

# Shady Oak Station

## Strategy Report

PA 8081: Economic & Community Development Workshop  
Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs



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## Executive Summary

Shady Oak Station will be located at the “bend” of the Southwest Light Rail (SW LRT) line where the tracks change from north- and southbound to east- and westbound, at the border of Hopkins and Minnetonka. The station area site is currently dominated by light industrial and warehouse uses, as well a strip mall and other low-density retail. The area is auto-oriented, with substantial building setbacks and large surface parking lots.

While the properties directly surrounding the future station site are commercial and industrial, most of the surrounding neighborhoods are residential. In addition, the cities of Minnetonka and Hopkins, aside from sharing a municipal boundary, are quite different in residential and commercial character. The cities also have expressed differing preferences in terms of multi-family housing and commercial development for the Shady Oak area.

The current industrial land uses on this site are not considered transit-friendly. This report outlines methods that will make the station area more conducive to transit riders, pedestrians, bicyclists, and local residents, as well as a plan to meld the characteristics of both Hopkins and Minnetonka in order to meet the needs and expectations of current residents and businesses.

Hopkins and Minnetonka residents have convenient access to a combined 65 public parks and 27 miles of Three Rivers Park District regional bicycle trails. In addition, close to the redevelopment site are Shady Oak Lake, Minnetonka Lake and

Lone Lake. All are within biking or walking distance of the proposed Shady Oak Station and accessible by existing bike trails.

Shady Oak Station will have a strong identity and foster connections between people and places. Through sustainable, forward-thinking design that incorporates and enhances existing natural amenities, the Shady Oak Station area will boost access to trails and parks, shops and restaurants in downtown Hopkins, and employment opportunities in both downtown Minneapolis and the southwestern suburbs. Shady Oak Station will be much more than just another nondescript park & ride; it will be a recreation and employment destination.

This vision will be carried out by a series of goals, policies, and actions, and specific design and phasing plans are presented to outline this process. Funding for this project will come from a variety of public sources, but this report recommends that private funders as well as leading edge financing mechanisms also be used to aid in the complete development of this area. Several benchmarks are prescribed to determine if the station will be successful.

## Introduction

This document outlines a thoughtful, detailed redevelopment strategy for the future Shady Oak Station area along the Southwest Light Rail corridor (SW LRT). Our plan identifies, explores, and embraces the distinct characters, needs, and wants of the two suburban cities who will share the station area: Hopkins and Minnetonka, Minnesota.

Currently, the station area site contains light industrial uses with little character or appeal. Though properties in the area are financially valuable, at present many of them are underused, with vacant storefronts and large amounts of surface parking. The area will need to be significantly redeveloped in order to reach its true economic potential. Our redevelopment strategy seeks to capture the value provided by Shady Oak Station's location at a major intersection between two of Minnesota's highly esteemed communities.

Through the implementation of several innovative, yet rational, goals and actions, this strategy will give Shady Oak Station a distinct identity and enhance and integrate the characters of Minnetonka and Hopkins. This plan recommends ways in which Shady Oak Station will become one of the SW LRT's premier destinations for riders from around the region. Additionally, Minnetonka and Hopkins residents will enjoy a unique community amenity and increased access to a first-class regional transit system.



## Existing Conditions

### *Location*

Shady Oak Station will be located at the “bend” of the Southwest LRT line where the tracks change from north- and southbound to east- and westbound, at the border of Hopkins and Minnetonka, Minnesota. The station platform will be southeast of the intersection of Shady Oak Road and Excelsior Boulevard in Hopkins, and just to the east of the Minnetonka municipal boundary. This area is traditionally known as the “west end” of Hopkins.

Shady Oak Road is a four-lane, divided highway to the south of Excelsior Boulevard, and a winding, two-lane road to the north. It runs north-south and links major connector highways such as Highway 62 to the south, and Highway 7 and Minnetonka Boulevard to the north. Excelsior Boulevard is a four-lane divided highway that runs east-west from Hopkins through Minnetonka. It connects with Highways 169 and 100 to the east of Hopkins.

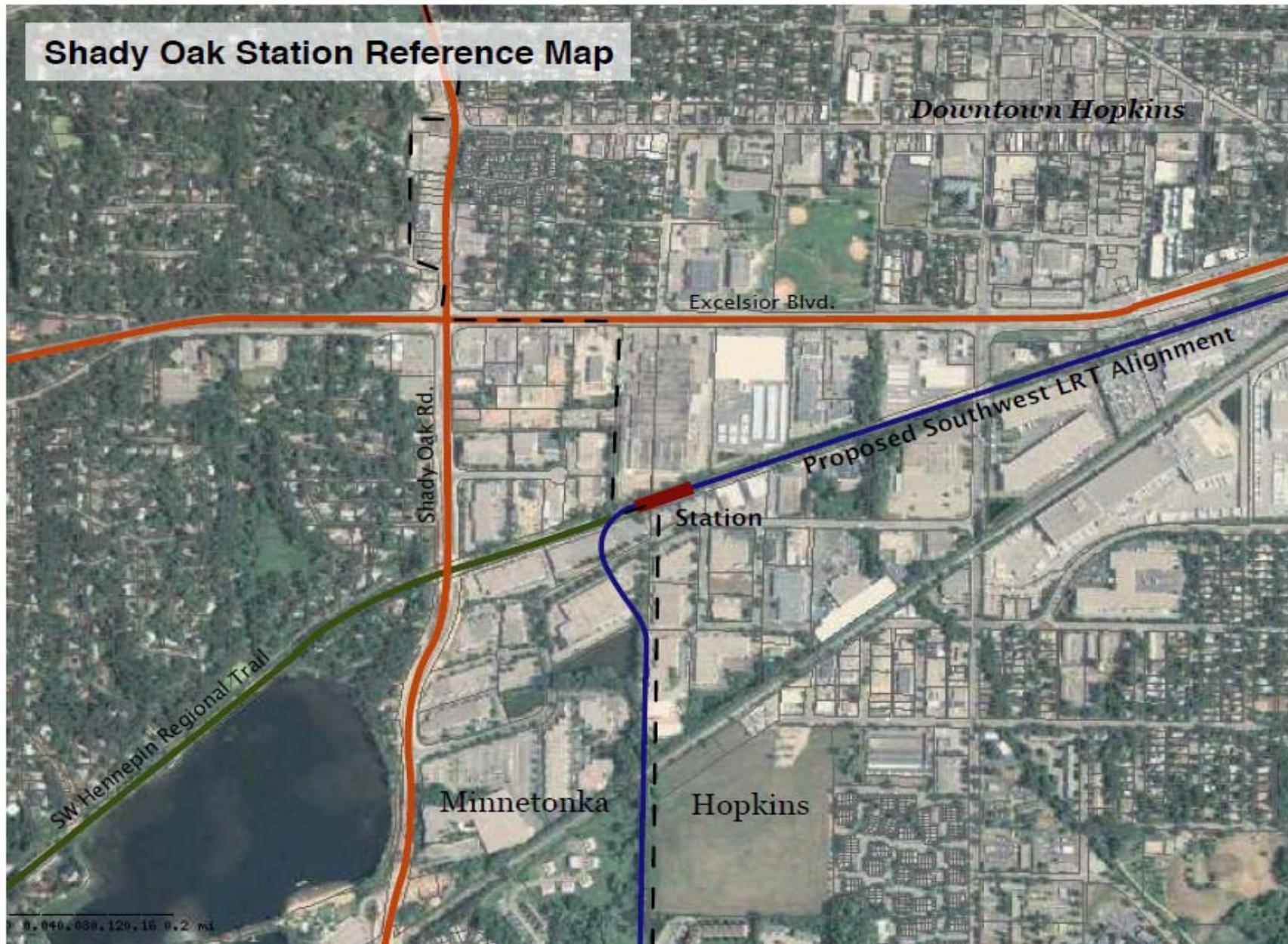
The intersection of Shady Oak Road and Excelsior Boulevard has been improved recently to deal with congestion and safety issues

brought about by the high volume of traffic in the area. According to Hopkins Public Works Director Steve Stadler, Shady Oak Road is scheduled to be upgraded north of Excelsior Boulevard before the Southwest LRT is constructed to accommodate projected traffic increases.

The station platform will be built along the existing Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail, which is operated by the Three Rivers Park District. The trail property is owned by the Hennepin County Rail Authority, which will continue to own the property once the SW LRT line is built. The station will be located approximately one quarter mile east of Shady Oak Road along the bicycle trail. There is currently no public access to the site beyond that provided by the trail.

The area specifically being considered for redevelopment in this plan is bounded by Shady Oak Road to the west, Excelsior Boulevard to the north, the Citizens Bank property to the east, and the Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail to the south.





## *Buildings and Businesses*

Shady Oak Station will be situated directly behind what is currently the Hopkins Tech Center, located at the intersection of Excelsior Boulevard and 17th Avenue in Hopkins. The property to the east of the Hopkins Tech Center is NAPCO, a supplier and light manufacturer of spare and repair military parts. Directly to the west of the Hopkins Tech Center is the Pump & Meter Service, Inc. To the west of the Pump & Meter site is the excavating and demolition company, Bollig & Sons, Inc. These sites are all light industrial uses and would potentially require significant soil clean up in order to be redeveloped to more hospitable uses, especially residential.



*Back of the Hopkins Tech Center and current access to the future Shady Oak Station platform site along the bicycle trail.*

Existing buildings in the redevelopment site are one- to two-story brick structures or strip mall developments, typical to the area. Uses include a mixture of low-density retail businesses and service uses such as dry cleaners, fast-food restaurants, self-storage units and various retail outlets. The area is auto-oriented, with substantial building setbacks and large surface parking lots to the front and sides of the structures.



*Surface parking between NAPCO (left) and the Hopkins Tech Center (right). Station platform will be located directly behind the Hopkins Tech Center.*

The commercial development located on the southeast corner of Shady Oak Road and Excelsior Boulevard is comprised of strip malls, a gas station, and a church. This area is not achieving its full economic potential. Historically at this site, businesses have come in for a short time, but generally do not last long. At present, the commercial units in the strip mall sit mostly vacant despite its location at a heavily traveled intersection.



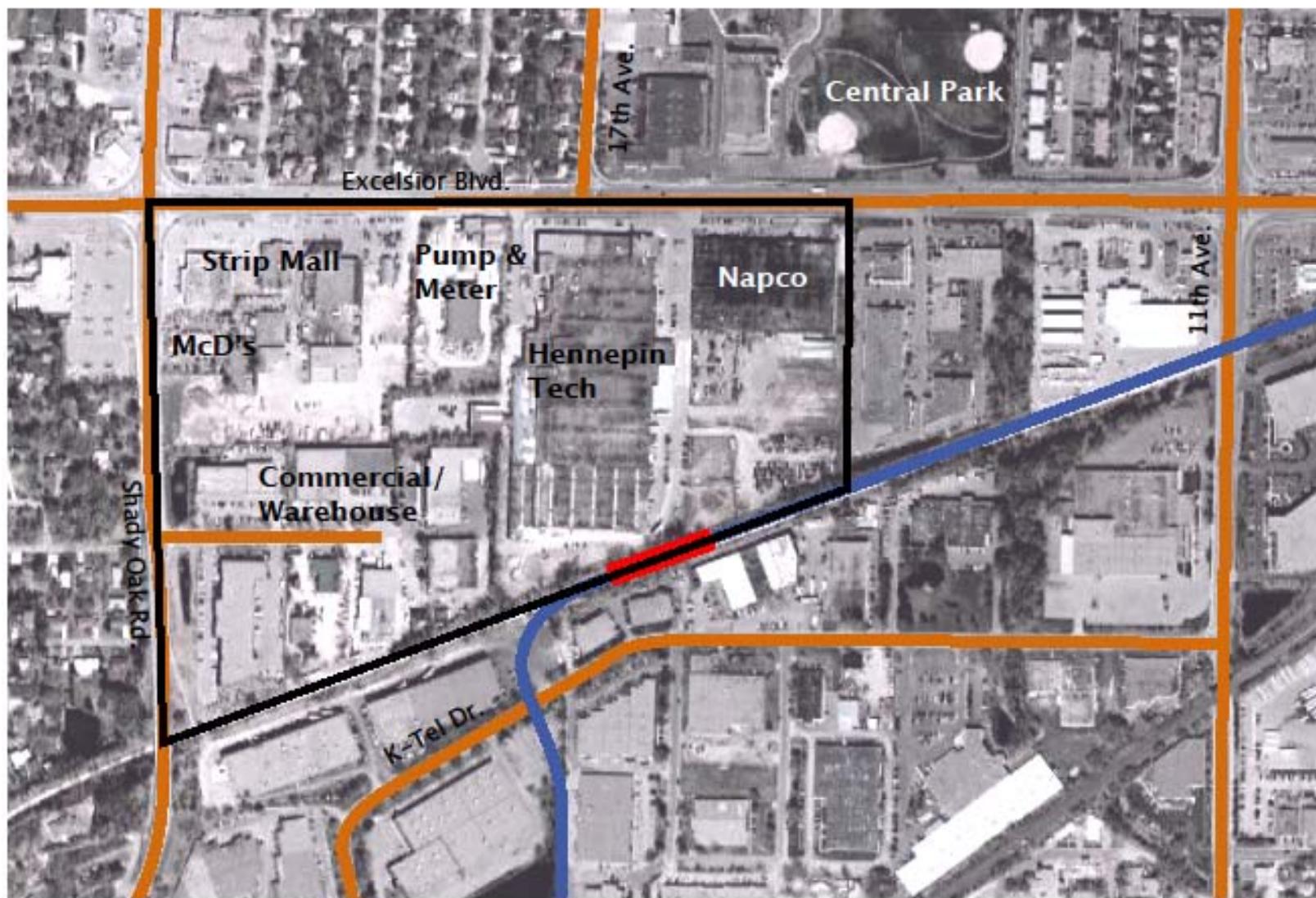
*Vacant strip mall located at the southeast corner of Shady Oak Road and Excelsior Boulevard.*

The businesses located on the east side of the redevelopment area are newer and appear to be having more success than their counterparts on the west side, and therefore, may be more conducive to future station area development. These buildings are also one-story strip mall style developments, with large setbacks and large amounts of surface parking. While this development is still auto-oriented and not very pedestrian-friendly, it does not pose the industrial hazards found in some of the other area properties.



