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JAMAICA AVENUE SMALL AREA PLAN

PREPARED FOR:

City of Cottage Grove
Washington County

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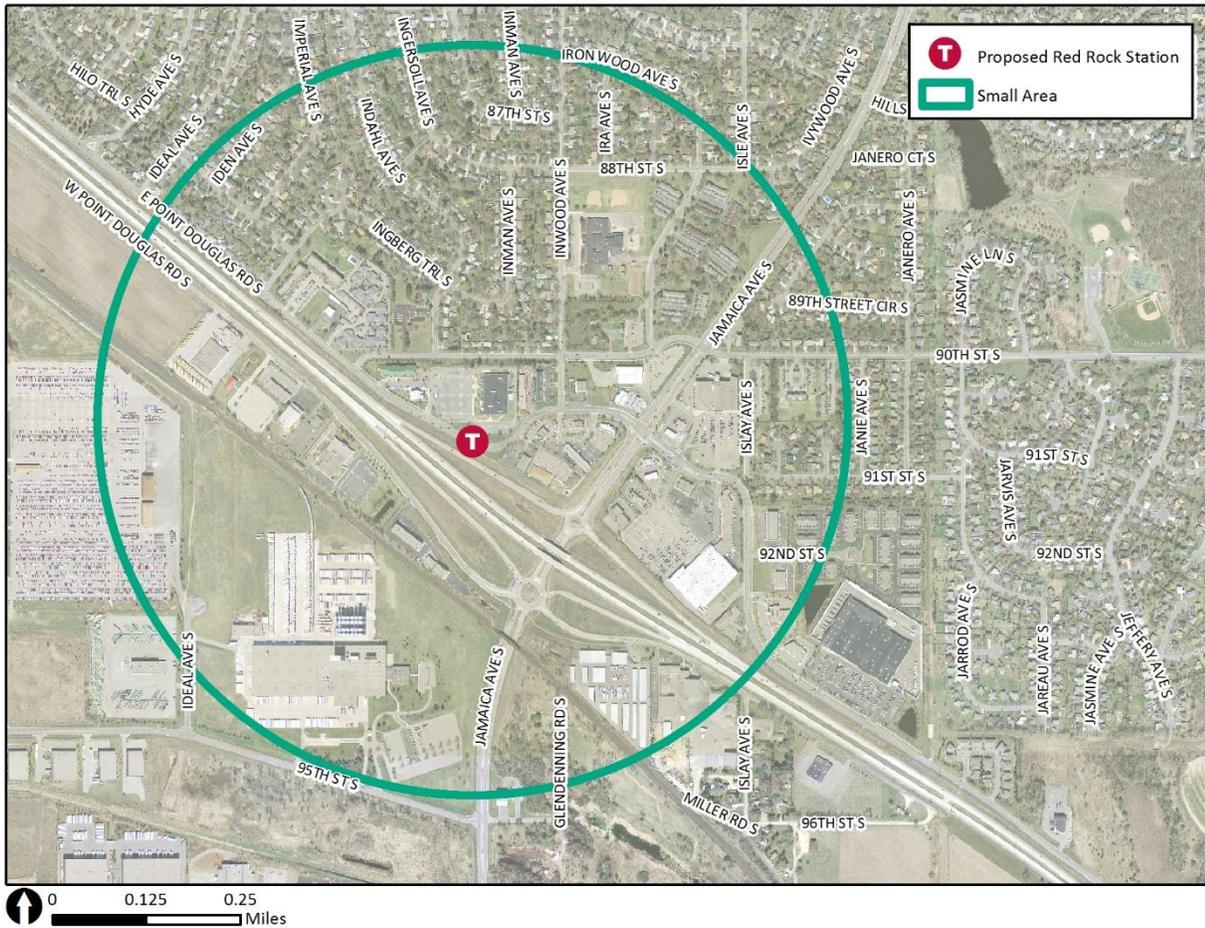


Figure 1: Jamaica Avenue Small Area

The following small area plan was developed for the City of Cottage Grove with support from Washington County Regional Railroad Authority. This planning process was an outcome of one of the recommendations from the Red Rock Corridor Implementation Plan to work with cities along Highway 61 to update comprehensive plans with consideration given to increasing population and employment density within the proposed station areas.

The goals for this small area planning process were to:

- Support the comprehensive plan process
- Support the character and vision of the community
- Stimulate economic development and redevelopment
- Improve connection through the community
- Identify transit-supportive strategies to build potential ridership

Existing Conditions Analysis

The existing conditions analysis provides an overview of the plans and studies that have been done to date in the Jamaica Avenue small area and documents the existing urban landscape of the small area. This information provides the foundation upon which the small area plan was built. While highlights of the existing conditions analysis are found in this plan, more detailed information can be found in the Cottage Grove & St. Paul Park Existing Conditions Memo posted on the Red Rock Corridor website.

