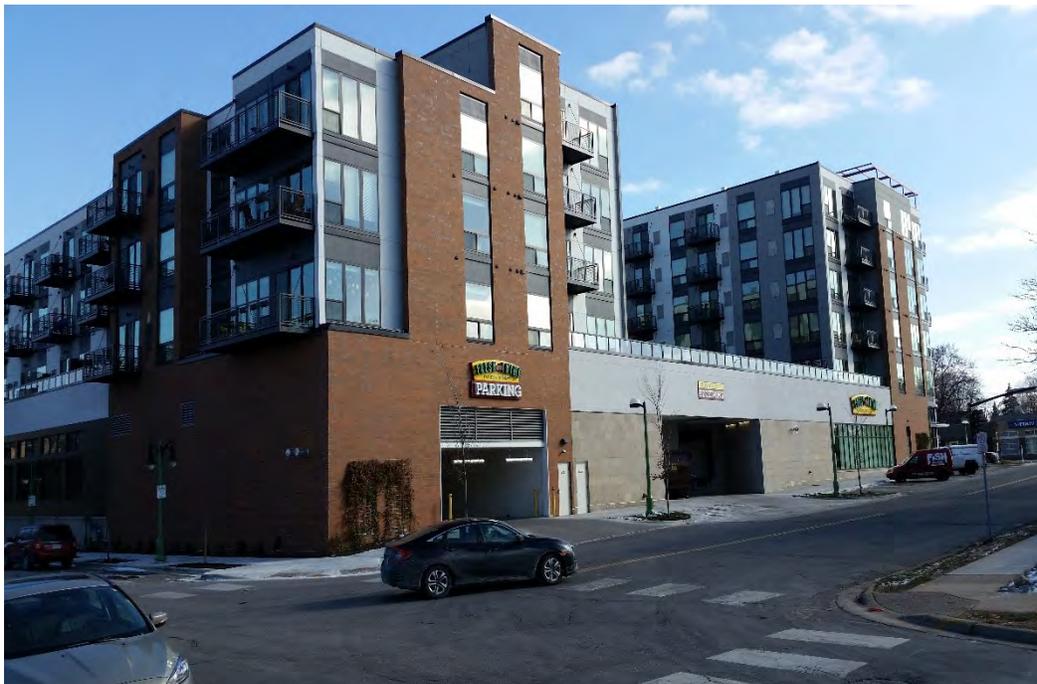
*Bus shelter with green roof promoting district access via mass transit and providing protection from elements in hot summer and cold winter months.*





*Transit service will become a larger part of the transportation system at 50<sup>th</sup> & France. Route 6, which travels north and south on France Avenue, links Southdale, 50<sup>th</sup> & France, 44<sup>th</sup> & France, and Uptown and Downtown Minneapolis.*

*Route 46, which runs east and west along 50<sup>th</sup> Street; and Express Route 146, which runs along 50<sup>th</sup> Street, links Downtown Minneapolis and employment centers along TH 169.*



*While growth in non-automobile access to the district is expected, additional parking for automobiles will still be needed, because availability of parking is currently limited during peak periods. Therefore, new developments may need to meet some of their parking demand on-site; either in above ground ramps or underground garages.*



# Small Area Plan for the City of Edina's 50<sup>th</sup> & France Mixed Use Center



Chapter 2  
Community  
Context and  
Demographic  
Characteristics



# 2. Community Context and Demographic Characteristics

## Community Context

The geographic area under review for analyses of demographic data includes the study area and areas within an additional half-mile of the intersection of West 50<sup>th</sup> Street and France Avenue South, as shown on Figure 2 on page 2. Although customers and visitors to 50<sup>th</sup> & France come from a much larger area, a half-mile radius was chosen for the area of review, because it is a typical standard for a walkable community around a destination.

This includes portions of adjacent primarily residential Edina neighborhoods – White Oaks, Country Club, Minnehaha Works, Golf Terrace Heights, and Arden Park. Since 50<sup>th</sup> & France is located on the city boundary, it also includes portions of neighborhoods in adjacent Minneapolis. While this Small Area Plan does not provide any guidance for Minneapolis, the data profile includes information from that area because it is an important part of the context for the 50<sup>th</sup> & France district.

The study area includes the public street rights-of-way and several land parcels in the immediate vicinity of the intersection of West 50<sup>th</sup> Street and France Avenue, particularly to the east of the intersection. This includes an existing commercial area and several multifamily residential properties. Also, for locational context of the study area, the box below contains an overview of the surrounding area.

**Main Ideas:**

The data for the 50<sup>th</sup> and France area (which includes Edina and surrounding areas in Minneapolis) tends to be:

- Predominantly single family housing with households made up of families with children present, although there is some multi-family housing and some households with single residents
- Much of the housing stock was constructed before 1939. The median age of the housing stock is 78 years. The housing stock, despite its age, is generally in very good condition
- The population is growing moderately and is predominantly white with a non-white population of 9 percent.
- Household incomes in the area are relatively high.

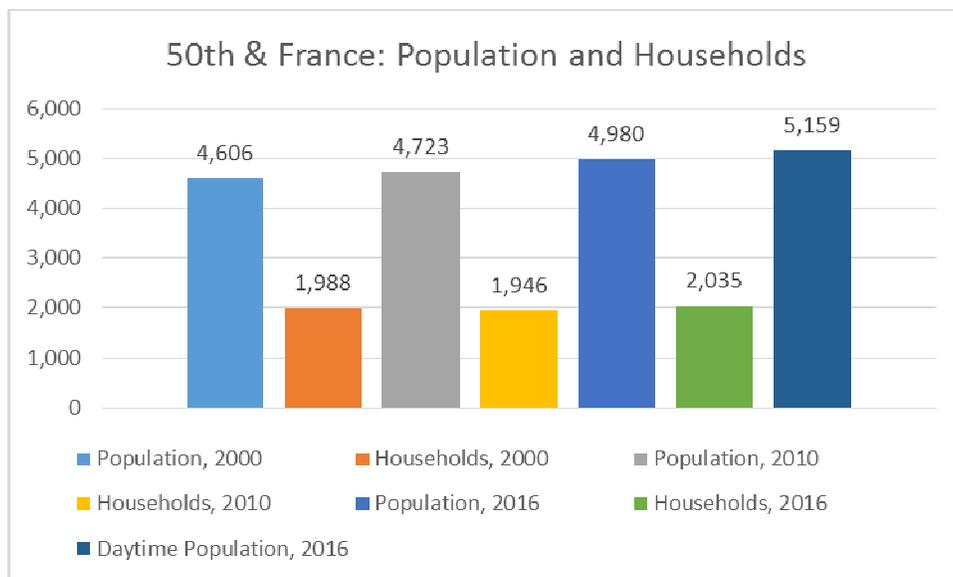
This collection of information suggests an affluent and comfortable population, with a mix of housing and business options in aging structure.

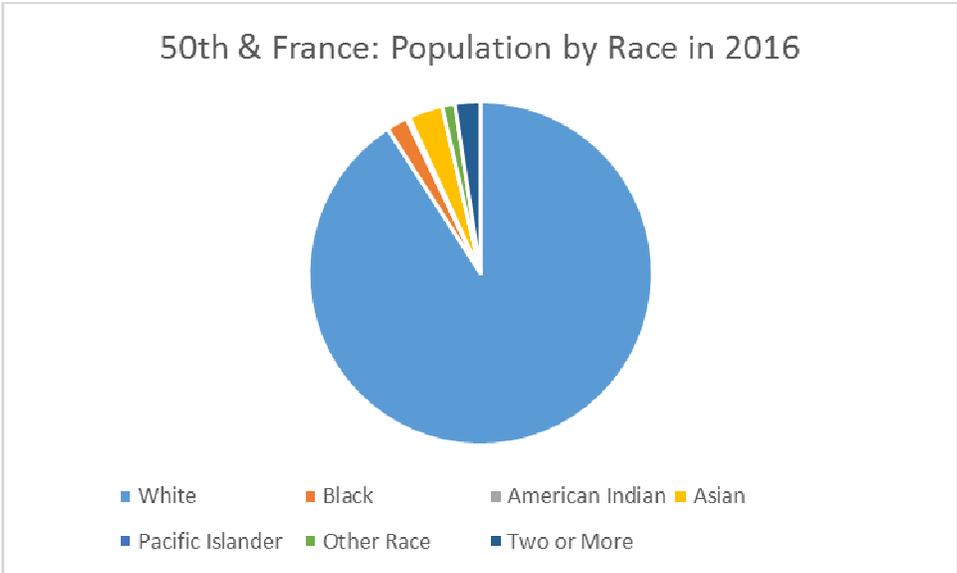
## Population Profile

The population of the surrounding area has increased modestly over the past 15+ years, going from around 4,600 in 2000 to around 5,000 in 2016. The household size has increased as well, remaining slightly above the citywide average at around 2.4. The area is also younger than the City as a whole, with a median age of 42.4 compared to a citywide median of 46.7. This reflects higher percentages of children under 15 as a proportion of the population.

The daytime population in 2016 is around 5,200, including both residents and workers. This is similar to base population, reflecting the tradeoff between residents leaving for jobs and employees traveling in for work. Daytime population is important in part because it helps support retail and service businesses during the day, such as places for lunch and errands.

The racial makeup of the population is slightly less diverse than the citywide average and is predominantly white. However, the population is becoming slightly more diverse over time – going from 92 percent white in 2010 to 91 percent in 2016. The largest gains have been in the Asian American population, followed by individuals who identify as another race.

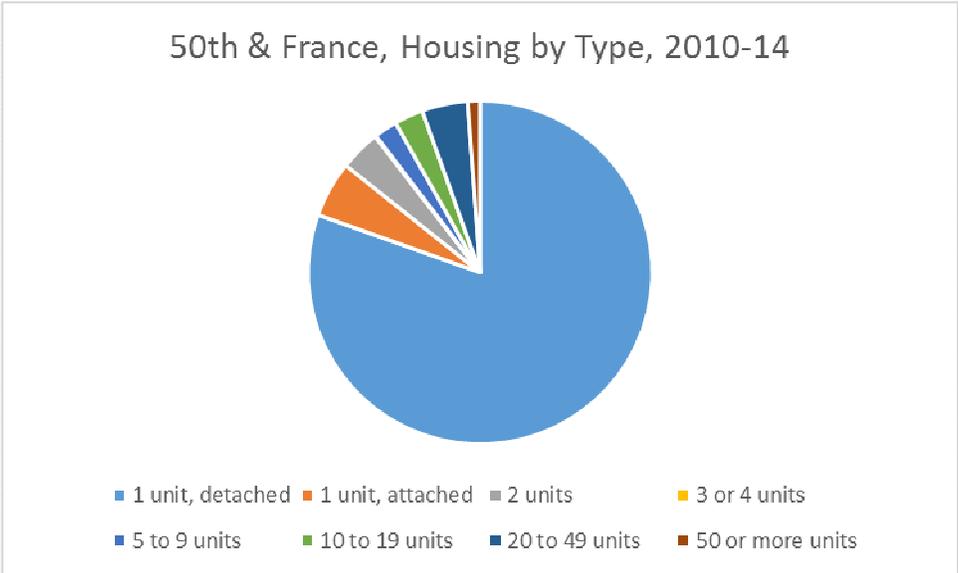




**Household Profile**

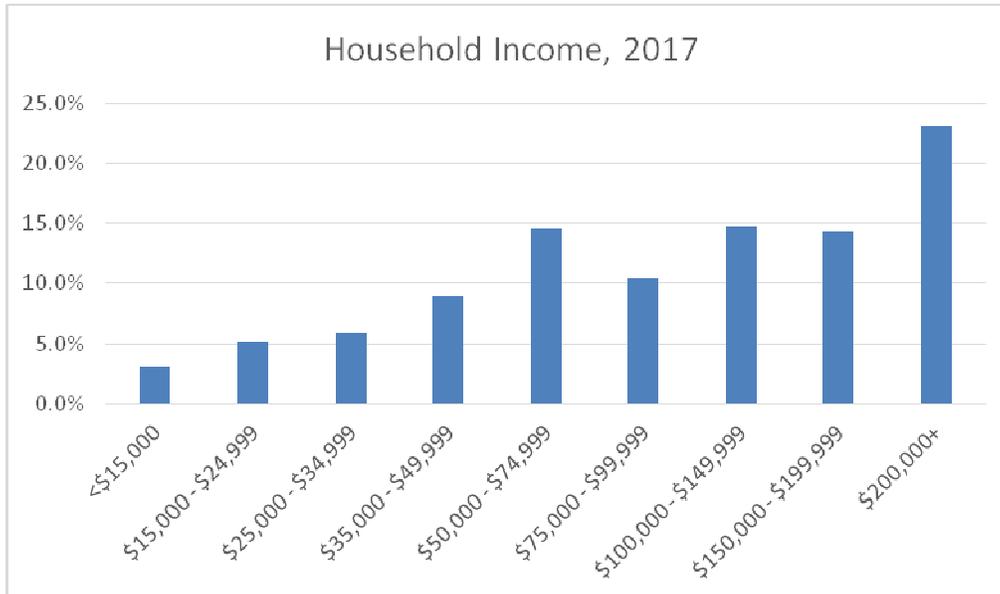
Around 65 percent of households in this area are family households, with around 7 percent classified as non-family households (unrelated individuals living together). Approximately 28 percent of households consist of one person living alone. Over 33 percent of households have children present, higher than the citywide average and reflecting both the higher household size and the lower median age.

The majority of residents in this area (80 percent) live in single family detached homes. There is a modest number who live in townhomes or apartments. The area is predominantly owner occupied, with 78 percent of the housing units owned by their resident. Pursuant to 2010 Census data, about 16 percent of the housing units within 0.5 miles of the intersection of 50<sup>th</sup> & France are renter occupied and about 6 percent are vacant. The percentage of owner occupancy has declined slightly in recent years, though it remains high.



## Income Profile

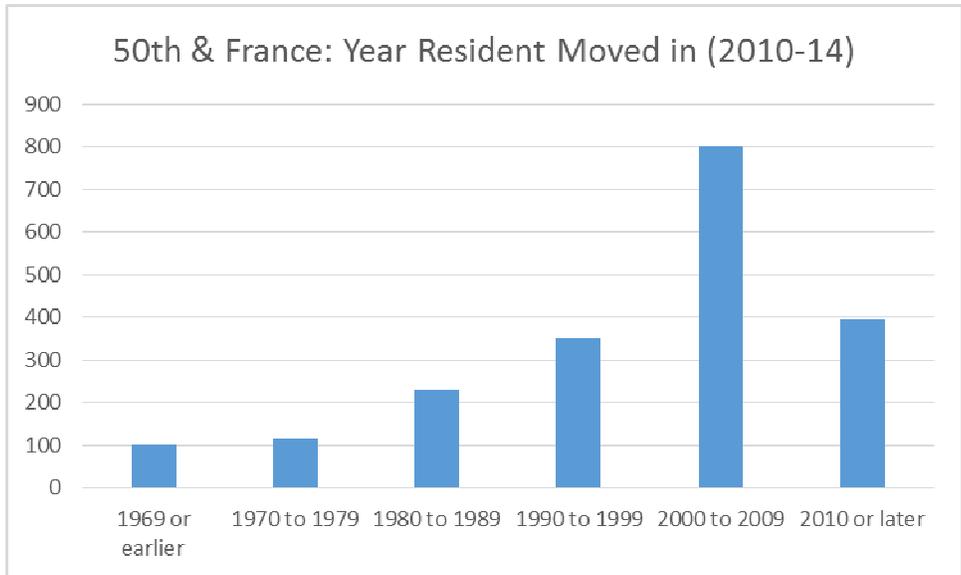
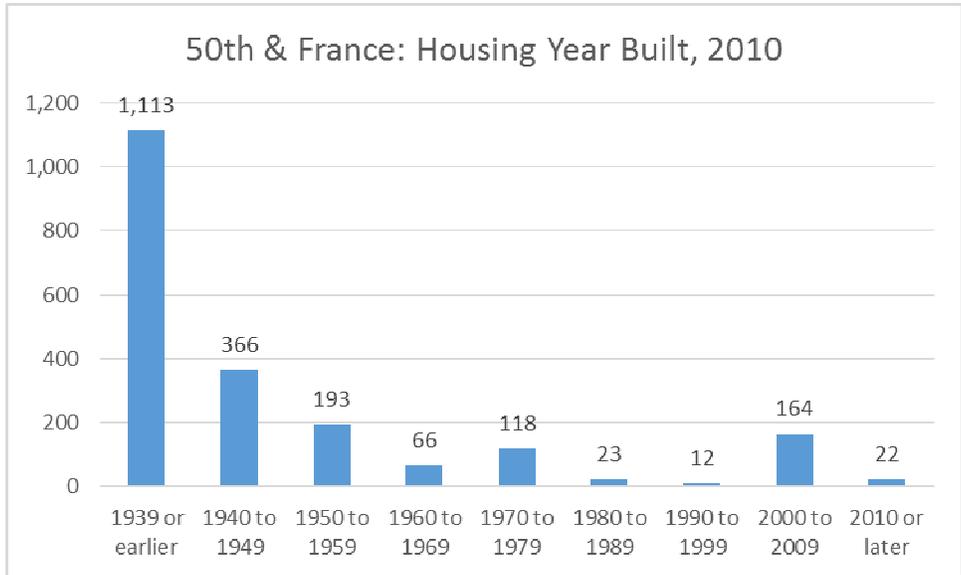
The median household income for this area is around \$115,000, significantly higher than the citywide median of \$89,794.



