



11 Joint Development

This chapter describes the long-term direct and potential indirect impacts, and short-term direct and potential indirect impacts, of the proposed METRO Blue Line Light Rail Transit (BLRT) Extension project with the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project.

This chapter compares the effects of the proposed BLRT Extension project both with and without the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project. Included is an overview of the regulatory context and methodology used for the analysis, in addition to descriptions of the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project, anticipated environmental consequences, and mitigation measures.

The discussion of impacts in this chapter assumes the construction of the proposed BLRT Extension project as described in [Chapter 2](#) of this Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS).

11.1 Regulatory Context and Methodology

This section describes the regulations affecting the evaluation and implementation of a joint development project that would use federal funds when it is associated with a larger overall project that would also use federal funds. This section also briefly describes how the Metropolitan Council (Council) assessed the impacts of the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project in this chapter.

Technical Advisory T6640.8A, Guidance for Preparing and Processing Environmental and Section 4(f) Documents (FHWA, 1987), provides guidance regarding the identification and discussion of joint development project measures that will preserve or enhance an affected community's social, economic, environmental, and visual values. In line with this guidance, this section discusses a proposed project that might be developed jointly with the proposed BLRT Extension project. *Joint development* is a term which, in the context of a federally assisted transportation project, encompasses potential development and expected impacts that are also addressed elsewhere in this Final EIS.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Circular *Federal Transit Administration Guidance on Joint Development* (FTA C 7050.1) (FTA, 2014) provides guidance to recipients of FTA financial assistance on how to use FTA funds or FTA-funded real property for joint development projects. Although this is not within the purview of the National Environmental Policy Act to address, it is worth noting here that the Circular also includes four eligibility criteria that must be met by project sponsors of an FTA-assisted joint development project in order for that joint development project to be eligible for capital funding. The four criteria are economic benefit, transit benefit, revenue, and tenant contribution.

The Council's analysis of the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project in this chapter is based on the assessment of impacts of the proposed BLRT Extension project with the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project compared to the impacts of the proposed BLRT Extension project without the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project. The methodologies for the environmental categories addressed in this chapter are described in the



corresponding regulatory context and methodology sections of the environmental categories included in **Chapters 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8** of this Final EIS.

The proponent of any joint development project associated with the proposed BLRT Extension project would need to successfully complete appropriate state environmental permitting processes. The environmental review included in this chapter relates only to the parcels of property that would contain the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project. The Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project proposes the incorporation of a mixed-use structure that includes retail space, a medical clinic, and residential units on the existing 1.4-acre footprint of the Robbinsdale Station.

11.2 Joint Development Project Description

Table 11.2-1 summarizes the elements of the proposed BLRT Extension project without and with the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project. The scope of the proposed Robbinsdale Joint Development project is not fully developed, and a cost estimate is not yet available. The Council anticipates that the proposed Robbinsdale Joint Development project would be funded through a mix of federal and local funds and/or private funds.

Table 11.2-1. Proposed BLRT Extension Project Elements without and with the Proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development Project

| Project Element | Without Joint Development Project | With Joint Development Project ¹ |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| Site area | 1.4 acres | 1.4 acres |
| Transit use | Light rail transit (LRT) station/park-and-ride lot/bus turn-around/metro transit staff relief area | LRT station/park-and-ride lot/bus turn-around/metro transit staff relief area |
| Retail use | None | 13,000 square feet |
| Medical use | None | 9,000 square feet |
| Residential use | None | 16 units (28,000 square feet) |
| Park-and-ride parking | Structured – 550 spaces | Structured – 550 spaces |
| Retail parking | 0 spaces | Structured – 33 spaces |
| Medical parking | 0 spaces | Structured – 30 spaces |
| Residential parking | 0 spaces | Structured – 16 spaces |

¹ All quantities are approximate and could change as the design advances for the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project.

This Final EIS assesses the proposed joint development project at the Robbinsdale Station location, described below.