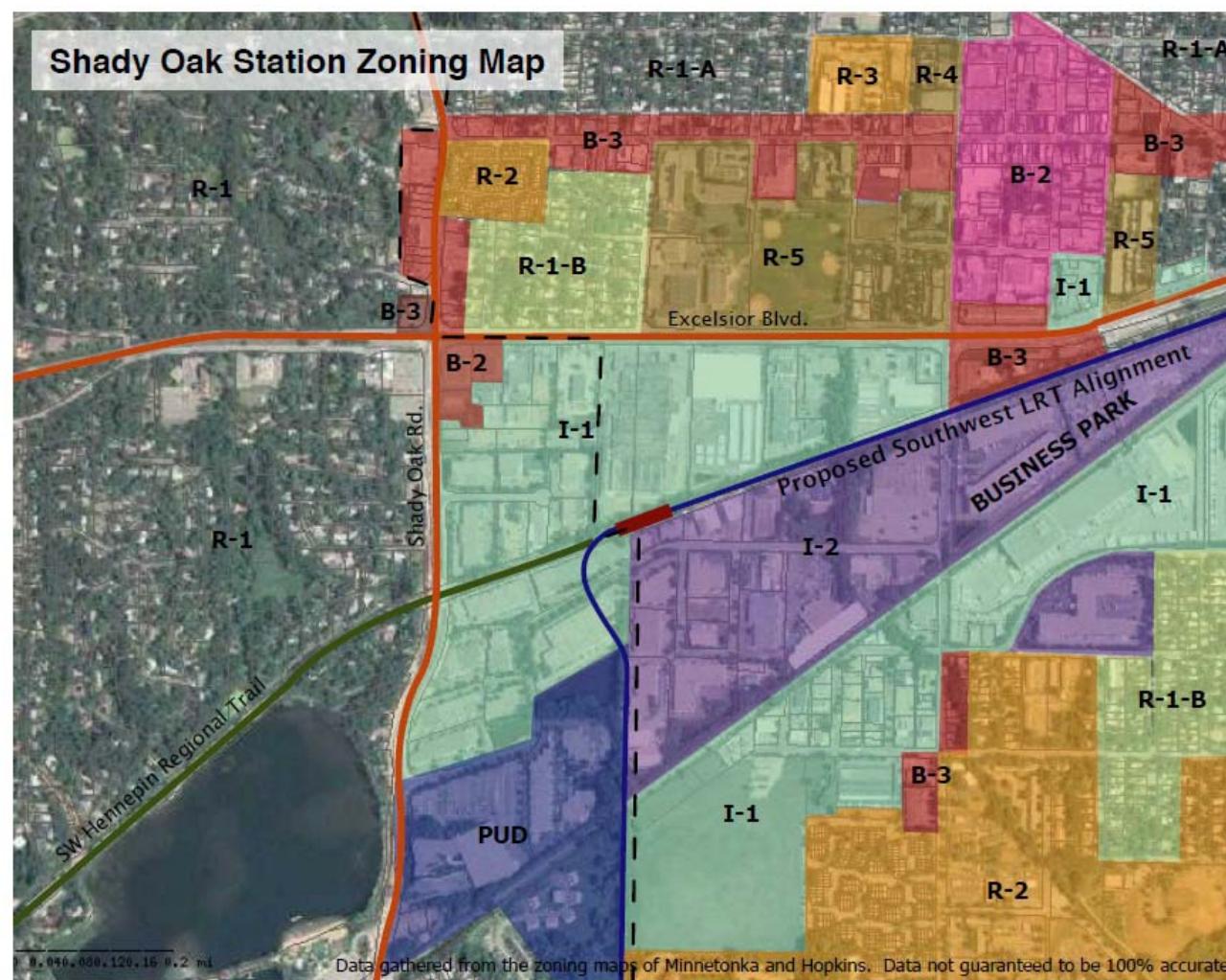
*Businesses on Excelsior Boulevard to the east of the redevelopment area.*

#### *Existing Structures at the Proposed Shady Oak Site*

*Shady Oak Station Area Site – Current Development*

## Zoning

Currently, almost the entire redevelopment site surrounding the future site of Shady Oak Station is zoned for industrial use; only the corner of Shady Oak Road and Excelsior Boulevard is zoned for commercial use. Zoning will need to be addressed in order to make any significant land use changes to the station area.



## *Surrounding Neighborhoods*

While the properties within the redevelopment area are commercial and industrial, most of the surrounding neighborhoods are residential. Hopkins and Minnetonka consider themselves to be family-friendly residential communities.

### *Downtown Hopkins*

Downtown Hopkins, the commercial focus of the City of Hopkins, is located just a few blocks north of the Shady Oak Station area. This area is home to the newly renovated Hopkins Center for the Arts, the Hopkins 6 movie theater, several restaurants, and the Marketplace Lofts. With its charm and small-town feel, downtown Hopkins is the polar opposite of the less desirable and characterless west end. Hopkins has concerns that new commercial development outside of its downtown area would spur unwelcome competition for downtown businesses.



*Charming Downtown Hopkins*

### *Residential Hopkins*

The residential areas of Hopkins are comprised of both small, post-war era single-family houses and multi-family apartment buildings and condominiums. The apartment buildings in Hopkins range from duplexes and small four-plexes to large new developments with a combination of hundreds of rental and condo units.

The street network in Hopkins is a grid pattern with small blocks and small lot sizes. Hopkins is, for the most part, a pedestrian-friendly community, with sidewalks and bike lanes.



*Single-family homes on 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Hopkins.*

## Minnetonka Village Areas

Minnetonka does not have a central downtown area similar to that of Hopkins. Instead, the City of Minnetonka focuses much of its commercial development in several “village areas” located throughout the community. These villages are highly-organized, mixed-use activity centers that each contain a unique identity and aim to increase overall accessibility in the area. Attributes of village areas include proximity to a major intersection or community resource, organized, accessible and connected design, pedestrian and transit connections, cohesive land use patterns, and a mix of uses and residential densities (City of Minnetonka).

Village areas are divided into three categories: community, neighborhood, and “special purpose.” Community village centers are the largest and support higher residential densities and strong commercial areas. Neighborhood village centers are smaller than community village centers and focus more on protection of residential neighborhoods and providing improvements to parks and open space. Special purpose village centers are the smallest of the three, and tend to be unique in terms of settings and uses.

The future Shady Oak Station site is located in the Shady Oak Road/Excelsior Boulevard neighborhood community center. Minnetonka’s *2030 Land Use Plan* recognizes the potential for additional medium- to high-density residential and transit oriented development (TOD) in this village area.

## Residential Minnetonka

Minnetonka’s residential areas are comprised mostly of individual subdivisions, neatly tucked away from the rest of the city. The typical Minnetonka dwelling is a large single-family house situated on a large lot. Minnetonka is an auto-oriented city, in residential and commercial areas alike. There are very few sidewalks. Residents generally must drive to work, shop, take their kids to school, or for any other normal daily activities. There is little multi-family housing in Minnetonka and residential zoning codes limit lot sizes so that larger lots generally cannot be broken up into smaller parcels for the development of smaller-sized houses.



*Typical Minnetonka residential neighborhood, located within  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile of Shady Oak Station area.*

### *Land Area and Street Patterns*

Hopkins has a land area of 4.1 square miles, while Minnetonka covers 28.0 square miles. Minnetonka is very green, with a large of green space and tree cover, about 1700 acres of parks and open space, large residential parcels, and winding, unconnected street patterns. Hopkins streets are in a grid pattern with houses on smaller lots, and just under 200 acres dedicated to parks and open space (see Appendix A for more detailed information).

### *Recreational and Natural Amenities*

Hopkins and Minnetonka residents have convenient access to a combined 65 public parks and 27 miles of Three Rivers Park District regional bicycle trails. Hopkins hosts the trailheads for four of these trails: North Cedar Lake Regional Trail, Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail, Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail, and Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail. This extensive system provides connections to other local trail systems, such as the City of Minnetonka's bicycle trail network which runs throughout the entire city and provides access to both jobs and entertainment centers.

Central Park in Hopkins, located across the street from the Hopkins Tech Center and NAPCO, boasts playgrounds and softball fields, and will be just a short walk from Shady Oak Station. Shady Oak Beach, a popular summer hangout for area children, is a quick bike ride from the station area or only a slightly longer walk. If a day at the beach isn't for you, Lone

Lake Park is just down Shady Oak Road and provides access to trails, picnic areas and plenty of other ways to spend the day.

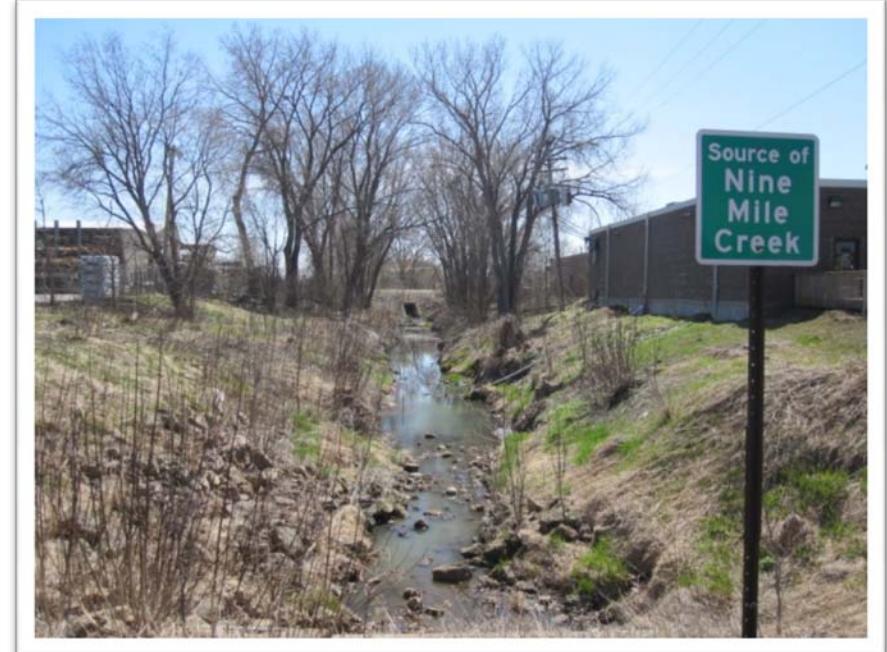
Hopkins and Minnetonka have joined forces with a combined Recreation Services department that provides recreational services and facilities for residents of both communities, including league sports, swimming lessons, and after-school activities. Three Rivers Park District operates nearby golf courses in addition to the regional trails network. The future Shady Oak Station site is proximate to all of these amenities for both local and regional residents.



*Minnetonka's Lone Lake Park in autumn.*

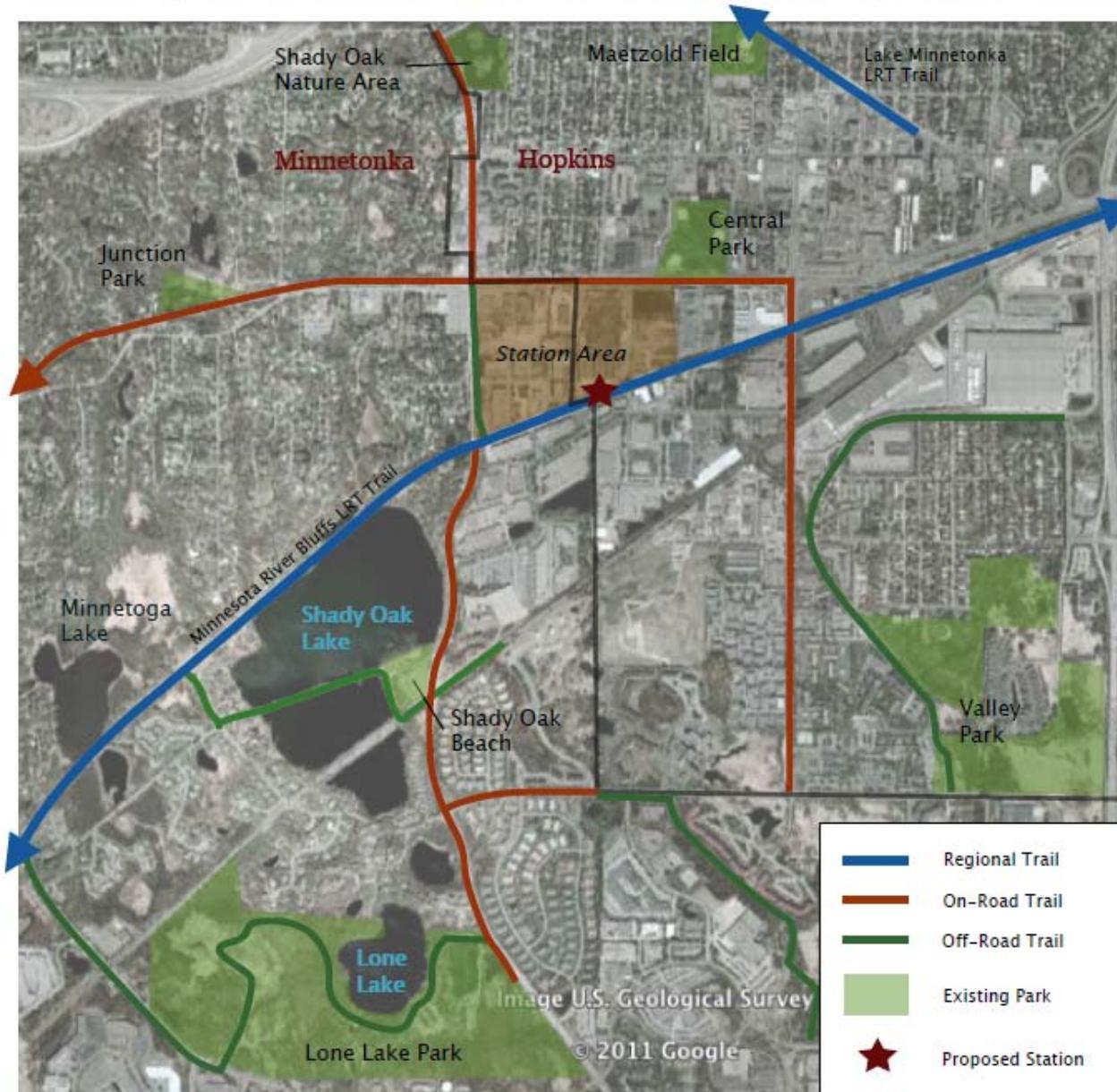
Lake Minnetonka, just five miles from the future station, is one of the region's favorite recreation centers. In the summer, patrons to this area enjoy beach volleyball, a day on the lake, and boating with friends; in the winter, ice fishing, cross country skiing or snowmobiling are popular. Closer to Shady Oak Station are Shady Oak Lake, Minnetoga Lake and Lone Lake. All are within biking or walking distance of the proposed Shady Oak Station and accessible by existing bike trails. Refer to the map on page 16 for a visual reference of parks and trails proximate to the Shady Oak Station area.