Over half (54 percent) of the housing stock in this area was built before 1939. The median year that structures were built was 1940, which is older than the housing stock in the City as a whole, reflecting the fact this is one of the oldest areas of Edina. A recent bump in new units since 2000 (9 percent) shows the impact of the teardown trend, as older homes are demolished and replaced with new structures.

The majority of residents living in this area (60 percent) has moved here since 2000. Around 11 percent of the residents has been here since before 1980 – almost all of which are owner occupants. Citywide, the median year for residents moving to their current home is in the early 2000's.

The median home value for this area is around \$431,000 and the median rent is \$1,058, both of which are comparable to the City median.



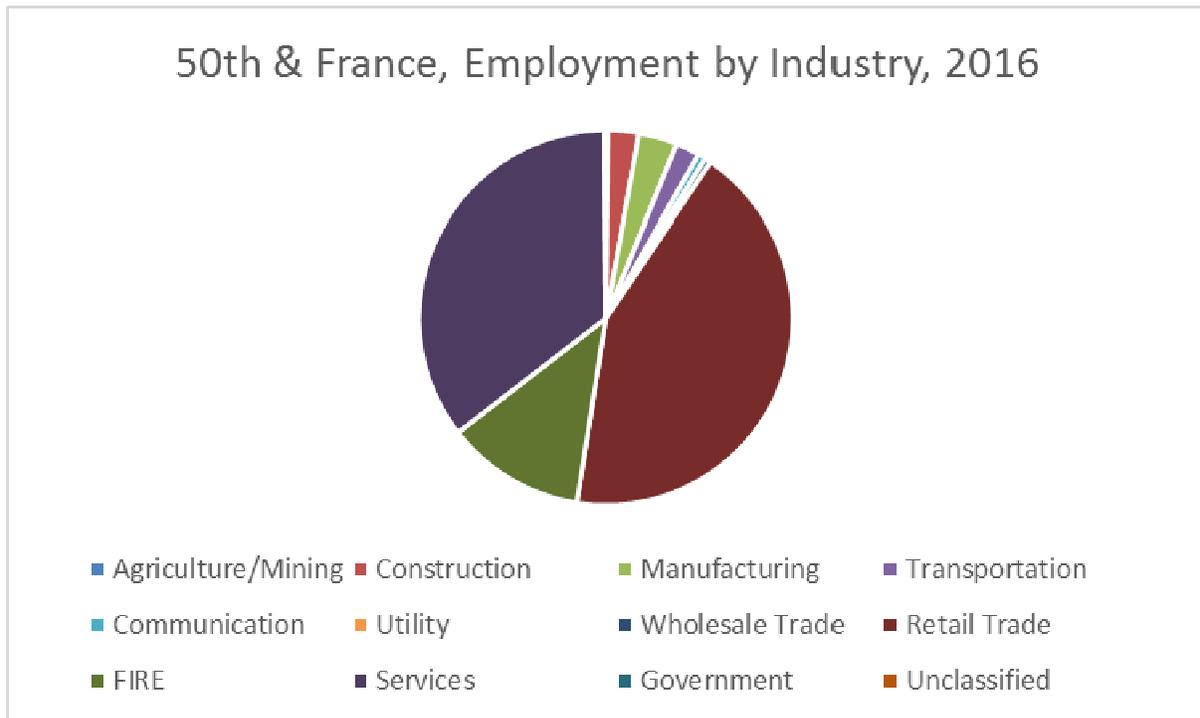
**Economic Profile**

The area has around 390 businesses with 3,400 employees. Compared to the resident population of about 5,000, there is a ratio of 0.68 jobs per resident. This is largely due to the fact that the commercial district is fairly compact and largely surrounded by residential neighborhoods. Retail trade employs around 43 percent of the workers in this area, with services following at 35 percent. The retail predominance reflects the business mix in this area and is higher proportionately than the City overall.

The employment rate of residents is very high, with only 3.9 percent of workforce eligible residents identifying as unemployed. Around 55 percent of the residents work in services, followed by 15 percent

in finance, insurance, and real estate – consistent with citywide averages. Only a modest percentage of residents are employed in retail, as most retail workers in the study area commute from somewhere else.

Workers in the study area commute from a several places. The most common home communities for commuters are Minneapolis (24.2 percent), Edina (9.0 percent), Bloomington (5.1 percent), and St. Paul (4.6 percent). Conversely, the same four cities are the four most common destinations for residents commuting out of this area to work: Minneapolis (36.7 percent), Edina (7.4 percent), Bloomington (6.4 percent) and St. Paul (5.4 percent). (Source: Census LEHD 2014)



# Small Area Plan for the City of Edina's 50<sup>th</sup> & France Mixed Use Center



## Chapter 3 Land Use and Urban Design Framework



## 3. Land Use and Urban Design Framework

### Current Land Use and Zoning Conditions

#### *Existing Land Use and Zoning*

The core of this study area is a community commercial district, characterized by 1-4 story commercial and mixed use buildings. These buildings directly front on the sidewalk and utilize shared surface and City-provided ramp parking facilities. The business mix includes a variety of upscale retail, service, and restaurant businesses.

The predominant zoning is Planned Commercial District 2 (PCD-2), which allows a range of retail and service uses. A few parcels are zoned Planned Residential District 4 (PRD-4), which allows multifamily housing, and “Automobile Parking District,” which allows parking lots and ramps. The 1974 study, which led to development of the parking ramps and ring roads, also encouraged replacement of antiquate uses, leading to developments such as the multi-family owner-owned housing along 51<sup>st</sup> and Halifax.

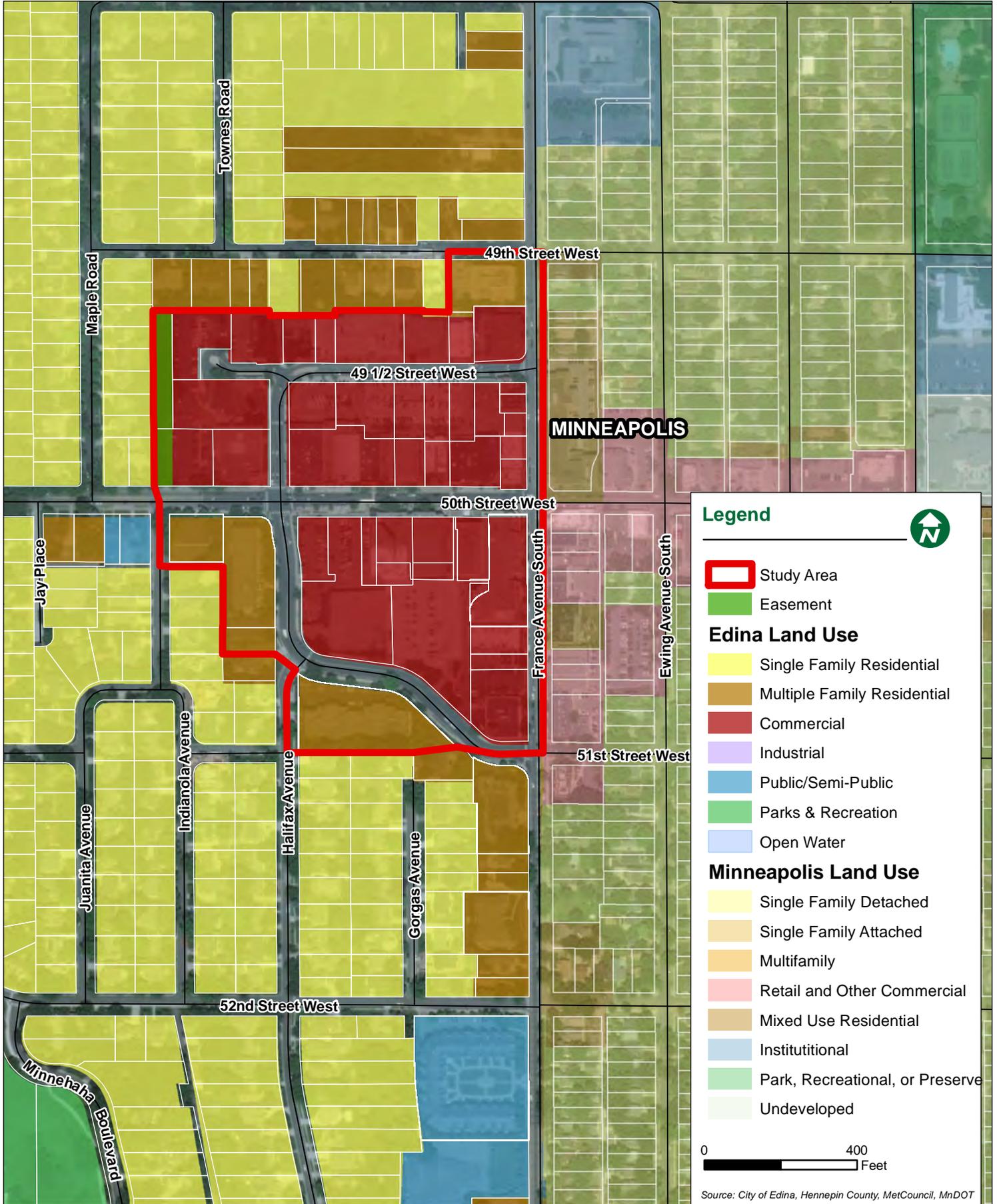
The commercial area is surrounded for the most part by single family residential neighborhoods, in both Minneapolis and Edina. The parcels immediately adjacent to the commercial district, however, are guided for low density multifamily residential.

Existing land use is shown on Figure 4 and 5.

#### *Recent and Proposed Development*

This area has been redeveloped incrementally over time, with some fairly recent infill projects. The most recent is a new development (the Nolan Mains development) that is replacing the existing City owned parking garages on the north side of 50<sup>th</sup> Street. In addition to replacing all the parking spaces, the project will include a 5-6 story mixed use building with apartments above ground floor retail space. An expanded parking ramp on the north side of the project has already opened and public underground parking will be available under the development when it is completed. A new public plaza and pedestrian connections to the retail businesses on the north side of France Avenue are also part of this project.

This project will include 100 new apartments, approximately 25,000 square feet of retail and commercial space, and 155 additional parking spaces. The first phase went under construction in January, 2018, and construction is planned to be completed by fall of 2019.



## Future Land Use

The future land use plan for the study area is shown on Figure 4. As noted, the 50<sup>th</sup> & France study area has significant redevelopment potential. The study area (*including the existing commercial/shopping area*) could be transformed from a collection of single story commercial buildings to a mixed use district, with housing, retail, and services within a single building.

This area will continue to be designated as a **Mixed-Use Center**. Primary land uses should be commercial uses (e.g., retail and services, offices, and studios), institutional uses, and residential uses (multi-family housing). Designation as a Mixed-Use Center:

- Provides predictability for current landowners;
- Supports current owners' efforts to invest in improvements in their properties by providing a predictable planning framework for the area;
- Provides flexibility for redevelopment;
- Provides greater flexibility to the development market by more explicitly encouraging the inclusion of needed housing;
- Promotes the development of new gathering space and placemaking and encourages the intentional integration of landscaped open space and new formal public spaces;
- Protects community values such as scale, walkability and character; and
- A set of development guidelines protects the scale, walkability and character of the existing area by regulating the relationship of buildings-to-streets and the transition of building heights from the district-to-the neighborhood.

50<sup>th</sup> & France will continue to attract customers from a regional customer base outside the local area, and it is expected that as the district evolves and strengthens, its appeal to regional consumers will grow.

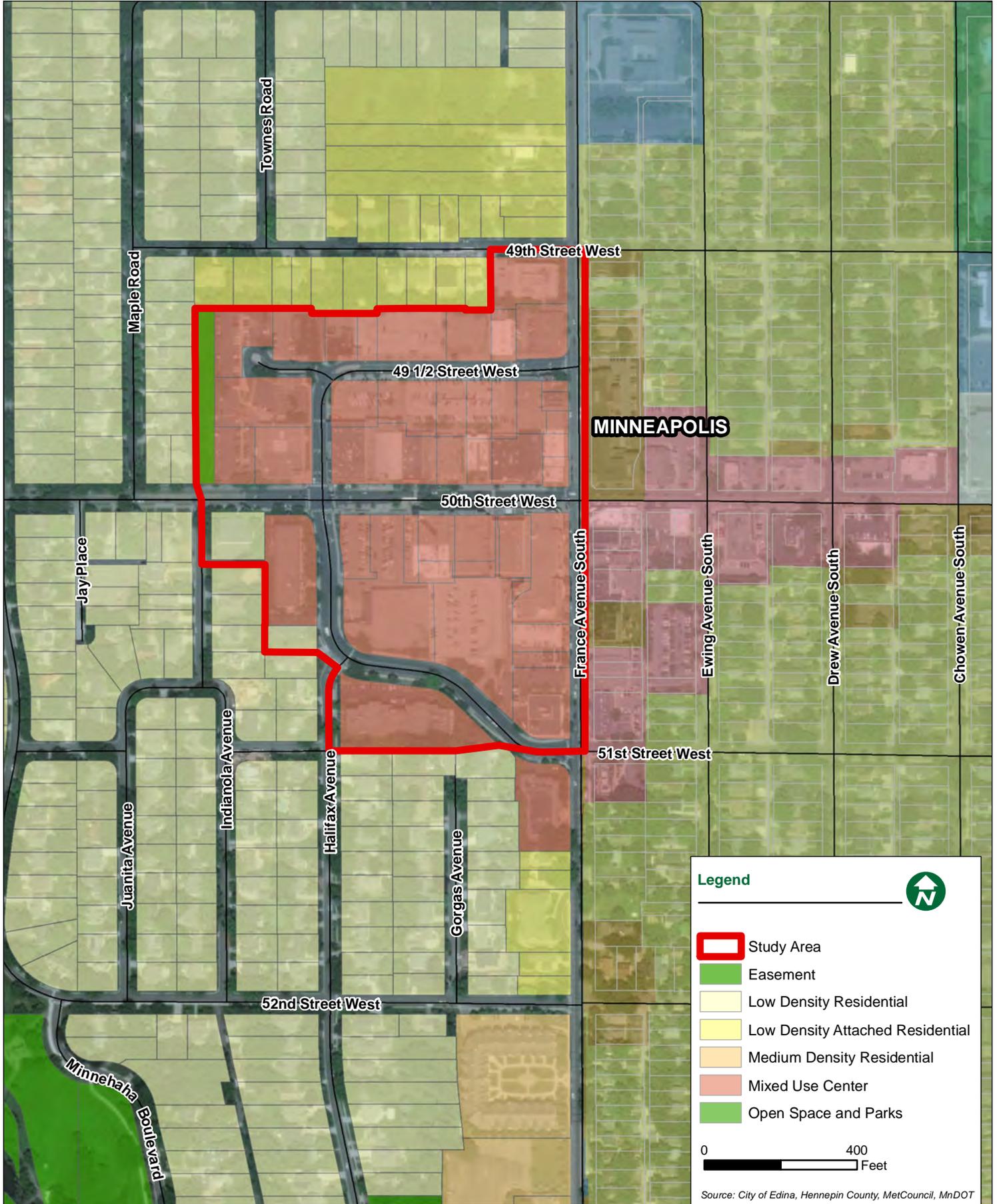


Table 3 describes characteristics of the 50<sup>th</sup> & France Mixed Use Center land use designation.