Proposed BLRT Extension Project without the Proposed Robbinsdale Joint Development Project.

Under the proposed BLRT Extension project without the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project, the Robbinsdale Station site would include construction of a 550-space structured park-and-ride facility, a bus stop/layover, and a passenger drop-off area. See **Chapter 3, Transportation Analysis, Figure 3.4-7** for an illustration of the proposed BLRT Extension project, Robbinsdale Station site without the proposed Joint Development component.

Proposed BLRT Extension Project with the Proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development Project.

See **Figures 11.2-1 and 11.2-2** for illustrations of the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project superimposed on the proposed BLRT Extension project. Under the proposed BLRT Extension project with the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project, 550 park-and-ride spaces in a structured parking lot, as well as a bus stop/layover and a passenger drop-off area, would be provided (that is, the same features associated with the proposed BLRT Extension project). The proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project would provide an additional 79 parking spaces. The additional parking spaces would be located below the mixed-use building, and would be available for medical, residential, and retail users. The proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project would add a multi-story mixed-use retail, medical clinic, and residential space in a liner building surrounding the 550-space park-and-ride. The proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project would generate revenue for Metro Transit through legal agreements with private parties.

The proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project is a means to achieve economic growth and other local land-use and economic development goals, such as increasing the area's tax base, retaining and creating new jobs, and establishing a mix of uses around the proposed light rail station area. Additionally, an increase in density around the proposed light rail station would likely increase transit ridership.

Several factors would affect the schedule for implementing the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project. First, the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project would be implemented only after FTA issues the project's Record of Decision. Second, final approval of the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project and its inclusion in the proposed BLRT Extension project would occur with FTA's approval of a Full Funding Grant Agreement for the proposed BLRT Extension project and FTA's approval of the Formal Joint Development Application.



Figure 11.2-1. Proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development Project – First Level