The source of the tree-lined Nine Mile Creek is located just feet from the future station site. Minnehaha Creek also flows through Hopkins and Minnetonka. These creeks and all nearby lakes are highly valued by area residents and regional visitors. They enhance the area's green, natural character – especially that of Minnetonka, which is known region-wide for its lakes, parks and trails.



*Source of Nine Mile Creek, Hopkins, MN*

## Existing Bike Trails and Parks Near the Proposed Shady Oak Station



## Minnetonka and Hopkins Residents

### Demographics

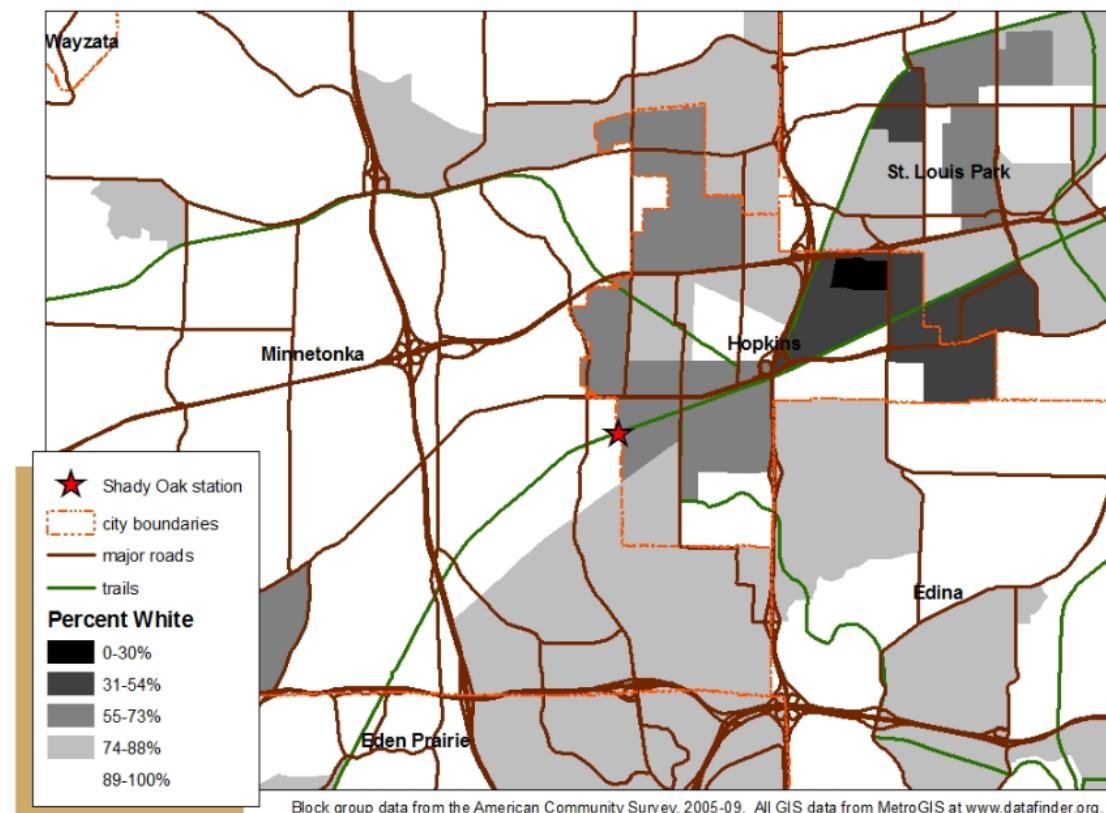
The Cities of Minnetonka and Hopkins, aside from sharing a municipal boundary, are quite distinct from one another. In 2000, Minnetonka was one of the largest cities in the state, with a population of 51,301, while at the same time Hopkins' population was 17,145 – about two thirds smaller. (Cities of Hopkins and Minnetonka)

The 2010 U.S. Census (<http://factfinder2.census.gov>) shows that Minnetonka's total population has decreased by about 3% since 2000. Over the same time, Hopkins' total population has increased by about 2.6%.

Minnetonka and Hopkins are both becoming more racially and ethnically diverse over time. Percentage of White residents in both from 2000 to 2010 – a 4% decrease in Minnetonka and a 10% decrease in

Hopkins. Over the same time, both cities saw their percentages of all minority populations increase. The Black or African American population accounted the biggest percent of population increase in both cities. Refer to Appendix A for more information.

White Population as a Percent of Total Population, 2005-09.

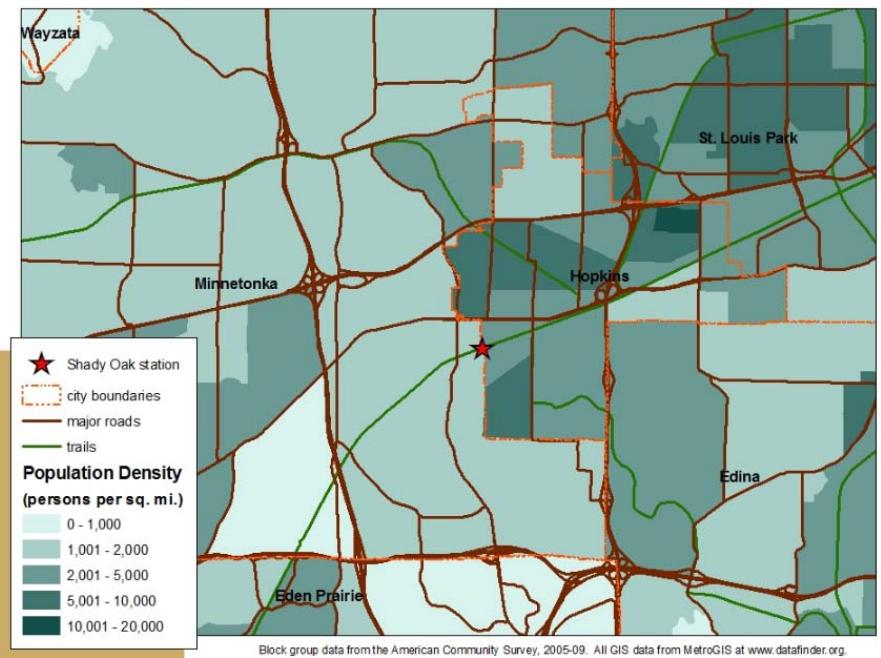


## *Income and Employment*

Residents and workers in Minnetonka tend to be better-off in terms of income than the regional and county average. The largest employment sectors in Minnetonka are finance/insurance, retail/trade, manufacturing, and health care/social assistance. Employment in Minnetonka is expected to grow over the next 20 years, with a projection of almost 60,000 jobs in the city in 2030. (Met Council)

Residents and workers in Hopkins tend to make less than the county and regional average. This disparity increased from 2000 to 2009, with incomes in Hopkins growing at a lower rate than the county and regional averages. Hopkins is expected to grow in terms of numbers of jobs over the next twenty years, with about 16,000 new jobs by 2030. The largest employment sector in Hopkins is health care/social assistance, comprising almost 30% of employment in Hopkins. Wholesale trade, educational services, and retail are the next largest sectors. (Met Council)

Population Density, 2005-09.



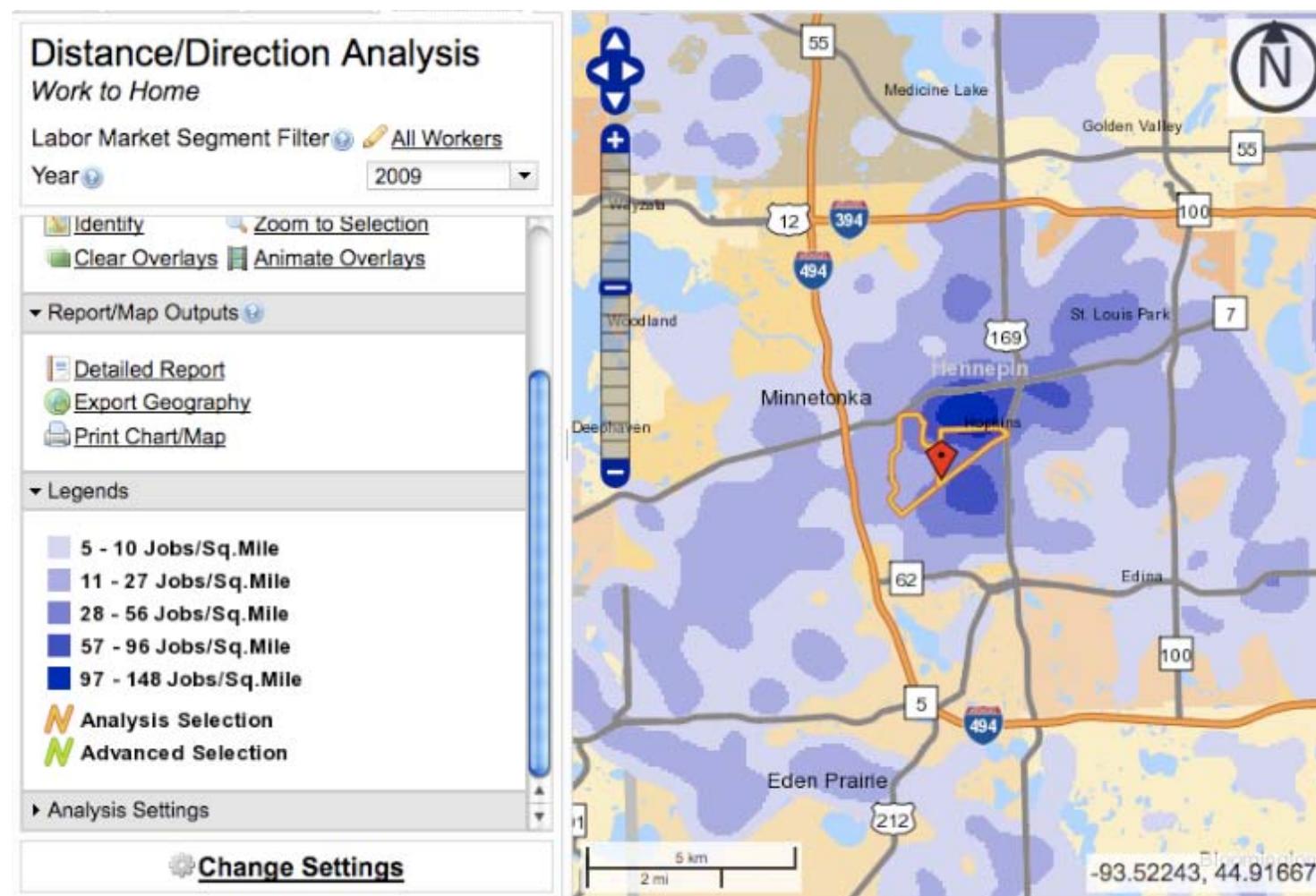
Block group data from the American Community Survey, 2005-09. All GIS data from MetroGIS at [www.datafinder.org](http://www.datafinder.org).

## *Population Density*

Hopkins is a more densely populated community than Minnetonka, due primarily to its smaller lot sizes and greater proportion of multi-family housing units. The areas to the north and east of the station area are quite dense, at a range of 2,001 to 10,000 persons per square mile. To the east and south of the station area in Minnetonka, the population density is only 1,001 to 2,000 persons per square mile. This indicates that there are a greater number of Hopkins residents within walking distance of Shady Oak Station. Minnetonka residents would likely have a greater need to drive to use the SW LRT because they are more spread out.

## Commuting to the Shady Oak Station Area

The map below shows where people who currently work within the Shady Oak Station area (outlined in orange on the map) currently live. The darker areas indicate a greater concentration of workers. The people who work within the redevelopment area tend to live in Hopkins, Saint Louis Park, and Minnetonka; some live in Golden Valley as well. This indicates that people work in this area tend to live nearby.



## Hopkins and Minnetonka Commuters

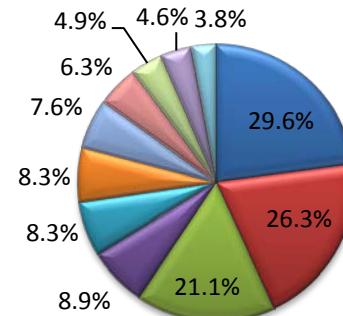
Hopkins and Minnetonka residents commute all around the metropolitan area for work, according to 2008 U.S. Census Bureau data. Minneapolis is the largest single employment center for both cities, employing about a quarter of Minnetonka workers and a fifth of Hopkins workers.

Minnetonka employers attract the second greatest percentage of workers from both cities work. In general, Minnetonka and Hopkins employees tend to work in the west metro, with the exceptions of Saint Paul and Bloomington.

On the charts to the right, the “Other” category includes cities throughout the 7-county metropolitan area, as well as communities outside of this region. Though this category contains the greatest percentage of workers in each city, it does not represent a singular, well-defined employment area.

Please refer to Appendix B for more detailed information.

### Top 10 Workplaces of Minnetonka Residents

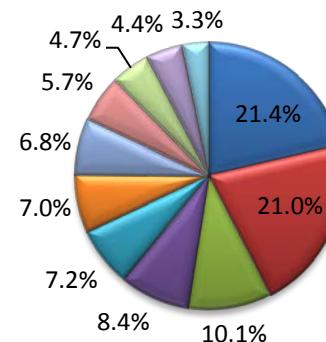


- Other
- Minneapolis
- Minnetonka
- Edina
- Eden Prairie
- Saint Louis Park
- Bloomington
- Plymouth
- Golden Valley
- Saint Paul
- Hopkins

Note: Workplaces and residences outside the seven-county area are counted in “Other”.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Local Employment-Household Dynamics:

### Top 10 Workplaces of Hopkins Residents



- Other
- Minneapolis
- Minnetonka
- Saint Louis Park
- Hopkins
- Eden Prairie
- Edina
- Bloomington
- Saint Paul
- Plymouth
- Golden Valley

Note: Workplaces and residences outside the seven-county area are counted in “Other”.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Local Employment-Household Dynamics:

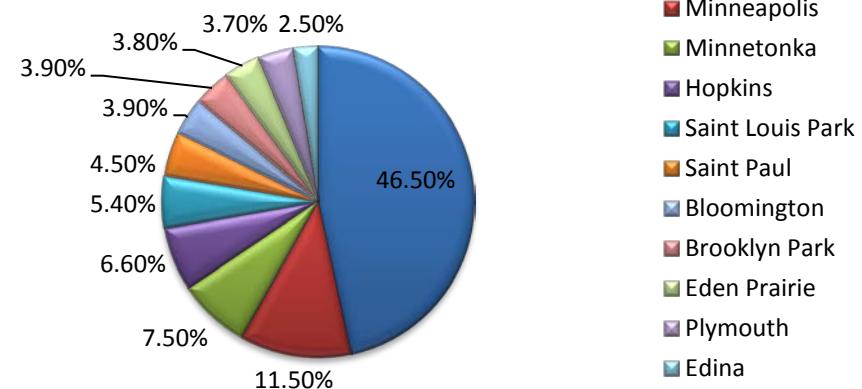
### *Hopkins and Minnetonka In-Commuters*

Workers who commute into Minnetonka and Hopkins are not centered in one location. Instead, the “Other” category comprises almost half of all people commuting into both cities. Similar to the charts presented on the previous page, “Other” indicates that workers originate from within or outside the 7-county metro area. It is not possible to deduce from this data if these employees reside in a concentrated area or are commuting in from around the metropolitan region.