OVERVIEW OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Jamaica Avenue small area includes a mix of uses, including commercial, industrial, and residential. The retailers in the northern part of the small area are primarily standalone business sites, and the retailers to the south include a mix of large format stores and standalone sites.

Bicycle, pedestrian, and street infrastructure east of Highway 61 all offer a well-connected network; less connectivity, larger parcels, and less dense building patterns exist west of the highway. Gentle slopes, diverse zoning, and higher traffic counts near the highway all contribute to the potential for transit-supportive development on the east side of Highway 61.

HIGHLIGHTS OF PREVIOUS PLANS AND STUDIES

Plans and studies reviewed include steering committee minutes, a community survey, and two background reports for the 2040 comprehensive plan; the East Ravine Master Plan; Washington County's Comprehensive Housing Needs Assessment Update; and the Red Rock Corridor Implementation Plan.

Washington County Comprehensive Housing Needs Assessment Update, 2017

Washington County's Comprehensive Housing Needs Assessment Update, produced by Maxfield Research and Consulting in March 2017, projects housing demands for submarkets in Washington County from 2017-2030 and provides recommendations on the amount and types of housing that need to be built to satisfy demand. The study also identifies areas for potential housing development.

Cottage Grove Steering Committee Documents, 2016

Notes from the Cottage Grove Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee include a discussion of key opportunities and challenges in the city as well as some of the priorities of those in leadership within the city.

Let's Talk About Cottage Grove! Survey Results, 2016

This survey, conducted in the fall of 2016, was part of the 2040 comprehensive plan update and was used to gauge perceptions of community strengths and opportunities and challenges around healthy living and food access in the city. The survey indicates (among other things) that retail and employment should be areas of focus in the small area plans.

Cottage Grove 2040 Comprehensive Plan: Background Report, 2016

The Background Report prepared by Stantec for the City of Cottage Grove serves as an overview of historical and existing conditions in the city. The report documents the small area demographic and land use changes and provides insight into how the area may continue to change in the future.

Cottage Grove Background Report: Market and Development Context, 2016

The Market and Development Context Report, prepared by Stantec and Tangible Consulting Services in 2016, outlines the market and development context that will shape the future growth of Cottage Grove. This report provides a more in-depth look at the economy and market dynamics of the city.

Red Rock Corridor Implementation Plan, 2016

High-level station area plans were developed as part of the Implementation Plan to help identify station area land uses that could support improved transit ridership. The Cottage Grove Station Area Planning Report highlighted the opportunity presented by the school district site in the Jamaica Avenue small area.

East Ravine Master Plan, 2005

East Ravine is the latest section of the city to be open for urban development. A master plan was completed in 2005 that describes land use designations, major roadway alignments, park and open space locations, and the types of utility extensions necessary to serve the area. Development occurring in East Ravine may impact the demand for certain types of elements in the Jamaica Avenue small area.

SMALL AREA OBSERVATIONS

Accessibility

Highway 61 is the major roadway that connects the Jamaica Avenue small area to the remainder of the metropolitan area. However, it is a barrier in the small area, since there are few places to cross it, and crossing freeways can be uncomfortable as a pedestrian. Jamaica Avenue is the primary arterial that connects the surrounding residential neighborhoods to Highway 61. 90th Street is also an important roadway in the small area and connects vehicles with Jamaica Avenue and ultimately to Highway 61. East Point Douglas Road is a frontage road for Highway 61 and functions not only to provide access to commercial properties along the highway but also to connect neighborhoods with one another. Local streets tend not to connect to adjacent neighborhoods and only serve internal circulation.

While there are multiuse trails along East Point Douglas Road and 90th Street, there are not sidewalks or trails to connect pedestrians between the neighborhood north of 90th Street and the businesses along East Point Douglas Road. Additionally, there are no pedestrian connections from the street to the door of the businesses in the small area.

Visibility

Traffic volumes along important roadways that serve the small area are as follows:

- Highway 61: 24,500 vehicles per day (2016 traffic count)
- Jamaica Avenue: 19,400 vehicles per day (2015 traffic count)
- East Point Douglas Road: 15,100 vehicles per day (2015 traffic count)

The traffic volumes help support the type and level of retail uses in the small area. Since most of the small area is relatively flat compared to the 80th Street small area. The view of parcels from major roadways is good.

Neighborhood Amenities

There are no public parks within the Jamaica Avenue small area. The closest park is Woodbridge Park, located about half mile east of Jamaica Avenue along 90th Street. The Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park is located a little over a mile east of the center of the small area. Although this park is not within a comfortable walk of the small area, its size and regional scope would likely be an attractive amenity for persons wanting to live or work in the small area.

There is a mix of stores providing a variety of goods and services in the small area. For many households, convenient access to these businesses would be considered a strong amenity.

