

BURNSVILLE HEART OF THE CITY

TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY

Heart of the City is Burnsville's 54-acre downtown area. Centered on Nicollet Commons Park north of Burnsville Parkway, this part of the city offers a variety of housing options for a mix of incomes, along with mixed-use buildings that provide spaces for employment opportunities and civic, social, and cultural activities. The City of Burnsville's long-term commitment to the area laid the foundation for implementation of METRO Orange Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service, set to open in 2020-2021.

Groundwork for the TOD Ordinance began in 2007, when the City adopted its Town Center (TC) Zoning Ordinance. Though the principles for TOD were similar to those for the Town Center, the City needed ordinances that were better suited to the different planning objectives for each of its four LRT stations.



Looking west from Nicollet Commons Park toward the Ames Performing Arts Center

Heart of the City grew from Burnsville's *Partnerships for Tomorrow* community visioning project in the 1990s. That process identified the creation of a central meeting area as a community goal. What began in 1995 as a streetscape project designed to enhance the area around Nicollet Boulevard and Burnsville Parkway evolved in 1999 to an in-depth Development Framework including a framework design manual and zoning ordinance. This eventually led to a fully-fledged redevelopment effort that continues today - supported by those early vision documents - ensuring that future development in the Heart of the City remains consistent with the community's long-term goals. When fully realized, Heart of the City will generate at least 15 times its original tax capacity of \$200,000. Development proposals and financing have been a combination of individual developers and property owners, with significant investment support by both the City and the Dakota County Community Development Authority, particularly around affordable housing units, both ownership and rental.

FAST FACTS

Total Development Cost: \$500M+
Total Public Investment: \$17M+
Dwelling Units: 775+
Affordable Units: 20 percent
Commercial Space: 200K sq. ft.

Partners:

- Burnsville Economic Development Authority
- Dakota County Community Development Authority
- Minnesota Valley Transit Authority
- SRF Consulting Group
- Sherman Associates

Transit: METRO Orange Line
Minnesota Valley Transit Authority

Station: Burnsville Heart of the City

Metropolitan Council Livable Communities Grants

Applicant: City of Burnsville
Year: 1999, 2000, 2001
TOD grant amount: \$5,724,634
Funded elements:
Nicollet Commons Park, streetscape, housing, public improvements



The METRO Orange Line Station will be located southwest of the intersection of Highway 13 and Nicollet Avenue. [Continue to next page](#) →

HOW DOES THE PROJECT SUPPORT TOD?

Connect: Planning for Heart of the City focused on placemaking, walkability, and connectivity. Heart of the City is near major highways, has express and local transit service, and will be served by the future METRO Orange Line. Public gathering spaces, new residences, and the renowned Ames Performing Arts Center bring the community together.

Intensify: Redevelopment of the area has added significant amounts of housing suitable for a mix of incomes that range from apartments, townhomes, and condos to buildings with a mix of uses including commercial. More residential units are proposed.

Demonstrate: The project demonstrates that with long-term commitment, public support, and market demand, a community can foster redevelopment that incorporates density, fosters a sense of community/place, and integrates walkability and transit.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Challenges

Burnsville proves that through committed investment and dedication, a highly successful mixed-use redevelopment – in this case creating a downtown – is possible. Maintaining a vision for the area and keeping up with development progress required patience and constant communication between all stakeholders, including local property owners, residents, and officials.

For a suburban community, the challenge of sustaining density often requires structured parking. The Heart of the City Parking Ramp was developed in partnership with Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA) and with support from a federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program (CMAQ) grant. This resource helped create easy access to parking for visitors to access events, shops, and services in Heart of the City.

Nicollet Commons Park and the Ames Performing Arts Center were supported by Metropolitan Council grants and donations from Dick Ames, the Marafie Foundation, and the Burnsville Community Foundation.

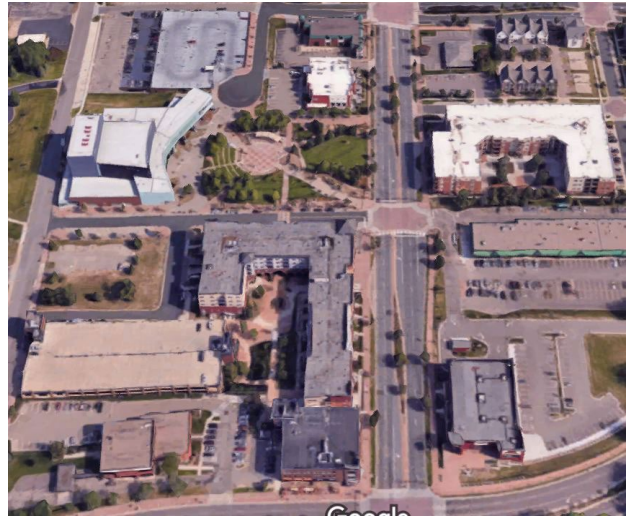
Lessons Learned

Transit investments do not drive the planning process of Burnsville's Heart of the City, but they remain important to its continued development. The parking structure serves the growing transit demand in Burnsville and supports the City's vision for Heart of the City.

The success of the Heart of the City depended on the inclusion of those who live, work, and play in Burnsville. The City and its partners actively plan and host community events all year, including a half marathon, jazz and arts festival, and community lighting to maintain interest and community investment in the area.

LEARN MORE

Planning and Project Web Sites
Heart of the City web site
Ames Center



Looking north through Heart of the City



View from Heart of the City municipal parking ramp overlooking Grand Market Place Apartments.

FEEDBACK

Did you find this information useful? Do you have questions or suggestions for improvement? Contact us at TODGuide@metc.state.mn.us

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