**TABLE 3  
50<sup>th</sup> & FRANCE MIXED USE CENTER CHARACTERISTICS**

Land Use Category	General Description and Purpose	Development Guidelines	Density Guidelines
Mixed Use Center	<p><b>Description:</b> 50<sup>th</sup> &amp; France is a small to moderate scale, mixed use district serving areas larger than one neighborhood and beyond city boundaries. Primary uses include commercial (retail and office), service, studios, multi-family residential, institutional uses, parks and public open space. Vertical mixed use should be encouraged.</p> <p><b>Purposes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Provide for small scale and pedestrian oriented retail, office, commercial and residential centers integrated into the existing community;</li> <li>B. Create a focal point of vibrancy and activity conveniently located to residential neighborhoods;</li> <li>C. Promote efficient and maximum utilization of land for development around major intersections;</li> <li>D. Take advantage of locational attributes;</li> <li>E. Provide a catalyst for redevelopment of adjacent residential and commercial neighborhoods;</li> <li>F. Clearly define and activate the public realm and pedestrian activity by locating buildings to form street edges and corners, and locating entrances and windows to activate the street and pedestrian levels;</li> <li>G. Protect the health, safety and welfare of existing development;</li> <li>H. Ensure that the design of structures and site development is compatible with the intended character of the neighborhood commercial node overlay district; and</li> <li>I. Encourage forms of mobility other than the automobile through a combination of development patterns, uses and flexible parking standards.</li> </ul>	<p>Building footprints generally less than 20,000 square feet (or less for individual storefronts). Parking is less prominent than pedestrian features. Encourage onsite parking (for comparatively larger developments), district parking for smaller developments, and open space linkages where feasible; emphasize enhancement of the pedestrian environment. Encourage development to comply with the 50<sup>th</sup> &amp; France Vision Statement and Guiding Principles.</p>	<p>Maximum residential density 12 to 75 dwelling units per acre (du/acre).</p>

## 50<sup>th</sup> & France Building Height

Other than recommending that the four story height limit in the zoning code should remain in place, this Small Area Plan does not prescribe building height requirements for the study area. At the same time it is recognized that some developers will wish to exceed the existing height limit. In response to these requests, this plan proposes that the City should not consider proposals by developers that exceed the height limits unless they demonstrate a willingness and ability to:

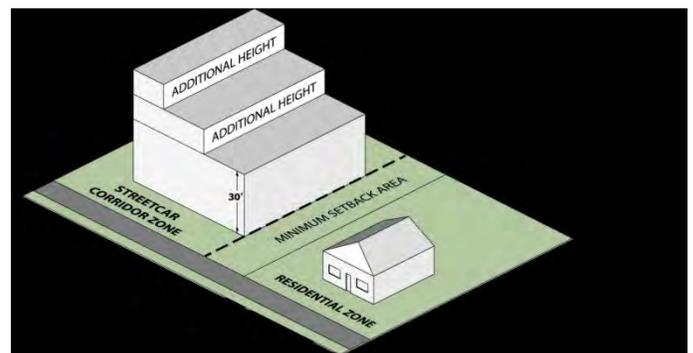
- 1) Implement private realm improvements, which, without limitation, will be implemented on private property and will necessarily include energy efficient buildings of superior construction and aesthetic quality and may also include other features that assist the city in the realization of its economic, environmental, transportation, and social goals; and
- 2) Assist the City with the cost of implementing public realm improvements that will ensure that the development project achieves goals outlined in the 50th & France Vision Statement and the 50th & France Guiding Principles. (See pages 8 through 15 of this plan document.)

Any development that would exceed the zoning limit would need to meet several requirements, including being of particularly high quality, because 50<sup>th</sup> & France is one of Edina's premier districts and any building that exceeds the standard height limits would become a signature building in the district, necessitating that it be a structure that increases the public perception of 50<sup>th</sup> & France.

Also, the developer of such a building would need to make contributions to Edina's public realm that would be determined by the City management at the time a project is proposed, but examples (which are not intended to be a preference) may include parks, public gathering areas, affordable housing, utility improvements (such as co-locating, mapping and burying utilities), and improved sidewalks. The project would also need to go through a public process, allowing feedback from Edina's elected officials, Planning Commission, and residents.

Meeting environment goals could also be a particular focus for future developments. These goals could include constructing developments with limited or zero emissions and assisting the City with improving stormwater management in the district. Separately, the City should explore ways to implement centralized stormwater management.

Related to existing zoning regulations, it is recommended that the City should develop step-back requirements for new buildings that exceed two stories, in order to ensure that any new developments are scaled appropriately so as to allow full sunlight to reach the street level and not negatively impact the pedestrian experience and residences in adjacent neighborhoods.



*Conceptual illustration of building setbacks, which allow buildings to be taller without impacting pedestrians and adjacent residential uses.*

## 50<sup>th</sup> & France Residential Density

The residential component of the 50th & France Mixed Use Center shall have a residential density of 12 to 75 dwelling units per acre. Table 4 shows examples of the residential densities achieved for recent development projects in Edina and in surrounding communities.

**TABLE 4  
REPRESENTATIVE RESIDENTIAL DENSITY FOR RECENT DEVELOPMENTS**

Project	Status	DUs	Acres	Dus/Acre
Elements on France	Developed	31	0.43	72
e2: Excelsior/France	Developed	132	2.16	61
Excelsior/Grand (Apartment Units only)	Developed	501	7.38	68
Nolan Mains: (Market Street, Edina))	Under construction	100	1.50	67
Onyx (6725 York, Edina)	Developed	72	1.38	52
The Loden (5901 Lincoln, Edina)	Developed	246	8.20	30
5000 France, Edina)	Developed	22	0.76	29
Edina Flats (6118-6124 Kellogg, Edina)	Developed	18	1.29	14
Total		1122	23.10	
<b>Average</b>		<b>140</b>	<b>2.88</b>	<b>49</b>

**Source: Biko Associates, Inc., 2018**

As shown in Table 4, residential density for these projects ranges between 14 and 72 dwelling units per acre, with an average of 49 dwelling units per acre. All projects cited above are located along or near streets that are designated transit corridors.

## How Development at 50<sup>th</sup> & France will Affect Traffic

Analysis was conducted to determine how development of optional land uses (all at 1,500 square feet) would affect traffic. Results of the analysis, presented below in Table 5, show that the land uses with the highest trip generation rates (number of trips generated per 1,500 square feet) are restaurants, commercial offices, and retail establishments. Residential uses (apartments, townhomes, and condominiums), by comparison, generate decidedly lower trips. Thus, land use development strategies that focus on increasing the number of residential uses (and residents) in the district will have a comparatively lower impact on traffic than other uses.

**TABLE 5**  
**Trip Generation Rates for Optional 1,500 Square Foot Land Uses**

Trips Generated	Quality Restaurant (1,500 SF)	Commercial Office (1,500 SF)	Retail Store (1,500 SF)	Apartments <sup>1</sup>			Townhomes <sup>1</sup>		Condominiums <sup>1</sup>		
				Low-Rise (2-Story)	Mid-Rise (3 to 10 Stories)	High-Rise (More than 10 Stories)	Rental	Ownership	Low-Rise (2-Story)	High-Rise (More than 3 Stories)	Luxury (Any Height)
AM Peak Hour Trips	8.36	2.70	10.26	0.46	0.30	0.35	0.70	0.32	0.67	0.34	0.56
PM Peak Hour Trips	11.24	2.60	4.07	0.58	0.39	0.30	0.72	0.24	0.78	0.38	0.55
Daily Trips	134.93	17.36	66.48	6.59	3.88	3.90	7.22	3.34	8.31	4.18	6.07

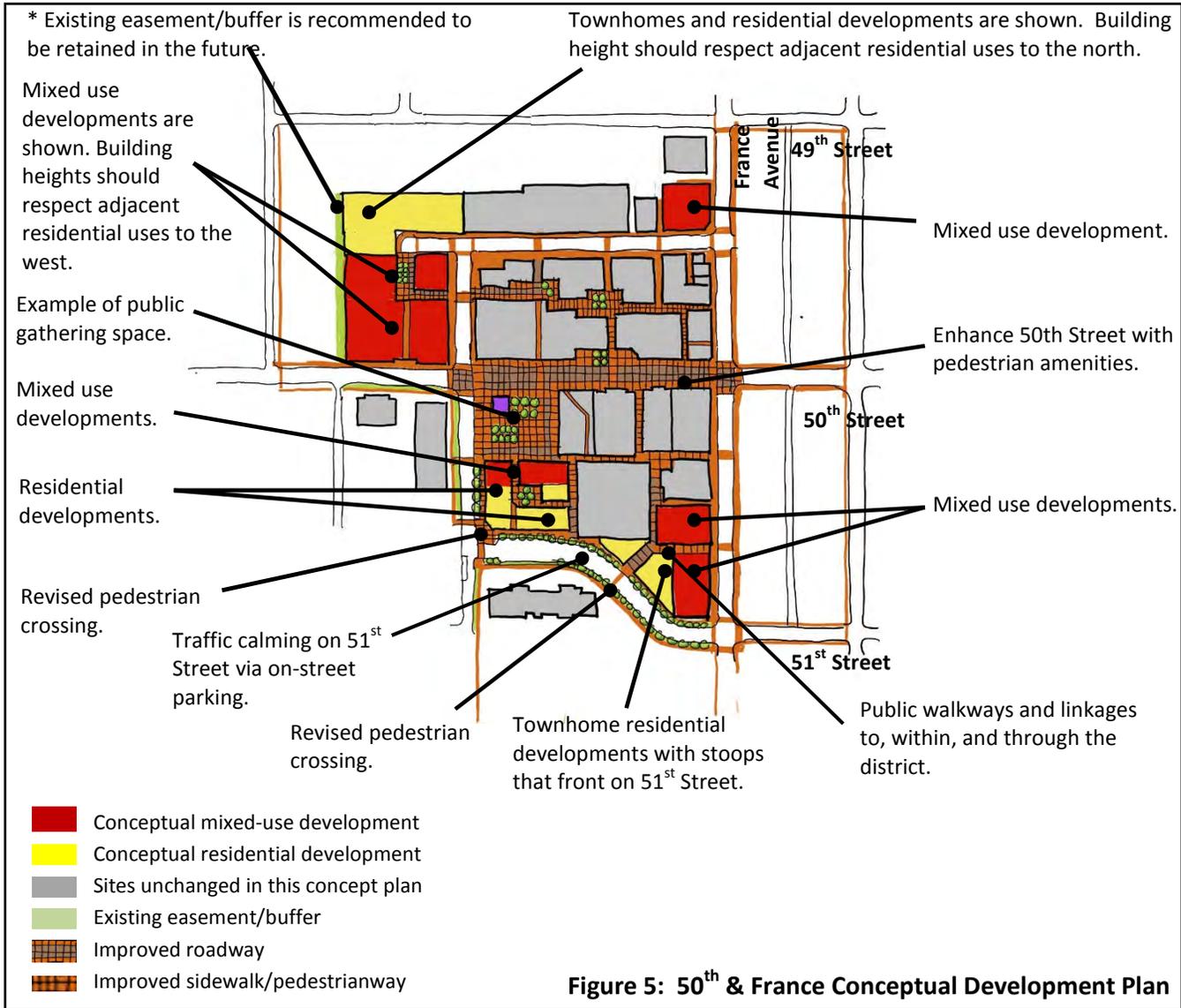
1. Assumes 1,500 square foot dwelling units  
 Source: Biko Associates, Inc., derived from Trip Generation 10th Edition Volumes 2 and 3, Institute of Transportation Engineers.

As shown in Table 5, different land use types (each at 1,500 square feet) will generate the following approximate number of automobile trips:

- **Quality restaurant:**
  - 13 AM peak hour trips
  - 17 PM peak hour trips
  - 202 daily trips
- **Commercial office:**
  - 4 AM peak hour trips
  - 4 PM peak hour trips
  - 26 daily trips
- **Retail store:**
  - 15 AM peak hour trips
  - 6 PM peak hour trips
  - 100 daily trips
- **Residential uses:**
  - 2 AM peak hour trips
  - 2 PM peak hour trips
  - 10 to 12 daily trips

### 50<sup>th</sup> & France Development Concept

Figure 5 below presents a conceptual development plan for the 50<sup>th</sup> & France small area. Recognizing that property owners and others seeking to develop/redevelop within the study area will prepare their own design plans, the conceptual development plan does not show an expectation of how and where development will occur but, instead, provides guidance and indicates important themes that should be met by a development proposal.



\* The existing 50-foot wide easement/buffer strip of land on the west side of the First Bank site within the study area is subject to an easement benefiting adjacent homeowners, pursuant to a 1972 deed executed by the then-Village of Edina. This easement restricts public use of this land, including a prohibition against use as a public park, except for public utility easements, if any, existing as of the date of the deed. Although this land is within the study area, the restriction against its development is noted. For public clarity, this easement is identified in green in drawings included with this small area plan as a buffer area between the neighborhood to the west and developable private property within the study area.

Figure 6 on the following page shows a plan view of the existing study area. Beside it, Figure 7 shows the conceptual plan. A predominant feature of the conceptual plan is the network of linkages (connections) to enhance the pedestrian experience at the ground level. Feedback from residents at the Community Meetings and from interviews with business owners and operators commonly supported the notion of improving pedestrian accessibility to, within, and through the district. Note that this plan makes no recommendation regarding building height.

EXISTING SITE PLAN - 50TH STREET & FRANCE AVENUE



- Study Area Boundary
- Existing Public Realm
- Existing Easement and Buffer



CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN - 50TH STREET & FRANCE AVENUE



- Study Area Boundary
- Existing Public Realm
- Existing Easement and Buffer
- Possible Developable Sites
- Conceptual Public Realm
- Conceptual Street Trees and Streetscape Improvements

A) - US Bank; B) - Lunds; C) - Walgreens; D) - BMO Harris; E) - D'Amico Site

Figure 6: Existing 50th & France Plan View

Figure 7: Conceptual 50<sup>th</sup> & France Plan

The conceptual plan shows an increase in linkages and connections, both south of 50<sup>th</sup> Street and north of 50<sup>th</sup> Street on the west side of Halifax Avenue. The conceptual plan also shows a pedestrian-oriented plaza treatment on the southeast corner of the 50<sup>th</sup> Street and Halifax Avenue intersection.

Additional changes depicted in the conceptual plan are:

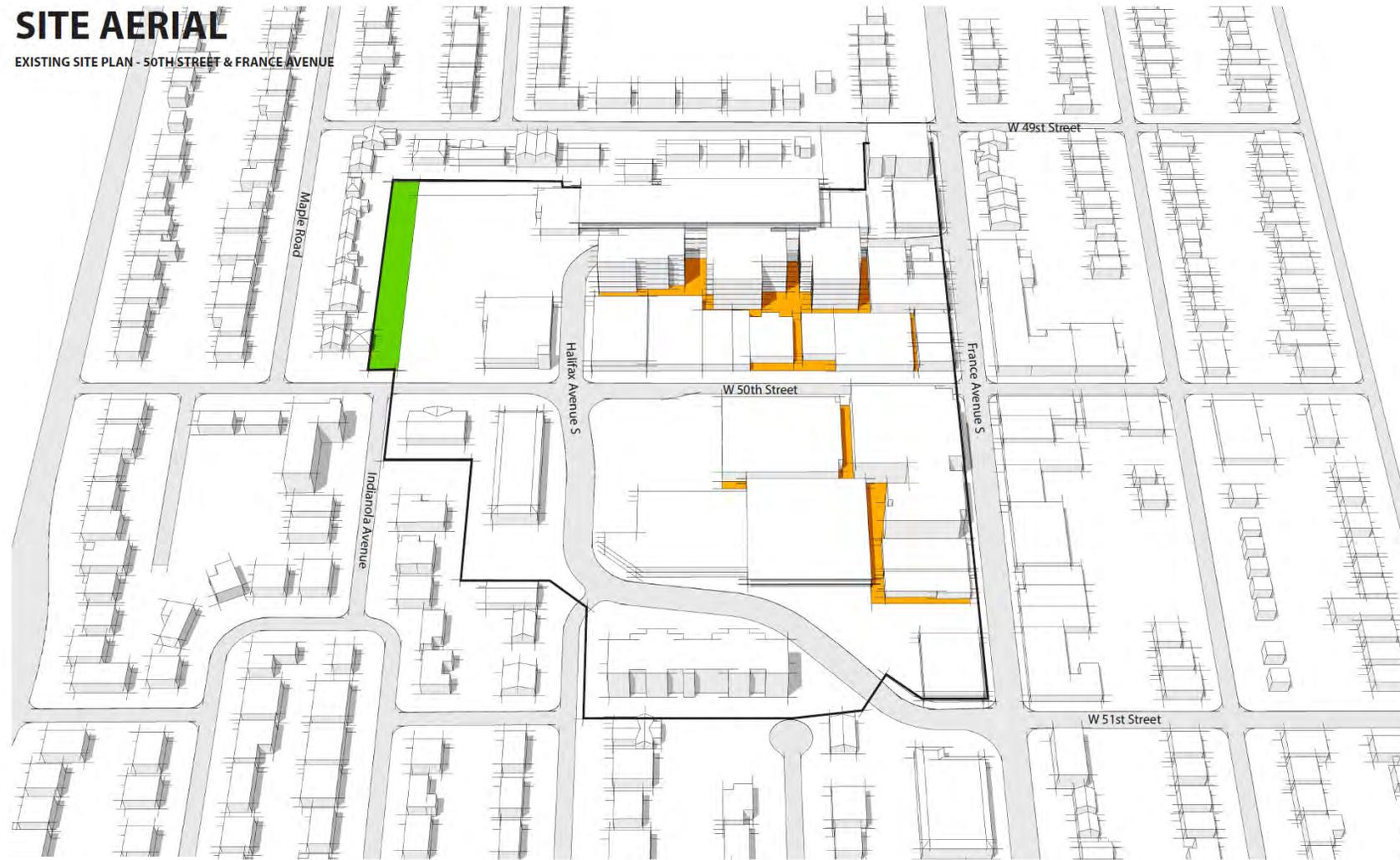
- East/west pedestrian crosswalks on France Avenue, between 50<sup>th</sup> and 51<sup>st</sup> Streets;
- Extensive boulevard tree plantings throughout the study area;
- A revised pedestrian crosswalk on Halifax Avenue and 51<sup>st</sup> Street.