Market Analysis

The market analysis informs the planning process and provides stakeholders with data and analysis of the short- and long-term market trends that will shape and shift opportunities in the Jamaica Avenue small area. Important market factors related to demographic trends, economic trends, real estate supply and condition, and the opinions of real estate experts were evaluated and used to identify key findings and draw conclusions. While highlights of the market analysis are found in this plan, more detailed information can be found in the Cottage Grove & St. Paul Park Small Area Plans Market Analysis Report posted on the Red Rock Corridor website.

REVIEW OF SOCIOECONOMIC DATA

With substantial tracts of undeveloped land, Cottage Grove has grown at a consistent rate for decades. This pattern is expected to continue into the foreseeable future in which the population will grow between 10 percent and 12 percent each decade through 2040. This will translate into approximately 3,800 to 4,800 new persons every decade. This amount of forecasted growth will require new residential and commercial development to support this growth.

The Jamaica Avenue small area has a young age profile, which is likely due to the concentration of rental housing in this small area. However, a rate of homeownership in the area that is higher than the 7-County Twin Cities Metropolitan Area indicates there may be a lack of adequate rental housing (both general occupancy and senior housing).

REVIEW OF EXISTING MARKETS

The current and foreseeable conditions of the housing, retail, and office markets in and near Cottage Grove were reviewed to determine the ability of the current supply to meet market demand in each of these sectors.

Housing Market

Residential development in Cottage Grove has been dominated by single-family housing. Senior housing has also played a significant role in residential development since 2007; there has been little non-senior multifamily development in the last 20 years.

The Cottage Grove submarket (which includes the communities of Cottage Grove, St. Paul Park, Newport, and Grey Cloud Island Township) has a calculated need of nearly 7,800 housing units through 2040. Over 63 percent, or roughly 4,900 of those units, would be considered transit-supportive. In order to attain the amount of housing development indicated in the demand calculation, it will be important to provide a variety of housing styles at various price points that appeal to a range of household types.

Retail Market

The Jamaica Avenue small area includes a strong complement of different retail and service-retail businesses (located primarily on the east side of Highway 61) that are drawn by the area's strong traffic volumes, good visibility, higher incomes, flexible building layouts, and a complementary mix of existing stores. Currently, the Jamaica Avenue small area has 30 retail properties with a combined total of 770,000 square feet. Target, Cub Foods, Menards, and Walmart are the anchors that drive traffic to this district. Vacancy is currently less than one percent. Average quoted rents are about \$15.50 per square foot, which is similar to the average in the 80th Street small area.

New residential development in this area will undoubtedly fuel demand for more community or neighborhood-focused retail development. However, it also means that any short-term retail development anticipating future residential growth is at risk of a downturn in the housing market in which subdivision development does not occur or is delayed.

Office Market

While job growth in the Cottage Grove and St. Paul Park area has consistently outpaced that of the metropolitan area and the United States over the last 15+ years, there are only 0.04 knowledge sector jobs (jobs that don't involve physical production) for every household (jobs in the knowledge sector typically contain the most office-based jobs). The Jamaica Avenue small area has roughly 140,000 square feet of office space spread across 13 properties. The vacancy rate is very low at just over two percent. Average quoted rent is \$13.55 per square foot, below the South Washington County average lease rate. Much of the office space in the Jamaica Avenue district is integrated among retail properties.

Office demand in the Red Rock Corridor is closely related to the needs of the local household base. Therefore, it is assumed that as the local household base in the Red Rock Corridor increases so will the demand for small office space. Currently, there is approximately 21 square feet of office space in the corridor for every household in Cottage Grove and St. Paul Park. Assuming the amount of office square feet per household will decline over time, and assuming a future household base of 20,600, this will translate into a need for roughly 350,000 total square feet of office space – an excess demand for 48,000 square feet over the next 25 years or so. In other words, this would be equivalent of three new small office buildings (16,000 square feet) every six to eight years.

DEVELOPER INTERVIEWS

Five real estate professionals familiar with Cottage Grove and St. Paul Park were interviewed for their perspective on the market for housing, retail, and office uses both at a macro level as well as specifically within the Jamaica Avenue small area.

There was agreement among those interviewed that there is demand for affordable and senior housing, although interviewees felt that public financial support would be required for affordable housing development.

There was general agreement that the existing retail in the Jamaica Avenue small area has good anchors, which is contributing to an overall healthy level of interest by retailers and should help the area remain viable for retail into the foreseeable future. It was stated that there is demand for one or more dining or entertainment destinations, which is hampered somewhat by the

limited amount of available and adequate sites. It was also observed that the Jamaica Avenue small area is somewhat distant from the population base, which could impact short-term retail expansion, but that building more housing would definitely help to strengthen retail in either district.

Interviewees felt that the Jamaica Avenue small area is not a market for office space, but that it might be possible in the short-term to support pedestrian-oriented retail areas on a small scale.