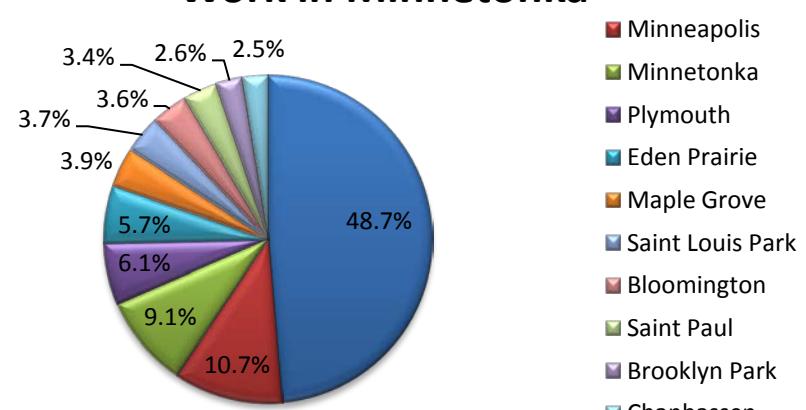
As seen with residents of Minnetonka and Hopkins, people who work in these cities tend to live in the western suburbs. From the data on this and the previous page, one can conclude that, in general, people who live in this region prefer to work in the same area, and vice versa.

Please refer to Appendix B for more detailed information.

### **Top 10 Residences of People Who Work in Hopkins**



### **Top 10 Residences of People Who Work in Minnetonka**



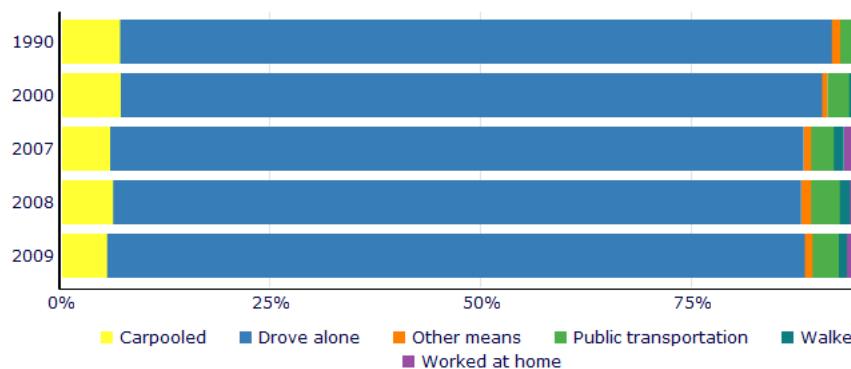
Note: Workplaces and residences outside the seven-county area are counted in “Other”.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Local Employment-Household Dynamics:

### Means of Transportation to Work

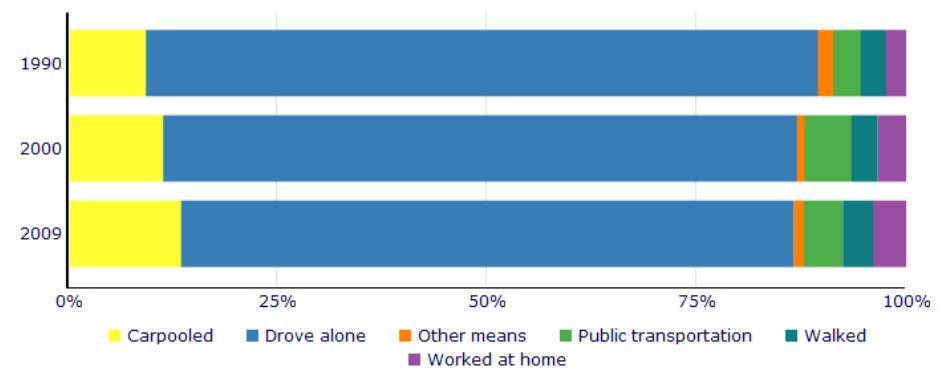
The primary mode of transportation to work for residents of both Minnetonka and Hopkins is driving alone. A slightly greater percentage of Hopkins residents use public transportation than Minnetonka residents – 5% in Hopkins versus 3% in Minnetonka. LRT may be a very convenient and feasible option for commuters who currently drive alone or carpool from Minnetonka, and for Hopkins residents who work in Minneapolis, which is, as discussed previously, the greatest employment center for Hopkins residents. From these figures, it is clear that there is a large population base in both cities who currently either are not well-served by transit or do not consider transit to be a convenient option.

**Means of Transportation to Work, Minnetonka Residents**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau [Decennial Census](#) and [American Community Survey](#).

**Means of Transportation to Work, Hopkins Residents**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau [Decennial Census](#) and [American Community Survey](#).

## Problem Statement

In the design and implementation of the Shady Oak Station area, several problems need to be addressed.

First, the proposed station area site is presently covered with various businesses and tenants. The Cities of Hopkins and Minnetonka, as well as Hennepin County, will need to work with these tenants and land owners to meet appropriate conditions for these industries to relocate. Those who are not required to move pose another problem; industrial land uses are not considered transit-friendly and should undergo either a structural and use renovation or complete demolition so that more appropriate land uses may be installed. This conversion will likely involve some brownfield cleanup, which also presents technical complications before new construction begins. Furthermore, the zoning for this area will need to be amended to allow for transit-oriented development and land uses more conducive to walking, such as human-scale, mixed-use designs.



The proposed station area site lacks identity. City staff from Minnetonka and Hopkins, as well as local residents and other stakeholders, have made a discernible plea for something special to be built in this area to fit with the light rail. While station area development will be unlike anything currently in either city, the new development must still embody the characters of Hopkins and Minnetonka in order to meet the needs and expectations of current residents and businesses. Furthermore, concerns have been raised by businesses in downtown Hopkins that the Shady Oak Station may draw away their patrons and shoppers. This is a legitimate concern, and it is not the objective of the Shady Oak Station to "step on the toes" of downtown Hopkins.

This leads to another problem in that the station area is situated on the border of two distinct cities. This creates a division of interests (as well as of the tax base) between Hopkins and Minnetonka. It is imperative that voices from both cities be heard, and their unique needs addressed in an accommodating manner.

Lastly, the issue of public financing has been brought up by many developers and real estate agents. Especially in this economy, the private sector will not be able to transform the Shady Oak Station area without some sort of public aid. Low interest loans, TIF districts, or other unique financing methods should be analyzed for this area.

## *SWOT Analysis*

In defining and solving problems, a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats/challenges) analysis is an extremely useful tool for aiding in understanding and decision-making. The following chart outlines Shady Oak Station's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges.

Important strengths include the Station's position on the Southwest Corridor. Due to its location on the "bend" of the line (where the route changes from north/southbound to east/westbound), Shady Oak Station has the potential to draw a large population from the widest region of any proposed light rail station along the Southwest Corridor. Additionally, its proximity to two high-traffic streets (Shady Oak Road and Excelsior Boulevard) will provide an existing demand for the park & ride (P&R) structure scheduled to be built nearby.

Furthermore, the Station will be adjacent to several bicycle trails and lakes – amenities currently enjoyed by local residents that draw many people to this area. Lastly, it is a strength of the area that most current industrial tenants seem to be willing to vacate their property, as these land uses will be incompatible to transit-oriented development and will need to be demolished or greatly renovated and remodeled.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ On the "bend" of the SW LRT line</li> <li>◦ Near two busy roads</li> <li>◦ Bicycle trails through site and lakes nearby</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Most current industrial tenants willing to leave</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Station area divided between two cities</li> <li>• Surrounded by low density &amp; industrial uses</li> <li>• Current lack of identity</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Challenges (Threats)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased tax base for both cities</li> <li>• Enhanced sense of place</li> <li>• Greater density could increase SW LRT ridership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soil contamination &amp; cleanup from industrial uses</li> <li>• Need for public financing</li> <li>• Some land uses incongruous with surrounding communities</li> </ul>

The Station area also has several opportunities to benefit the cities of Minnetonka and Hopkins. New development and an increased number of business patrons to this area will boost the tax base for both cities while also contributing to increased LRT ridership. Additionally, the new station area plan will focus on community relationships and citizen needs to contribute to an enhanced sense of place.



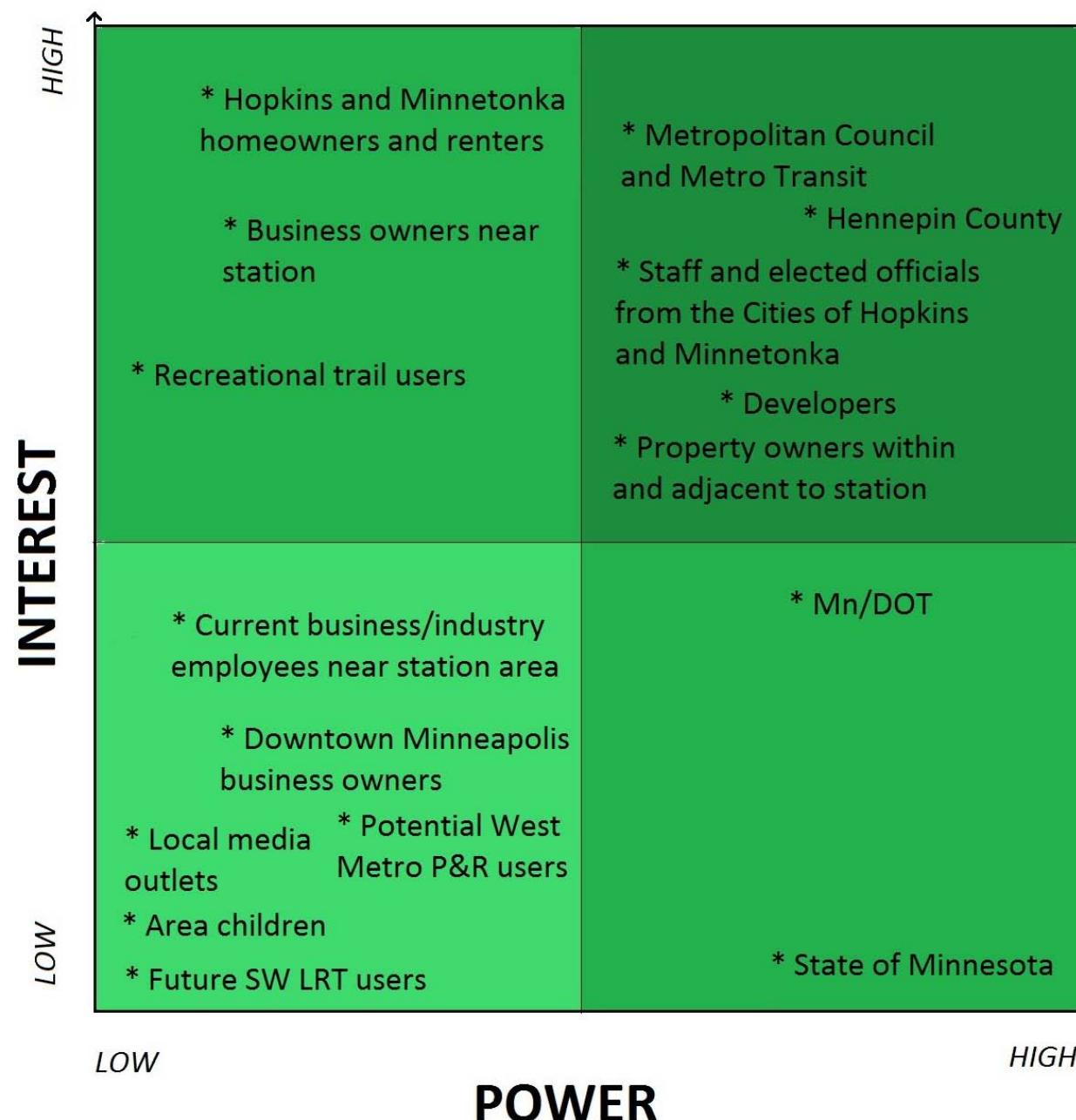
However, the station area also faces challenges and weaknesses. These include the difficulty of developing a project divided between two cities with two unique governments, wants, and characters, in addition to melding nearby low-density land uses with transit-oriented development. Moreover, according to Loren Gordon, City Planner for Minnetonka, the area will likely need to undergo expensive soil remediation from past industrial uses on this

site before development can commence. At this time it has not yet been determined who will pay for this and other developmental expenses – another challenge facing the area. Various channels of public financing must be explored in order for the station area to realize its full potential.

#### *Stakeholders: Power versus Interest*

There are many stakeholders involved in the planning, implementation, and outcome of Shady Oak Station. Since the station area is situated along the border of two cities, this introduces an even greater number of stakeholders than may be present at other proposed stations along the Southwest LRT Corridor.

