

Chapter 4 - Land Use and Development

Introduction

Overall Pattern

The land use pattern of Hopkins has evolved over the last century and is well established (see Figure 4.1: Existing Land Use Map). In the years ahead, the focus for Hopkins will not be on new development, but on redevelopment or underdeveloped sites. Recent redevelopment initiatives have included preliminary planning for the Blake Road Corridor, initial planning for the redevelopment of the Shady Oak Road corridor and long-range planning for the Southwest Light Rail Transit (LRT). These projects and others may impact the existing land use pattern and are discussed further in this section of the Comprehensive Plan. Redevelopment projects that have recently been completed include the Marketplace Lofts in downtown and the Excelsior Crossings located in the northeast quadrant of TH 169 and Excelsior Boulevard. Both projects have proven to fit the overall character and cohesiveness of Hopkins and can serve as models for other redevelopment initiatives.

Only a few undeveloped parcels of land remain. Underutilized sites and, more particularly, inappropriate uses of land are the major issues now confronting the community.

Downtown Hopkins

Perhaps one of Hopkins' greatest assets is its Downtown. The Downtown has changed over the years from an important and vibrant retail center to one that serves local convenience needs and certain specialty market niches. The dynamics of consumer preferences and the transportation network have caused such shifts in many older central shopping areas. Downtown Hopkins still, however, possesses a special character. The character of the area can be used to help reposition it to respond to contemporary market challenges and opportunities but not without the combination of private and public efforts.

There has been considerable public investment and interest in Downtown in the past, and that trend is continuing. Without question, Downtown Hopkins is one of a limited number of recognizable



Hopkins Downtown Antique Shops



Regency Townhomes

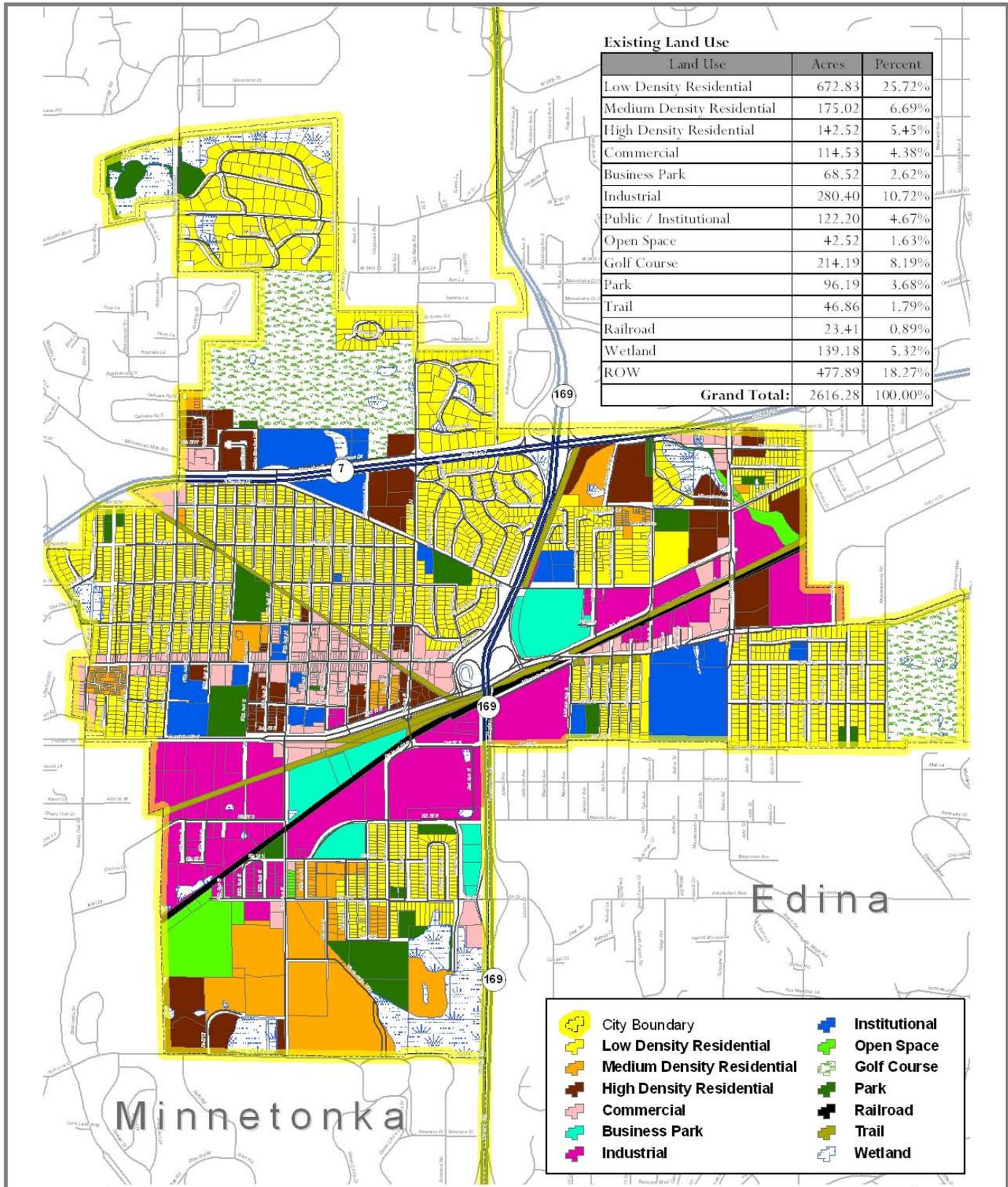


Figure 4.1 - Existing Land Use Map

central community shopping areas in the Metropolitan Area. It is an asset worth protecting. The community recognizes the importance of the Downtown and has a strong positive emotional response to the location.

Residential Neighborhoods

Another one of Hopkins' greatest assets is its neighborhoods of single-family homes, which accommodate residents of all ages. These neighborhoods give Hopkins its character and cohesiveness; however, acceptance of some of the smaller, post-war homes may wane as time goes by and long-time residents move out. Protecting these neighborhoods from inappropriate development and the effects of aging as well as preserving a strong social fabric will continue to be major challenges for the community. In the future, redevelopment may threaten existing single-family homes. The City needs to consider means to restrict the loss of single-family housing.

Industrial and Commercial Areas

Hopkins has long been an important center of employment and commerce in the western suburbs as a result of its streetcar, highway, and railroad service. Industrial development and redevelopment continue to be important to the community for purposes of tax base and employment. The City has invested staff time and financial resources to leverage private investment and is committed to an ongoing effort of business recruitment and development.

Excelsior Boulevard, Shady Oak Road, TH 7 and Blake Road have always been important roadways in Hopkins because they serve as a local access for commercial, industrial and residential neighborhood areas. Over the past few years, the City has worked with Hennepin County and other agencies to improve these corridors. The City has recently reconstructed Excelsior Boulevard to improve both its function and aesthetics. The recent enhancement of the corridor gives Hopkins a recognizable gateway into the community. The City should continue to aggressively pursue reconstruction and aesthetic improvements eastward to the St. Louis Park border.