Other public realm and private realm improvements, besides or in addition to those in the conceptual plan, may also be encompassed by the Vision Statement and the Guiding Principles.

Perspective views of the existing condition and conceptual plan are shown on pages 40 through 49. Consistent with this plan's recommendation, the existing protection easement/buffer on the west side of the study area is maintained and illustrated on each of the conceptual plans.

# SITE AERIAL

EXISTING SITE PLAN - 50TH STREET & FRANCE AVENUE



- Study Area Boundary
- Existing Public Realm
- Existing Easement and Buffer

**Figure 8: Perspective View of Existing 50<sup>th</sup> & France  
(Looking North)**

# SITE AERIAL

CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN - 50TH STREET & FRANCE AVENUE



Figure 9: Perspective View of Conceptual 50<sup>th</sup> & France Plan  
(Looking North)

# SITE AERIAL

EXISTING SITE PLAN - 50TH STREET & FRANCE AVENUE

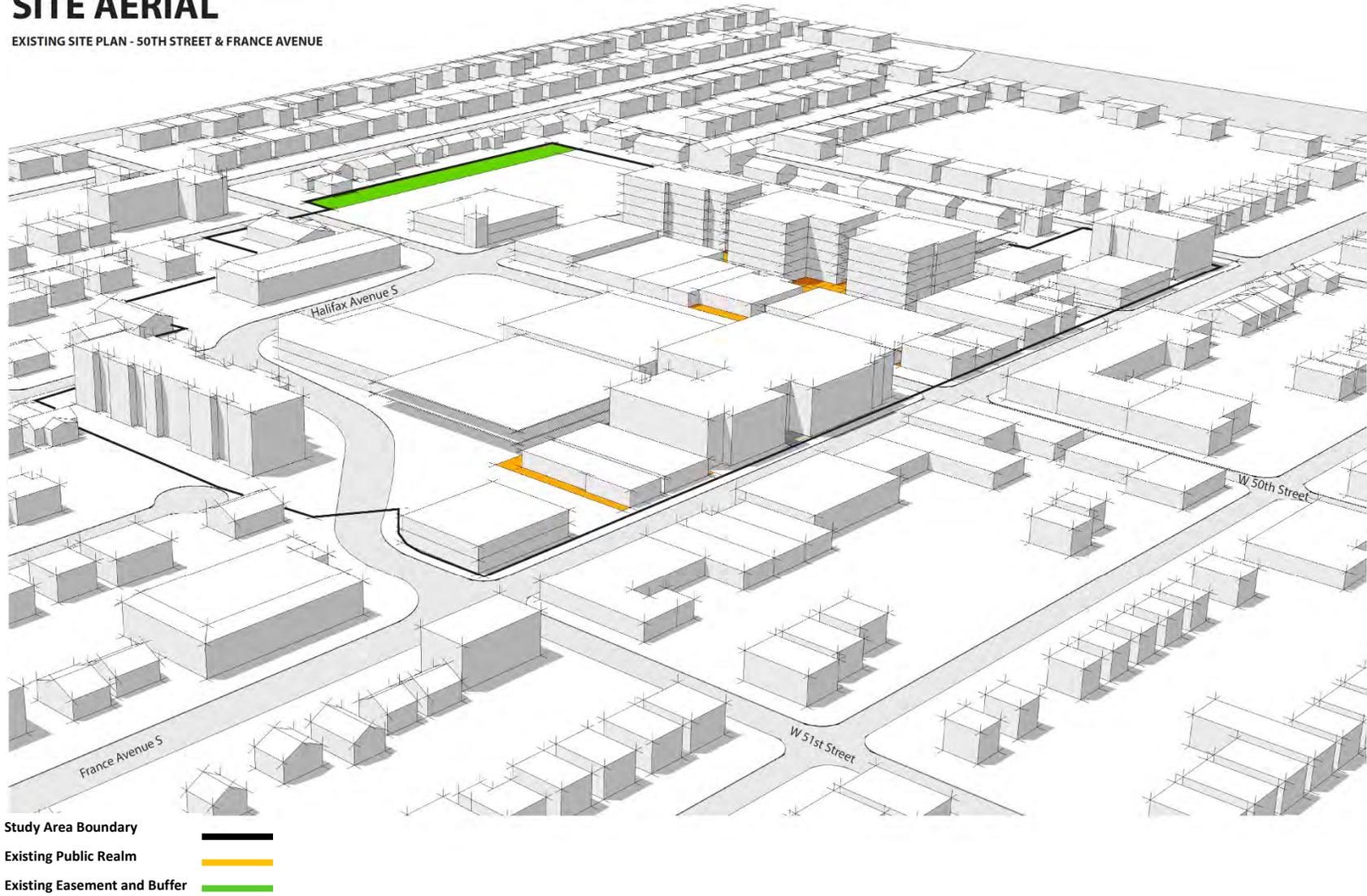


Figure 10: Perspective View of Existing 50<sup>th</sup> & France  
(Looking Northwest)

# SITE AERIAL

CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN - 50TH STREET & FRANCE AVENUE

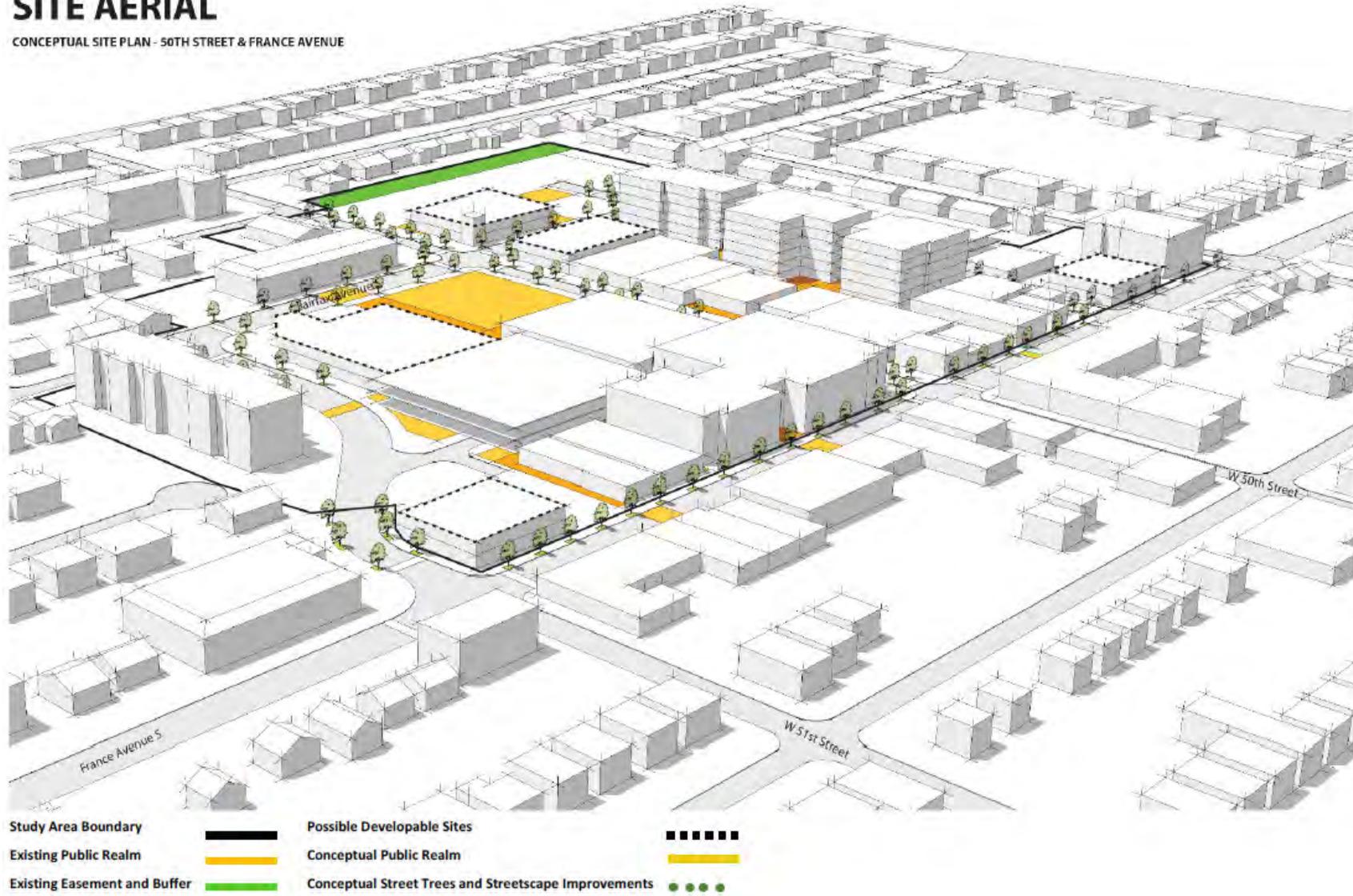


Figure 11: Perspective View of Conceptual 50<sup>th</sup> & France Plan  
(Looking Northwest)

# SITE AERIAL

EXISTING SITE PLAN - 50TH STREET & FRANCE AVENUE



Figure 12: Perspective View of Existing 50<sup>th</sup> & France  
(Looking Northeast)

# SITE AERIAL

CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN - 50TH STREET & FRANCE AVENUE

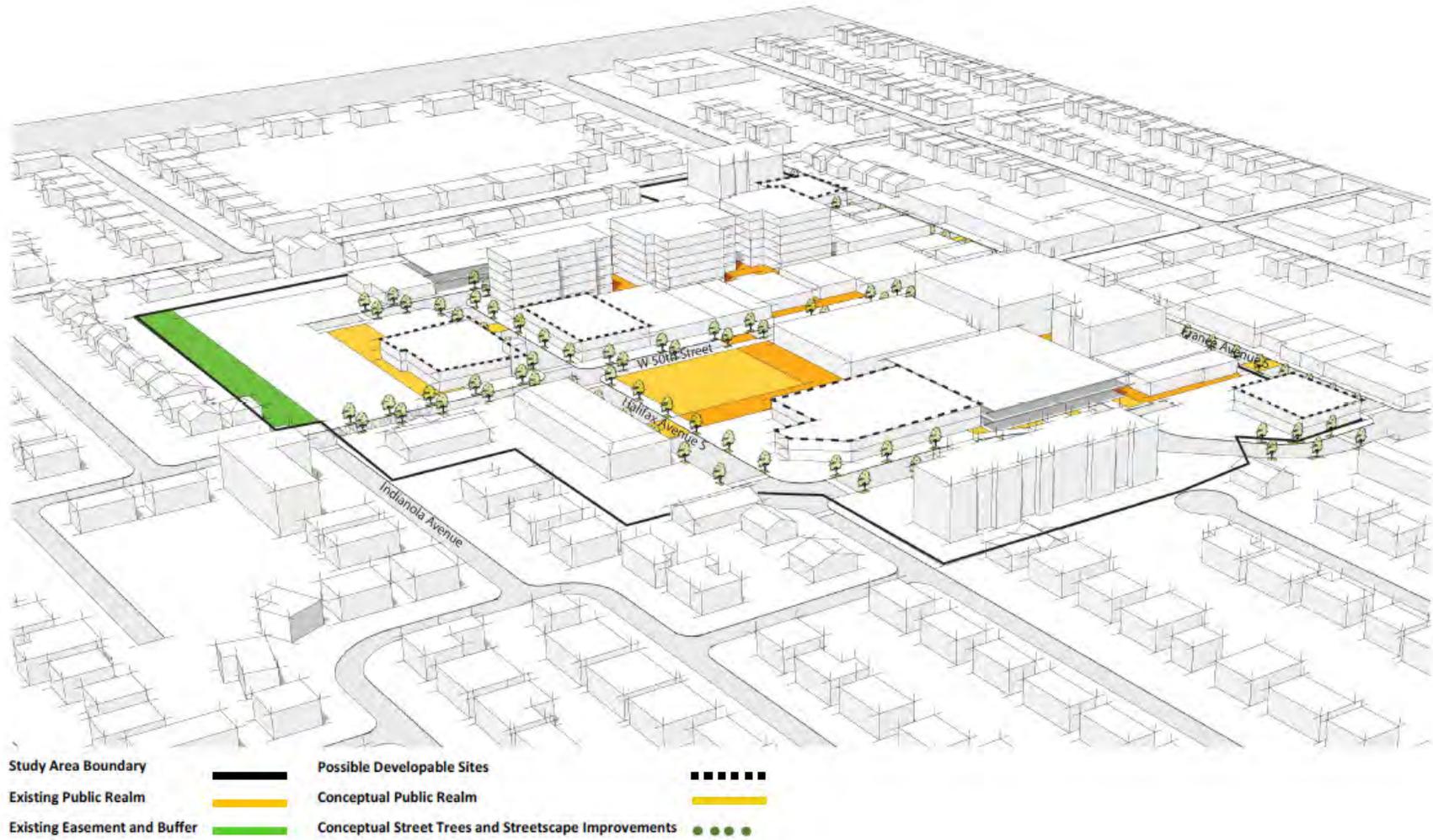
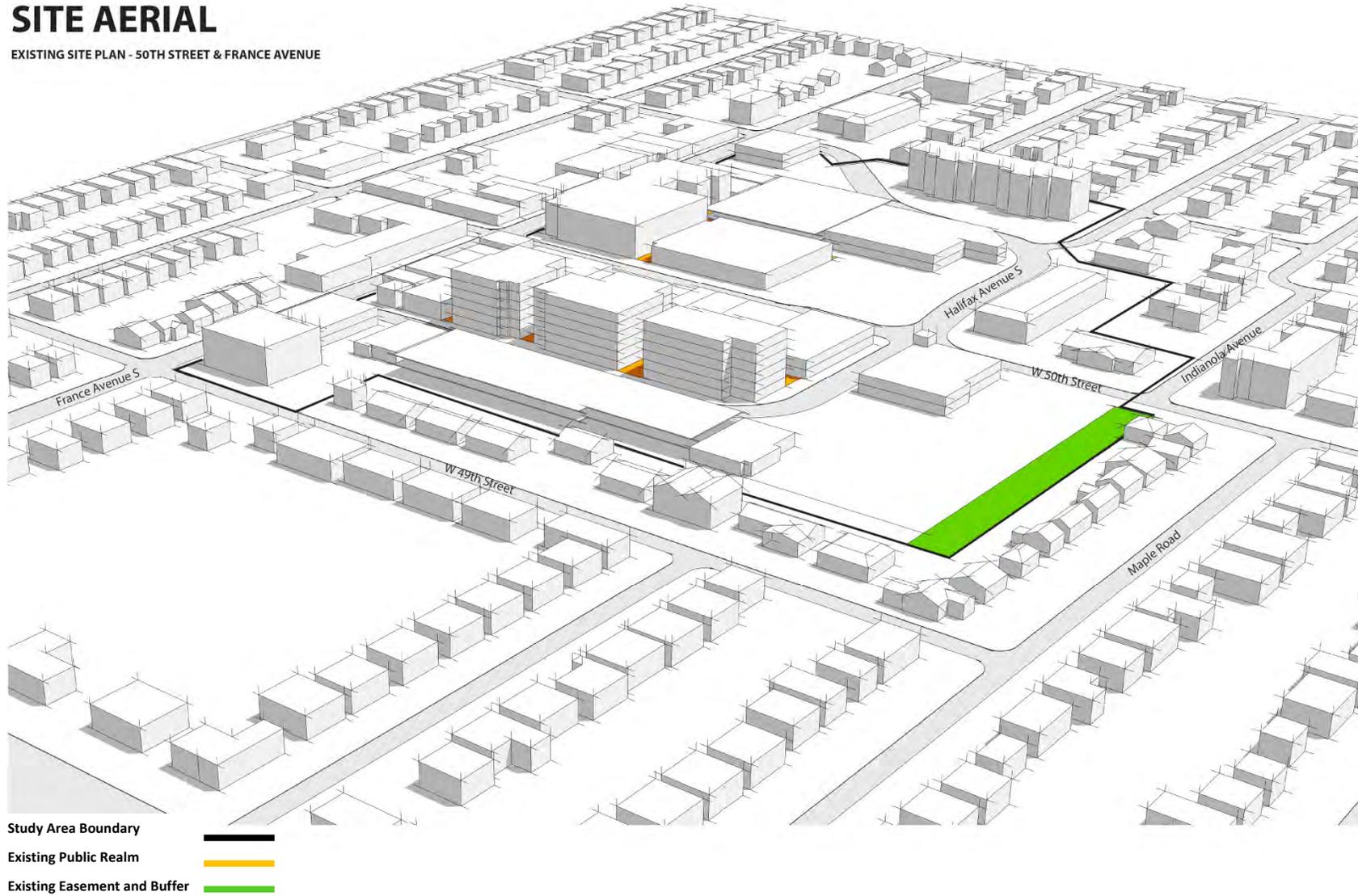


