The Downtown Milwaukie segment extends from Highway 224 south to the bridge structure that spans Kellogg Creek and McLoughlin Boulevard (Fig. 45). Milwaukie, a city of 20,000 with a rich history, is located on the banks of the Willamette River. This segment is characterized by the city’s traditional, small town Main Street, which extends for the entire length of the segment. More than 1,200 people work in downtown Milwaukie, and thousands more use the various TriMet bus lines that connect in downtown. Main Street has long been home to small businesses and professional service providers, with restaurants, coffee shops and home design companies recently gaining presence. Dark Horse Comics, the largest employer downtown, has been a Main Street fixture for more than 20 years. The Milwaukie High School, St. John the Baptist Catholic School and Portland Waldorf School are both within a short walk of Main Street, and the City’s historic City Hall sits across the street from a block that hosts the Milwaukie Farmers Market eight months a year.

The Tillamook Branch freight rail line runs through downtown Milwaukie, as does McLoughlin Boulevard. Both transportation corridors have seen plans and improvements to better integrate them with the downtown area, including those underway with the PMLR project. Milwaukie’s Riverfront Park, just across McLoughlin Boulevard, will soon be improved and expanded, and plans are in the works to better connect downtown with the Willamette River. Several other transportation and revitalization projects are on the boards. The PMLR project, combined with these other local initiatives, will improve neighborhood connections to the downtown and help create a vibrant streetscape, while retaining the area’s historic, small-town charm.
Neighborhood Context, Opportunities and Challenges

The light rail alignment through this segment runs adjacent to the east side of the freight railroad, which sits between downtown Milwaukie and the Historic Milwaukie and Lake Road neighborhoods. Since the City adopted its Downtown Plan in 2000, Milwaukie’s downtown area has begun revitalization with new residences and retail spaces and near-term plans to expand and redevelop Riverfront Park. Downtown Milwaukie has the good bones of a classic small-town downtown. Existing attractions include views of the Willamette River, historic buildings, a Sunday farmers’ market, restaurants, coffee shops and stores. More than 1,200 people work at the many downtown businesses, including the corporate offices for Dark Horse Comics, ODS, Advantis Credit Union and Reliable Credit.

To the east of the alignment sit two residential neighborhoods, Historic Milwaukie and Lake Road. The areas near the tracks contain a mix of single family and multifamily residences, and several local cultural landmarks such as Milwaukie High School, St. John the Baptist Church and School, and the Portland Waldorf School.

The Milwaukie station presents some unusual opportunities and challenges because the light rail platforms will be adjacent to freight tracks on one side and to developable land (the “Triangle Site”) on the other (Fig. 46). In downtown Milwaukie, the freight tracks are a challenge since they create a barrier between the platform area and the adjacent land and activity to the west (the South Downtown development area).

Development opportunities: The station will provide a southern anchor to Milwaukie’s downtown, and generate activity to support revitalization along the Main Street retail spine. The station area is planned to be an active node that provides access to downtown, is a destination in its own right, and complements activities and development to the north. Many lots throughout downtown, including properties immediately adjacent to the station platform, offer opportunities for future redevelopment with a mix of housing,

The Kellogg Creek Bridge provides an opportunity to create a new, attractive portal into downtown from Lake Road, and a challenge to create a safe bicycle and pedestrian environment under the bridge. It is critical in Milwaukie’s small scale downtown that every project element be designed to be as slender and small as possible, to best fit into Milwaukie’s landscape.

The Downtown Milwaukie station honors the historic character of downtown and is safely and easily accessible by pedestrians, cyclists and bus riders. The project greatly improves the streetscape of downtown by reconstructing sidewalks to provide access to the station, providing both new and improved rail crossings, and by adding pedestrian amenities such as trees and streetslights. The station helps activate the downtown core by supporting a place where people want to be. A transit-oriented development adjacent to the eastern platform is a new local landmark, providing a place for neighbors to meet up and small stores to support bike commuters. Surrounding neighborhoods are better connected to downtown due to bike and pedestrian access improvements made by the project. The bridge over Kellogg Creek allows for a future multi-modal connection between the light rail station and the Island Station neighborhood to the south.