Existing Land Use	Net Acres
Low Density Residential	672.83
Medium Density Residential	175.02
High Density Residential	142.52
Commercial	114.53
Business Park	68.52
Industrial	280.40
Public / Institutional	122.20
Open Space	42.52
Golf Course	214.19
Park	96.19
Trail	46.86
Railroad	23.41
Wetland	139.18
ROW	477.89
Total:	2,616.28

Table 4.1 - Existing Land Use (Net Acres)



Single Family Homes



SAM's Enterprise

A set of overall goals provides a framework for land use initiatives in Hopkins. Pertaining to land use, the City of Hopkins seeks to:

- **Maintain a viable downtown commercial core.** Downtown Hopkins has a unique commercial business core. Maintaining the viability of downtown is dependent on the success of its businesses. Redevelopment in and around downtown Hopkins will occur over the next 30 years. Additional commercial development is likely to occur along Excelsior Boulevard, Shady Oak Road and possibly Blake Road. The City will need to carefully guide additional commercial development in a manner that is supportive of downtown.
- **Maintain a strong employment base.** Much of Hopkins' job base is dependent on the success of industrial uses located in the southern portion of the community. It is important for the City to maintain industrial uses that will provide job opportunities. The City will work to ensure these sites are utilized to their full potential as redevelopment occurs and will encourage private reinvestment.
- **Continue to emphasize compatible land uses between adjacent jurisdictions.** Hopkins is adjacent to the Cities of Minnetonka, Edina and St. Louis Park with similar land use patterns occurring along most common borders. The City will continue to work with adjacent jurisdictions to ensure seamless land use patterns along the respective borders, particularly along Excelsior Boulevard.
- **Maintain appropriate transitions between land uses.** Hopkins is a fully developed community and will likely see new development through redevelopment initiatives. The City will work to ensure appropriate transitional uses and buffering between new and existing land uses.
- **Take advantage of redevelopment opportunities to capture future Light Rail Transit (LRT) initiatives.** The Southwest LRT line passes directly through Hopkins, creating redevelopment opportunities at and around three potential station locations. These redevelopment opportunities may occur prior to any LRT improvements. Therefore, the City will work to ensure that new redevelopment in and around future station areas is appropriate and consistent with future transit improvements.
- **Continue to coordinate land use and transportation needs. An effective transportation network is vital to the future of Hopkins and its redevelopment efforts.** Over the next 20 years, traffic volumes on local roadways will continue to increase and added congestion will occur. The City will continue to assess the relationships between land use and transportation in two ways: by assessing the impacts of redevelopment on the existing transportation systems and, in some cases and locations, assessing the impacts that new transportation improvements will have on land use.

Natural Protection Areas

There are two locations of special natural significance in Hopkins: Nine-Mile Creek and Minnehaha Creek. Each is protected by the rules and regulations of a Watershed District and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. In addition, the City of Hopkins has approved zoning regulations to complement the efforts of those non-municipal agencies. The Nine-Mile Creek basin in southeast Hopkins is being protected for purposes of flood protection, wildlife protection, agriculture, natural beauty, and passive recreation. The Minnehaha Creek basin does not include agriculture but does include active recreation such as canoeing.

Other natural areas include a park and trail system that is further discussed in the Park, Open Space, and Trail chapter.

Land Use and Development Plan

Land Use Plan Categories

In addition to the standard residential, commercial and industrial land use categories, the future land plan uses a mixed land use category (see Figure 4.2: Land Use Plan). The purpose of the mixed-use category is to accommodate a variety of planning initiatives and land uses that may occur around the proposed LRT stations. The following is a review of all of the land use patterns used in the plan.

Low Density Residential

The majority of Hopkins existing housing stock falls within the low density residential land use category at 1-7 units per acre. This category accommodates the existing single-family detached housing that contributes to Hopkins' character and cohesiveness.

Medium Density Residential

Medium Density Residential uses include attached residential units, predominantly townhomes or condominiums ranging from 8-16 units per acre.

Planned Land Use	Net Acres
Low Density Residential	686.44
Medium Density Residential	163.37
High Density Residential	144.53
Commercial	91.27
Business Park	111.77
Industrial	164.70
Mixed Use	97.00
Public / Institutional	112.37
Park	94.11
Open Space	45.56
Golf Course	214.19
Trail	50.45
Railroad	23.47
Wetland	139.18
ROW	477.89
Total:	2,616.28

Table 4.2 - Planned Land Use (Net Acres)

High Density Residential

High Density Residential includes multi-unit and multi-building developments. The high density category accommodates more intense housing, such as apartments and condominium developments. The density range for this category establishes a minimum threshold of 17+ units per acre, ultimately resulting in multi-storied structures.

Commercial

Commercial land uses offer a wide variety of goods and services. Hopkins commercial uses are primarily located along major transportation corridors (Excelsior Boulevard & TH 7), which serve both regional and community needs. Commercial uses located downtown largely serve local needs and specialty market niches. Overall, these goods and services range from grocery stores, salons, dry cleaners, retailers and coffee shops.

Mixed Use

The Mixed Land Use category is intended to capture anticipated redevelopment initiatives associated with the proposed LRT stations. Each station area is likely to redevelop in a mixed-use type fashion. The density range for this category establishes a minimum threshold of 30+ units per acre. It is assumed the mixed use category will develop at 60% residential and 40% commercial. The Hopkins Station Area Plan completed in 2008 addresses preferred density ranges and uses at each LRT station. Additional planning efforts have also addressed station locations. The East Hopkins Land Use and Market Study provides a framework for future land uses near the Blake Station Area. The Hopkins Station Area Plan and East Hopkins Land Use and Market study both support mixed use development and are reflected in the land use plan.

Land guided for mixed uses is located in three areas of the community: 1) Shady Oak Station Area, 2) Hopkins Downtown Station Area and 3) Blake Station Area. Each station area, as previously noted, will vary in density and use. Based on the Hopkins Station Area Plan, the following density ranges and uses are suggested:

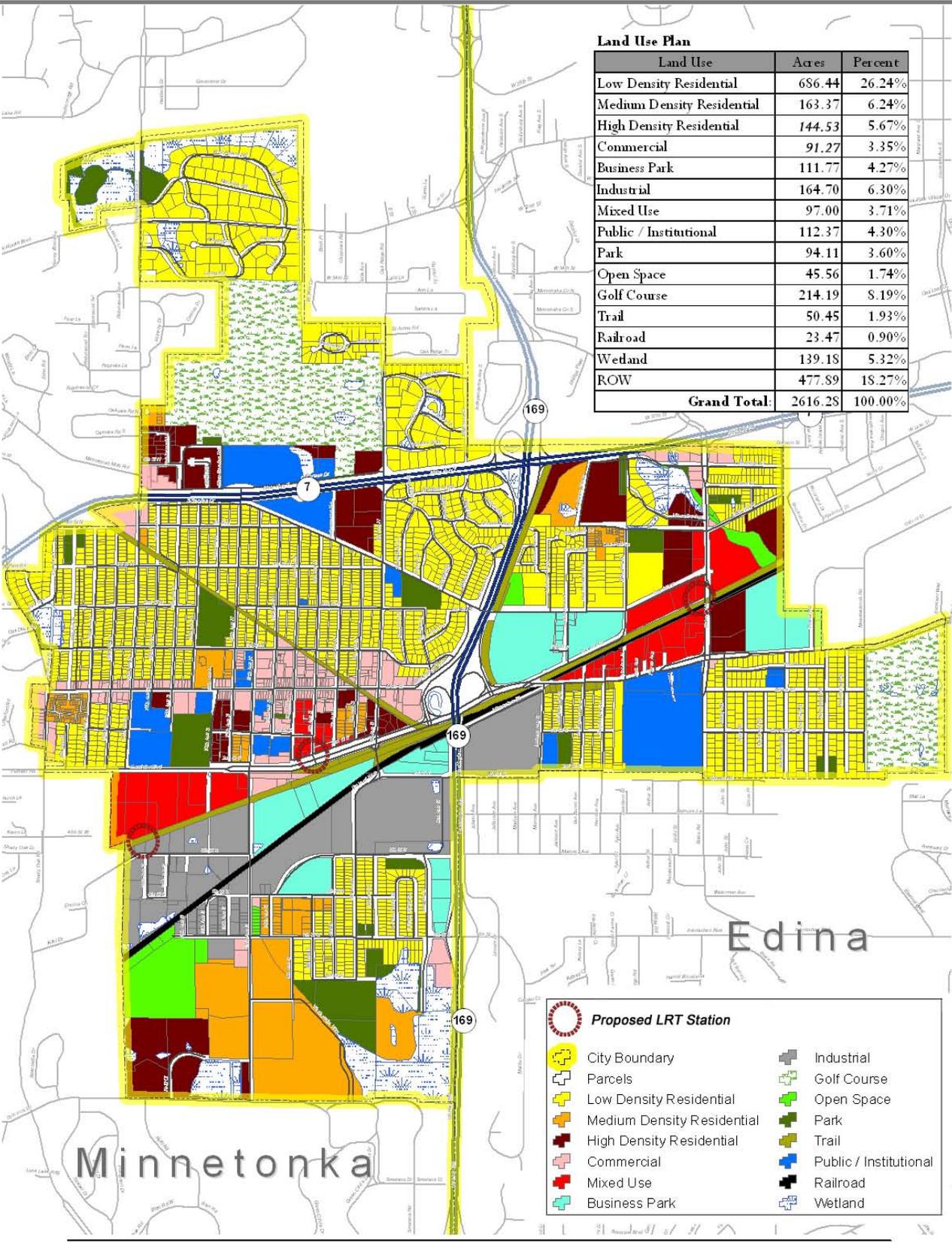


Figure 4.2 - Land Use Plan

Shady Oak Station Area

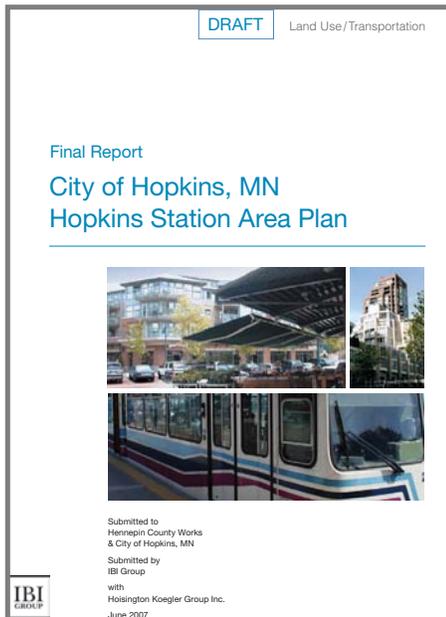
The proposed Shady Oak Station would consist of a 280-car park-and-ride structure on 17th Avenue. Redevelopment is anticipated to occur in a mixed-use fashion and develop around the park-and-ride sites. Mixed uses would support the function of a park-and-ride facility and create a live/work environment.

The Hopkins Station Area Plan calls for redevelopment to occur in the following manner:

Type	Shady Oak Station (sq. ft)
Main Floor Commercial	102,406
Main Floor Live/Work	23,664
Upper Floor Commercial	58,082
Residential Units (177 Units at 1,000 sq. ft./unit)	177,000
Total Est. Built Area (sq. ft)	361,152
Residential Sq. Ft.	177,000
Total Est. Built Area (sq.ft.)	361,152

Hopkins Downtown Station Area

The mixed-use category is intended to serve the proposed downtown LRT station at 8th Avenue. In this area, the City envisions higher density residential with offices to create a live/work environment. Retail development associated with redevelopment should be limited to 8th Avenue, with the majority of retail located along Mainstreet.



The Hopkins Station Area Plan calls for redevelopment to occur in the following manner:

Type	Hopkins Downtown Station (sq. ft)
Main Floor Commercial	39,200
Main Floor Live/Work	30,580
Upper Floor Commercial	-
Residential Units (177 @ 1,000 sq. ft./unit)	200,000
Total Est. Built Area (sq. ft.)	269,780

The Blake Station Area

The primary focus of this area is to provide higher density uses near and around the proposed LRT station. Desired uses include a mix of high density housing with retail commercial and offices.

The Hopkins Station Area Plan calls for redevelopment to occur in the following manner:

Type	Blake Station (sq. ft)
Main Floor Commercial	64,000
Second Floor Office	32,000
Residential Units (194 @ 1,000 sq. ft./unit)	194,000
Total Est. Built Area (sq. ft.)	290,000

Business Park

The business park category accommodates stand-alone office and office service uses. Business park areas may include such uses as office-showrooms, research and development facilities, real estate offices or banks.

Industrial

Industrial uses are largely located near the rail lines that run through

Hopkins. In most cases, these areas are fully developed. Uses include manufacturing, warehousing or distribution centers.

Institutional

The institutional category is intended to capture public and semi-public uses. These uses would include schools, churches, city hall and other civic uses.

Open Space

The open space category is intended for areas to be preserved for natural resources or future park opportunities.

Park

These are areas that have been developed for recreational opportunities or amenities/facilities that offer active living opportunities.

Private Open Space

The private open space category includes private uses, such as the Meadowbrook Golf Course and Oak Ridge Golf Course.

Wetland

The wetlands depicted in the land use plan are derived from the Hennepin County Wetland Inventory. The inventory provides three classes of wetlands: (1) wetlands with little or no drainage apparent (2) wetlands in most cases, partially drained basins and (3) wetlands that could potentially be wetlands but need to be field verified. The wetlands that are shown on the planned land use map have been field verified. The wetlands depicted are for reference purposes only.

Planning Districts

As part of the comprehensive planning update process, eight planning districts have been established (see Planning District Maps). Each district was defined based on geographical boundaries, transportation

corridors and known planning initiatives. The intent of the district approach is to allow the establishment of a specific framework for each geographic area.

Each planning district embraces the land use goals set forth in this document. Each district has been analyzed, and plans have been formulated based on the specific uses and opportunities within the boundaries of the district, as well as assessing its relationship to adjacent planning districts.

Planning District #1 – North Hopkins

North Hopkins land use patterns are well established and not likely to change over the next 20 to 30 years. The majority of this area is comprised of larger single-family residential lots and the Oak Ridge County Club (golf course). Commercial and high density housing is located along Highway 7 as are the Hopkins School District administrative offices and Eisenhower Elementary School.

Residential lots in Planning District #1 are the largest in Hopkins. The Bellgrove neighborhood is located just north of the golf course. This neighborhood offers larger homes and provides opportunities for move-up buyers. In addition, Bellgrove is adjacent to the Minnehaha Creek Preserve, which offers recreational uses.