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The following are key findings and conclusions regarding the short- and long-term market opportunities for transit-supportive development in the Jamaica Avenue small area.

Overall Factors Influencing Market Demand

The Jamaica Avenue small area is close to the developing suburban edge, which means in the short-term it has a smaller household base from which to draw from, yet in the long-term has the greatest opportunity from which to capture a growing nearby household base.

Commercial uses in the small area are spread out along Highway 61, which serve to dilute the energy and activity generated by these uses. Similarly, the west side of Highway 61, though proximate to the proposed Red Rock Corridor bus rapid transit (BRT) station, is not only cut off from the east side of Highway 61, it consists mostly of low density uses, which limits the number of local households and workers that could support increased activity in the small area.

Short-Term (Less than Five Years)

Housing will be in high demand in the near-term. However, the demand for multifamily housing will skew toward older households that live nearby and want to downsize their housing instead of toward young professionals. Once the new senior housing developments in the 80th Street small area become fully absorbed, developers may start to look to the Jamaica Avenue small area.

Retail space in the Jamaica Avenue small area is currently almost full, with the exception of a few vacant spaces that are part of the normal turnover process. However, the reconstruction of nearby Keats Avenue at Highway 61 and the introduction of sewer and water into that area may lead to the Keats Avenue interchange area capturing future commercial development

The short-term demand for office space in the Jamaica Avenue small area will be minimal. It currently functions secondarily to the office submarket in the 80th Street small area, and the current focus of the existing office space is on the west side of Highway 61 away from the core commercial activity.

Long-Term (More than Five Years)

Long-term housing in the Jamaica Avenue small area will be contingent on the provision of redevelopment sites. Demand for multifamily will remain strong in the long-term; however, the current supply of sites primed for redevelopment is limited. Long-term candidate sites do exist in the area, such as one or more of the large-format stores.

Since the Jamaica Avenue small area is located within a couple miles of significant tracts of vacant land that could be developed with housing, the area may experience the significant population growth. This will fuel demand for retail space; however, if large-scale commercial development is allowed to occur near Keats and Highway 61, it may have a serious impact on the potential to transform the Jamaica Avenue small area.

The long-term potential for office space in the Jamaica Avenue district is minimal, unless the Cottage Grove Business Park fills with growing businesses that require office space with better visibility or access.

Transit-Supportive Principles

Based on the existing conditions and market analysis of the small area, as well as engagement with the public and stakeholders, the transit-supportive principles found in Table 1 were developed to guide the Jamaica Avenue small area.

Table 1: Transit-Supportive Principles for the Jamaica Avenue Small Area

Mobility & Connectivity	Create a safe and inviting pedestrian network between destinations in the small area
	Improve multimodal connections to the employment surrounding the small area
	Prioritize pedestrian connections from streets to the doors of commercial developments
	Increase bicycle connections within the small area
Parking	Encourage parking to be organized secondary to the pedestrian environment
	Support shared parking agreements
	Encourage bicycle parking to be included with new developments
Diversity of Land Uses	Build upon the diversity of housing types in the small area through the support of additional multifamily and senior housing
	Encourage horizontal mixed-use developments within the small area
Density	Allow for densities of at least 40 units per acre within the small area (currently ranges from 1-4 to 24 units per acre)
Design	Introduce pedestrian-scale lighting, wayfinding, plantings, and street furniture in the small area
	Increase street connectivity as large sites redevelop
	Encourage pedestrian-oriented site designs
	Introduce public gathering spaces

Small Area Vision

The following vision was written for the Jamaica Avenue small area based on public and stakeholder input:

The vision for the Jamaica Avenue small area is to build on the established retail district with additional commercial types and multifamily housing. Current pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure will be supplemented with improvements connecting bicyclists and pedestrians to the doors of residential and commercial developments. The area will transform to be a pedestrian-oriented street lined with new restaurant types, stores, housing, and a community gathering space. The Jamaica Avenue small area will be a walkable place where people can dine, shop, and gather.

Development Scenarios

As part of the market analysis for the plan, the assessed property value per square foot was investigated for the parcels within the small area. This information is displayed for the Jamaica Avenue small area in Figure 2.