Figure 13: Perspective View of Conceptual 50<sup>th</sup> & France Plan  
(Looking Northeast)

# SITE AERIAL

EXISTING SITE PLAN - 50TH STREET & FRANCE AVENUE



- Study Area Boundary 
- Existing Public Realm 
- Existing Easement and Buffer 

Figure 14: Perspective View of Existing 50<sup>th</sup> & France  
(Looking Southeast)

# SITE AERIAL

CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN - 50TH STREET & FRANCE AVENUE

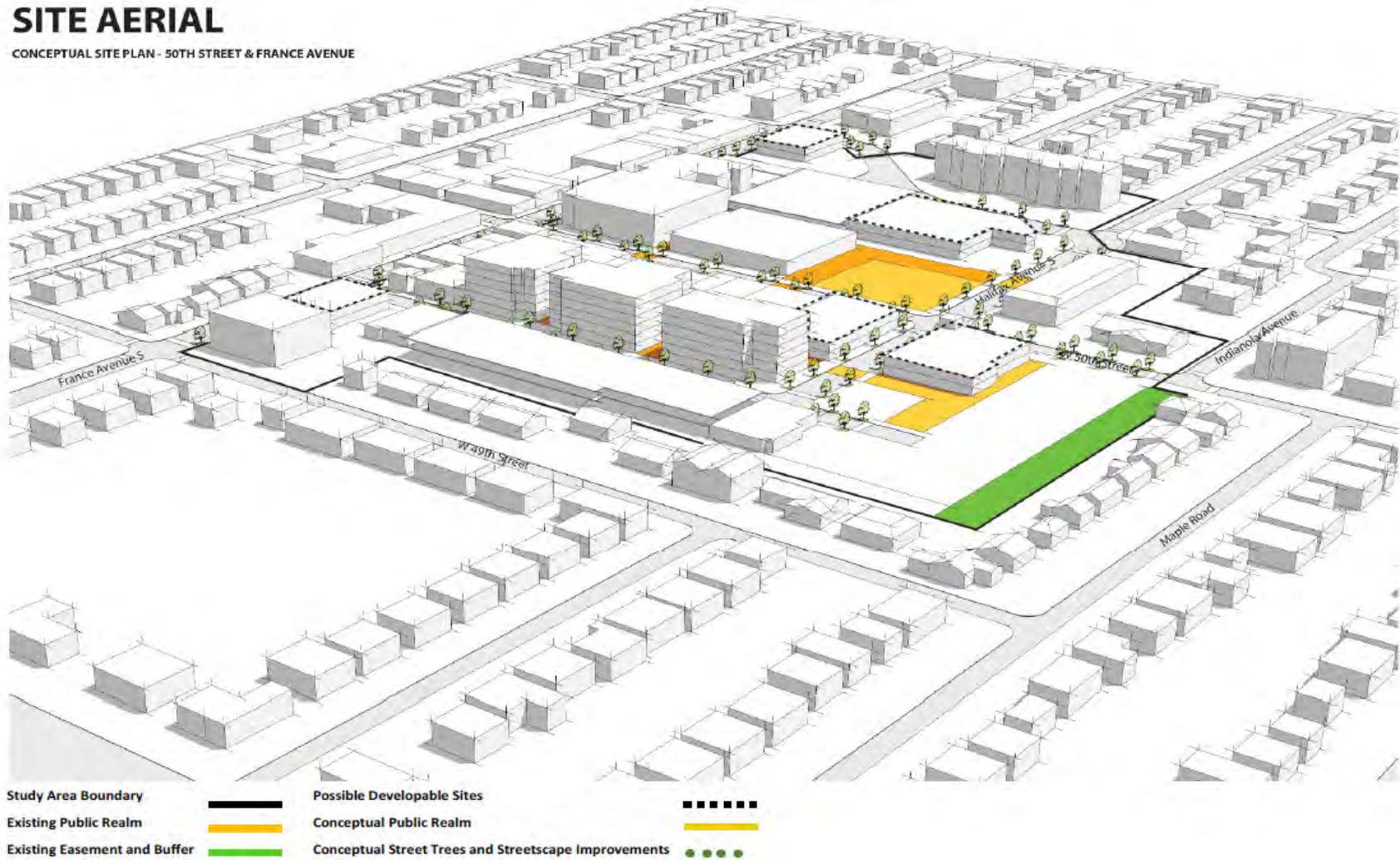


Figure 15: Perspective View of Conceptual 50<sup>th</sup> & France Plan  
(Looking Southeast)

# SITE AERIAL

EXISTING SITE PLAN - 50TH STREET & FRANCE AVENUE



Figure 16: Perspective View of Existing 50<sup>th</sup> & France  
(Looking Southwest)

# SITE AERIAL

CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN - 50TH STREET & FRANCE AVENUE



- |                              |  |  |  |
|------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Study Area Boundary          |  | Possible Developable Sites                           |  |
| Existing Public Realm        |  | Conceptual Public Realm                              |  |
| Existing Easement and Buffer |  | Conceptual Street Trees and Streetscape Improvements |  |

Figure 17: Perspective View of Conceptual 50<sup>th</sup> & France Plan  
(Looking Southwest)

It should be mentioned that the current City Zoning Ordinance identifies a four-story height limit for the study area. Therefore, as a matter of right, any property owner or developer can redevelop or develop up to a four-story building. Because such a proposed building would be within the codified height limit, the City's review of the proposed development would be limited to a review of the proposal's compliance with the Building Code and other regulations. Consequently, the City's ability to reach an agreement with a project proposer to assist with the development of public realm improvements would be limited.

## Trends and Challenges

### **Managing potential conflicts between commercial and residential uses.**

As is typical for a busy mixed use area, there have been discussions about how to ensure that impacts from commercial uses (including restaurants and retail) do not negatively affect residents living in and around the area. The most commonly mentioned concern is traffic congestion. Other concerns are hours, parking, lighting, outdoor dining, pedestrian traffic through neighborhoods, and other activities.

### **Split geography of commercial district.**

The 50<sup>th</sup> & France area straddles a boundary between two cities, with a substantial portion of the commercial district in Minneapolis. This split adds to the challenges of developing a cohesive identity and framework to the area. Addressing some of the district's issues may require participation from both cities, such as implementing mid-street crosswalks across France Avenue, and parking and traffic issues could benefit from a joint approach. Unlike the City of Edina, however, the City of Minneapolis considers several other districts to be of a higher priority and has a different cultural approach to various issues. For example, the City of Minneapolis and its residents are more comfortable with visitors to commercial district parking in adjacent residential neighborhoods. It is hoped that City leadership, perhaps in connection with the 50<sup>th</sup> & France Business and Professional Association, can maintain and improve relationships between the cities so as to jointly approach the planning, design, and implementation of potential district-wide improvements. A notable event regarding cooperation occurred toward the end of the process to develop this Small Area Plan, when it was reported that a group of property owners and key merchants in the district began to meet to discuss collaborative strategy, planning and operations for the commercial space within the district. This group was instigated by the 50<sup>th</sup> & France Business and Professional Association and, reportedly, includes participation by the City of Minneapolis.

## Goals and Policies

The following is a policy framework that provides guidance for both public and private investment in the study area. This reflects the opinions and values of stakeholders expressed during the planning and design process, previous planning contexts, and existing policies.

The study area will continue to grow as a Mixed-Use Neighborhood Node of housing and commercial development guided by market forces and trends, property owners' decisions, the policies and guidelines of this plan, and the Edina Comprehensive Plan. Though it is expected this district will include a larger amount of residential uses than it does currently, the exact pattern of land use over time will be driven by market forces and private development decisions. Current uses of land may, of course, remain as they are until owners decide to make a change.

### ***Land Use and Community Design Goals***

1. **Continue the Evolution of the Study Area:** Support the evolution of the study area as a vibrant mixed use district, incorporating a variety of residential and commercial (retail and office) uses. Some new buildings should feature ground floor commercial or other active uses on appropriate frontages, oriented toward streets and public spaces.
2. **Improve Connections:** Improved streets and new and improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities will enable efficient and safe circulation within the study area, improve the feeling of activity within the district and strengthen the unique sense of place of 50<sup>th</sup> & France.
3. **Require that Buildings Interact with the Public Realm:** Whether a new building is a mixed use building (with commercial on the ground floor and residential above) or strictly a residential building, ensure that ground-level frontages throughout the study area are carefully designed with a pedestrian scale and character that interact with the public realm, encouraging beauty, safety, informal interaction, walkability, and a sense of place. Require additional investments in the public realm alongside with new and renovated development to create new or improved public spaces.
4. **Require Graceful Transitions:** Encourage the scale of buildings in the mixed use core to transition from center to edge, with the greatest building heights toward the center of the district, such as along France Avenue, and comparatively smaller buildings nearer to the western and northern edges of the district. Require that redevelopment adjacent to residential areas is designed with sensitivity to mitigate any impacts on neighboring properties.
5. **Allow Land Uses to Evolve:** Allow existing land uses to evolve in response to market changes. Current land uses may, of course, remain until owners decide to make a change. Allow for flexibility in land use guidance to allow for a compatible mix of uses.
6. **Minimize Impact of Automobiles:** While vehicles must be accommodated to ensure convenience, a desirable characteristic of this area is that of a walkable neighborhood. Discourage the development of access driveways directly to and from 50<sup>th</sup> Street and France Avenue. Require buildings seeking drive-thru lanes (such as with banks) to locate driveways on other streets.

### ***Policies for Land Use and Community Design***

1. With adoption of the plan the City will maintain the existing building height limit at four stories.
2. With adoption of the plan, the City will revise the Comprehensive Plan to establish a residential density range of 12 to 75 dwelling units per acre.
3. The City will review creation of stepback requirements for all buildings over two stories (twenty-four feet).
4. As appropriate, new developments should comply with the City's affordable housing policy.



# Small Area Plan for the City of Edina's 50<sup>th</sup> & France Mixed Use Center



Chapter 4  
Heritage  
Preservation



## 4. Heritage Preservation

### Introduction

Historic preservation efforts are managed nationwide through the inclusion of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Nominations to the Register are directed through State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO), and properties included on the NRHP must meet specific criteria for evaluation. According to these criteria, listed buildings must possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. They should be associated with events or people that have made a significant contribution to history and be of historical, cultural, and architectural significance.



West 50<sup>th</sup> Street looking west from France Avenue, Edina Minnesota, 1950's.

Source: Lakesnwoods.com

No buildings in the study area are currently on the NRHP. However, the Edina Theatre Sign at 3911 West 50<sup>th</sup> Street, shown to the left and below, has been designated as an Edina Heritage Landmark.

The original theater sign was destroyed by a tornado in 1981. Twenty-one (21) years later, in 2002, the Edina Heritage Preservation Board found that the reconstructed theater sign was the property's most historically significant architectural feature and determined it alone was eligible for Edina Heritage Landmark designation as an historic object. The City's preservation code allows for the designation of historic objects as landmarks in cases where the historic

resource is a significant example of public art related to a specific location. In this case, although the physical relationship between the sign and the theater building is important in defining its historic identity, it is understood that the heritage value of the sign is not necessarily dependent upon preservation of the theater façade. The plan of treatment supporting the landmark designation provides for guidance in restoration and recognizes that if the sign must give way to new development, it may be relocated to a new site with compatible surroundings where it can be preserved and rehabilitated.

In 2004, the Edina Heritage Award was presented to the owner of the Edina Theatre in recognition of the careful reconstruction of the historic sign. The attention to detail, referring to the original 1934 plans during reconstruction resulted in a sign that continues to prominently identify downtown Edina.

The Edina Theatre, itself, is an Art Deco style motion picture theater. Built in 1934, the original design by Liebenberg and Kaplan featured a brick-faced, ziggurat-stepped façade with a tower, metal canopy and lighted sign.



Since it opened on August 31, 1934, the theatre has undergone extensive alterations, including replacement of the original canopy and marquee and modifications to the entrance, lobby, lounge, box office and retail shop spaces. All but 30 feet of the auditorium was reconstructed in 1984. Nevertheless, the building's historic plan and form remain largely intact.

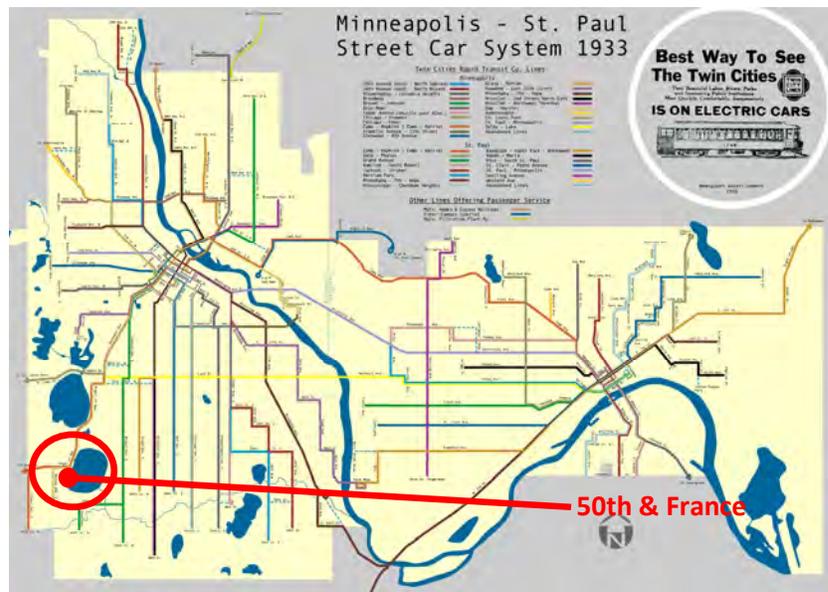
Despite the fact that there are no historically significant buildings within the study area, the community should keep in mind the long history of 50<sup>th</sup> & France as a commercial, community, and transportation hub. Though not within the small area itself, the Wooddale Avenue Bridge and George W. Baird House are nearby structures that are both NRHP listed.

## Historical and Existing Conditions

The intersection of 50<sup>th</sup> Street and France Avenue is currently a regionally important commercial and residential district. Before residential development occurred in what was historically known as France Village, land use was nearly all commercial/ retail with the exception of farmsteads that had been constructed in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. As a burgeoning commercial district, customers were primarily attracted from Edina and Minneapolis and, to a lesser degree, from other communities in the west metro.

In addition to serving as Edina's traditional downtown, the commercial district was also recognized as a gateway to the rest of the Twin Cities. It was one of the last stops on the Como-Harriet streetcar line, which terminated at 54<sup>th</sup> Street. This made the intersection particularly important as a link between Edina and the remainder of the Twin Cities.

The historical review of the study area shows that it is an area that has evolved many times over the years. It can truly be stated that what exists today, did not exist as few as 10 to 15 years ago....and it is likely, based on its history, that it will continue to change as time moves on. Presented below are examples of the changes that have taken place since 1929.



*Minneapolis/St. Paul Street Car System map from 1933 showing Como-Harriet route's a stop at 50th & France and terminus at 54th & France.*

### **Gregg's Pharmacy**

In 1929 Gregg's Pharmacy opened at the northwest corner of 50<sup>th</sup> and France, in the building that remains to this day and is now known as the Paper Source Building.



*Gregg's Pharmacy at the northwest corner of 50<sup>th</sup> Street and France Avenue, with a streetcar in the foreground.*



*Hay & Stenson Company, Edina's first liquor store opened in 1934.*

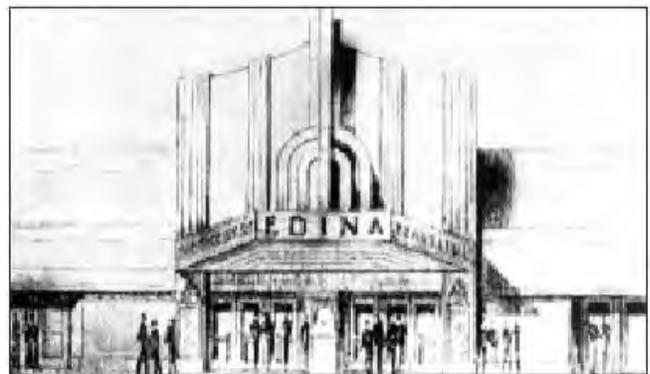
*Source: Minnesota Historical Society*

### **Hay & Stenson Company Liquors**

Just a year after Prohibition ended in 1934, Edina's first liquor store, Hay & Stenson Company, opened at 3922 West 50<sup>th</sup> St. It was eventually superseded by a City-owned liquor store, which is still located in the 50<sup>th</sup> and France shopping center.

