This thesis examines how architecture can make mass transit more accessible and desirable to the public, while also taking the considerations of the public to mould the design into a more improved form and function. Specifically, it examines how creating downtown areas accessible through public transportation and creating an on-site living population would enhance the lives of those that would be using the system.

A key focus was to create a community of these on-site mass transit commuters that has ways of connecting amongst each other, while also connecting with the urban and suburban communities it connects to. This transportation hub and multi-family living complex in the suburbs also looks to enhance the image of public transportation to that of an advanced transportation system that is both safe and reliable for the public.

A NEW WAY TO CONNECT TO TRAVEL
Northstar Commuter Rail Community
Coon Rapids, MN

Northstar Commuter Rail Route
A defining factor of the site is its distinct areas utilizing the positives of both the tighter knit urban and the free-flowing and open suburban lifestyles. This merging of spaces is what brings about cohesion between the separate stations downtown and the one here in the suburbs. It is also a major factor that would draw users to live on-site, being able to draw the best from both separate lifestyles.
The most important feature of the transit center was that it needed to be functional for many different types of users. Those that would be using the site as a park-and-ride service, or those living on-site both need to be catered to. The space is open in both height and floor space to accommodate wide ranging uses for those that would get to the station early and need to sprawl out somewhere. There is also a lower and more confined space with the coffee shop and deli seating areas that lends itself to singular work and eating. There are even multiple outdoor spaces for users to visit that are both large and public or small and more secluded.
These modern apartment units define open living plans and are designed to attract young professionals looking to stay connected to their jobs downtown at a moment’s notice, and their friends and nightlife downtown as well. The courtyard and communal spaces are meant to foster a community environment amongst the tenants. The style of the apartments reflect the style of modern downtown living with the space and price only available from living in a suburban area, giving these professionals more financial freedom. All standard units are also equipped with PTAC units to give tenants better control over their climate, as well as radiant floor heating for the most energy efficient heating and cooling of the units.
Open Coffee Shop Design

Quiet Suburban Park, Lake and Path

Active and Social Interior Courtyard

North Apartment Elevation

Interior Courtyard and Apartments Section