Governmental bodies have the most power in this process, and those directly involved in the development and design of the Southwest LRT, including Hennepin County and the Met Council, also have high levels of interest. Those who will have the closest and most frequent affiliation to the station area – local residents, business and property owners – have high interest in the project, but less power. Developers will have high interest and high power, as they explore potential development opportunities here and have the capability to implement them. The level of power and interest among each of these stakeholders varies and is well represented in the power versus interest grid on the following page:



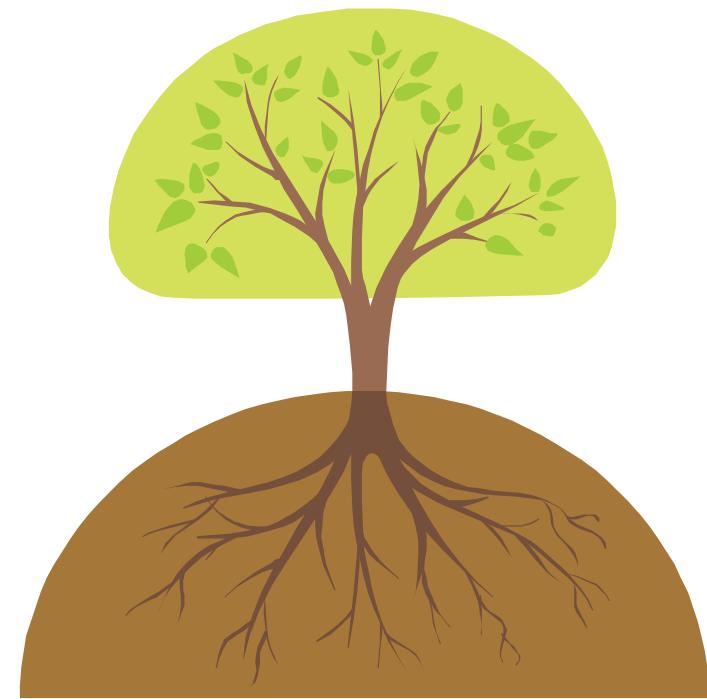
## *Shady Oak's Potential*

While transit is not currently a highly popular mode of transportation in Hopkins and Minnetonka, there is a potential market for commuters from the two cities into downtown Minneapolis. In addition, employment centers such as Cargill and the Opus Center already draw employees from all over the Twin Cities. The Shady Oak Station area could potentially draw from this labor pool by expanding job opportunities here. It is important to consider where commuters are coming from (and going to) to plan for future parking, zoning, and additional transit connections to the Shady Oak area.

There are differing ideas about what the character of the Shady Oak Station area should encompass. Through stakeholder interviews, multiple sources have suggested that the Shady Oak area be redeveloped into an employment hub, with office space and room for start-up businesses to develop. One stakeholder suggested that the area be a high tech think tank involving the University of Minnesota, although this avenue of development is not explored in this report.

Another suggestion for the station area's character is to augment the green space and natural amenities nearby. Minnetonka currently boasts about 1700 acres of parks and green space that are connected by a series of trails (it was mentioned in stakeholder interviews that the Shady Oak Station would be the perfect spot for a Nice Ride bicycle sharing hub). People from Minneapolis could take the SW LRT to Shady Oak, get on a bike and spend the day at Shady Oak Lake or go riding on the trails.

Additionally, the Shady Oak Station site could attract businesses similar to, but not duplicative of, those in downtown Hopkins. This could create a "boutique corridor" of sorts and supplement business in downtown Hopkins instead of drawing patrons away from it, as is a noted concern. Furthermore, the nearby Perpich High School for the Arts would supplement an art walk or other type of creative and unique corridor from the station.



## The Vision for Shady Oak Station

Imagine three friends, Carl, Janet, and Jerome, who live in the same neighborhood in Minnetonka, but work in downtown Minneapolis, Eden Prairie's Golden Triangle, and along K-Tel Drive in Minnetonka. Each day, these friends drive alone to work, battling traffic congestion and wasting time that could otherwise be spent with each other. Their commute is not ideal, but luckily, they will soon have a new transportation option made possible by the Southwest Corridor LRT and the Shady Oak Station.

The Shady Oak Station will have a strong identity and foster connections between people and places through sustainable,



forward-thinking design that incorporates and enhances existing natural amenities. The Shady Oak Station area will boost access to trails and parks, shops and restaurants in downtown Hopkins, and employment opportunities in both downtown Minneapolis and the southwestern suburbs. The Shady Oak Station will be much more than just another nondescript park & ride; it will be a recreation and employment destination.

Twenty years from now, the area immediately around Shady Oak Station will be a much improved place. Instead of the tangle of old warehouses along Excelsior Boulevard, the area will be a mix of uses accentuated with open space. The station area will exemplify the town center feel of Hopkins, with the added natural amenities and open space akin to Minnetonka – connecting the two cities with its design.

Now picture the completion of the Southwest Corridor; Carl, Janet, and Jerome's commute has significantly changed. Every weekday, these three carpool to the Shady Oak Park & Ride to connect to their jobs in different parts of the metro area. Carl takes the light rail downtown to his job at Wells Fargo, while Janet takes the train south to her job near the Golden Triangle station. Jerome doesn't take the train at all; instead he walks past the station to his new office on K-Tel Drive.

In this scenario, Shady Oak Station serves as much more than just a park & ride. Every day, residents use the trails to bike or walk to Shady Oak Lake and downtown Hopkins. Those from outside the immediate station area can take an entire day to

enjoy the natural amenities provided here by swimming, boating, biking, relaxing, picnicking or playing Frisbee.

Shady Oak Station will become its own destination as well, with the only micro-winery in the region located nearby. Building upon Hopkins' status as the raspberry capital of the world, the micro-winery will specialize in raspberry wine. The micro-winery will attract a happy hour crowd of light rail and park & ride users, as well as local residents and wine enthusiasts from afar.

### *Why This Vision?*

This vision is appropriate for the Shady Oak Station area for several reasons. Drawing from fifteen separate stakeholder interviews as well as three meetings with our client, it is apparent that enhancing the natural amenities along the proposed Shady Oak Station is the best course of action for community and economic development.

Our vision addresses one of the most prominent concerns facing this area – integrating the two very distinct cities of Hopkins and Minnetonka. Our vision blends these individual cities by matching the open space of Minnetonka with the close-knit community atmosphere of Hopkins.

Furthermore, our vision makes good use of nearby amenities at the site. In any case, Shady Oak Lake will exist in this location; it only makes sense to amplify this recreational and natural resource. In addition, Minnetonka and Hopkins residents already visit this area to take advantage of the trails, beach, and open space that is offered here. Our vision strengthens

what local residents already use and enjoy without displacing or ignoring these functions.

Another pressing concern facing the proposed Shady Oak Station is avoiding duplication of development similar to downtown Hopkins. Our vision brings a unique touch to this site that will not detract from, but rather will complement downtown Hopkins, as well as provide something completely different from the sterile business atmosphere present at the proposed Opus Station area to the south.



Lastly, the location of the proposed Shady Oak Station is the most accessible for people coming from the western suburbs. Situated on a "bend" where the light rail line changes from north- and southbound to east- and westbound, Shady Oak Station has the potential to draw a large population from the widest region of any proposed light rail station along the Southwest Corridor. Our vision is one that can be enjoyed by both local residents and those traveling from farther away, including passengers on the light rail as well as drivers utilizing the proposed park & ride.

## Action Plan

### Goals and Objectives

The action plan for development of the Shady Oak Station is centered around the following goals and objectives:

*Goal 1: The Shady Oak Station area's design and function needs to fit in with the surrounding communities of Minnetonka and Hopkins, yet foster a transit-oriented environment.*

- *Objective 1.1: Seamlessly match the varying densities of Hopkins and Minnetonka.*

There is a marked change in housing densities between Minnetonka and Hopkins. The eastern edge of Minnetonka is a very green, suburban, and low-density neighborhood, while Hopkins mixes small-lot homes with apartments, creating a small-town feel. To fit the styles of both communities, the Shady Oak Station area must feel like a continuation of both cities. This can be achieved by including densities similar to downtown Hopkins with the green space akin to Minnetonka.

- *Objective 1.2: Development should complement – not compete with – downtown Hopkins.*

A legitimate concern among Hopkins residents and business owners is that new businesses in the Shady Oak redevelopment plan will directly compete with existing businesses in downtown Hopkins.

Development around the Shady Oak Station must be strategically controlled in a way that only allows complementary businesses to move in. Failure to do this could result in a loss of business for downtown Hopkins and the erosion of Hopkins' small town culture.

- *Objective 1.3: Address Minnetonka's and Hopkins' unique housing needs by integrating multi-family/senior housing with lower density townhomes.*

Because so much multi-family housing is already present in Hopkins, many existing residents do not want additional apartment facilities. Conversely, Minnetonka contains very little multi-family housing, but has a growing demand for these types of homes to meet the needs of the aging population. To balance these unique needs, residential development should include single-family townhomes or duplexes on the Hopkins side, and multi-family structures on the Minnetonka side.

- *Objective 1.4: Promote high enough development densities to facilitate transit-oriented development (TOD), yet integrate open space to correspond with the existing built environment.*

More people can effectively use light rail transit if there are high numbers of residents and jobs within walking distance of the stations. In this way, Shady Oak should contain higher-density development to foster these

activities. However, traditional high density does not fit with the character of Hopkins and Minnetonka.

Therefore, modest increases in density must blend with parks and open spaces to best fit the character of the surrounding neighborhoods.

*Goal 2: Shady Oak Station should be unique and create its own “sense of place.”*

- *Objective 2.1: Promote existing natural amenities to define the character of this area.*

The neighborhoods around the proposed station already contain parks and natural amenities, such as Central Park to the North, Westside Park to the East, and Shady Oak Lake to the southwest. Designs for redevelopment will utilize these existing recreational spaces by building connections to such spaces and improving access from these sites to the station area (and to the rest of the Metro area via light rail).

- *Objective 2.2: Design a space that is inviting to all.*

One major concern with the station site is that it will not be visible from Shady Oak Road or Excelsior Boulevard, so fewer people will use the station. The initial site design will take great care in making the station and park & ride facility more visible from Excelsior Boulevard as well as major bike/walking trails. Also, the station itself should be architecturally inviting, and the

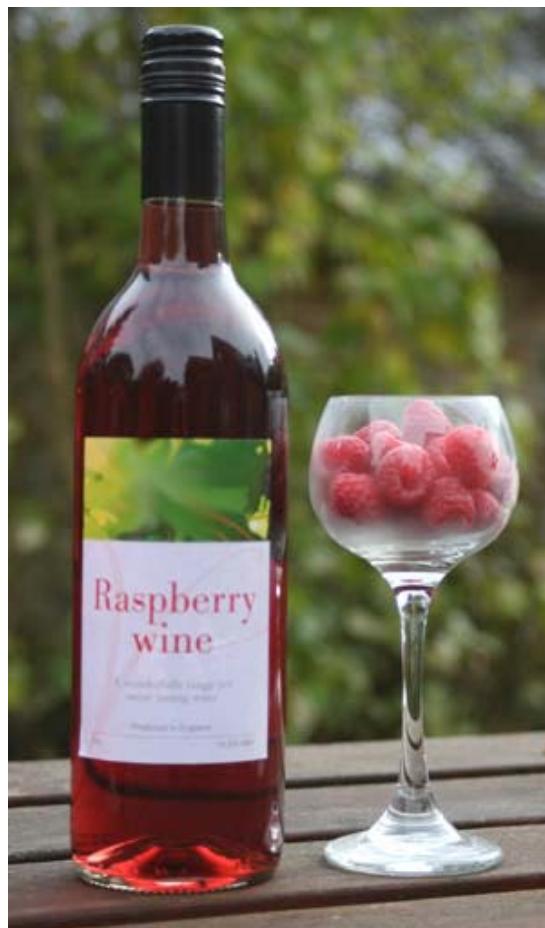
park & ride should include facilities for bicycle commuters.



- *Objective 2.3: Attract a unique business or business park to help create a “spark”.*

Currently, the area has no true identity or “spark”. Downtown Hopkins has small town charm, and Minnetonka’s Opus development, Cargill, and SUPERVALU serve as the major employers in the area. To be unique, Minnetonka and Hopkins need to attract a special tenant. Potentially, the spark in this area could be a micro-winery specializing in raspberry wine. Discussion about the legalization of brewers to sell their beverages has been ongoing in Minnesota. If this were

to be approved, Shady Oak Station could be one of the first places in the state to take advantage of this opportunity. This would also tie into the history of Hopkins (the self-proclaimed raspberry capital of the world), and create a unique, yet laid-back, destination for workers, residents, and tourists.



*Goal 3: Ensure that Shady Oak Station contributes to the economic vitality of the region.*

- *Objective 3.1: Prescribe zoning and development that will increase the tax base around the station for both Minnetonka and Hopkins.*

The station area is currently zoned I-1, or restrictive industrial. Revised zoning (such as form-based codes) and new types of development around the proposed Shady Oak Station are a golden opportunity for Hopkins and Minnetonka to expand their tax bases. Not only will redevelopment of the Shady Oak site provide enhanced economic opportunities for the cities, but the improved access will bring in regional visitors who might not otherwise frequent Hopkins and Minnetonka businesses. In addition, the SW LRT and new station area developments will increase property values nearby and provide further economic benefits to the region.

- *Objective 3.2: Ensure employment opportunities for local residents and new commuters.*

The future site of Shady Oak Station is already an employment center for many local residents. It would be detrimental to the surrounding community to lose this concentration of jobs. Although the current light industrial uses in this area may not be appropriate for transit-oriented development, new development such as the micro-winery and office and commercial spaces

will provide other employment opportunities in this location. To maintain the employment sector in this area, any redevelopment around the proposed Shady Oak Station should provide at least the same number of jobs, or greater, currently found at the site with a similar or higher level of compensation.

*Goal 4: As per the tenets of TOD, the area must be fully connected and accessible via multiple modes of transportation; moreover, the surrounding natural amenities make this need even greater.*

- *Objective 4.1: Create a pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly area.*

The Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Bicycle Trail is a prized amenity valued by locals and residents from around the region. Shady Oak Station should enhance the trail and make it even more accessible to both bikers and pedestrians. Furthermore, all transit users are pedestrians (and some are also bicyclists), so the station area must cater to this requirement as well.

- *Objective 4.2: Create multi-modal connections to key locations.*

Given its strategic location on the bend of the SW LRT line, Shady Oak Station should provide enhanced

connections to other transit lines such as bus service, as well as convenient access to its P&R structure for commuters from the west metro. These connections will help workers reach their jobs and will expose area businesses to potential customers from around the region.



## *Design Elements – Transit-Oriented Design*

Transit-oriented design (TOD) is a broad concept that incorporates many different types and styles of development. Since the Southwest LRT line will be operated by Metro Transit (a division of the Metropolitan Council), this strategy follows the Metropolitan Council's guidelines for TOD. They recommend that TOD include four design elements:

1. Compact, dense development
2. Rich mix of uses
3. Pedestrian-oriented design
4. Access to a variety of transportation options

Compact development in TOD calls for transit-supportive design with medium- to high-density housing and employment. Development should be located within comfortable walking distances of a transit station (generally defined as  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile for bus, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile for rail).

Mix of uses includes diverse and complementary high-activity land uses. These can include retail, office or commercial uses, housing of varying densities and prices, and open and green space, all within the central area of a TOD and easily accessible to transit by foot. Mix of uses also should include varying housing options for multiple life stages, as well as a mix of housing affordability levels.