### **Edina Theater**

In 1934, the Art Deco Edina Cinema opened its doors, adding an entertainment draw to the district. A bold and modern design for the time, it went through multiple design revisions before being built. It was expanded to house more movie screens over the decades, until being completely remodeled in 1989. The façade and sign remain as on the original theater.





**Hove's Supermarket**

The first Supermarket in Edina was Hove's, which moved into its first location across the street from the Edina Theatre in 1938. Hove's eventually became Lunds grocery store, which is now owned by Lunds & Byerlys. A Lunds & Byerlys store is located on the south side of 50<sup>th</sup> Street today, as is the corporation's headquarters. Hove's second self-service store was built in 1962 in Edina on 50th Street near France Avenue.

*Hove's second self-service store was built in 1962 in Edina on 50th Street near France Avenue.*

**Edina Bowling Center**

Edina's first bowling alley, Edina Bowling Center, opened in October of 1940 at 5030 France Avenue. The Edina Bowling Center at 50<sup>th</sup> & France changed names and owners but survived until 1967. Source: Edina Historical Society



**Edina Library**

The Bull Family Farm house, built in 1872 at 4124 West 50<sup>th</sup> Street, became Edina's first library when donated for that purpose in 1955. It continued in this role until 1968, when it was demolished and replaced on the site by a bank. This is the current site of the US Bank Building.



*Source: Edina Historical Society*

**Nolan's Golf Terrace**



*Nolan's Golf Terrace Cafe, 1940s. The Nolan Mains apartments under construction at the site pay homage to its former occupant. Source: Nolan Mains Apartments.*

## Trends and Challenges

The intersection of West 50<sup>th</sup> Street and France Avenue has been a commercial and community hub in Edina for generations. Though some of the properties have changed little, most of the buildings and businesses in the small area have evolved to suit the needs of new generations. While many businesses, such as supermarkets and theaters, have been a part of the commercial district for decades, their locations or buildings have changed. The 50<sup>th</sup> & France Small Area has long been a vital part of Edina and can grow in the future while retaining links that tie together past with present.

## Goals and Policies

### Goals

- **Promote Education and Learning---**  
Develop and implement educational and learning experiences for end users at 50<sup>th</sup> & France, based on the area's history.

### Policies

- The City's Heritage Preservation Commission will safeguard significant heritage properties and other resources identified in the 50<sup>th</sup> & France small area.
- The City's Heritage Preservation Commission will identify and nominate properties within the 50<sup>th</sup> & France study area for Heritage Landmark designation, as it deems appropriate in compliance with its processes and policies.
- The City's Heritage Preservation Commission, in partnership with the Edina Historical Society, should capture the history of the district and develop programs to educate people about that history. As determined to be appropriate, mementoes, such as plaques, illustrations, photographic exhibits, essays, and newspaper articles should be developed and placed on display within the district and elsewhere in Edina.



# Small Area Plan for the City of Edina's 50<sup>th</sup> & France Mixed Use Center



Chapter 5  
Economic  
Vitality



## 5. Economic Vitality

### Current Conditions

The Minneapolis Saint Paul region competes with other regions around the globe for talent and quality employment opportunities. Edina contributes to the region’s economic vitality by providing well-located business and industrial parks, excellent housing, schools, shopping, health care, dining and entertainment and other amenities important to residents’ quality of life and talent attraction to the region.



Significant change lies ahead as the needs and preferences of two large generations –the baby boom and millennials – evolve. In addition, multiple forces of change in technology, housing, transportation, and consumer spending patterns will converge in ways that are not yet fully understood. Retail areas are rethinking their role and exploring ways to adapt successfully and will need to continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

### Trends and Challenges

#### Overview

The 50<sup>th</sup> & France District - Edina’s “downtown” – is located in both Edina and Minneapolis. Properties on the east side of France Avenue are located in Minneapolis. Twenty-five acres of the district are located in Edina, on the west side of France Avenue, and include properties developed from the 1930s to the present day. The district meets the daily needs of area residents with a full-service grocery, movie theater, two pharmacies, post office, banks, small medical and dental practices, salons, national and local clothing stores, boutiques, and a growing number of dining establishments. It is also a regional destination for shopping and dining. The Edina Theater, an arts and culture anchor for the district, features new releases as well as independent, foreign, and avant-garde films.

There is a strong, positive recognition of the 50<sup>th</sup> & France district with its charm, pedestrian amenities and high quality retail and service businesses. The 50<sup>th</sup> & France Business and Professional Association is 75 years old and engages business and property owners from both Minneapolis and Edina in activities to strengthen the district. The Association estimates that there are 175 businesses in the district (both cities), employing approximately 2,000 people. An estimated 95 businesses are located in Edina. Properties in the district are owned by independent property owners, with some larger holdings by Lunds & Byerlys and related corporations. A 2018 Cushman & Wakefield analysis presented to the 50<sup>th</sup> & France Small Area Plan Work Group identified:

- Strong demographics (3 mile radius):
  - 140,000 people/ 63,000 households
  - \$1.95 billion in retail purchases
- 130 retail and service businesses
- 410,000 square feet of commercial space
- A historic vacancy rate of 3 percent to 3.5 percent, with 2018 vacancy at 7.25%

- Historic rents, similar or somewhat higher than other specialty centers like Grand Avenue, Galleria and the Shops at the West End approximately:
  - \$35-45 psf for small shops
  - \$25-30 psf for larger spaces
- \$15-20 psf for real estate taxes and common area maintenance (CAM)
- 2018 rents down 20-30%, with uncertainty about the level at which rents will stabilize

The Cushman & Wakefield analysis and interviews with business and property owners indicate that changes affecting the retail sector nationally are also impacting the 50<sup>th</sup> & France district. There is an increased market demand for housing, food, and services in the district and a declining demand for retail space. In addition, at the time of this study, the district is experiencing changes in parking and access for businesses on the north side of 50<sup>th</sup> Street and access-related impacts associated with construction of the Nolan Mains project on Market Street. Upon completion of the Nolan Mains project, there may be approximately 25,000 additional square feet of commercial space in the district. The introduction of this space, perhaps the largest addition of retail square footage to 50<sup>th</sup> & France in more than a decade, is both a challenge under current conditions and an opportunity to strengthen the long-term vitality of the district.

### ***Taxes and Employment***

The assessed value of commercial properties at 50<sup>th</sup> & France is among the highest in the City. Some parcels in the Greater Southdale and Grandview areas are similarly valued.

Retail trade employs about 43 percent of the workers in the area, with services following at 35 percent. (ERSI Business Analyst)

### ***Infrastructure – Organizational and Physical***

The 50<sup>th</sup> & France Business and Professional Association states that its purpose is to promote the general welfare and economic well-being of the 50<sup>th</sup> & France business district in order to accomplish more collectively than could be achieved individually in the following areas:

- Advertising
- Marketing & Promotions
- Operations
- Member Communications
- Community Relations
- Public Relations
- Member Services
- Development Issues
- Government Relations

Special legislation established a special services district at 50<sup>th</sup> & France in Edina, which addresses cleaning, maintenance, and repair of the parking ramps and the public realm in the district, including snow removal, trash, and planters. More recently, the City of Minneapolis and business owners on the Minneapolis side of France Avenue established a business improvement district that includes public realm maintenance.

50<sup>th</sup> & France is well connected via Metro Transit buses to downtown Minneapolis, Southdale, the University of Minnesota, and both light rail lines, providing access to a broad labor pool. Transit routes serving the district include:

- Route 6 – major destinations include Edina Industrial Park, Southdale Center Transit Hub, 50<sup>th</sup> & France, Uptown, Hennepin Ave, Downtown, Green Line, the University of Minnesota.
- Route 46 – major destinations include 50<sup>th</sup> & France, I-35W and 46<sup>th</sup> St Station (express to downtown); 46<sup>th</sup> Street Station on the Blue Line (airport to downtown); Highland Park.
- Express Route 146, which runs along 50<sup>th</sup> Street to connect Downtown Minneapolis and employment centers along Lincoln Drive near Trunk Highway (TH) 169.

### **Trends and Challenges and Retail Transformation**

The retail industry is experiencing transformation as consumer shopping patterns change to on-line shopping and home delivery. Retail stores and shopping centers are rethinking their role in this rapidly changing environment and exploring ways to successfully adapt. Creating “an experience” that consumers cannot get on-line is critical to generating traffic to support brick and mortar stores. These changes, which are underway globally, are expressed in higher vacancies and turnover in the retail sector.

Research by CBRE, *The Future of Retail 2030*, indicates that a number of technology trends will impact how we make purchases. From a real estate perspective, technology and other trends are expected to have the following impacts:

- Shopping centers will become simply “centers” integrating shopping, live, work, play, sharing, learning, discovery, health and wellness
- Independent stores and food and beverage operators will be more prevalent
- The traditional in-store physical point of purchase will disappear, resulting in fewer employees
- Wellness establishments will grow and there will be a diverse offering of fitness options
- Mundane purchases will be ordered and delivered without traditional “shopping” and consumers will increasingly see retail as a social and leisure experience
- The divide between retail and leisure will blur. Leisure activities including cinemas, food and beverage, bowling, ice skating will bring traffic; retailers will create opportunities for an experience in their stores. People will spend money on products, services and increasingly on experiences.



*“Transformation of Shopping Centers,” Shopping centers will become simply “centers”. From CBRE, The Future of Retail 2030, CBRE, The Future of Retail 2030.*

These changes are expressed at 50<sup>th</sup> & France with the integration of more dining and entertainment options as well as condo and residential rental developments. Changes affecting the retail sector and

construction are creating stresses for some businesses and commercial property owners. The combination of these forces creates an opportunity to foster a strategic tenant mix that enables the district to adapt to changing demographics and emerging trends.

### **Infrastructure – Physical**

Although most underground utilities north of 50<sup>th</sup> Street have been rebuilt or replaced in connection with the Nolan Mains development, property owners elsewhere in the district have expressed concerns about aging underground infrastructure. Problems include:

- Interruption of business operations due to problems with aging electric and natural gas infrastructure; and
- A lack of complete information on the location and condition of utilities.

A comprehensive underground infrastructure inventory and strategy, involving public and private utilities, can improve safety and reliability and support more realistic cost estimates for redevelopment. Also, stormwater management is currently handled on an older, site-by-site basis, causing stormwater to drain to municipal sewers, and opportunities should be sought to upgrade stormwater management in the district, perhaps on a community basis. Interest has been expressed in having a broadband program for the district, sometimes referred to as “build once,” to support the technology needs of businesses, employees and residents. Further, a district solution for handling solid waste and recyclable materials may also be beneficial to the study area.

### **Workforce**

#### **Transit and Parking**

With the retirement of the baby boom and a strong economy, labor force shortages topping 62,000 are projected for the MSP region by 2020 (MN DEED MSP Regional Forecast Overview, November 2017). As competition for workforce heats up, factors such as parking and the availability of reliable, high frequency, extended hour transit have become (and will continue to be) more important to employers.

## **Goals and Policies**

### **Economic Vitality Goals**

- Coordinate a comprehensive underground infrastructure inventory and strategy, involving public and private utilities and property owners to improve safety, reliability, security and resilience, support more realistic cost estimates for redevelopment, and ensure competitive broadband service to district businesses and residents.
- Encourage high frequency, extended hour transit service, including Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) along Metro Transit’s Route 6 (Southdale –Uptown- Downtown- Green Line – University of MN) to expand the labor pool for area employers and minimize employee parking demand and provide a high quality transit option for business patrons.
- Be a supportive partner to the 50<sup>th</sup> & France Business and Professional Association as the area navigates the convergence of significant changes in demographics, shopping/dining/entertainment, technology, transportation and housing.

- Coordinate with the City of Minneapolis to develop cohesive strategies and public realm components.

### ***Economic Vitality Policies***

The City will:

- Encourage redevelopment within the district that is consistent with this Small Area Plan and other City goals and policies.
- Make balanced, equitable and intelligent investments, balanced against other City requirements, to create public realm improvements that benefit a broad base of the community, including streetscape improvements, pedestrian and bicycle safety and amenities, public parking, utility and transportation improvements, storm water management and park, plaza or green spaces.
- When making investments or tax allocations, the City should consider and make findings regarding a variety of factors, including the structural and aesthetic quality of a development, the magnitude of its benefit to the community, its height, density, appropriateness for the study area, effect on the tax base, and the quality and character of public realm improvements.
- Coordinate infrastructure improvements with utility providers and common carriers of broadband and similar technologies to “build-once” in the 50<sup>th</sup> & France area to encourage competition, redundancy, resilience and minimize the cost and disruptions associated with updating underground infrastructure.
- Review management of stormwater, solid waste and recyclables in the district, to determine if district-wide solutions would be beneficial.
- Sustain high standards of maintenance for parking ramps, walkways and other public realm areas and encourage effective maintenance of parking and other public realm facilities in the Minneapolis portion of the district through the new Special Services District in Minneapolis.
- Support existing special events and encourage new ones to take advantage of public realm areas in the district, with possibly increased involvement in the planning and support for such events from City departments, such as Parks and Recreation and Public Safety.



# Small Area Plan for the City of Edina's 50<sup>th</sup> & France Mixed Use Center



Chapter 6  
Transportation



# 6. Transportation

## Current Conditions

### Regional Roadways Passing Through the Study Area

The study area is located at the intersection of West 50<sup>th</sup> Street and France Avenue. West 50<sup>th</sup> Street is a municipal street between France Avenue and Trunk Highway (TH) 100. It is a Hennepin County highway east of France Avenue and beginning at the TH 100 interchange ramps with 50<sup>th</sup> Street. France Avenue is a Hennepin County highway as it runs north and south through the City of Edina.

50<sup>th</sup> Street functions as an A-Minor Arterial and is an important roadway segment in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Highway System Plan. Because of its role as a roadway link between I-35 W and TH 100, it is a Municipal State Aid (MSA) street, and the City of Edina receives funding from the State of Minnesota for its upkeep and maintenance.

Likewise, France Avenue is an important roadway segment in the Metropolitan Highway System Plan. It is indirectly linked to Lake Street and Highway 7 and directly linked to Excelsior Boulevard, three east/west arterials that carry regional traffic. It is also directly linked to TH 62, the Crosstown Highway, and I-494. Since France Avenue is under the jurisdiction of Hennepin County, it is a County State Aid Highway (CSAH), and the City of Edina receives funding from Hennepin County for its upkeep and maintenance. As a result, improvements to France Avenue require the consent of Hennepin County, making it harder for the City of Edina to implement any desired changes.

Two-way daily traffic volumes on both of these streets are comparatively high due to their linkages to other regional routes and the trip geography of the region that has developed as a result of land use policies that support development at the fringes of the metropolitan area. Table 6 and Figure 18 shows historical Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) volumes on 50<sup>th</sup> Street and France Avenue between 2010 and 2017<sup>2</sup>.

**TABLE 6  
SMALL AREA PLAN STUDY AREA TWO-WAY DAILY TRAFFIC**

Year	France South of 50th	France North of 50th	50th East of France	50th Between Halifax and Arden	50th Between Arden and Wooddale	50th Between Wooddale and TH-100	Market Between Halifax and France	51st Between Halifax and France	Wooddale South of 50th
2010	13100	12300	12400	NA	15700	22800	5800	6500	5200
2011	13700	12200	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
2013	NA	NA	13600	9600	NA	24800	6700	6800	6100
2015	10000	11200	11400	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
2017	NA	NA	NA	9300	18100	23400	5600	6300	NA

Source: MnDOT Street Series

<sup>2</sup> AADT is the total volume of vehicle traffic on a highway or road for a year divided by 365 days. It should be noted that MnDOT does not count daily traffic on each street in the metropolitan area each year. In cases where MnDOT has not counted AADT, Table 6 indicates as much with “NA.”



**Figure 18: Historical Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)**

As shown in Table 6 and on Figure 18, AADT has not grown significantly over the past seven years, with the exception of the AADTs on 50th Street between Wooddale and Halifax Avenues<sup>3</sup>. Further, in some cases, AADT has actually decreased. The lack of growth in daily traffic is a phenomenon that has been observed in the “built” areas of the metropolitan region; i.e., in the central cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul and in the first ring suburbs. At the same time, AADT is growing in communities at the fringes of the metropolitan area where land is relatively inexpensive and available, and development continues at a rapid pace.

In May, 2017, in connection with City review of the proposal to develop Nolan Mains, SRF Consulting Group performed a traffic study to forecast how the development could impact traffic. This study, which followed earlier studies prepared in January and March, 2017, focused on area traffic volumes, vehicular speeds, cut-through traffic, and pedestrian facilities/infrastructure. The earlier studies focused on the traffic impacts of the Nolan Mains development on 10 key intersections within the 50<sup>th</sup> & France area.

The May, 2017, study found that:

- 1) Traffic volumes along 50th Street during the weekday PM peak period have been relatively consistent or decreased since 2011. See Figure 19, which compares the two-way, 15-minute peak of the peak hour traffic volume for November 2011, December 2016, and May 2017. As shown, these volumes have decreased over time.