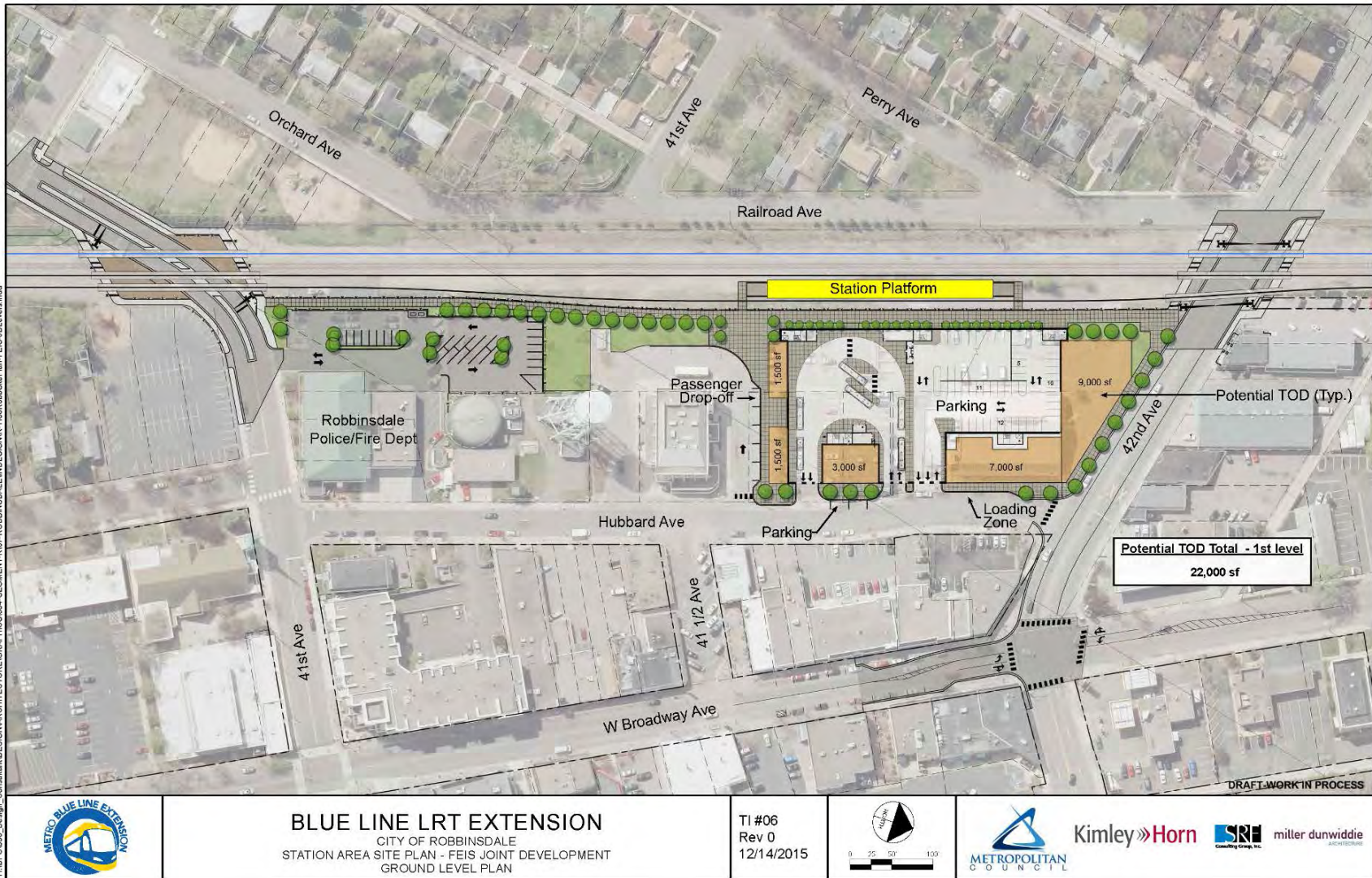
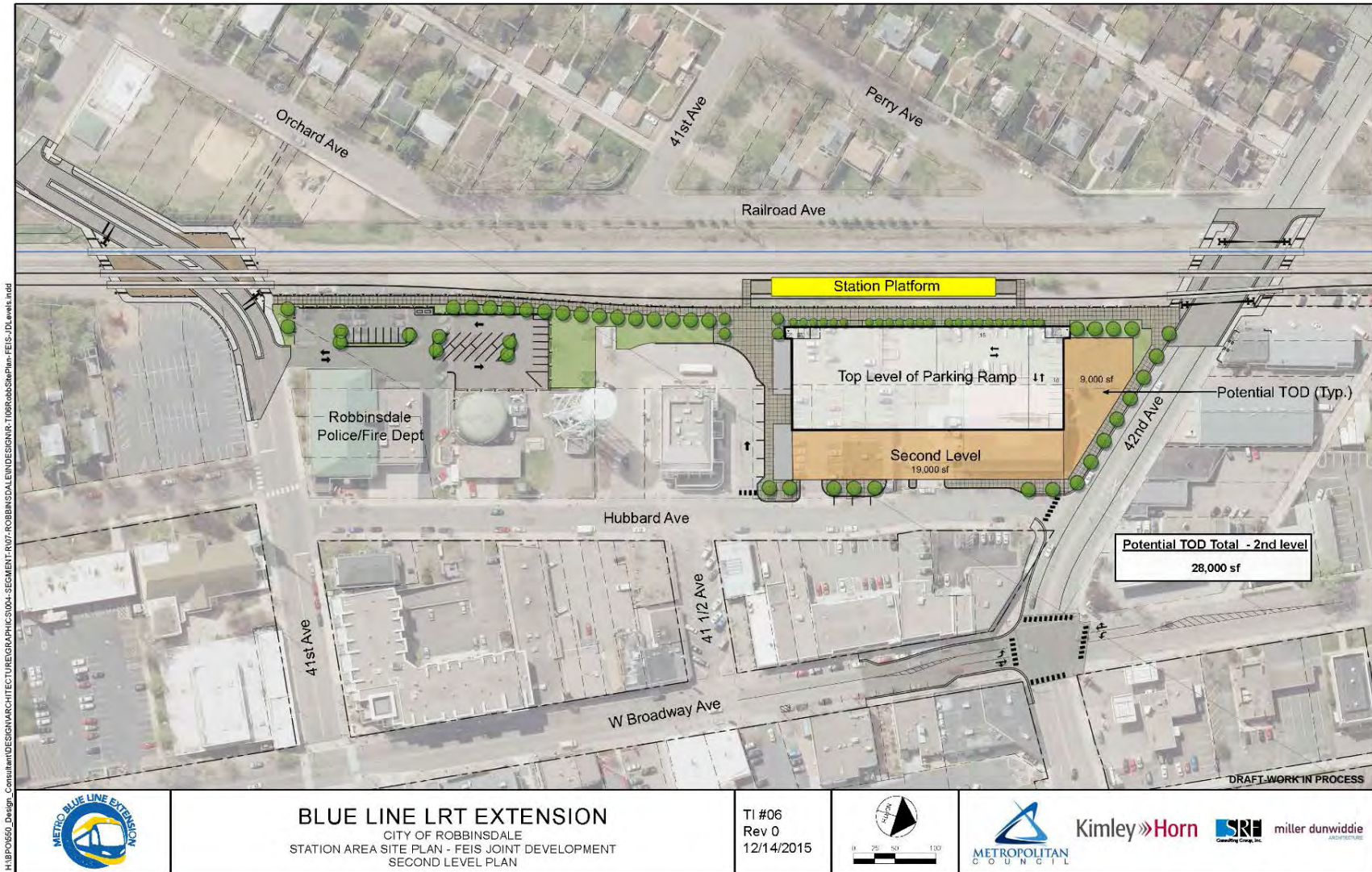