*Pedestrian-friendly transit-oriented design in Douglasville, GA*

Pedestrian-oriented design requires that the environment be attractive and easily accessible for pedestrians and bicyclists. Buildings should be street-facing with small setbacks. The street system should be at pedestrian-scales, with crosswalks at frequent intervals, wide sidewalks, and inviting landscaping. Walking and bicycle paths should connect the TOD's transit station, commercial, civic, and residential areas with one another.

Access to transit and other transportation facilities requires that transit facilities – rail stations and bus stops – be tailored to the level of transit service appropriate to the specific development. Additionally, sufficient parking must be available to accommodate both transit users and TOD customers.

## Design Elements – Transit-Oriented Design Case Studies

### Excelsior and Grand, Saint Louis Park, Minnesota

Excelsior and Grand, in neighboring Saint Louis Park, provides one of the most well-known local examples of TOD. Excelsior and Grand is a 16-acre site that transformed an auto-dominated land use pattern into a mixed-use, walkable environment that is a highly desirable place to live and visit.

While Excelsior and Grand embodies higher densities and a larger amount of development in terms of square footage than Hopkins and Minnetonka might like to see at Shady Oak Station, there are several important design elements to be taken away from this example. Excelsior and Grand features a very walkable environment, large amounts of public green and open space, and enhanced connectivity to the local bike trail system. Additionally, the development implements an “eyes on the street” approach with windows on each building facing the street, and wide sidewalks to accommodate foot traffic. These design elements promote pedestrian safety as well as an enhanced sense of community for residents and visitors alike.

Lastly, this complex redevelopment project involved a strong partnership between the public and private sectors (Congress for the New Urbanism). It is certain that the redevelopment of the Shady Oak Station area can draw from the lessons of partnership and cooperation provided in the Excelsior and Grand example.



Design of Excelsior and Grand development

Source: Congress for the New Urbanism



Public art and green space in Excelsior and Grand

### *Orenco Station, Hillsboro, Oregon*

Orenco Station is a TOD community located about fifteen miles west of downtown Portland, Oregon. It is adjacent to a MAX light rail station that connects to downtown Portland and beyond to the eastern suburbs. Orenco Station was built in the late 1990s and is considered to be one of the nation's most successful examples of TOD.

Orenco Station provides important design elements that can be applied in the development of Shady Oak Station. First, Orenco Station is centered around a mixed-use commercial Town Center, with higher residential densities in this area and tapering off as one moves outward. This is a useful design element that can be used to blend new development at Shady Oak Station with the surrounding low-density neighborhoods.

Another important lesson to learn from Orenco Station is pedestrian access. Many residents of Orenco Station do not walk to transit because there are few shortcuts or walking paths to complement the sidewalk network. Pedestrian-friendly access is key to promoting transit usage and reducing automobile traffic. The redevelopment of the Shady Oak Station area must make sure to address this need.

In addition to the benefits that the light rail provides, most people who live in Orenco Station moved there for reasons other than access to transit. Orenco Station provides a livable, enjoyable community atmosphere. Well designed buildings and inviting community spaces have attracted residents and created a unique sense of place. This phenomenon can benefit Shady Oak Station, as well. (Bae, 2002)

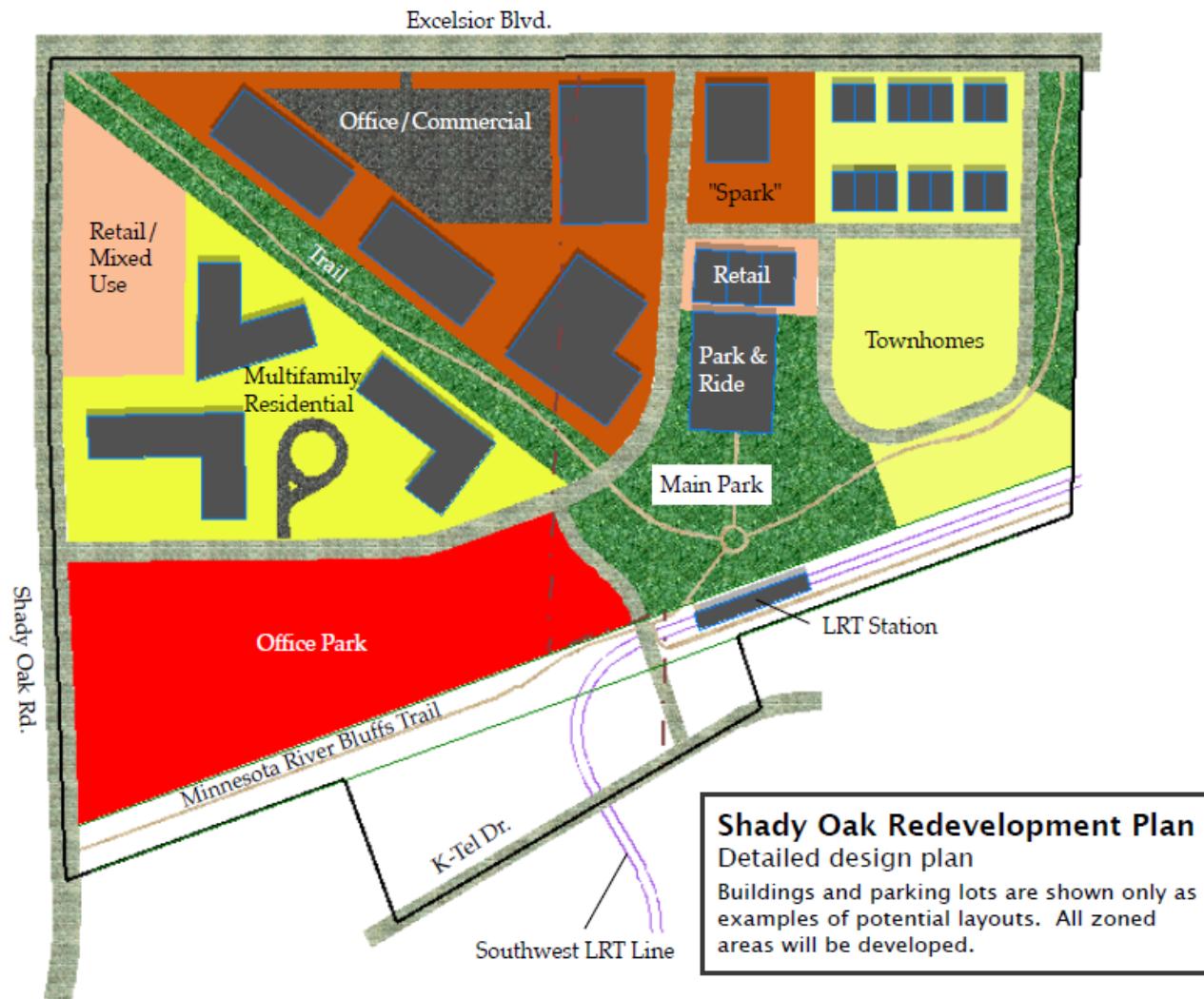


*Wide sidewalks and green space in Orenco Station*

## *Redevelopment Plan – “Shady Oak Corners” (Design 1)*

The Shady Oak Corners redevelopment plan shows an in-depth analysis of the best-possible design for the Shady Oak site. The

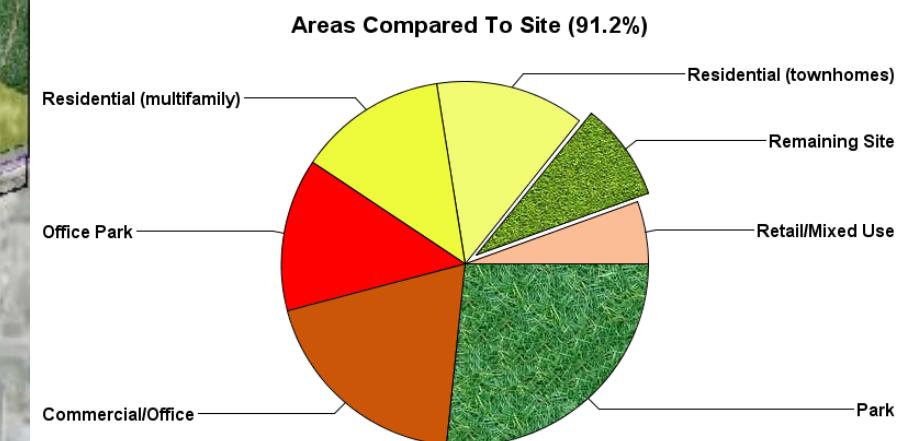
strengths of this design are its connectivity to major nodes and parks, visibility of the station area, and blending of Hopkins and Minnetonka streetscapes. This design also keeps all existing infrastructure surrounding the site intact.



(see page 39 for land use legend)

Land Use Map – “Shady Oak Corners” (Design 1)

## Proposed Land Use & Design for Shady Oak Corners



**Site Area: 3,110,153 ft<sup>2</sup> (71.3993 acres)**

Retail/Mixed Use.....	5.5%	170,943 ft <sup>2</sup>	(3.9243 acres)
Remaining Site.....	8.8%	272,750 ft <sup>2</sup>	(6.2615 acres)
Residential (townhomes) ..	13.2%	409,007 ft <sup>2</sup>	(9.3895 acres)
Residential (multifamily) ..	13.2%	410,965 ft <sup>2</sup>	(9.4345 acres)
Office Park.....	13.5%	419,459 ft <sup>2</sup>	(9.6295 acres)
Commercial/Office.....	19.3%	601,459 ft <sup>2</sup>	(13.8076 acres)
Park.....	26.5%	825,570 ft <sup>2</sup>	(18.9525 acres)

## Land Use Designations and Legend – “Shady Oak Corners” (Design 1)

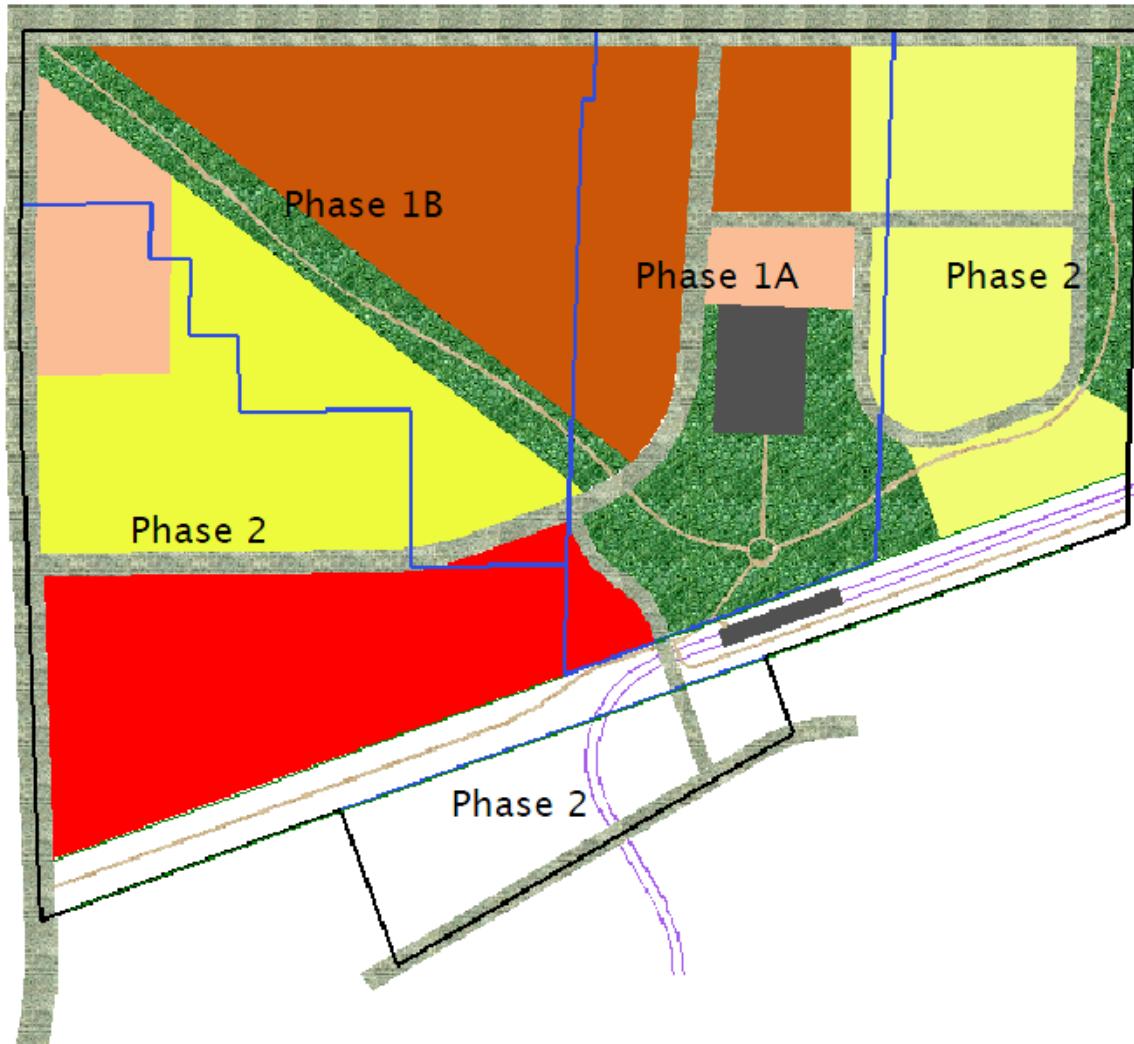
Land Use	Appearance	Main Uses	Setback (from ROW)	Density (units/acre or FAR)	Height	Parking
Townhome Residential		Single family residences	10' minimum 20' maximum	12-24 units/acre	2-4 stories	Attached/ side garages
Multifamily Residential		Residences/ apartments	10' minimum	20/36 units/acre	3-6 stories	Surface and/or underground parking lots
Office Park		Office	10' minimum	0.8-2.0 FAR	2-6 stories	Surface parking lots
Commercial/ Office		Office & limited retail/ service use	Variable*	1.0-2.4 FAR	2-5 stories	Surface/underground parking (access to 17 <sup>th</sup> or Excelsior)
Retail/Mix Use		Retail stores and/or apartments	20' maximum	0.9-1.5 FAR	2-4 stories	Combination of street/surface/ P&R
Park		Recreation & Bike/Ped Avenues	N/A	N/A	N/A	P&R and bike racks

\*Maximum setback of '20 for streets that buildings face. Other setbacks can be eased for parking.

This will accommodate a "downtown" feel and allow for parking lots off of other roads.