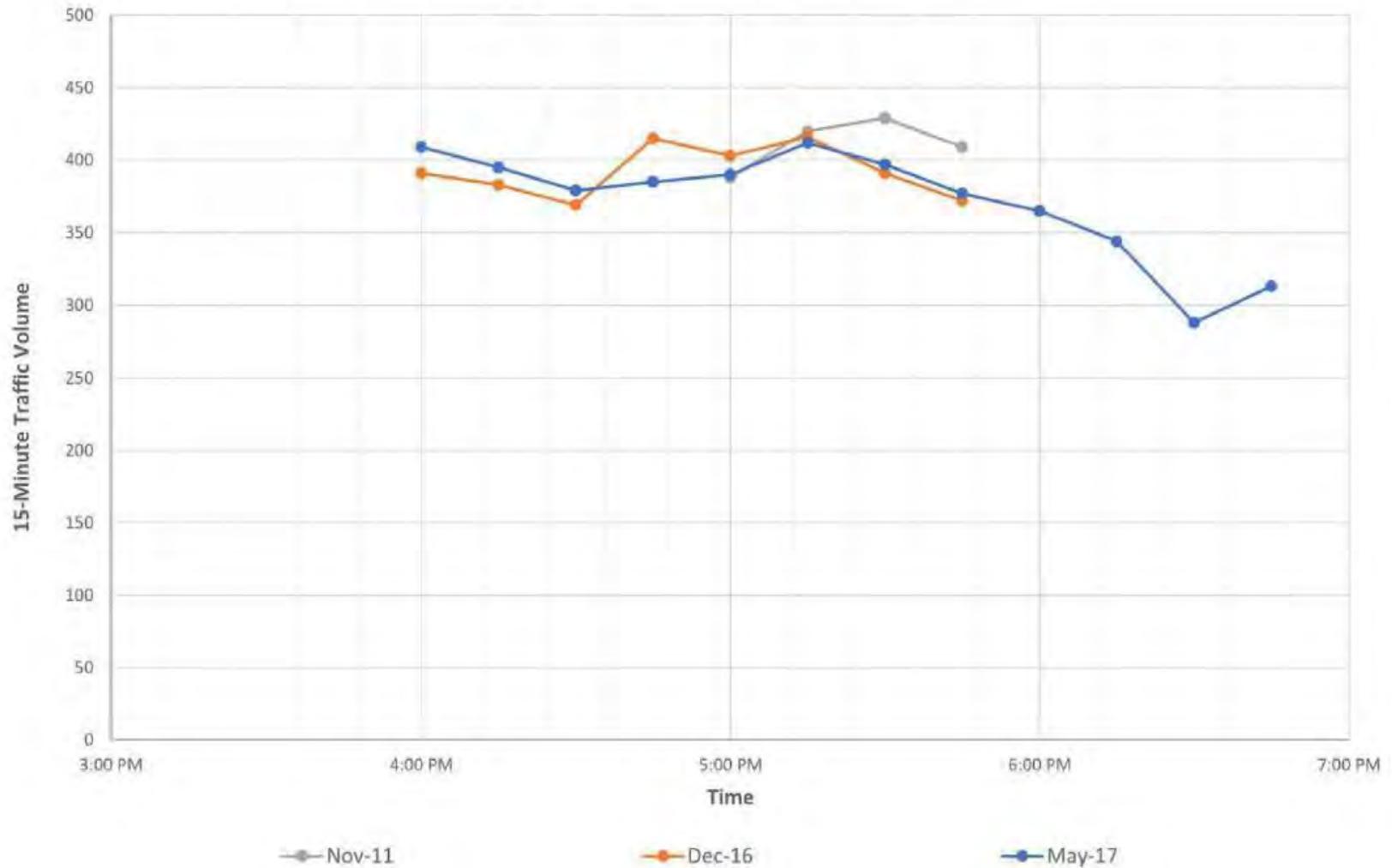
<sup>3</sup> The change in AADT along 50<sup>th</sup> Street, between Wooddale and Halifax Avenues, is 2,400 vehicles per day over a seven-year period. This represents a 2.1 percent annual growth factor, which is more consistent with the annual growth factors observed for suburban communities beyond the first ring than for the two central cities and first ring suburban communities. One way to explain this higher than expected increase is construction activity on I-35 W, which has caused more traffic to use 50<sup>th</sup> Street than would normally be the case

- 2) Average daily traffic (ADT)<sup>4</sup> volumes along 50<sup>th</sup> Street (from west of Wooddale Avenue to west of France Avenue) between 1997 and 2017 have been steady or trending down. Figure 20 shows that the average daily traffic volumes within three segments of 50<sup>th</sup> Street are generally trending downward, with the greatest decrease occurring along 50<sup>th</sup> Street west of Wooddale (near the TH-100 ramps). As shown this segment of 50<sup>th</sup> Street has seen ADT as high as 25,000 in 1997, 2005, and 2013 and as low as 18,000 in 2017.
- 3) ADT volumes within the neighborhood northwest of the 50<sup>th</sup> Street and France Avenue area have generally been within +/- five (5) to 10 percent of one another since 2006. There was, however, a noticeable increase in ADT volume along Browndale Avenue between 2006 and current conditions. However, given the change in traffic volumes, further evaluation is needed to verify the accuracy of this difference. (See Figure 21.)
- 4) Vehicular speeds (85th percentile) within the neighborhood northwest of the 50<sup>th</sup> Street and France Avenue area have leveled or decreased since 2006 in comparable locations. The 85th percentile vehicular speeds recorded by the City within the neighborhood northwest of the 50<sup>th</sup> Street and France Avenue area between 2012 and 2016 have all been within the 20 to 31 miles per hour (mph) range. The posted speed limit (or statutory speed limit) for these roadways is 30mph.

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<sup>4</sup> ADT is not the same as AADT. AADT is an annual average. ADT is an average that is calculated by dividing the total volume of traffic by the number of days over which it was counted; typically five days.

### Historical 50th Street Peak Hour Traffic Volumes (East of Wooddale Avenue)

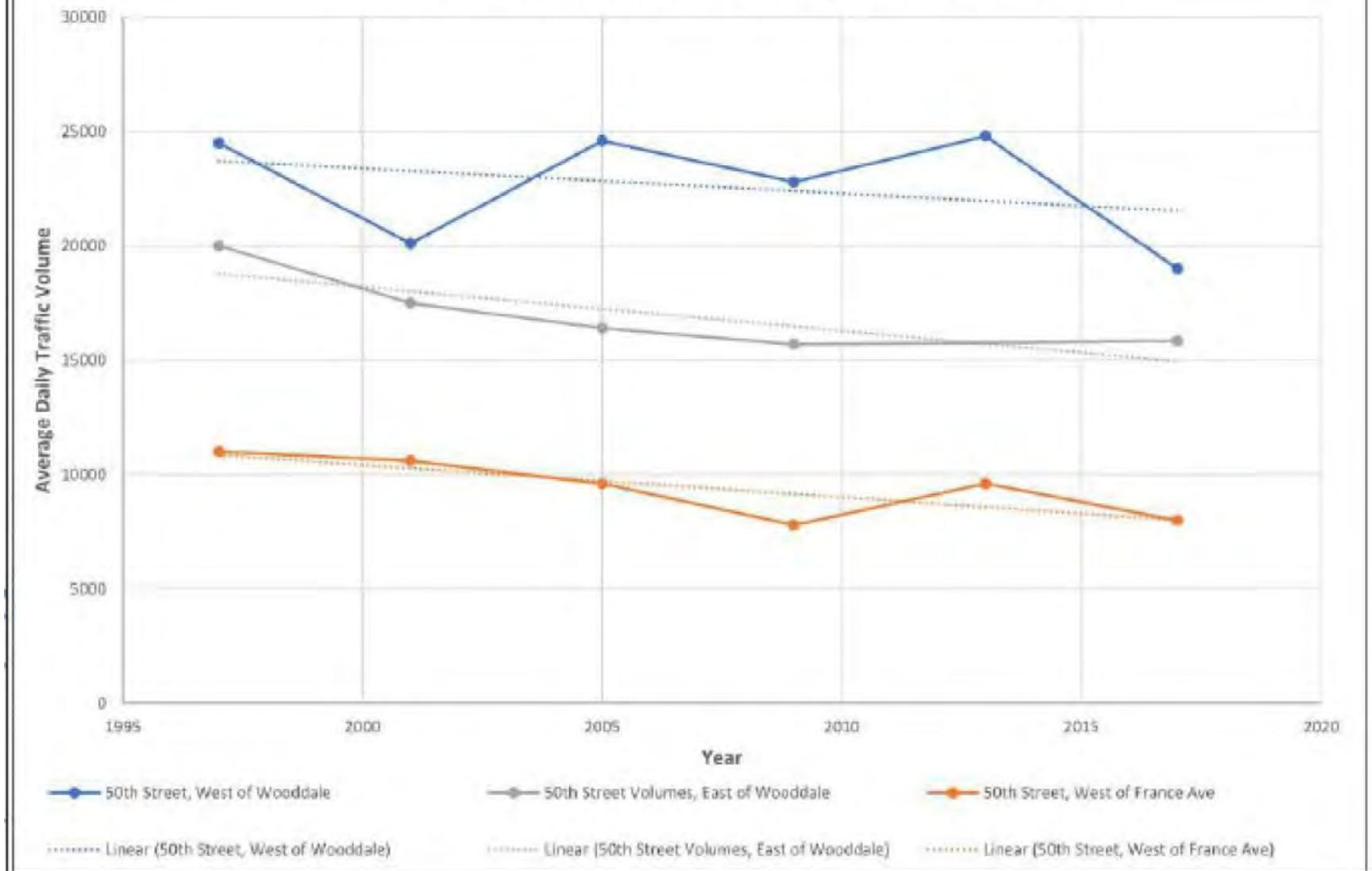


**50th Street PM Peak Hour Volumes**  
50th Street and France Avenue Neighborhood Study  
City of Edina, MN

01710564  
May 2017

Figure 19: 50th Street PM Peak Hour Volumes

## Historical 50th Street Average Daily Traffic Volumes

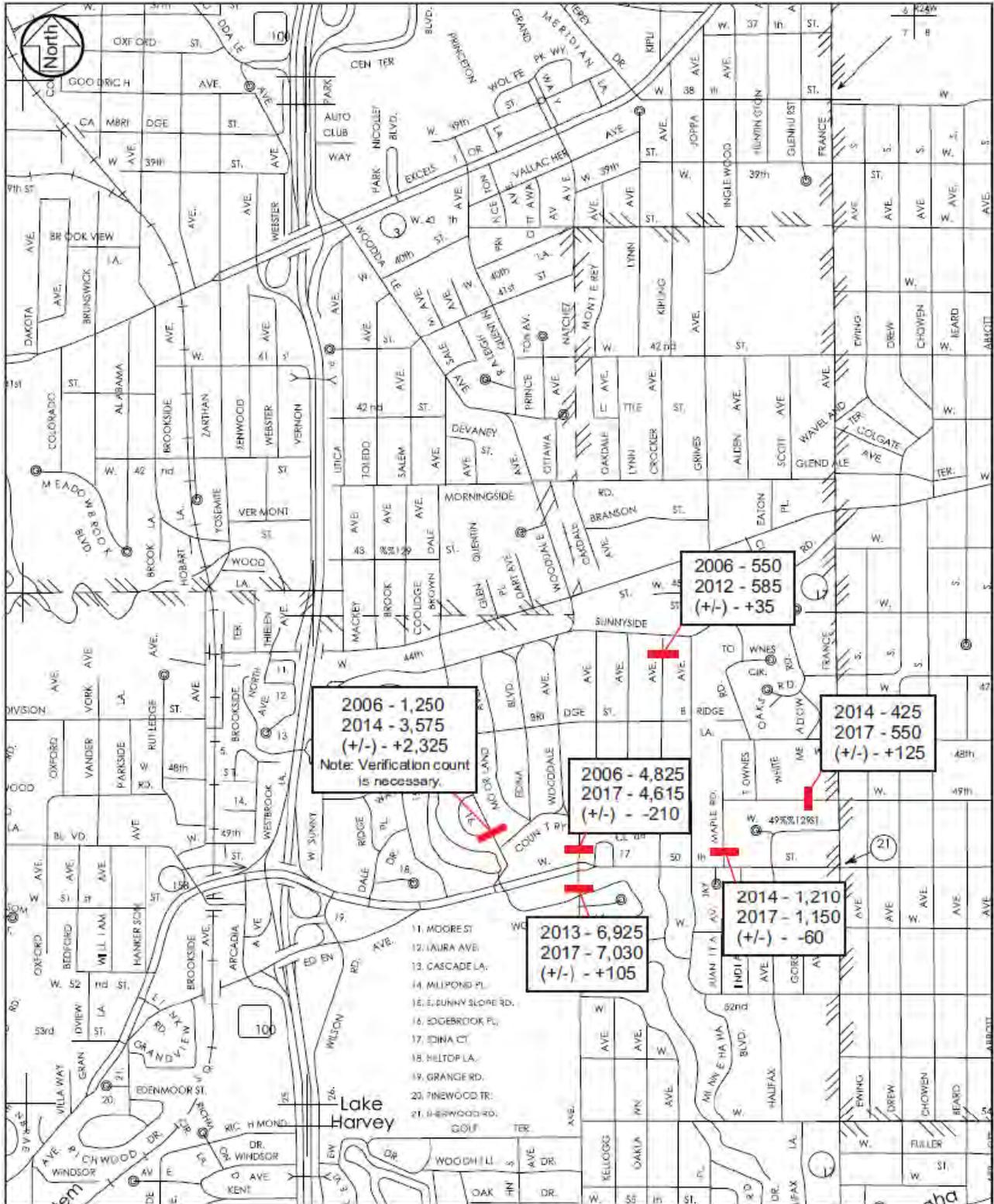


### 50th Street Daily Traffic Volumes

50th Street and France Avenue Neighborhood Study  
City of Edina, MN

01710664  
May 2017

Figure 20: 50th Street Two-Way Daily Volumes



**Comparable Location AADT Changes**  
50th Street and France Avenue Neighborhood Study  
City of Edina, MN

**Figure 21: Comparable Location ADT Changes**

001710654  
May 2017

Despite stagnation in the volume of daily traffic, residents in the central cities and first ring suburbs complain that traffic congestion is getting worse. One possible explanation for this observation is that the AM and PM peaks are now longer than they were in the past. Peak hour traffic actually lasted for one hour several years ago. It now lasts for one hour and 15 minutes, and the previous 15-minute long peak of the peak is now 20 minutes or 25 minutes long. During the development of this Small Area Plan, traffic was one of the most common concerns raised by residents, who, when asked, often acknowledged that reducing traffic would be difficult. For example, residents and businesses have not been in favor of actions to widen West 50<sup>th</sup> Street or France Ave., such as by removing trees or the front end of stores. Additionally, planning personnel from the City of Minneapolis believe that 50<sup>th</sup> Street may be temporarily incurring additional traffic from Minneapolis residents who are using different routes during the reconstruction of I-35W.

The January, 2017, study by SRF Consulting Group showed that despite the increase in the volume of peak hour traffic and the increased duration of the peak periods: 1) 10 important intersections in the study area will continue to operate at acceptable Levels of Service (LOS) and 2) there still remains capacity to accommodate more vehicles at the intersections. At the same time, the study:

- Identified long, peak period queues both east and west of France Avenue on 50<sup>th</sup> Street<sup>5</sup>;
- Determined that the source of traffic congestion (long queues) at the study area's intersections is primarily the volume of east/west and north/south regional trips travelling on 50<sup>th</sup> Street and France Avenue, respectively; and
- Noted that, by comparison, trips generated by land uses located in the study area only contribute a small percentage of the traffic that is causing the congestion.

### **Local Streets in the Study Area**

Other streets in the study area and its surrounding influence area are under City of Edina jurisdiction and have different functions. For example, 49-1/2 Street (now named Market Street), Halifax Avenue, and 51<sup>st</sup> Street are three local streets that enable cars to circle around the intersection of 50<sup>th</sup> Street and France Avenue, thereby reducing the number of left-turns, which can cause back-ups at the intersection. Indianola Avenue, Juanita Avenue, 49<sup>th</sup> Street, Maple Road, Townes Road, and Halifax Avenue (south of 50<sup>th</sup> Street) are local streets where the primary function is to provide access to adjacent residential properties.