There are no anticipated land use changes in Planning District #1. If redevelopment were to occur, it would most likely happen through redevelopment initiatives along the TH 7 corridor. Low-density residential uses will remain unchanged. The Minnehaha Creek Preserve will remain as Open Space and continue to provide passive recreational uses.

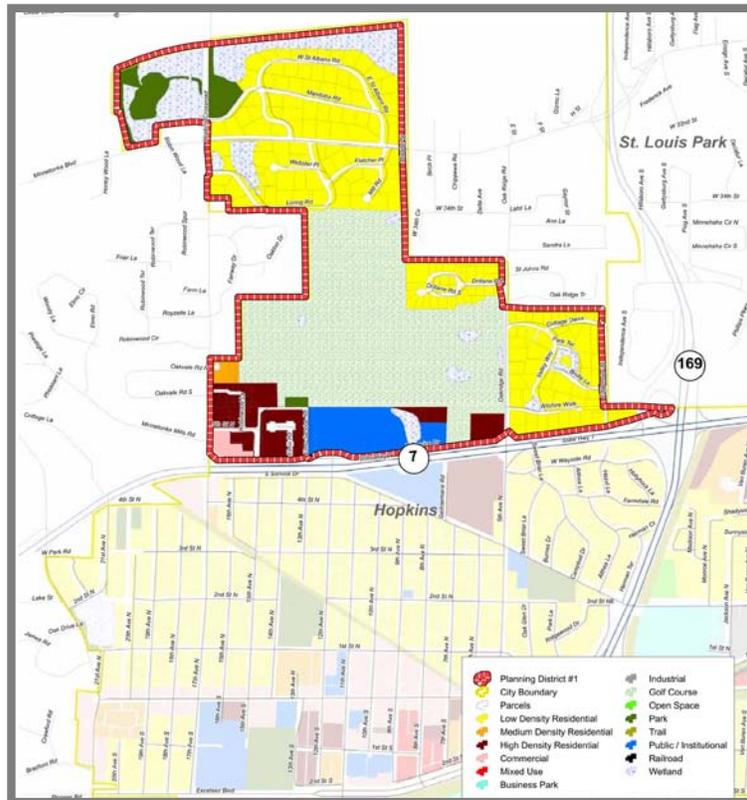


Figure 4.3: Planning District #1

Summary of Planned Land Use Changes:

No changes are being proposed at this time.

Planning District #2 – Central Hopkins

The bulk of Hopkins single family homes can be found in the Central Hopkins Planning District. A significant portion of these homes were constructed in the 1900s and contribute to the unique character of Hopkins’ housing stock; however, housing constructed during this era is reaching a point where maintenance issues are becoming a concern. The Housing Plan addresses this issue calling for ongoing maintenance and private reinvestment. In the future, Planning District #2 needs to be protected from outside intrusions that might threaten the integrity of the existing low density neighborhoods. Potential intrusions are most likely to occur on the common boundary between Planning District #8 and Planning District #2.

Shady Oak Road forms the western boundary of Planning District #2. The City has been collaborating with the City of Minnetonka and Hen-

nepin County to address numerous safety, mobility and access issues associated with the corridor. Out of those discussions a preferred alignment has been recommended, and the reconstruction of the roadway is currently scheduled for 2013. Corridor improvements and land use changes identified in corridor planning efforts to date are not expected to negatively impact the single family homes located in Planning District #2, with the exception of the homes acquired as part of the road project.

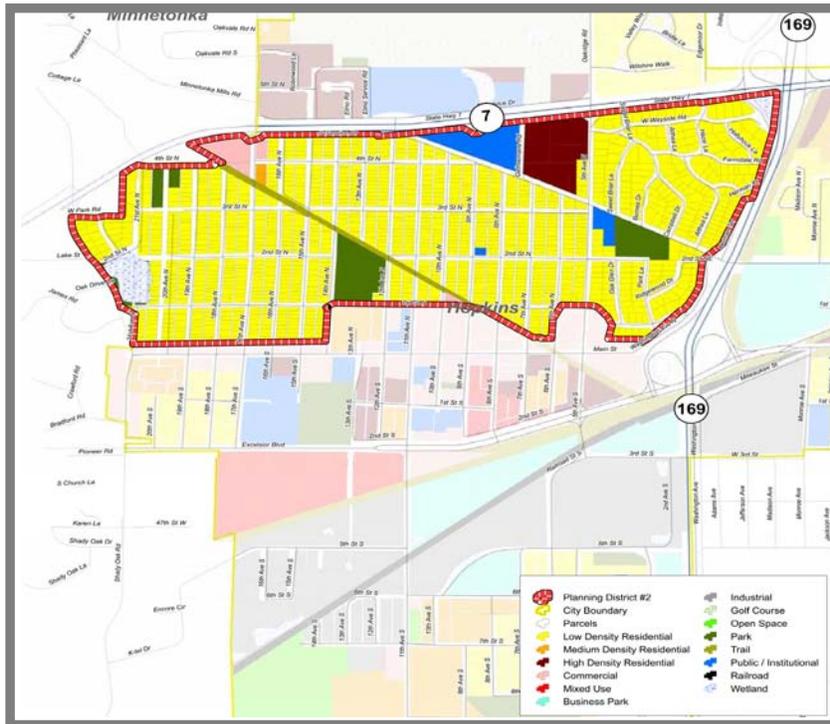


Figure 4.4: Planning District: #2

Summary of Planned Land Use Changes:

No changes are being proposed at this time.

Planning District #3 – East of US Highway 169

Planning District #3 is bounded by three major transportation corridors: TH 169, TH 7 and Excelsior Boulevard. Geographically, the district is one of the smallest, but contains a mix of uses including business park, industrial, low density residential, medium density residential and high density residential. Although this district is compact, the existing uses are largely compatible since appropriate transitional uses and buffering exist.

Challenges facing Planning District #3 include a narrow strip of land along Jackson Street, just north of Excelsior Boulevard. This land, guided as Business Park, may see enhanced redevelopment potential due to the recent development of the Cargill office complex immediately to the west; however, the size and width of the site present development challenges.

Located just east of Jackson Street is property guided for Business Park. In the unlikely event that this site is proposed for redevelopment in the future, attention should be given to ensure that appropriate buffering can enhance the integrity of the residential neighborhoods to the north. Long-term, the presence of LRT may enhance the redevelopment potential of this property.

Summary of Planned Land Use Changes:

- Reguide the ABM site from Industrial to Low Density Residential
- Reguide parcels located east of the Cargill site and west of Jackson Ave. from Industrial to Business Park.