Map of Phasing Plan – “Shady Oak Corners” (Design 1)

### Shady Oak Redevelopment Phasing Plan



*(see page 39 for land use legend)*

## Phasing Plan – “Shady Oak Corners” (Design 1)

Improvement	Priority	Who will purchase?	Who will implement?	Acquisition cost (2011 dollars)
<b>Phase 1A: Before the Station</b>				
17th Ave. Extended Park & ride/station	High	Hennepin County	Hennepin County	\$4.55 million
Create main park	Low	Hennepin County	3 Rivers Park Dist.	
<b>Phase 1B: Before the Station</b>				
Develop offices & spark	Medium	Private Developers	Private Developers	\$9.84 million
Develop neighborhood	Low			
Create angular	Low	Hennepin County	3 Rivers Park Dist.	
<b>Phase 2: During/After the Station</b>				
Build LRT line	High	Hennepin County	Hennepin County	(at most**) \$3.69 million
Finish park	High	Hennepin County	3 Rivers Park Dist.	(incl. in other costs)
Extend 47th St.	High			
Develop office	Medium			(at most**) \$11.41 million (\$10.28 without McDonalds purchase)
Develop multifamily	Medium			
Improve Shady Oak Rd. retail	Low	Private Developers	Private Developers	
Develop Complete street grid	Medium			\$6.67 million

\*Acquisition costs derived from March 2011 market values of parcels (see Appendix D).

\*\*Some parcels do not need to be purchased for development or conforming land uses.

Phasing for Design 1 comprises three stages: 1A, 1B, and 2. Phase 1A includes street and park improvements to be made before the station is built in 2017 (estimated). While the site for 1A lies within Hopkins, it will be the responsibility of Hennepin County, along with other government agencies, to purchase the right-of-way and build the street and the park & ride structure necessary for the station.

Phase 1B will also occur before the completion of Southwest LRT, but construction priorities are lower. In this phase, both cities will look for private developers to acquire and improve land to develop office, retail, and park space. The cities may or

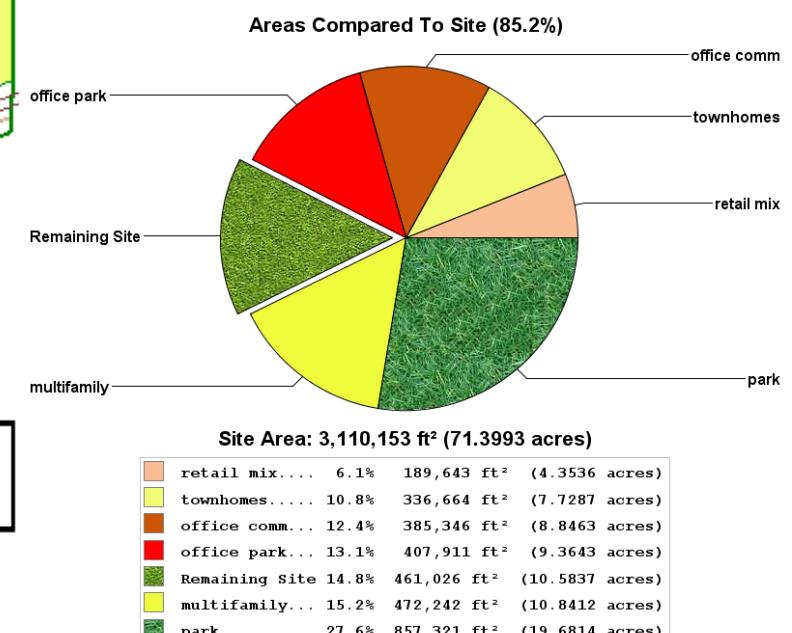
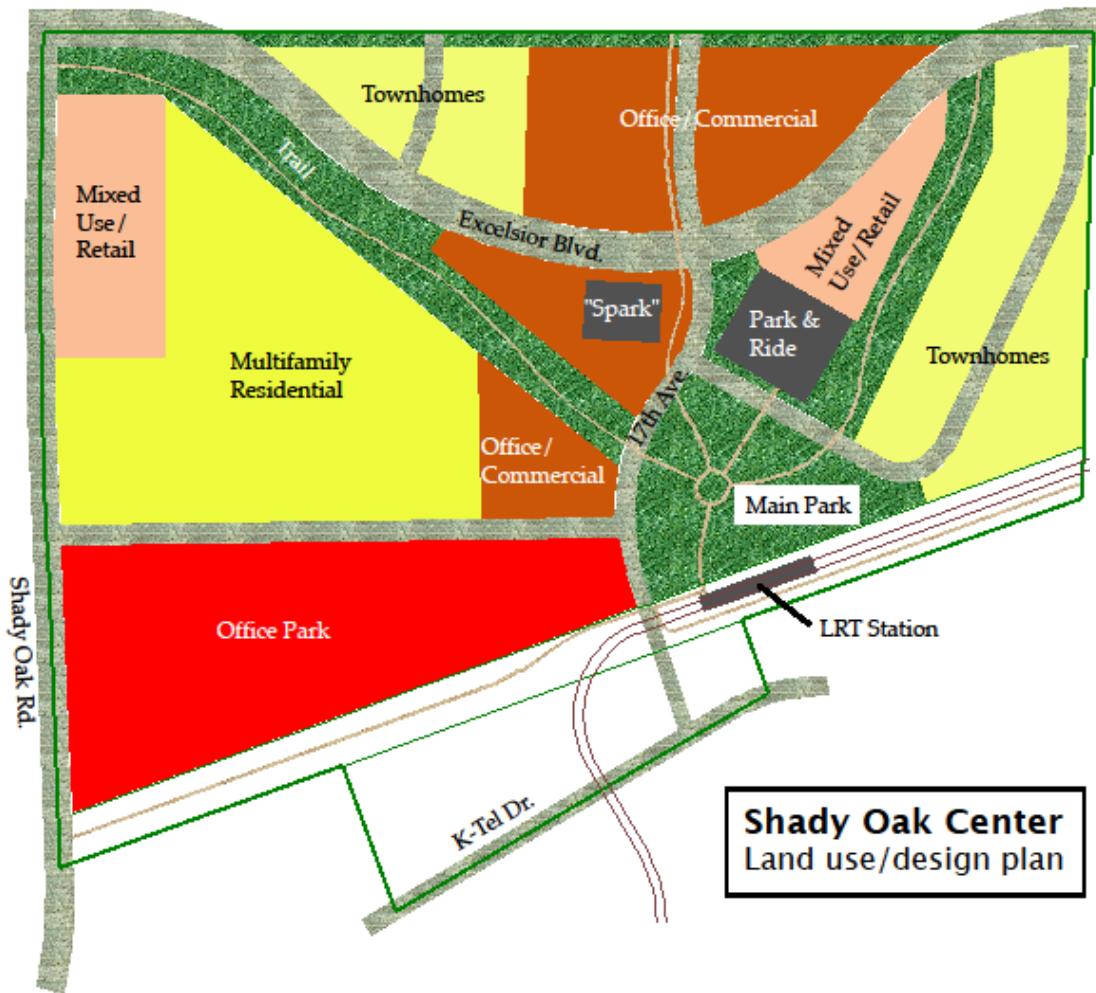
may not decide to assist developers by sponsoring grant applications for infrastructure and site cleanup costs. Acquisition costs only include the April 2011 market value of all parcels necessary to make improvements.

Phase 2 includes all other land acquisitions and improvements necessary to implement LRT and complete the site. Hennepin County must purchase portions (or all) of two parcels to have the LRT line turn south. Otherwise, Phase 2 is designed for private developers to acquire and develop the remainder of the site.

## *Redevelopment Plan – “Shady Oak Center” (Design 2)*

The Shady Oak Center redevelopment plan is a representation of an alternate design for the site. The major difference in this design is that Excelsior Boulevard is moved much closer to the

station and park & ride. While this design creates greater visibility and connectivity to the center of the site, implementation of this design would be both complex and costly.



## *Shady Oak Corners and Shady Oak Center – Side-by-Side Comparison*

### Shady Oak Corners

- Station visible from certain points, including intersection of Shady Oak Road & Excelsior Boulevard
- Park & ride is near station but away from Excelsior Boulevard
- Any bus/shuttle service must go down 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue to reach station area
- Modest densities will still provide high employment levels
- Phasing plan allows for simple station access in Phase 1A at a relatively minimal cost
- No major roads will be moved, only new roads built

### Shady Oak Center

- Station visible from much of Excelsior Boulevard and 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- Park & ride is near station and directly accessible from Excelsior Boulevard
- Excellent node at Excelsior Boulevard and 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue for busses/shuttles to serve station area
- Design has slightly less land zoned for commercial, so densities should be at the higher end of recommended commercial densities
- All land in Phase 1 plus some of Phase 2 must be purchase initially for road moving and station access (estimated \$20.9 million acquisition cost)
- Excelsior Boulevard must be moved, requiring additional construction plans

## Actions

To achieve all of these objectives, there are three general actions that Hopkins and Minnetonka can implement: zoning, collaboration, and design actions. The following three sections provide an overview of how the two cities can implement this plan using specific actions.

### Zoning actions

One important action that both cities can take is to review their respective zoning codes to promote the best possible land use and appearance. This review process will be useful to discover which exiting zoning districts work best for the Shady Oak area, and to create new zoning codes that will promote ideal development for this site.

- Both cities should utilize form-based zoning codes instead of permitted use codes. Form-based zoning is ideal for promoting a specific density and controlling architectural and design standards. The two cities should create new and/or select existing zoning districts that meet the following requirements:
  - Zoning should contain minimums and maximums for density. Examples of density controls include floor area ratios (FARs), plus minimum and maximum heights and setbacks. Consider implementing densities between 12 to 36 units per acre for residential lots, and be sure to use *minimum* heights and *maximum* setbacks.

- Form-based codes can also include parameters for appearance standards. To create any office/commercial/business space, zoning districts must specify appropriate facades, four-sided architecture, window heights, and signage sizes to closely match development in downtown Hopkins.
- Consider creating a zone that requires “double-sided” commercial for any retail included in the development. This is especially useful for retail/commercial that faces the road on one side and residential or trails on the other. Requiring multiple entrances in specific places forces loading areas to be located in less visible parts, creating more a desirable retail atmosphere for patrons to the area.
- Conduct a parking inventory study for both towns (including the proposed park & ride). This will indicate how much parking is available nearby and guide future action in setting maximum street-facing parking in zoning codes. Fewer visible parking lots will make neighborhoods more walkable and blend with the adjacent neighborhoods.

- The Shady Oak Station area should have an appropriate mix of uses to create balance between Hopkins, Minnetonka, and this new TOD. This will require the following zoning parameters:
  - No more than 10% of non-park land should be zoned for retail, so that development will not legitimately compete with downtown Hopkins.
  - Residential zoning in Minnetonka should contain a density of 20 to 36 units per acre, and 12 to 24 units per acre in Hopkins residential areas. This will blend the site between the two cities' styles while fulfilling each city's desires for housing.
  - One parcel should be set aside for the "spark". This will help the site achieve a sense of place.
  - A minimum of 30% of non-park land should be set aside for non-retail commercial. This will help to provide employment that was lost by redevelopment.



#### *Collaboration actions*

- *Require periodic meetings between Hopkins and Minnetonka.*

Hopkins and Minnetonka city staff are already holding joint meetings to determine their design and development goals for the Shady Oak Station. The Cities should continue this collaborative effort throughout the design and construction phases. By maintaining their partnership even after the Shady Oak Station area has been fully developed, Hopkins and Minnetonka can continue to strategically enhance and manage future growth in ways beneficial to both cities.

- *Form partnerships between downtown Hopkins business owners and the cities.*

Several goals and objectives stress the need to create a development that complements downtown Hopkins, not compete with it. Downtown Hopkins business owners know what is best for their businesses, so they should have a say in the types of retail and commercial uses that are built into this new development. Both cities should create a partnership with Hopkins business owners for Shady Oak development consulting and discovering ways to reinforce the primacy of downtown.

- *Search for tenants to provide a spark.*

To provide the appropriate spark, Hopkins and Minnetonka should actively search for the unique business development. A micro-winery could fit the site perfectly, but both cities should be searching for businesspeople with the desire, knowhow, and investment backing to undertake such a project. One-time startup incentives are a good way to attract a potential winery, as initial capital costs are a large consideration for many small businesses. Long-term tax breaks and incentives are less desirable, as they lower the tax base (and ultimately the quality of municipal services) for too long.

#### *Design actions*

First, design guidelines need to promote the appropriate mix of land use and open park space.

- To create an effective transit-oriented development, mixing land uses is essential. However, this does not necessarily mean that mixed-use zoning should dominate the site. Developments can mix land uses without zoning of the same name as long as design standards blend the various land uses effectively. Design guidelines can use parks, trails, and roads as buffers, but specific commercial designs (like double-sided commercial zoning) can also soften harsh boundaries between land uses.

- To enhance the natural amenities in the area, the development design must set aside a portion of the site as open space and park. Ideally, these parks would serve as both recreation areas for residents and visitors, as “avenues of sight” to link the station to the street, and as pedestrian and bicycle paths to neighboring parks. Site design should also include a central park-like area next to the station as an open gathering place for the neighborhood.



Transportation options are also critical to the success of the design. The following are recommendations that promote connectivity and multi-modal transportation options, creating a more inclusive community to live and work in.

- Minnetonka and Hopkins (in particular) should create a transit link between Shady Oak Station, downtown Hopkins, the Downtown Hopkins Station, and Cargill offices. This will give residents and LRT riders greater options for travelling between these nearby locations,

and will reinforce these places as the main economic nodes for work, shopping, and leisure.

- The site should include new bicycle and pedestrian routes to key locations. Linking the Shady Oak Station to downtown Hopkins, Shady Oak Lake, the Shady Oak/Excelsior intersection, and Central Park in Hopkins will increase multi-modal connectivity while linking the neighborhood to additional recreational spaces.
- Another way to increase connectivity for multiple transportation modes is to include clear and creative signage by roads and trails. Signposts pointing out nearby destinations will not only make travel easier, but will add a sense of character to the neighborhood.
- To further promote bicycle usage as a commuting mode, bike lockers and racks should be installed at the park & ride and other nearby locations. P&R bike lockers should be the responsibility of the Metropolitan Council, but other racks and locks are up to the individual cities to foster bicycle connectivity.



### *How the Action Plan Will Accomplish the Vision*

Goal 1 achieves our vision of connecting and blending the Cities of Hopkins and Minnetonka. It aims to seamlessly connect the Shady Oak Station and the development around it with the surrounding neighborhoods. It is of the utmost importance to both communities that any new development around the Shady Oak Station not clash with existing structures and character. The cities want densities and building heights to be a natural extension of the surrounding neighborhoods. In this way, the Shady Oak Station will serve as a buffer where Hopkins and Minnetonka come together as partners.