Figure 11.2-2. Proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development Project – Second Level





11.3 Affected Environment

The parcel of property in the City of Robbinsdale where the Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project is proposed to be located has a zoning classification of DD2-Downtown District (a pedestrian- and transit-oriented mixed-use area). The site contains two businesses, a grocery store and an audio/visual rental/repair/installation business. Acquisition of these properties is proposed as part of the proposed BLRT Extension project. No additional acquisitions are required to implement the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project. The location is bounded by 42nd Avenue to the north, Hubbard Avenue to the east, the Hubbard Market Place site to the south, and railroad tracks to the west.

11.4 Environmental Consequences

This section identifies and compares the long-term and short-term direct and indirect impacts that the Council anticipates from the proposed BLRT Extension project with and without the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project. *Direct impacts* are defined as those reasonably foreseeable impacts that occur at the same time and place as the proposed action, while *indirect impacts* are defined as impacts that occur later in time or farther removed in distance from the proposed action, but that are still reasonably foreseeable (40 CFR Part 1508.8). *Long-term impacts* are those that would continue to occur after construction is complete, while *short-term impacts* are those that would be temporary and that would be associated with the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project’s construction activities.

Table 11.4-1 summarizes additional impacts that would occur if the proposed BLRT Extension project were to include the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project. The table is organized by the environmental categories addressed in **Chapters 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8**, which do not consider impacts of the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project. Further details on the additional impacts are in the narrative following the table.

Table 11.4-1. Summary of Impacts from the Proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development Project

| Environmental Category ¹ | Summary of Impacts ² |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Transit Conditions | Anticipated additional increase in transit use as a result of commercial, office, and residential use. |
| Freight Rail Conditions | None. |
| Vehicular Traffic | About 860 new development-generated daily trips were assumed by the station under the proposed BLRT Extension project without the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project. Since the trips estimated to be generated by the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project land uses are fewer than the 860 daily trips already included in the proposed BLRT Extension project traffic analysis, no additional trips and no additional infrastructure improvements are expected. A short-term increase in construction traffic and congestion is anticipated with the construction of the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project. |
| Pedestrians and Bicyclists | None. |