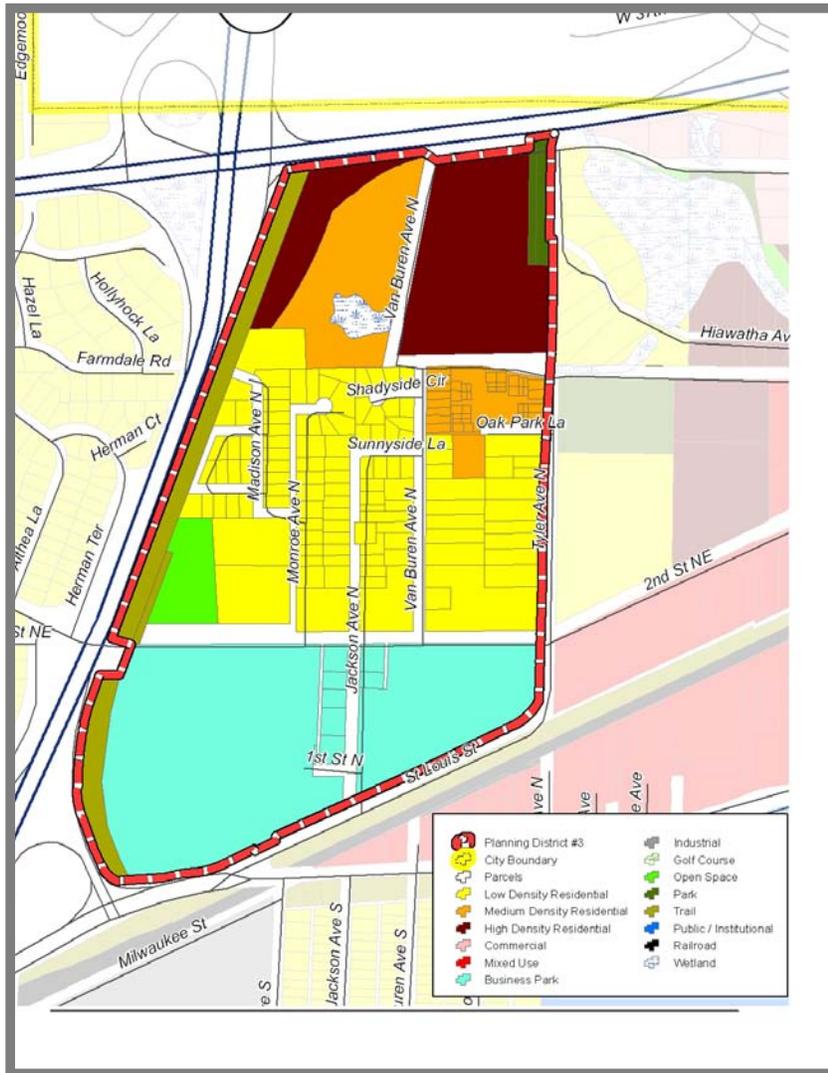


Figure 4.6 - Planning District: #3

Planning District #4 – Blake Road Corridor

Blake Road is a major north-south arterial on the eastern edge of Hopkins. It provides connectivity between TH 7 and Excelsior Boulevard. The intersection at Blake Road and Excelsior Boulevard serves as a gateway into the community. Recent initiatives have examined the future of the corridor considering land use, transportation, safety and design. The City has begun to address several of these concerns through various plans. Planning documents addressing this area include:

- Blake Road Corridor Community Assessment
- Blake Road Streetscape Concept
- East Hopkins Land Use and Market Study
- Hopkins Station Area Plan

Blake Road currently contains a mix of uses similar to those found in Planning District #3. Challenges facing this district today include a collection of structures that were built between the 1950s and 1970s that need improvements and a corridor that is facing safety, mobility and access issues. In turn, there is a unique opportunity to revitalize the corridor by implementing the recommendations found in the planning documents referenced previously. The most significant planning opportunity from a land use perspective is the proposed LRT station. The station is proposed to be located south of 2nd St NE and west of Blake Road.

LRT is a catalyst for redevelopment and is scheduled for 2015. Current land uses near the LRT site consist of industrial and commercial uses. Some of the current industrial buildings east of Blake Road are no longer operating and are for sale or vacant. Sites located north of Excelsior Boulevard are guided for Mixed-Use and land located to the east is guided for Business Park.

Land located west of Blake Road and north of Excelsior Boulevard has been addressed in the East Hopkins Land Use and Market Study, adopted by the City Council in July of 2003. The study suggests that portions of this area are to be redeveloped. This redevelopment is reflected in the future land use plan as mixed-use; however, the East Hopkins Land Use and Market Study should continue to be used to determine future land use patterns in this area.

New residential uses located in the planning district would be associated with mixed-use developments. A viable mixed-use option may typically include high-density housing above retail uses or uses may be separated in a horizontal configuration. Single family housing located within the planning district is suggested to remain in place consistent with the housing goals defined in this plan; however, it should be noted that the Cottageville Neighborhood located east of the northern portion of Blake Road faces a number of challenges. The neighborhood contains pockets of deteriorating housing. There might also be an opportunity to provide better connectivity with Minnehaha Creek and provide additional recreational opportunities for residents. Removal of some existing structures in this area would increase the visibility and viability of Cottageville Park, which is presently underutilized. Planning efforts for the Cottageville Park area will need to continue as the City continues its focus on improvements along the Blake Road Corridor.

Summary of Planned Land Use Changes:

- Reguide the Baker Square, McCoy’s and 43 Hoops sites from Industrial and Commercial to Mixed-Use.
- Reguide the Atlas site from Industrial to Mixed-Use.
- Reguide the Rainbow and Kunz Oil site from Industrial to Business Park.
- Reguide land located west of Blake Road, north of Excelsior Boulevard and south of the railroad tracks from Industrial and Commercial to Mixed-Use.
- Reguide a strip of commercial to mixed use on the west side of Blake Road (North of 2nd St NE & South of Lake St NE).