### **Parking**

Free parking is provided at the study area, and it is expected that this will continue. Before construction activities began for the Nolan Mains development, there were 907 parking stalls provided in three parking ramps and various surface lots within the district. After completion of the Nolan Mains development project there will be 1,170 free parking stalls in three ramps and various surface lots. Analysis showed at the least busy time of the year (October), there will be a district-wide parking demand for 978 stalls, resulting in an excess supply of 192 parking stalls. At the busiest time of the year (December), there will be a district-wide demand for 1,119 stalls, resulting in a 51 stall excess in capacity. Neither of these excesses is sufficiently large enough to accommodate an increase in parking

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<sup>5</sup> The study forecasts the new Nolan Mains development to generate 2,408 daily trips, 144 AM peak hour trips and 203 PM peak hour trips. Analysis showed that under existing conditions and forecast Year 2020 conditions, with Nolan Mains fully built-out, 10 intersections within the 50<sup>th</sup> & France influence area operate (and will operate) at LOS D or better. (Source: SRF Consulting Group, January 2017)

demand if sufficient development and redevelopment occur. Therefore, developments in the study area will need to either provide their own parking or public/private agreements will need to be reached on how to meet the increased demand.

The City, in the past, has provided parking in the ramps to meet demand generated by land uses at a Floor: Area Ratio (FAR) of 1.0, and the land owners have been responsible for providing parking in the ramps for FARs that exceed 1.0. The City has, in the past, constructed the parking ramps and maintained them and passed the cost on to the land owners as assessments. This Small Area Plan takes no position on whether such responsibilities on the part of the City are appropriate or possible for future developments, but notes that financial advisors to the City have recommended charging for parking, especially for customers who use a premium stall for an extended period of time, and encourages the City to investigate further the proper manner to meet potential further demand for parking in the study area and whether the costs for such parking should be borne by City residents generally, by taxpayers within the study area, or a mix.

In addition to identifying administrative and financing arrangements to meet future parking demand, the City will also need to identify potential locations for future parking, because the Edina side of the 50th & France commercial district is completely built-out, and constructing a parking ramp would take land that would be better suited for mixed use development out of commission.

A plausible approach would be to require new developments to construct onsite parking where parking capacity would be provided under or in the lower levels of new developments. Another approach might be to consider finding underused land nearby the study area, either in Edina or Minneapolis, and develop a new parking facility (presumably a ramp). An example of a possible location is the existing surface parking lot in the City of Minneapolis on Ewing Avenue south of 50th Street.

An important note is that the South Ramp is considered to be reaching the latter years of its expected life. The City recently invested a significant amount of money to repair the ramp, but it is possible that the City will be soon faced with the choice of having to invest significantly more money to repair or replace the ramp. Although the long-term vision for the district includes increasing its pedestrian nature, for the visible future the number of parking spaces available at the South Ramp are considered to be critical for the district. If and when the City determines that the South Ramp can no longer be used in its current form, this Small Area Plan recommends that an equivalent number of parking spaces be developed and made available, either at the current location of the South Ramp or another nearby location. A replacement of the South Ramp is also an example of a project that could allow the construction of centralized stormwater management. Additionally, if there is gap in time between when the spaces available at the South Ramp are not available, such as if it is replaced at its current location, the City needs to conduct robust public engagement to determine all parties that may be affected by the loss of the parking spaces and the impact on nearby roads from construction and develop robust plans to mitigate any harm to these parties, which likely include businesses in the district, customers and residents of nearby neighborhoods. Based on community feedback received during the development of this Small Area Plan, the criticality of community engagement and incorporating community feedback into the development plans, in order to ensure that the development is a long-term success with minimal short-term negative impact, cannot be emphasized enough

### Transit

Figure 22 shows the Metro Transit routes that serve the study area. These services include two regular routes and one express route:

- Regular Route 6, which runs north and south along France Avenue and on Wooddale Avenue between 54<sup>th</sup> Street and Valley View Road;
- Regular Route 46, which runs east and west along 50<sup>th</sup> Street; and
- Express Route 146, which runs along 50<sup>th</sup> Street and links Downtown Minneapolis and employment centers along TH 169.

City and business leadership in the study area should seek to enhance transit services and facilities to enable growth in the district while minimizing additional traffic. As shown, Route 6 provides service to the Southdale Transit Center. As this route goes north, it provides service to the Uptown Transit Center and Minneapolis Central Business District. Metro Transit has recently initiated a study to determine the feasibility of developing this route as a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line. Some BRT routes include traffic signal pre-emption, which ensures that buses have a green light at intersections; thus, further reducing travel time.

BRT service includes a limited number of stops at major destinations, which decreases bus travel time. Together, travel time improvements and enhancements at BRT station stops (advance “real-time” bus arrival information, off-board fare collection, and low platform boarding) could make transit use more comparable to and competitive with automobile use.

*Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is a high-quality bus-based transit system that delivers fast, comfortable, and cost-effective services at metro-level capacities. It does this through the provision of dedicated lanes, with busways and iconic stations typically aligned to the center of the road, off-board fare collection, and fast and frequent operations.*

*Because BRT contains features similar to a light rail or metro system, it is much more reliable, convenient and faster than regular bus services. With the right features, BRT is able to avoid the causes of delay that typically slow regular bus services, like being stuck in traffic and queuing to pay on board.*

*Source: Institute for Transportation & Development Policy*

Figure 22: 50<sup>th</sup> & France Transit Routes



### ***Pedestrian and Bicycle***

The study area has sidewalks on both sides of the major streets: 50<sup>th</sup> Street, France Avenue, Market Street, Halifax Avenue, and 51<sup>st</sup> Street. The sidewalks on 50<sup>th</sup> Street are 20 feet wide in some locations, and the sidewalks on France Avenue range between 10 feet and 12 feet in width. These sidewalk widths are appropriately sized given the volume of pedestrians observed.

Bike lanes are not provided on either 50<sup>th</sup> Street or France Avenue. Advisory signage indicates that bikes and motorized vehicles are to operate in a “shared lane” condition. Bike parking was observed to be limited in the study area.

Pedestrian access to 50<sup>th</sup> & France within Edina is available along West 50<sup>th</sup> Street, France Avenue, and by a crosswalk at approximately Halifax Avenue and West 51<sup>st</sup> Street. Each of these crosswalks crosses or is alongside a major traffic route.

Currently, the 50<sup>th</sup> & France district does not have a pedestrian entry that is intentionally welcoming or noteworthy to pedestrians. Most pedestrian access occurs on sidewalks that are located along major roads. Additionally, there is no pedestrian access directly to Market Street from neighborhoods to the north.

Two mid-block, pedestrian crosswalks have been provided on 50<sup>th</sup> Street between France and Halifax Avenues, to enable customers and other pedestrians to cross between the north and south sides of 50<sup>th</sup> Street. This segment of 50<sup>th</sup> Street is under municipal jurisdiction and not under Hennepin County jurisdiction. It is the County’s current policy not to provide mid-block crosswalks on Hennepin County roads. Therefore, in order for the City of Edina to implement these mid-block crosswalks, Hennepin County agreed with the City request to assume responsibility for this segment of 50<sup>th</sup> Street to the City.

There has been discussion with Minneapolis planning staff about developing a mid-block crosswalk on France Avenue between 50<sup>th</sup> and 51<sup>st</sup> Streets; an action that would enhance pedestrian circulation within the district. To obtain this crosswalk, the Cities of Edina and Minneapolis would have to jointly petition the County to return management of this segment of France Avenue from the County to the cities.

Regardless of the form of collaboration between Edina and Minneapolis, improved collaboration between the cities and Hennepin County regarding transportation matters is likely to improve the safety, effectiveness and usefulness of roads and transit.

### **Trends and Challenges**

The SAPWG heard several transportation-related issues from the community, including the following:

1. Improved transit service is desired, including increased frequency of service and better facilities (bus stops with heated shelters).
2. Some automobile intersections in the area do not operate efficiently, and there are backups during peak travel periods. The backups for eastbound traffic to France Avenue extend from the west at Wooddale Avenue and sometimes even to Highway 100.

3. The perceived speed of traffic is too high along Halifax Avenue and 51<sup>st</sup> Street, the southern ring road streets, and pedestrians expressed concern about waiting for a gap in traffic sufficient to allow crossing.
4. Improved bicycle facilities are desired.
5. Generally, an enhanced pedestrian realm that functions well throughout the year. Included were improvements to existing pedestrian connections linking the district to the adjacent neighborhoods and a desire for sidewalks to be more walkable during winter. However, it should be noted that some residents of nearby neighborhoods, while generally in favor of improved pedestrian facilities for the district, oppose constructing new direct pedestrian linkages between the district and their neighborhoods. If ever such a proposal is made, a robust public engagement process, including direct notice to residents within 1,000 feet of the proposed development and Public Hearings, will be required.
6. Walkways between buildings, such as between the south parking ramp and both France Avenue and 50<sup>th</sup> Street, are convenient, but should have more commercial and pedestrian activity, and could benefit from an increased amount of public art.

## Goals and Policies

### Goals

The following goals and policies were developed in response to the trends and issues identified above:

1. Participate in Metro Transit's feasibility study for implementing bus rapid transit (BRT) service along France Avenue.
2. Identify approaches for reducing automobile travel demand in the study area through:
  - development of bicycle routes on streets other than 50<sup>th</sup> Street and France Avenue and by providing bicycle facilities in the area that encourage and support bicycle use, e.g., bicycle parking racks
  - expanding the shuttle bus circulator service to include 50<sup>th</sup> & France and other nodes and activity centers throughout the City
3. Address pedestrian access at the south end of the district along Halifax Avenue and 51<sup>st</sup> Street by calming traffic, such as by developing residential properties or allowing on-street parking on 51<sup>st</sup> Street.
4. Consider redesigning the Halifax Avenue and 51<sup>st</sup> Street curve and investigate the potential benefits and costs of converting the curve to an intersection and relocating the pedestrian crossing to a right-angle crosswalk instead of being on a curve in the road.
5. To improve the year-round pedestrian connectivity of the district, review methods and technologies to improve snow removal during winter.

## ***Policies***

The following policies are directions the city will initiate to ensure that development in the district fulfills the Vision Statement and transportation-related Guiding Principles:

1. The City will coordinate with Metro Transit to explore improving regular bus service on Route 6, going to downtown, as well as for connecting routes through the district.
2. The City will coordinate with Metro Transit and participate in its feasibility study to investigate establishing France Avenue as a BRT corridor for Route 6.
3. If a higher level of transit service is implemented along the I-494 corridor, such as Light Rail Transit (LRT) or BRT, the City should encourage development of a linkage between I-494 and the district.
4. The City will research approaches for improving automobile travel at 50<sup>th</sup> & France, such as the implementation of a transit circulator that connects the district to other City districts and neighborhoods.
5. The City will explore the potential to implement additional bicycle facilities at 50<sup>th</sup> & France to encourage and support the use of bicycle travel.
6. The City will encourage the development of housing around the perimeter of the study area, such as along Halifax Avenue and 51<sup>st</sup> Street, in order to have front doors on these two streets and create a more welcoming location for pedestrians and other non-motorized traffic.
7. Approximately a year after the completion of the Nolan Mains project, the City will conduct a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) and parking analysis to update traffic and parking data and review the updated numbers against the pre-construction projections.
8. The City will require the proposers of new development projects and significant redevelopment projects to complete Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) reports as a component of the development review process. The geographic scope of TIA reports will be defined by the City of Edina, as will the scope of transportation/traffic issues to address. The geographic scope of the TIA may include neighborhoods adjacent to the immediate project area. In the event the TIA identifies traffic/transportation issues, the City and project proposer will identify mitigation measures that should be examined to achieve safe and acceptable operations.
9. Review whether coordinating traffic signals, especially during rush hour, between Wooddale Avenue and Chowen Avenue in Minneapolis would improve the throughput of cars.
10. The City will continue to follow existing district parking policy and look for opportunities to reduce the aggregate of surface parking lots in the district.

# Small Area Plan for the City of Edina's 50<sup>th</sup> & France Mixed Use Center



Chapter 7  
Implementation



## 7. Implementation

### Land Use and Urban Design Implementation

Action	Lead	Timeframe
<p><b>Incorporate this Plan by Reference</b>            The City will amend the land use designation of the 50<sup>th</sup> &amp; France study area from Mixed-Use Neighborhood Commercial to 50th &amp; France Mixed-Use Center.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The City will review development applications of all future projects within the boundaries of the 50<sup>th</sup> &amp; France district to ensure compliance with the Vision Statement and Guiding Principles.</li> </ul>	Community Development/Planning Department	With City Council adoption of 50 <sup>th</sup> & France Small Area Plan
<p><b>Zoning Regulations</b>            The City will consider setback requirements for new buildings developed in the district to regulate the setbacks for buildings: a) greater than two stories that are adjacent to residential neighborhoods and b) greater than four stories where shadows may affect sunlight reaching France Avenue and 50<sup>th</sup> Street.</p>	Community Development/Planning Department	With City Council adoption of 50 <sup>th</sup> & France Small Area Plan
<p><b>Education</b>            Work with City departments and Commissions to incorporate and feature history and education about 50<sup>th</sup> &amp; France in public realm improvements.</p>	Edina Heritage Preservation Commission and other Commissions and Departments	Ongoing
<p><b>Stormwater Management</b>            Identify opportunities to locate and construct systems to improve stormwater management, including a centralized stormwater collection systems</p>	Engineering Department	2019 and ongoing

## Economic Vitality Implementation

Action	Lead	Timeframe
<p><b>Provide additional bicycle and pedestrian linkages and connections to, through, and within the district.</b></p>	<p>Community Development/Planning Department, Economic Development Department, Chamber of Commerce</p>	<p>With City Council adoption of 50<sup>th</sup> &amp; France Small Area Plan</p>
<p><b>Support existing small business and property owners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The City will continue to participate and support the 50<sup>th</sup> &amp; France Business and Professional Association to address the convergence of significant changes in demographics, shopping/dining/ entertainment, technology, transportation and housing.</li> <li>• In response to concerns about taxes raised during the small area planning process, the City Assessor is encouraged to review the evaluation process to ensure that properties are assessed on a fair approach that considers the market value of improved properties.</li> </ul>	<p>Economic Development Department, Chamber of Commerce</p>	<p>2019 and ongoing</p>
<p><b>Improve the district's infrastructure.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The City will coordinate with property owners and utilities to inventory and assess the condition of public and private utilities to ensure that the district has reliable, resilient infrastructure to meet the long-term needs of the district.</li> <li>• The location of all utilities should be mapped.</li> <li>• Seek opportunities to co-locate, bury or hide utility lines.</li> </ul>	<p>Community Development/Planning Department, Economic Development Department, Public Works Department, 50th &amp; France Business and Professional Association, and Chamber of Commerce</p>	<p>Ongoing and as development proposal are submitted</p>

## Transportation Implementation

Action	Lead	Timeframe
Coordinate with Hennepin County and the City of Minneapolis to investigate the feasibility of developing a mid-block crossing on France Avenue between 50 <sup>th</sup> and 51 <sup>st</sup> Streets.	Transportation Planning and Engineering Department	2019
Investigate redesigning crosswalk for pedestrians crossing Halifax Avenue and 51 <sup>st</sup> Street.	Transportation Planning	2019
Provide bicycle parking infrastructure within the district and encourage development proposers to address bicycle parking in their project proposals.	Transportation Planning and Engineering Department	2019 and as development proposals are submitted and evaluated.
Participate with Metro Transit (Metropolitan Council) in its feasibility study for developing France Avenue as a bus rapid transit (BRT) corridor.	Transportation Planning and Engineering Department	2019
Review cost/benefit analysis of actions that could improve year-round conditions of sidewalks, which may include even a low technology solution, such as hiring additional personnel to shovel snow.	Community Development and Transportation Planning, Engineering Department	2019
Support the development and operation of a transit circulator that serves the 50 <sup>th</sup> & France study area and is linked to the already existing circulator serving the Greater Southdale Area and future neighborhood nodes within the city.  Encourage development proposers to consider participation in a transit circulator program concurrent with submission of project proposals.	Planning Department and Transportation Planning	2020 – 2021 and in response to development proposals
Encourage developers to improve pedestrian routes in their project proposals. Upgrade community engagement processes to ensure robust community participation in any proposal abutting or interacting with a residential neighborhood.	Community Development and Transportation Planning	In response to development proposals
Research the costs and benefits to the City of various arrangements for addressing parking within the district. Engage the community in discussions and the evaluation of alternatives.	Planning Department and Transportation Planning and Economic Development Department	2019 - 2020
Review the condition of the South Ramp. If replacement needed, determine all businesses, customers and neighbors who will be affected by the temporary absence of parking and changes in traffic and develop robust plans to mitigate any negative effect.	Engineering Department, Transportation Planning and Planning Department	Ongoing

Conduct traffic and parking studies one year after the completion of Nolan Mains and endeavor to determine causes for material differences from projections.	Transportation Planning	2020-21
Modify zoning code to codify and revise long-standing policies regarding shared parking at 50 <sup>th</sup> & France.	Planning Department	2019
The City will review its policies and practices for maintaining parking ramps in the district in order to maximize the useful life of the new parking ramps.	Engineering Department	2019
Traffic studies for future development projects should be extended beyond the roads immediately adjacent to the development site to examine potential spillover effects to roads in the surrounding area.	Engineering Department	2019