Table 11.4-1. Summary of Impacts from the Proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development Project

| Environmental Category ¹ | Summary of Impacts ² |
|--|--|
| Parking | Additional 79 spaces for the retail, medical clinic, and residential mixed-use space. |
| Aviation | None. |
| Land Use Plan Compatibility | None. |
| Community Facilities/ Community Character and Cohesion | No effect on access to community facilities. A minimal change would occur in the neighborhood's visual character with the addition of the multi-story development. The impact is not anticipated to be substantial. |
| Displacement of Residents and Businesses | None. |
| Cultural Resources | None. |
| Visual/Aesthetics | Addition of the multi-story buildings would affect the visual environment around the Robbinsdale Station area by adding taller and larger structures, though this impact would not be substantial. The impact of the Joint Development facility would be positive, since it would help blend the parking ramp into the visual and architectural scale of Robbinsdale's downtown. |
| Economic Effects | None. |
| Safety and Security | None. |
| Utilities | Additional changes to utilities are anticipated within and connecting to the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development site. No adverse electromagnetic interference impacts are anticipated. |
| Floodplains | None. |
| Wetlands | None. |
| Geology and Soils | None. |
| Hazardous Materials Contamination | None. |
| Noise | None. |
| Vibration | None. |
| Biological Environment | None. |
| Water Quality and Stormwater | None. |
| Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas Emissions | None. |
| Energy | None. |
| Parklands, Recreation Areas, and Open Spaces | None. |
| Environmental Justice Compliance | No change in the finding for the proposed BLRT Extension project that the project would not result in disproportionately high and adverse impacts to environmental justice populations. |

¹ The environmental categories are those assessed in **Chapters 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8** of this Final EIS.

² Impacts are from the proposed BLRT Extension project with the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project compared to the proposed BLRT Extension project without the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project.



11.4.1 Long-Term Direct Impacts

11.4.1.1 Land-Use Plan Compatibility

The proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project is compatible with planned land use. The direct impact to land use from the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project would be construction of the two-story mixed-use building that would have about 13,000 square feet of retail use, 9,000 square feet of medical use, and 16 residential units (28,000 square feet). The proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project would be built in the footprint of the Robbinsdale Station site. The land is currently zoned as downtown district. The downtown district is described in the [Robbinsdale City Code](#) as:

A district to permit uses that promote conversion of existing buildings and the development of new buildings in a manner that maintains the visual character and architectural scale of existing development within the district, to promote the transformation of the downtown into an even more compact pedestrian- and transit-oriented mixed-use area.

Based on this assessment, no adverse impacts with respect to land-use plan compatibility are anticipated by the Council as result of the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project.

11.4.1.2 Economic Activity

The proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project could create a small number of direct short-term jobs and additional earnings associated with the construction of the mixed-use facility and associated development. The conceptual development plan includes retail and medical clinic space, which may increase the amount of long-term jobs and earnings for the region. The increased parking and increased density and transit access could provide an economic stimulus to local retail shops as customers frequent the area.

The proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project would add about 13,000 square feet of retail use, 9,000 square feet of medical clinic, and 16 residential units. The residential units would be either owner-occupied or rented. Additional uses at the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development site would tend to increase site economic activity, property value, and tax collections.

The Council expects the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project to have a positive impact on the local economy through the creation of jobs, increased density, and increased transit access. Based on this assessment, no adverse impacts with respect to economic activity are anticipated by the Council as a result of the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project. Since the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project would not require any additional property acquisition, no long-term adverse impacts to property tax collections are expected.