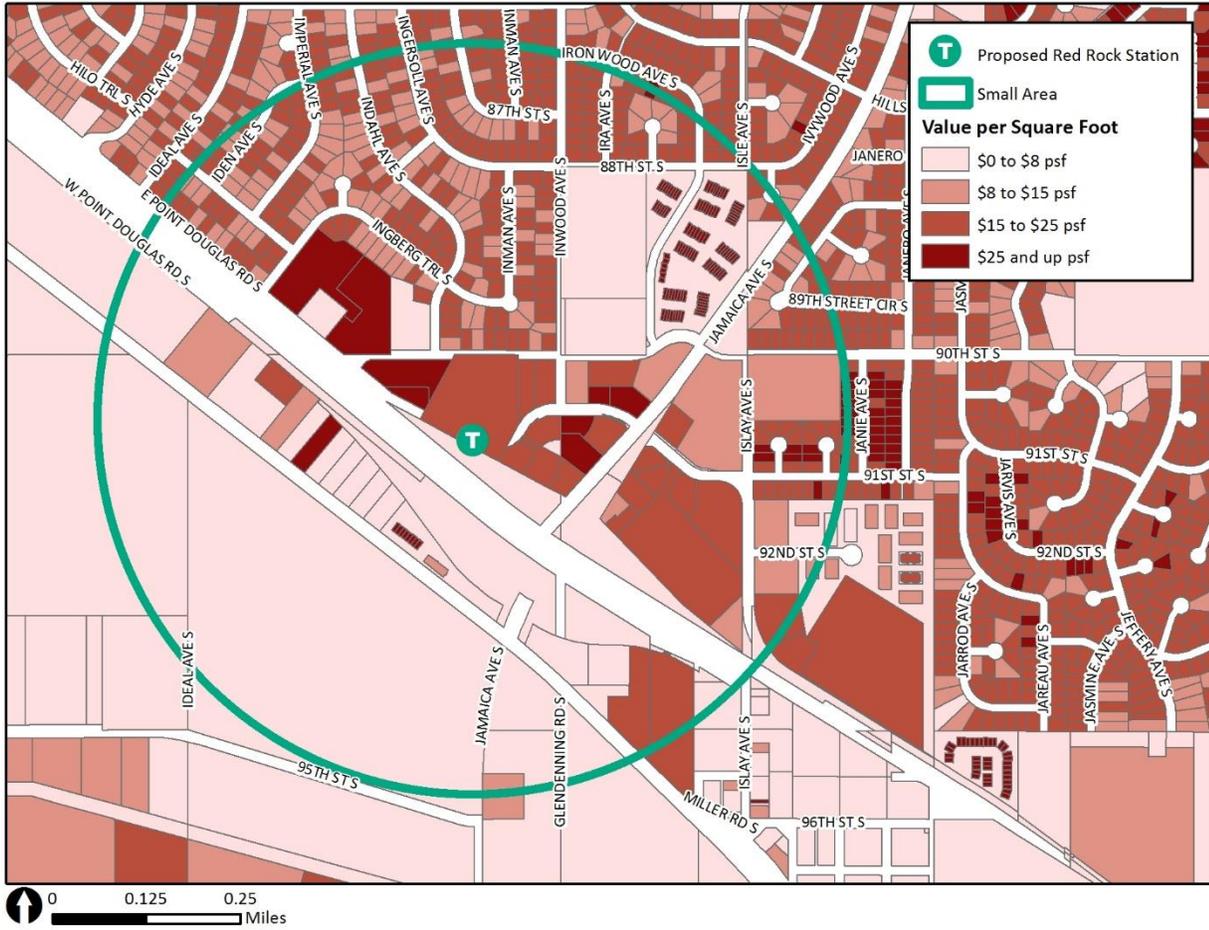


Figure 2: Assessed Property Value per Square Foot by Parcel in the Jamaica Avenue Small Area

The existing conditions and market analysis was used to identify potential opportunity areas within the Jamaica Avenue small area. These areas are shown in Figure 3. The purpose of this analysis was to identify potential project areas that may be of interest to developers in the near- to medium-term. It is important to note that the participation of existing property owners, through sale of the property or some other form of collaboration, is a critical condition for any new development to proceed. This analysis did not evaluate the views of existing property owners and does not imply that identified development opportunity sites will be redeveloped or should be redeveloped. It does not take away or diminish the rights of property owners to keep ownership of their properties or to sell their properties to whomever they choose. Talking to existing property owners would be an important early step in further exploring the development potential of any of these sites.