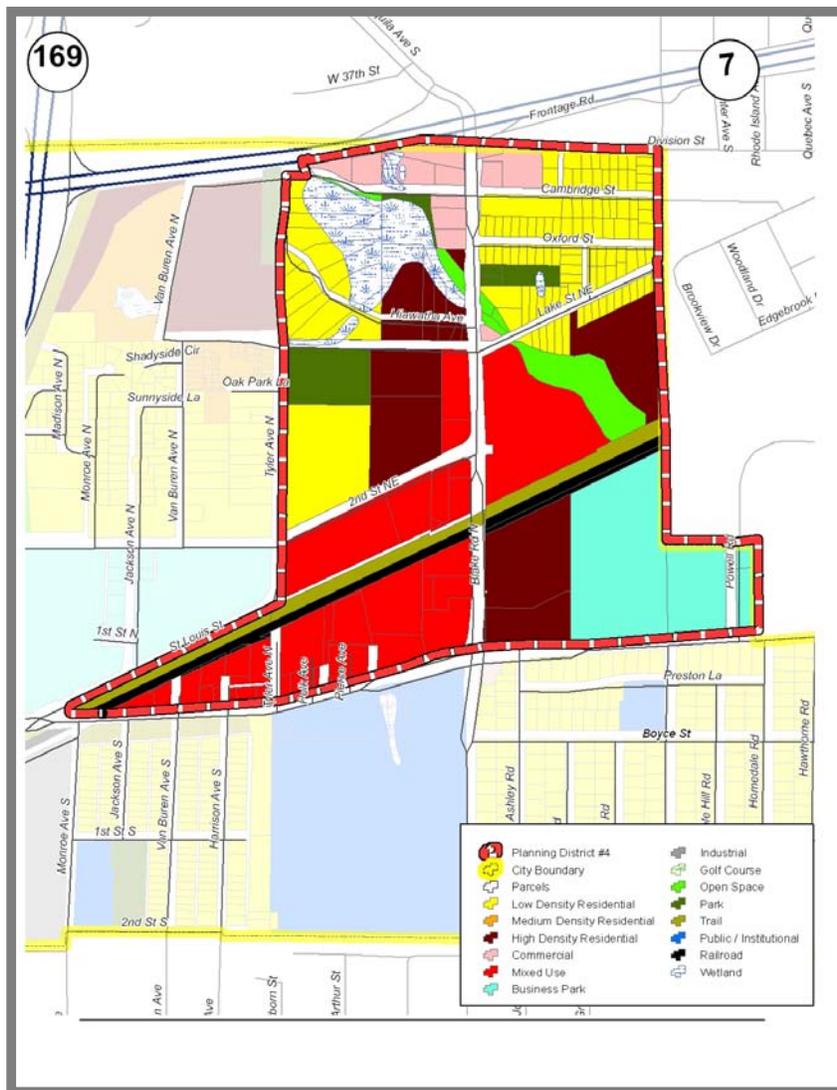


Figure 4.6 - Planning District: #4

Planning District #5 – East Hopkins

The majority of the district consists of low-density residential along with the presence of significant institutional uses. One of the focal points of the district is The Blake School. To the east of the school is the Interlachen neighborhood and to the west, the Presidents neighborhood. Each is a neighborhood of strong single family residential units, and existing uses will continue to be supported in the land use plan. It is highly unlikely that the land use pattern in Planning District #5 will change over the next 20-30 years. It is expected that property owners will continue their efforts to address ongoing maintenance needs along with more substantial renovations and additions.

Summary of Planned Land Use Changes:

- No changes are being proposed at this time.

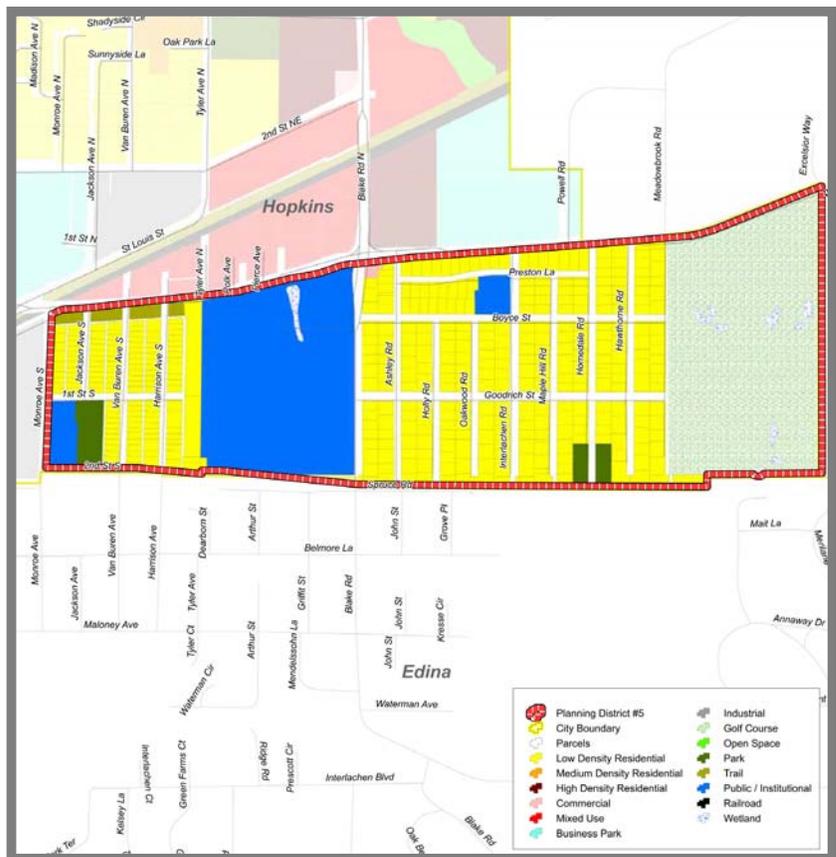


Figure 4.7 - Planning District: #5

Planning District #6 – South Hopkins

The southern portion of Hopkins consists of mainly residential uses. A concentration of medium density housing borders both sides of 11th Avenue South. There is a significant stock of single family homes located in the Peaceful Valley and Park Valley neighborhoods. These neighborhoods are well established and have been developed in the 1950s.

This planning district has a strong residential core; however, it also includes some commercial, office and industrial uses. In some respects, these uses have spilled over from the industrial core that makes up Planning District #7. The impact of these uses on residential properties has not been an issue due to the scale of the buildings and buffering between uses. The residential neighborhoods in District #6 will continue to be important assets to the community.

District #6 is the home of the largest vacant parcel of land in Hopkins. The landfill site may have future development potential, but it is highly constrained by a number of environmental issues. At the present time the site has not been cleared by State agencies for any type of use. As a result, the property is fully fenced and it contains a methane collection system. Because of the magnitude of environmental issues on the landfill site, it is not expected to develop within the timeframe of this Comprehensive Plan without financial assistance from other partners.

The future land use plan presents no changes in this district.

When the land fill site is developed, it will require a significant public investment that would warrant a public purpose for its future use. As part of the Comprehensive Plan update, it is recommended that this site remain as open space.

Summary of Proposed Land Use Changes:

- No changes are being proposed at this time.

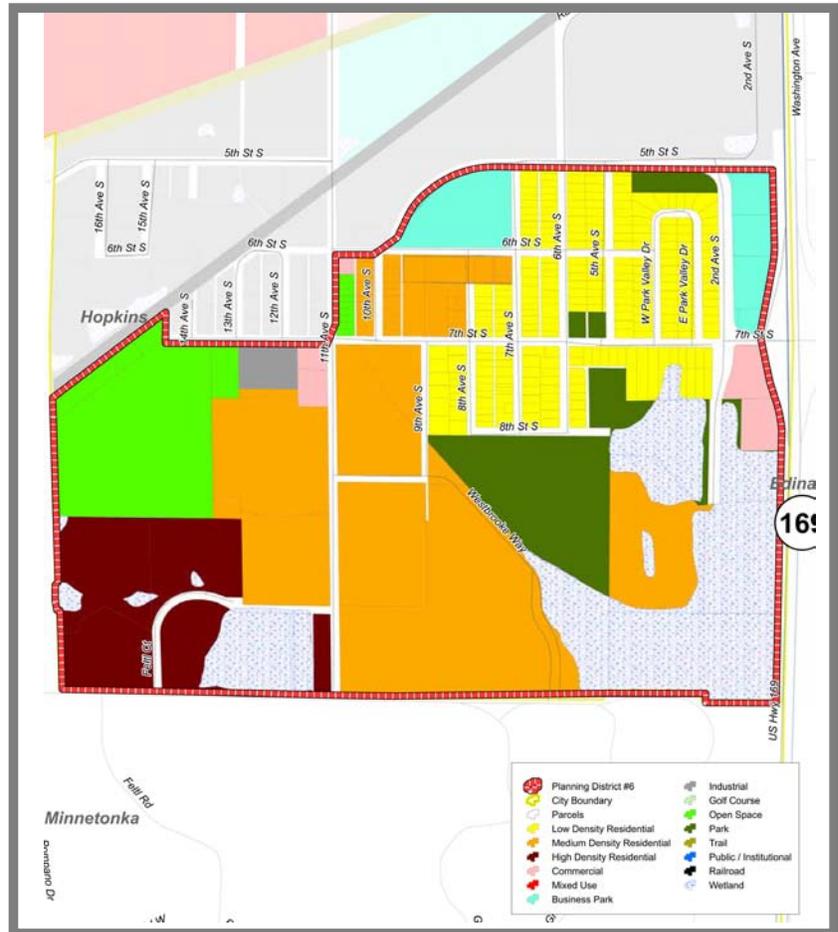


Figure 4.8 - Planning District: #6

Planning District #7 – Industrial

The industrial uses located in Planning District #7 make up a significant portion of the employment base in Hopkins. SuperValu, which is Hopkins’ largest employer, has facilities scattered across this district. It is important to maintain the industrial land use pattern in this area to maintain a wide-range of jobs. It is not anticipated that any of these uses will change over the next 20 to 30 years. The long-range continuation of these uses is encouraged as are public and private reinvestments needed to keep the area viable.