11.4.1.3 Neighborhood and Community Impacts

The following evaluation criteria were used by the Council to analyze impacts to neighborhoods and the community:

- **Access to community facilities.** No direct impacts in access to the community facilities in Robbinsdale are anticipated.
- **Community character.** Compared to the proposed BLRT Extension project, the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project would not cause additional noise or vibration impacts. As stated in **Section 11.4.1.5**, the additional multi-story buildings associated with the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project would change the visual setting to an in-substantial extent. The impact of the proposed Robbinsdale Joint Development project would be positive, since it would help blend the parking ramp into the visual and architectural scale of Robbinsdale's downtown.
- **Community cohesion.** The proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project site would not add physical barriers to neighborhood connectivity or cause adverse impacts to parking. The proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project would provide a mix of uses at the site, which would be consistent with the surrounding land use.

Based on the Council's review of potential changes in access to community facilities, community character, and community cohesion, the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project would not cause adverse impacts to neighborhoods or the community.

11.4.1.4 Acquisitions and Displacements

No additional property acquisitions would occur with the proposed Robbinsdale Joint Development project.

11.4.1.5 Visual Quality and Aesthetics

A visual simulation of the site with and without the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project is provided in **Figures 11.4-1 and 11.4-2**. The proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project would add multi-story structures to the landscape on a site that currently has only one-story structures. However, the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project would not result in a high degree of change to the visual environment at this location, and the changes that would occur would be compatible with the existing urban visual setting.

Figure 11.4-2. Proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development Project Site – Proposed Design



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DRAFT-WORK IN PROCESS



BLUE LINE LRT EXTENSION
 FEIS DESIGN DOCUMENTS
 SKETCHUP VIEWS
 CITY OF ROBBINSDALE
 VIEW EAST ALONG 42ND AVENUE

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 SHEET 35 OF 53



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11.4.1.6 Surface Water Resources

Floodplains

No additional impacts to floodplains would occur with the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project.

Wetlands

No wetlands are present on the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development site.

Stormwater

Since the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project would be located within the footprint of the proposed BLRT Extension project's Robbinsdale Station park-and-ride facility, no additional stormwater management would be required and the amount of impervious surface area would remain the same. All stormwater would be treated in accordance with applicable state and local requirements using the best management practices described in this Final EIS.

11.4.1.7 Transit

The numbers of transit boardings and alightings could increase as a result of the retail, medical, and residential uses associated with the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project. Additional analysis would be needed to estimate the increase in ridership generated by the mixed-use project. However, since the Council's *Thrive MSP 2040 Transportation Policy Plan* (Council, 2015) forecasts included a certain level of trip generation associated with the Robbinsdale park-and-ride and transit center site (see [Section 11.4.1.9](#)), it is likely that the ridership modeling for the proposed BLRT Extension project has accounted for the majority of boardings and alightings associated with the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project.

11.4.1.8 Parking

The mixed-use building with the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project would include an additional 79 parking spaces, which would be located in an underground parking garage that is part of the mixed-use building. Thirty spaces would be designated for the medical clinic use; 33 spaces for the retail use; and 16 spaces for the residential space (one per unit).

11.4.1.9 Roadways and Traffic

The proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project would produce an estimated 802 daily trips. The Council estimated trip generation using the Institute of Transportation Engineers' *Trip Generation Manual* (2012). The analysis was based on the proposed uses (apartment, specialty retail center, and medical clinic). The estimate assumes a multi-unit retail storefront with a 5-percent internal capture, or shared trips, from the apartment and clinic trips. The estimate also assumes a 15-percent reduction for transit-oriented development.

The level of traffic that has been analyzed by the Council in this Final EIS is based on the Thrive 2040 forecasts. The forecast for the transportation analysis zone (TAZ) that encompasses the



Robbinsdale park-and-ride and transit center site included growth in households and employment by 2040. Of that overall growth in the TAZ, the Council assumed that about 860 new development-generated (that is, not park-and-ride) daily trips would be created by the Robbinsdale park-and-ride and transit center site. Since the trips estimated to be generated by the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development land uses are fewer than the 860 daily trips already included in the traffic analysis for the proposed BLRT Extension project, the Council did not conduct additional traffic analysis, and does not expect the need for additional infrastructure improvements.