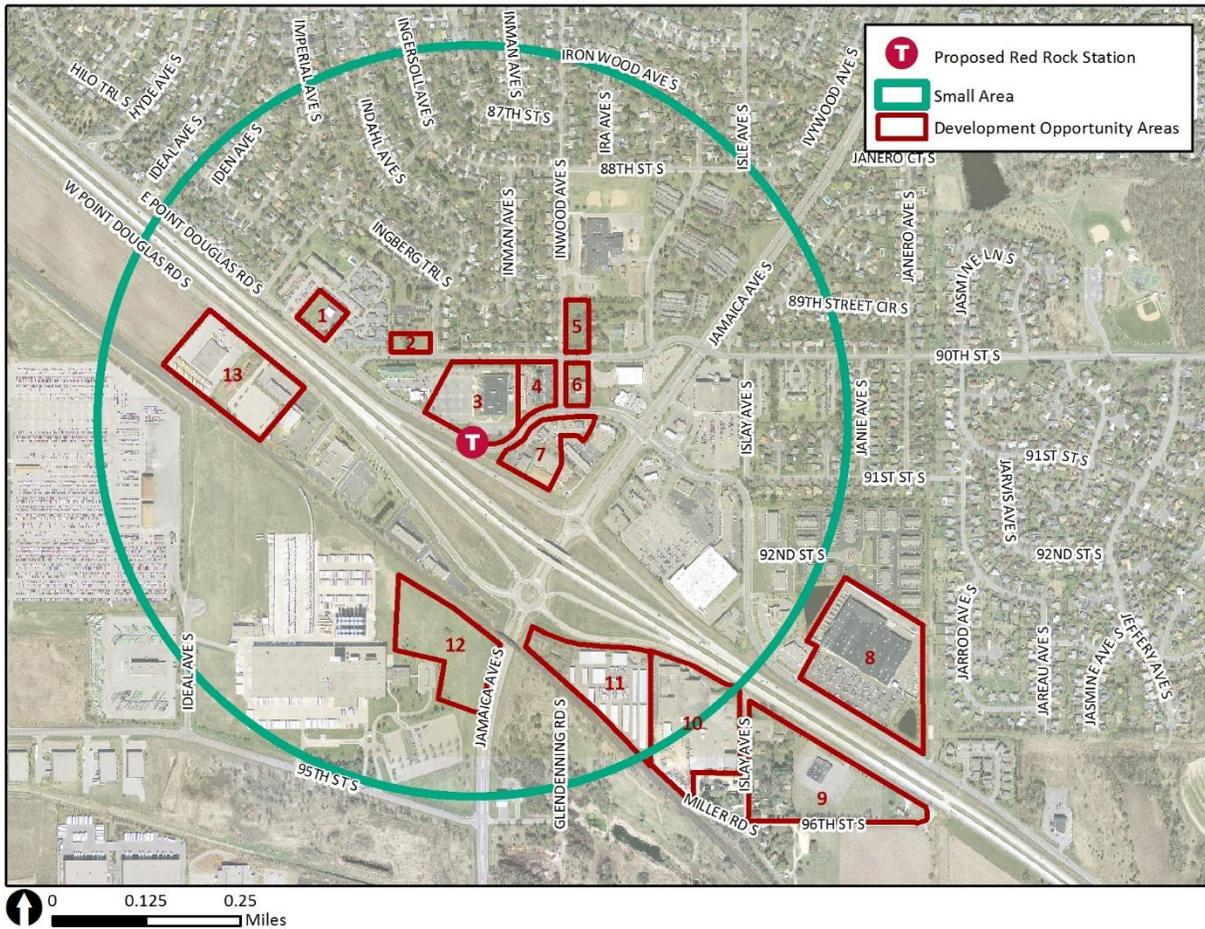


Figure 3: Jamaica Avenue Small Area Potential Opportunity Areas

The potential opportunity areas were then further classified as areas likely to change and areas to possibly change. The areas identified as likely to change are those that developers would likely be interested in first. These classifications are depicted in Figure 4.



Figure 4: Jamaica Avenue Small Area Opportunity Area Classifications

The potential opportunity areas were further thought out into development scenarios to visualize how such developments could look in the community, provide additional housing and retail options, and affect the city's tax base. The development scenarios created are located at various sites/parcels along Jamaica Avenue, East Point Douglas Road, and 90th Street. All of these parcels are in some form of private ownership and will need to be acquired, and a couple of sites are currently vacant. The proposed development scenarios are based on 5, 10 and 20 year increments that reflect current market conditions in the short-term and are more visionary in the long-term.

SHORT-TERM OPPORTUNITIES

Short-term opportunities include development of vacant sites associated with larger tracts of land (shown in Figures 5 and 6).