Urban Design Vision
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Opportunities and Challenges

**DOWNTOWN MILWAUKIE STATION AREA**

**Neighborhood Context:**
This station will be the southern anchor to Main Street in Milwaukie’s downtown, a classic small town environment that includes historic buildings, active businesses and a growing number of residents. The station area is surrounded by established residential neighborhoods, Kellogg Creek and Riverfront Park on the Willamette River.

**Opportunities**

1. Create a high quality station that generates activity to support the new neighborhood described in the South Downtown concept
2. Support ongoing revitalization throughout downtown Milwaukie
3. Create a new, attractive portal into downtown from Lake Road
4. Facilitate a future multi-use connection from downtown to Kronberg Park and Island Station
5. Commemorate Milwaukie’s history through the design of the light rail station
6. Develop site adjacent to station to provide a local landmark that generates activity and reinforces the “sense of place” at the station
7. Improve bus, bicycle and pedestrian facilities through streetscape enhancements

**Challenges**

8. Maximize opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian safety, as well as for access to Adams Street businesses, when 21st Avenue is regraded
9. Minimize auto connectivity reduction due to planned closures of parts of Adams and Main streets
10. Design new bridge over Lake Road and Kellogg Creek to minimize scale and create a safe environment under the bridge
11. Coordinate with future development of a new public plaza on Main Street

FIGURE 46: Downtown Milwaukie station area — Opportunities and Challenges
employment and retail uses. The city’s current zoning code supports mixed use redevelopment at densities described in the Downtown and Riverfront Land Use Framework Plan.

**Current Design Direction**

The station is located at the south end of downtown on a block bounded by Lake Road (south), 21st Avenue (east), Adams Street (north) and the UPRR tracks (west) (Fig. 49). The station platforms will be in a side/center configuration that reflects the City of Milwaukie’s recommendation to provide direct access to the adjacent Triangle Site and minimizes the size of the structure over Lake Road, Kellogg Creek and McLoughlin Boulevard (Figs. 47, 50 and 51). The platform configuration is driven in part by the requirement to maintain a buffer from the UPRR tracks; there is not enough room for a platform between the southbound light rail trackway and the UPRR tracks, so it is located between the two light rail tracks. A side platform for northbound service will help support the transit-oriented development opportunity on the adjacent Triangle Site.

To improve the safety of the intersection, the project will close the west leg of the intersection of Adams Street at 21st Avenue. It will also implement the City’s plans to limit vehicular access on Main Street south of Adams Street.

Access to the station will be primarily via foot and bike. Bus stops near the corner of Washington Street and 21st Avenue will provide a transfer point for passengers from Milwaukie and Clackamas County neighborhoods connecting to the light rail line. Some on-street Quick Drop parking will be provided on 21st Avenue, but no long term parking will be provided. It is the city’s policy not to allow park-and-ride activity in downtown zones; the city will enforce its parking policies to manage expected demand.
FIGURE 49: Downtown Milwaukie station area plan
It is likely that the standard transit shelter will be modified at this station to create an element of distinction that further supports the adjacent development opportunity and meets the city’s design goals. Improvements made by the project will be consistent with the guidelines and principles in Milwaukie’s Downtown Plan, Public Area Requirements, and Downtown Design Guidelines. Additionally, the project design will be coordinated with the City’s ongoing work to refine the plans for the South Downtown and the restoration of Kellogg Creek (Fig. 48).

The project will construct bicycle and pedestrian connections from the north and south ends of the platform to public sidewalks (Fig. 52). The space created under the new trackway bridge that crosses over Lake Road will be well-lit and designed to create a safe and comfortable environment for pedestrians and cyclists; this will be an important passageway from the station platforms and Lake Road to the future plaza at the terminus of Main Street. The pedestrian route from the station platforms to sidewalks on 21st Avenue and Lake Road will be designed for both safety and a quality of experience. This station is located at the hub of the city’s network of bikeways. Bicycle parking will be abundant and strategically located to minimize the need for cyclists to cross the light rail tracks.
Outstanding Issues

- Urban design of the station, including integration of ramps, storm water facilities, and pedestrian amenities into the site
- Public art opportunities and the specific design treatments (e.g., furnishings such as benches and shelters) at the station
- Changes in traffic patterns and volumes, and how they will affect surrounding neighborhoods

- Design of rail crossings, crossing gates and the introduction of overhead catenary systems throughout the downtown Milwaukie alignment
- Design and programming of transit-oriented development on the Triangle Site