11.4.2 Long-Term Indirect Impacts

11.4.2.1 Land Use

The transition of land use and the redevelopment of property near the Robbinsdale Station could be a long-term indirect impact of the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project. The *Robbinsdale 2030 Comprehensive Plan* (City of Robbinsdale, 2010) indicates increasing density as a goal in the downtown area, including transition of some single-use parcels to mixed use. The plan states that transit corridors provide the potential for concentrations of residential uses that could accommodate the goal of increased population. Therefore, the potential development-related indirect impacts of the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project would be consistent with the *Robbinsdale 2030 Comprehensive Plan*.

11.4.3 Short-Term Impacts

11.4.3.1 Economic Activity

Construction of the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project would represent further capital investment in the regional economy in the form of additional commercial and residential facilities. This additional construction activity would temporarily increase employment, earnings, and economic output during the construction period. Without the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project to replace the loss of existing commercial structure, a potential exists for an adverse impact to the property tax collections of the city.

11.4.3.2 Roadways and Traffic

The proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project would affect adjacent roads and traffic on those roads due to an increase in construction activities at the site (for example, increased truck traffic to and from the site and temporary lane closures), compared to work at the location the proposed BLRT Extension project alone. However, this increase would be minor and is not anticipated by the Council to result in any additional adverse effects.



11.5 Mitigation Measures

This section describes measures to mitigate the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project's short-term impacts; no long-term impacts were identified. These mitigation measures will be implemented only if the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project were ultimately included within the proposed BLRT Extension project and constructed. This construction could occur concurrently with or subsequent to implementation of the proposed BLRT Extension project.

11.5.1 Mitigation Measures for Short-Term Impacts

11.5.1.1 Impact – Economic Activity

Short-term impacts to businesses associated with construction of the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project are described in [Section 11.4.3.1](#).

11.5.1.2 Mitigation

Specific mitigation measures for short-term impacts to businesses will be identified in a Construction Communication Plan and a construction staging plan, which will be implemented prior to and during construction. The purpose of the Construction Communication Plan will be to prepare businesses and commuters in the proposed BLRT Extension project vicinity for construction, listen to their concerns, and develop plans to minimize harmful or disruptive effects. Specific mitigation measures included in the Construction Communication Plan would be location-specific and could include the following:

- Issue and post regular construction updates to the website for the proposed BLRT Extension project.
- Provide advanced written notice of roadway closures, driveway closures, and utility shutoffs.
- Conduct public construction meetings.
- Establish a 24-hour construction hotline.
- Prepare a brochure with applicable construction information.
- Post special open-for-business and way-finding signage.
- Address property access issues.
- Assign staff to serve as liaisons between the public and contractors during construction.

In addition, a construction staging plan, to be reviewed with the appropriate jurisdictions, railroads, and the contractor, would be required to secure the necessary permits. Components of a construction staging plan will include traffic management plans and a detailed construction timeline.



11.5.1.3 Impact – Roadways and Traffic

The short-term impacts of the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project would include increased traffic and congestion as a result of construction activities, as described in **Section 11.4.3.2**.

11.5.1.4 Mitigation

Traffic management plans will be reviewed by the appropriate jurisdictions before construction activities begin. In some cases, intersections might need to be modified temporarily during construction to minimize vehicle delay. Measures could include adding turn lanes, constructing temporary traffic signals, revising existing signal timing plans, and/or adding warning signs.

A detailed construction timeline, to be developed by the Council before construction activities begin, will inform roadway users and owners of adjacent properties about when the activities would begin, the type of work to be performed, an estimate of when the work would be completed, and recommendations about how individuals and entities can minimize disruption to their activities.

These mitigation measures for short-term impacts will be implemented only if the proposed Robbinsdale Station Joint Development project is ultimately included within the proposed BLRT Extension project and constructed. This construction could occur concurrently with or subsequent to construction of the proposed BLRT Extension project.



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