- Sites: 1.5 acres
- Multifamily Units: 78
- Townhouse Units: 5

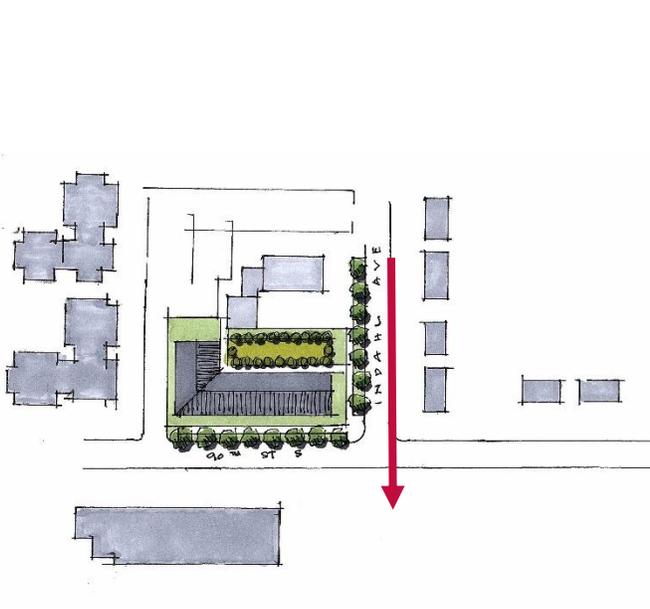


Figure 5: Development Scenario Near 90th Street & Indahl Avenue

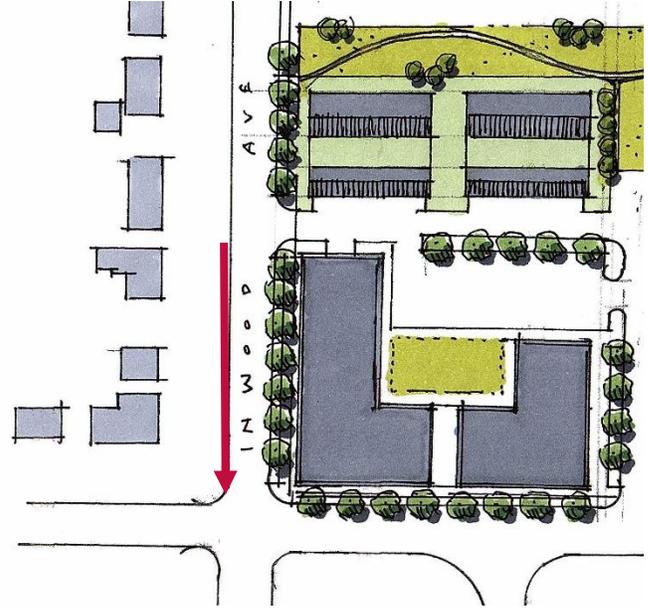


Figure 6: Development Scenario Near 90th Street & Inwood Avenue

MID-TERM AND LONG-TERM OPPORTUNITIES

Mid-term and long-term opportunities are depicted in Figure 7 and include the idea of developing a new mixed-use town center in this area that would provide an identifiable destination for Cottage Grove. This would require assembling a number of parcels and sites that would initially be developed with a mixed-use, transit-supportive program (and as responsive to the market place). Additional, future development would include a range of residential, commercial, office, and parking uses. A long-term option would be to incorporate BRT and Metro Transit park-and-ride demands in a parking structure that could also include liner buildings.

- Sites: 16.5 acres (total)
- Right-of-Way: 3.2 acres
- Parking: 2.8 acres
- Commercial/Retail: 172,200 square feet
- Multifamily Units: 264



Figure 7: Development Scenario for the Jamaica Avenue Small Area

An additional study of the Jamaica Avenue small area included the potential to redevelopment the Menards site as well as future potential redevelopment of the Cub and Target sites. The Menards site includes 14.9 acres that fronts onto East Point Douglas Road. The study addressed more transit-supportive uses such as multifamily and townhouse residential uses as well as commercial and mixed-use along East Point Douglas Road, as depicted in Figure 8. The study also focused on increased pedestrian connectivity based on smaller buildings and a greater number of intersections.



Figure 8: Development Scenario for the Current Menards Site on East Point Douglas Road

The Cub Foods and Target sites are currently impacted by poor vehicular access and circulation due to high traffic volumes and conflicting turn movements along East Point Douglas Road and Jamaica Avenue. The study recommended intersection improvements and illustrated one way to accommodate redevelopment over time. These scenarios would include a range of commercial, retail, residential, and parking uses that feature a more connected street and block pattern, well-defined pedestrian improvements, and smaller and more flexible parcels that can be developed on an incremental basis.



Figure 9: Development Scenario for the Existing Cub Foods Site Along Jamaica Avenue



Figure 10: Development Scenario for the Existing Target Site Along East Point Douglas Road

Mobility Improvements

Mobility improvements within the Jamaica Avenue small area would be beneficial for those walking and bicycling throughout the small area as well as for connections to the proposed Red Rock Corridor BRT station. As indicated in Figure 11, mobility improvements are identified throughout the small area.



Figure 9: Proposed Mobility Improvements in the Jamaica Avenue Small Area

PRIORITY CORRIDORS

One priority mobility improvement in the Jamaica Avenue small area is the completion of the sidewalk network along West Point Douglas Road. Bicyclists and pedestrians currently traveling along this roadway experience gaps in the network, and the trail ends prior to the Cottage Grove Park & Ride, making it uncomfortable for those bicycling or walking to the park-and-ride. Stakeholders and the public also highlighted the current issues with crossing Jamaica Avenue at East Point Douglas Road, so this mobility improvement is also a priority.