Proposed Land Use Changes:

- No changes are being proposed at this time.

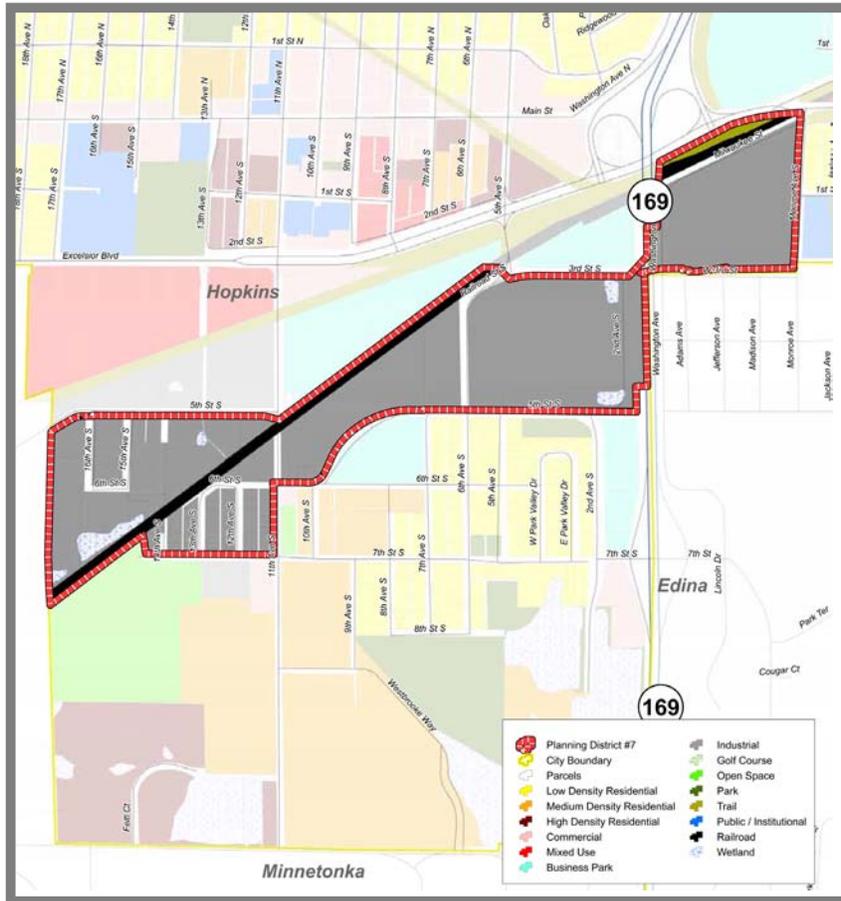


Figure 4.9 - Planning District: #7

Planning District #8 – Downtown Hopkins

The foundation of Downtown Hopkins has been well established for many years. The core of downtown is primarily focused along Main-street between 7th Avenue North and 12th Avenue North. The downtown district also extends west of 7th Avenue North and is comprised of a mixture of commercial and residential uses. The downtown core is also comprised of commercial and residential uses with a strong presence of civic uses (City Hall, Post Office & Hopkins Center for the Arts). In addition, a variety of restaurants, a movie theater and specialty stores are located throughout the downtown.

At this time, there are no land use changes proposed for downtown; however, redevelopment may present mixed-use opportunities. In recent years, downtown Hopkins has seen a number of significant mixed-use redevelopments. Marketplace Lofts on the east end of Mainstreet provides commercial uses on the street level with residential units above. Future redevelopment within the core of downtown will be encouraged to continue this pattern.

Mixed-use redevelopment may also be prompted by the proposed Downtown Station Area located just south of downtown. When LRT becomes available, there will be a desire to redevelop within the vicinity of the station. The station area plan calls for redevelopment along Excelsior Boulevard, at the intersection of 8th Avenue and up 8th Avenue to Mainstreet. At this location, the intent is to create a live/work environment and provide retail development that is compatible and supportive of the downtown.

In Planning District #8, there is also an opportunity to capitalize on underutilized properties. The EBCO site located at the intersection of Excelsior Boulevard and TH 169 could redevelop in a manner that is compatible with the existing business park to the northeast while taking advantage of the proximity to the downtown LRT station.

Areas around all of Hopkins' proposed LRT stations are expected to develop in a mixed-use fashion. The form and function of the various mixed-use areas varies between stations. As noted in the land use plan, the mixed-use category has been established to reflect the land use patterns intended for each station.

The mixed-use located at the Shady Oak Station has also been included in the planning district. The idea of including both stations within one planning district is to help facilitate coordinated land use patterns. It is important to understand their role and proximity to one another. The purpose of the Shady Oak station is to serve as a live/work environment, but on a different scale than the downtown. Redevelopment in this area would likely occur in a business park form, with the inclusion of residential uses. The mixed-use development may also include some commercial uses. Commercial uses would be sized to serve only the needs of the business park and park-and-ride facility.

Overall, Planning District #8 is expected to see the most significant change over the next 20 to 30 years as a result of redevelopment and the implementation of light rail transit. The Comprehensive Plan supports and recognizes these potential land use changes. Changes in this area, however, will need to continue to be compatible with the character and function of downtown. The following chapter provides additional guidance on how to maintain and enhance the character and identity of downtown Hopkins.

Summary of Proposed Land Use Changes:

- Reguide the EBCO site from Industrial to Business Park
- Reguide the Tech Center and Napco site from Industrial to Mixed Use.
- Reguide portions of land north at the intersection of Excelsior Boulevard and 8th Avenue S to Mixed Use.

