

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.

FAST FACTS

Total Development Cost: \$500M+
Total Public Investment: \$17M+
Dwelling Units: 775+
Affordable Units: 20 percent
Commercial Space: 200,000 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
Years: 1999, 2000, 2001
TOD grant amount: \$5,724,634
Funded elements: Nicollet Commons Park, streetscape, housing, public improvements



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 with a streetscape project evolved into an in-depth Development Framework that included design guidelines zoning ordinance language. This eventually led to a fully-fledged redevelopment effort that continues today. Early vision documents ensured that future development in the Heart of the City remained consistent over time.

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 Ames Performing Arts Center bring the community together.

Intensify: Redevelopment of the area has added significant amounts of housing 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.



Looking north through Heart of the City



The METRO Orange Line Station will be located southwest of the intersection of Highway 13 and Nicollet Avenue.

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.

Developing 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.



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

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](#)

Staff Contacts

TBD

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