Implementation Strategies

The Jamaica Avenue small area presents opportunities for placemaking (creating a unique identify for the area) and development that would increase the vibrancy of the area around the station, enhance its value to the community, and build population and transit ridership. This section of the plan offers implementation strategies for proposed improvements to move this plan to actionable change.

The recommended implementation strategies build on research, analysis, and engagement—including market research, observations of development trends, interviews with developers, and discussions with the project steering committee and the

public. Site-specific recommendations also draw on the outcomes of the December 5, 2017 Implementation Workshop, which gathered implementation leadership at the city and county levels to brainstorm how to implement development concepts for Cottage Grove and St. Paul Park small areas.

GENERAL STRATEGIES

Some general implementation strategies for encouraging transit-supportive development in the Jamaica Avenue small area are as follows:

- **Financial Strategies**
 - Create tax increment financing (TIF) districts as requested by developers for sites within the small area
 - Bond to help developers secure a low interest rate
 - Dedicate resources to help secure land for transit-supportive developments
- **Regulatory**
 - Amend zoning or create zoning overlays that allow for mixed uses and at least 40 units per acre in the small area
 - Create or amend site plan regulations to require developers to construct pedestrian infrastructure from the door of their building to the sidewalk or trail along the street
 - Require bicycle parking at new developments within the small area
 - Create design guidelines for the small area so that development and redevelopment maintains the character desired by the community
 - Encourage parking to be oriented second to the pedestrian environment with the small area
- **Policy**
 - Establish economic development as a priority and share this priority with other departments
 - Connect small area plans and economic development chapter of the comprehensive plans
 - Make transit-supportive policy statements in the land use, housing, and transportation chapters of the city's comprehensive plan and specifically refer to the Red Rock Corridor and building ridership in the corridor
 - Review role of and potentially expand responsibilities for Economic Development Authority
- **Promotion**
 - Identify advocates for transit-supportive developments and communicate consistently
 - Participate in a corridor-wide economic development strategy
 - Educate the public and city councils regarding transit-supportive development
 - Host developer panels to discuss development opportunities within the small area
 - Advertise potential development or redevelopment opportunities
- **Land Assembly**
 - Support land acquisition for transit-supportive developments
- **Public Improvements**
 - Fund enhanced streetscaping, public art, or community spaces within the small area
 - Maintain infrastructure to quality standards to entice continued and additional development
 - Create a consistent pedestrian network throughout the small area

IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

Market and development research found market support for both retail and residential development in the Jamaica Avenue area, under certain conditions. Nevertheless, development in the small area will face challenges, particularly where it entails redevelopment of already developed property. Among them are the following:

- **Site assembly.** Acquiring property for redevelopment in the small area adds a cost premium compared with greenfield development (building on undeveloped land). It also extends the development timeline and introduces holdout risks where multiple properties need to be acquired.
- **Lack of precedents.** The multifamily housing and retail formats that are envisioned would be pioneering in the station area. This introduces uncertainties for developers because there are not rent precedents that developers can use to estimate their future rental income.
- **Public role.** While Cottage Grove has a history of taking action to attract development, implementing the Jamaica Avenue small area plan will require new types of actions—with implications for staffing, financial planning, and communication.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

The following are some approaches that may be utilized to pursue the development vision in the Jamaica Avenue small area:

- **Pursue high-quality development at the single owner sites.** This entails opening the lines of communication with property owners, such as the two churches and the owner of the animal hospital, to understand their short- and long-term goals and their potential interest in additional development on, or redevelopment of, their properties. The public sector can also play a role in attracting developer interest to these sites and supporting development financially where appropriate.
- **Make public realm improvements.** Every action that increases the comfort for pedestrians will improve the attractiveness of the area for redevelopment. Implementing plan recommendations related to bicycle and pedestrian connectivity, intersection improvements, and wayfinding (directional signage) will improve the attractiveness of the area to prospective developers.
- **Set high design standards for new developments.** New development has a visual impact for a long time. It is important to put high design standards in place to ensure that it benefits the community and sets a high bar for subsequent development projects. The standards may differ for different subareas within the station area. Setting standards may entail changes to the zoning code, map, or both and may be supplemented by the creation and adoption of development objectives or design standards documents.
- **Prepare to play a financial role in supporting new development.** Public financial support is expected to be required for redevelopment projects in the small area. Some level of financial support may also be required for development of undeveloped land, where proposed development types are pioneering for Cottage Grove. Specific steps that could be taken to prepare for playing an appropriate development finance role include:
 - Evaluating the likely public sector costs for development through a pro forma analysis
 - Preparing a development finance toolkit in anticipation of development
 - Evaluating and deciding on a reasonable pace of public sector development and placemaking investment that can be sustained over the next couple of decades
 - Adopting a communication strategy about development-related goals and the public sector actions that may be required to attract and shape development. Cities need to invest in themselves over time, but public understanding of that reality requires ongoing communication.