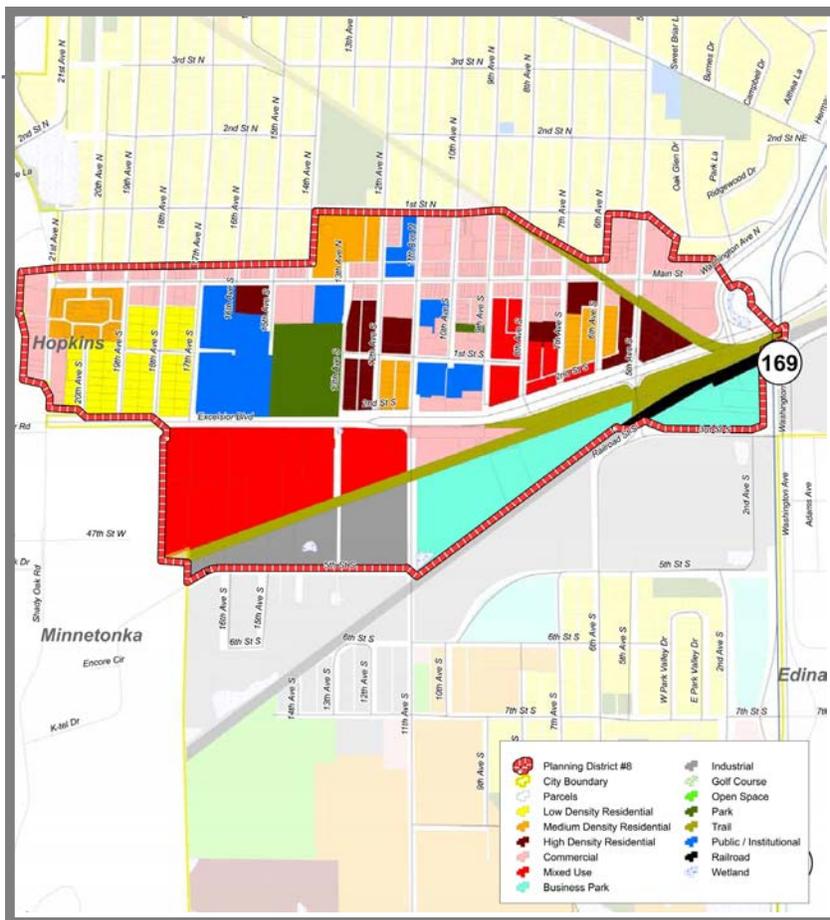


Figure 4.10 -Planning District: #8

Land Use Implementation Actions

Hopkins' Land Use plan identifies strategies and approaches to help meet the identified land use goals which include:

- Maintain a viable downtown commercial core.
- Maintain a strong employment base.
- Continue to emphasize compatible land uses between adjacent jurisdictions.
- Maintain appropriate transitions between land uses.
- Take advantage of redevelopment opportunities to capture future Light Rail Transit (LRT) initiatives.
- Continue to coordinate land use and transportation needs.

The goals listed above and the implementation actions that follow are intended to ensure long-term land use patterns, maintain a viable downtown, provide opportunities for new employment, capture redevelopment opportunities and provide a mix of uses that keeps the community viable and competitive.

Residential Land Use Patterns

The City regards the preservation and protection of its existing residential neighborhoods as one of its most important priorities. The City will work to protect land use patterns that continue to support single family homes.

- A balanced supply of housing is important to Hopkins' efforts to serve the needs of a broad range of residents. The land use plan identifies land use patterns that will support a variety of residential uses including medium to high density uses, such as condos, townhomes and apartments.

In order to address residential land use patterns, Hopkins will:

- Work to protect the integrity and long-term viability of its low-density residential neighborhoods and strive to reduce the potential negative effects of nearby commercial or industrial land through zoning, site plan reviews, and code enforcement.
- Ensure that the infilling of vacant parcels and the rehabilitation of existing developed land will be in accordance with uses specified

in the Comprehensive Plan.

- Ensure that incompatible land uses will be improved or removed where possible and the land reused in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.
- Work to assure strong and well-maintained neighborhoods.
- Work to enhance a variety of residential land uses in the City.
- Work to balance the supply of multiple family residential uses within the City.

Downtown Land Use Patterns

Hopkins' identity and character is largely defined by the downtown district. It provides a sense of place for residents and is a center for commerce and government. The land use plan takes the adjacent land use patterns into consideration to protect the integrity and long-term viability of downtown. The City will work to ensure that land use patterns do not develop in a manner that would jeopardize downtown's economic viability or character.

In order to address downtown land uses, Hopkins will:

- Continue to leverage private investment in the redevelopment of the Downtown through judicious use of tax increment financing revenues and local capital improvement funds.
- Work with Downtown landowners and merchants to improve parking, access, and appearance.
- Maintain its compact form in order to concentrate business activities and to protect adjacent residential areas. Expansion of the commercial area will generally be limited to areas that do not displace single family housing.

Industry and Business Land Use Patterns

Hopkins has established a diversified base of employment including a number of major employers supplemented by a diverse mix of smaller businesses and industries. Today, the only opportunity that industries and businesses have to build or relocate is through redevelopment initiatives. Accordingly, the future land use plan has focused on current land uses that are not being utilized to their fullest potential. In some cases, these properties have been reguided to advocate a more appropriate land use pattern.



Summit Condominiums



Excelsior Crossings

To address industry and business land uses, Hopkins will:

- Continue to actively promote the development and redevelopment of its industrial areas through marketing and public relations efforts, land use planning, and careful financial incentives, including tax increment financing.
- Strive to leverage its valuable locational assets and create industrial areas that have attractive building and grounds, concealed outdoor storage, high floor-area ratios, and high levels of employment, especially employment in the professional and technical job areas.
- Carefully study the implications for commercial redevelopment of the pending reconstruction, widening, and realignment of Shady Oak Road. Redevelopment efforts for the area seek to create new commercial sites that appeal to the local market, have safe and convenient access and parking, and have a high level of landscaping and site improvements.
- Participate in the redevelopment of deteriorated and/or obsolescent industrial and commercial areas when public financing is determined to be feasible and necessary.
- Expansion of industrial zoning will be considered only in cases where it can clearly be demonstrated that changes will not have a detrimental effect on nearby residential properties.
- Set and enforce high standards for all non-residential design. Site plans for commercial and industrial facilities will be carefully reviewed for proper building orientation, parking placement, access, traffic impacts, pedestrian improvements, landscaping, screening of storage, and general architectural appearance.
- When commercial property abuts residential property (especially across a street), extensive landscaping, fencing and /or berms should be used to mitigate impacts on the housing.

Solar and Access Protection

Metropolitan cities in Minnesota are required to include an element for protection and development of access to direct sunlight for solar energy systems in the Update. A solar access protection element is included in the Update to assure the availability of direct sunlight to solar energy systems. Solar energy is an alternative means to energy.

It has less adverse impact on natural resources than fossil fuel. Currently fossil fuels and nuclear power are used to heat or cool homes and businesses, as well as for most types of transportation. Increasing the use of solar energy would decrease reliance on fossil fuels and nuclear power. The purpose for including this section of the Update is to ensure that direct access to sunlight for solar panels is not subjected to shading from nearby trees, buildings or other structures.

Solar Access Protection Goal and Policies

Goals:

Encourage the use of solar energy systems for the purposes of space heating and cooling and hot water heating in new residential developments.

Policies:

- The City will review its Zoning Ordinance and consider appropriate amendments to exempt active solar energy systems from lot coverage and setback provisions.
- The City will review its Code and consider appropriate amendments to require swimming pools be heated using solar or some other form of renewable energy resource, where possible.
- Within Planned Unit Developments, the City will consider varying setback requirements in residential zoning districts as a means of protecting solar access.

Aggregate Resources Protection

The Council's aggregate resources inventory does not indicate the presence of aggregate resources available for mining in Hopkins. Because the City is fully developed and has no aggregate resources available for mining, it does not need to address this matter in its Update.

Historic Preservation

The City of Hopkins has no sites that are on the State or National Historic Register.