Goal 2 is designed to fulfill the vision of making the Shady Oak Station more than just nondescript park & ride, but its own destination. The existing natural amenities around Shady Oak, from the bike trails, to the parks, to Shady Oak Beach, are treasured by area residents. Development around Shady Oak should focus on improving access to and connections between these amenities and attracting a unique business to provide a distinct character for the station area. In this way, Shady Oak will become a regional destination for commuters from the West metro.

Goal 3 reiterates the vision of preserving employment to create overall improvements in the area. Shady Oak will become a more desirable location for businesses, thereby increasing, or at least maintaining, current levels of employment. Currently under-captured property tax revenues will be brought up to

their potential levels by an increase in property values with more desirable uses. Both Hopkins and Minnetonka will benefit by the economic boost created by this development.

Goal 4 promotes both the visions of creating a park-like atmosphere, by enhancing existing natural amenities, and connecting Shady Oak with the surrounding communities through multi-modal transportation options. Shady Oak's green space and natural feel will further work to blend the station area with surrounding tree-filled neighborhoods. The space created by the Shady Oak Station will be inviting to pedestrians, cyclists and commuters alike. Upon entering the station area, people will not feel as though they have left Hopkins or Minnetonka, but will feel a unique sense of place.

#### *Funding*

The station area plan will be funded through a variety of means, including local and federal grant money, and perhaps public-private partnerships, and development impact fees.

Initial financing for all stations along the Southwest Corridor will come from an \$865 million to \$1.4 billion fund stemming from 4 principle agencies. These agencies financial responsibility is as follows:

- Federal Transit Administration – 50%
- Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority – 10%
- State of Minnesota – 10%
- Local sales tax – 30%

Any funding oversight is to be covered by the Metropolitan Council Program Office.

However, other entities such as developers and the cities of Minnetonka and Hopkins will potentially need to front the cost of new development and redevelopment, site cleanup, land purchasing, park maintenance, and new roads. To cover these expenses, public-private partnerships, special service districts, and development impact fees should be utilized.

Impact fees are “one-time charges applied to offset the additional public-service costs of new development. They are usually applied at the time a building permit is issued and are dedicated to the provision of additional services, such as water and sewer systems, roads, schools, libraries, and parks and recreation facilities, made necessary by the presence of new residents in the area” (Ohio State University Extension Fact Sheet).

By assessing development impact fees, Minnetonka and Hopkins will have an additional source of funding for many of the uses called for in the vision plan. Using impact fees is also a good idea because research shows that fewer builders and developers oppose these assessments, and that it is quite common for communities to recover full facility costs.



Special service districts are areas within a city that provide unique services made financially possible by revenues collected from imposed user fees. Several special service districts have already been implemented throughout the Twin Cities and are widely supported by local legislators. Through homeowners' fees or business service charges, a great deal of revenue could be collected via this method.

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) will help pay for the balance of funding needs by contracting private sector companies to pay a portion of the costs associated with the station area in exchange for a share of the project's rewards. PPPs are an appropriate and innovative funding mechanism that can be utilized in times of economic uncertainty and in periods of prosperity. Businesses that exist near the proposed station area today may be the best targets for PPPs since they already have a vested interest in this project and its location.

#### *Development Costs*

There will be millions of dollars in expenses associated with the Shady Oak Station area. Some of these costs will be borne by the cities of Hopkins and Minnetonka, while others will be covered by Hennepin County, the Metropolitan Council, the State of Minnesota, the Federal Government, and developers and builders.

It will be the responsibility of private developers to fund a 15-foot deep site cleanup due to former industrial uses at this location. In addition, Hennepin County will have to purchase

land for the station site; potentially, new roads will need to be built to provide access to the park & ride and LRT platform. The redevelopment of existing buildings, including landscaping and facade improvements, and park construction and maintenance - part of the spark of this site - will also add to the cost of redevelopment.

Additional costs include bicycle trail relocation, moving and adding utilities, a 250-spot expandable park & ride, the station platform, and a variety of new buildings including the micro-winery and housing, which will cost millions of dollars in total.

Please see the phasing plans on pages 26-30 for specific development costs and who will be responsible for these expenses.



### *Responsibility for Implementation and Follow-Through of the Action Plan*

The Cities of Minnetonka and Hopkins, Hennepin County, Three Rivers Park District, and private developers will be jointly responsible for implementation of the action plan. The Metropolitan Council is the body responsible for assuring that the stations along the Southwest LRT line are actually designed and built. Oversight, development, and design of all of the station areas will be governed by this entity once complete funding has been approved through the Full Funding Grant. The Metropolitan Council is currently in control of the project and all funding for station development flows through their program office. Once the station has been designed, Hennepin County and the Metropolitan Council will share responsibility for construction of the line and all station areas.



The Cities of Minnetonka and Hopkins will be given a strong voice in the overall design and development plan for the Shady Oak Station area. Hopkins and Minnetonka city staff are already holding joint meetings to determine their preference

for a station area design and a phasing plan for the development. The Metropolitan Council and Hennepin County may be able to overrule the cities if there is a disagreement on a design or development aspect. However, the cities will have more influence over the design and development of Shady Oak Station if they present a strong, united voice and a clear link between their preferences and the overall goals and objectives they share for Shady Oak Station.

### *Possible Unintended Outcomes of the Action Plan*

Although many residents, businesses, and governments are excited about the Southwest Corridor LRT and Shady Oak Station, it should be anticipated that problems will be raised with the development action plan. Projected concerns may range from the loss of industrial jobs in the area (and in turn the pains of business relocation and shifting customer bases), to apprehension concerning the levels of noise produced by the train, to worries that an abundance of parks and open space may not provide as much economic development opportunities as would a business park or shopping district. Maintaining the number of employment opportunities on the site is a critical goal of the design plan, as is attracting unique businesses like the micro-winery and complementary uses to downtown Hopkins to engender new types of economic growth in this area. Furthermore, research shows that light rail trains are actually much quieter than diesel or other fuel-burning buses and produce much less noise than the equivalent volume of automobile traffic.

### *Justification for the Action Plan*

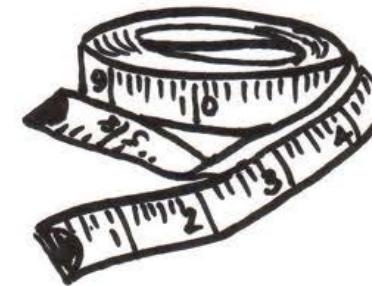
Regardless of a plan, after the SW LRT is constructed, development would eventually occur nearby. This development could follow the plan outlined in this report or happen organically; however, following the prescribed actions and diagnoses provided will be most effective.

If the action plan fails to be implemented, the region could face several negative impacts. For example, without the development action plan, Shady Oak Station would lack character and be indistinguishable from many other generic park & rides. This does not meet the requests or expectations of city officials and residents. Additionally, the action plan ensures the station area will appropriately blend the unique characteristics and needs of Hopkins and Minnetonka; without it, this goal would remain unmet and the station would not function well in its proposed location. Lastly, ignoring the action plan will lead to a waste of good access to the existing natural amenities surrounding the station that citizens already use and enjoy. These resources will exist at this site no matter what, and it would be a great shame not to consider them in the planning, design, and implementation of the Shady Oak Station.

### *Benchmarks for Success*

To ensure that this action plan is implemented, the Cities of Hopkins and Minnetonka, along with Hennepin County and the Metropolitan Council, should adopt a series of predetermined

benchmarks for success. These benchmarks should be customized to the goals of the Shady Oak Station area and to the particular needs of both Hopkins and Minnetonka. They should provide measurable data that accurately depict how well the station area is meeting its goals over time.



In order to determine the success of the economic development goals of Shady Oak Station, the Cities of Minnetonka and Hopkins should perform a comparison of property and sales tax revenues from the redevelopment area over time. A baseline tax rate should be formulated according to tax revenue data from 1980-2010 in order to serve as a comparison for future returns. Property values should increase (accounting for inflation) by 20% going forward due to higher demand for station area properties. If this occurs, the economic development portion of the Shady Oak redevelopment can be considered successful.

Employment numbers for businesses around Shady Oak Station are another useful tool to determine the station area's economic success. If employment numbers within a ½ mile radius of the station area are 30% higher than a baseline level of employment obtained from 2010 U.S. Census data, and there

are a greater variety of occupations available to workers, then the station can be considered a success. It would also be useful to look at income generated by employees within the study area before and after development, adjusted for inflation. These comparisons will provide clear information on how well the station area is performing economically.

Ridership numbers at Shady Oak Station will also provide information on its success. Metro Transit can keep track of the number of passengers who get on the train and disembark at Shady Oak Station to determine the success of the station as a destination. Ridership numbers that meet or exceed Metro Transit estimates will indicate a successful station.

Additionally, Metro Transit can count the number of vehicles that use the parking structure at Shady Oak to determine how many commuters are accessing the line from this station. A full

or near-full park & ride (240 stalls) at peak hours indicates a thriving station.

The Three Rivers Park District regularly counts traffic along its trails throughout the year. Three Rivers can compare traffic along the Minnesota River Bluffs Trail around Shady Oak Station before and after development of the station to determine if the development has increased trail usage. This would provide insight as to how well Shady Oak has increased accessibility for bikers and pedestrians who want to use the trail system.

As Shady Oak Station matures over time, these benchmarks for success may change to match the growing needs of the Cities of Hopkins and Minnetonka.

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## Appendices

### *Appendix A – Overview and Population*

*Table A.1 – Hopkins and Minnetonka, Minnesota, Community Statistics*

	<b>Minnetonka</b>	<b>Hopkins</b>
<b>Total Population (2010)</b>	49,734	17,591
<b>Total Population (2000)</b>	51,301	17,145
<b>Total Land Area</b>	28.0 sq miles 17,899 Acres	4.1 sq miles 2,616 Acres
<b>Median Income per Household (ACS 2005-2009, in 2009 dollars)</b>	\$79,700	\$45,500
<b>Median Income per Household (2000 census, 1999 dollars)</b>	\$69,979	\$39,203
<b>Parks, Recreation &amp; Preserves</b>	1691 acres	191 acres
<b>Jobs in the city (2009)</b>	46,176	10,396
<b>Total housing units (2010)</b>	23,294	8,987
<b>Housing occupancy status (2010)</b>	94.0% occupied; 6.0% vacant	93.1% occupied; 6.9% vacant
<b>Population below poverty (ACS 2005-2009)</b>	4.3%	10.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Census

Source: Metropolitan Council Community Profile for Hopkins, Minnetonka, Minnesota. <http://stats.metc.state.mn.us> Last accessed May 1, 2011.

*Table A.2 – Population by Race and Ethnicity in Minnetonka and Hopkins*

	<b>Minnetonka (2000)</b>	<b>Minnetonka (2010)</b>	<b>Hopkins (2000)</b>	<b>Hopkins (2010)</b>
<b>% Population White</b>	93.69%	90.0%	80.22%	70.4%
<b>% Population Black or African American</b>	1.47%	3.7%	5.1%	13.5%
<b>% Population Asian</b>	2.28%	3.1%	5.88%	8.5%
<b>% Population Hispanic or Latino (any race)</b>	1.28%	2.4%	5.54%	7.9%
<b>% Population 2 or more races</b>	0.9%	2.1%	2.32%	3.6%
<b>% Population American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	0.18%	0.3%	0.66%	0.6%
<b>% Population Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</b>	0.02%	0.0%	0.09%	0.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Census

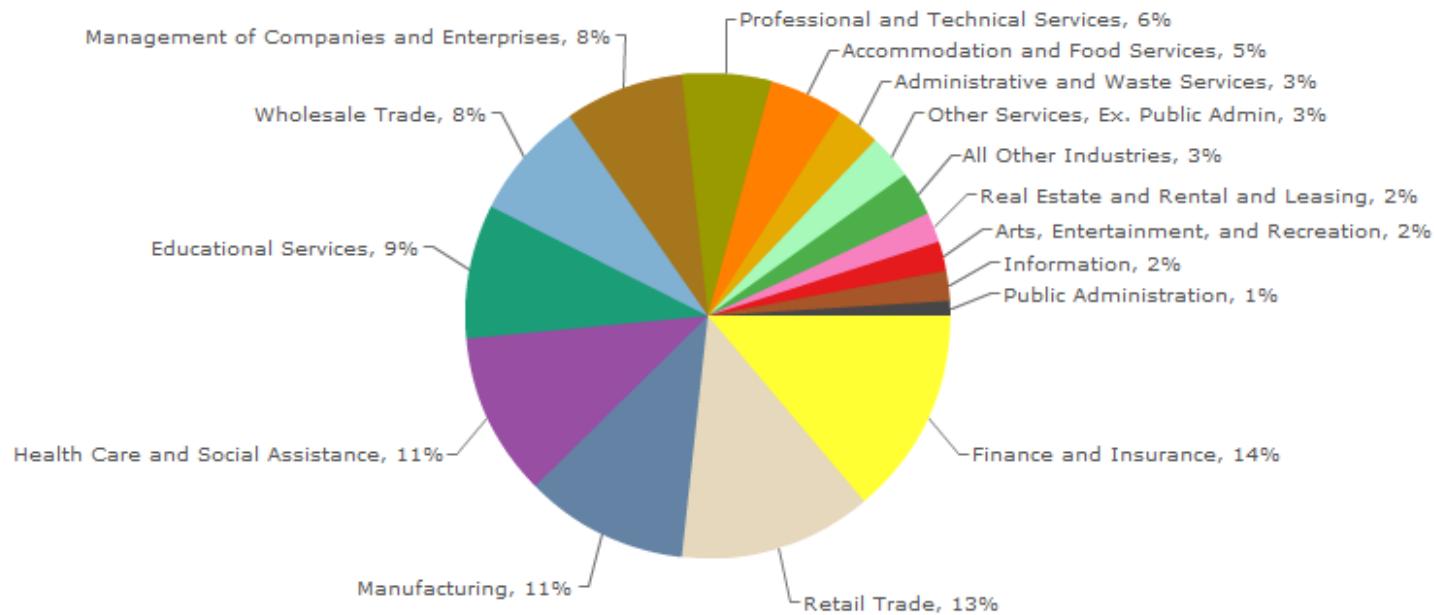
Source: Metropolitan Council Community Profile for Hopkins, Minnetonka, Minnesota. <http://stats.metc.state.mn.us> Last accessed May 1, 2011.

## Appendix B – Employment and Jobs

### Employment by Industry in Minnetonka

Select data to chart:

2009 ▾

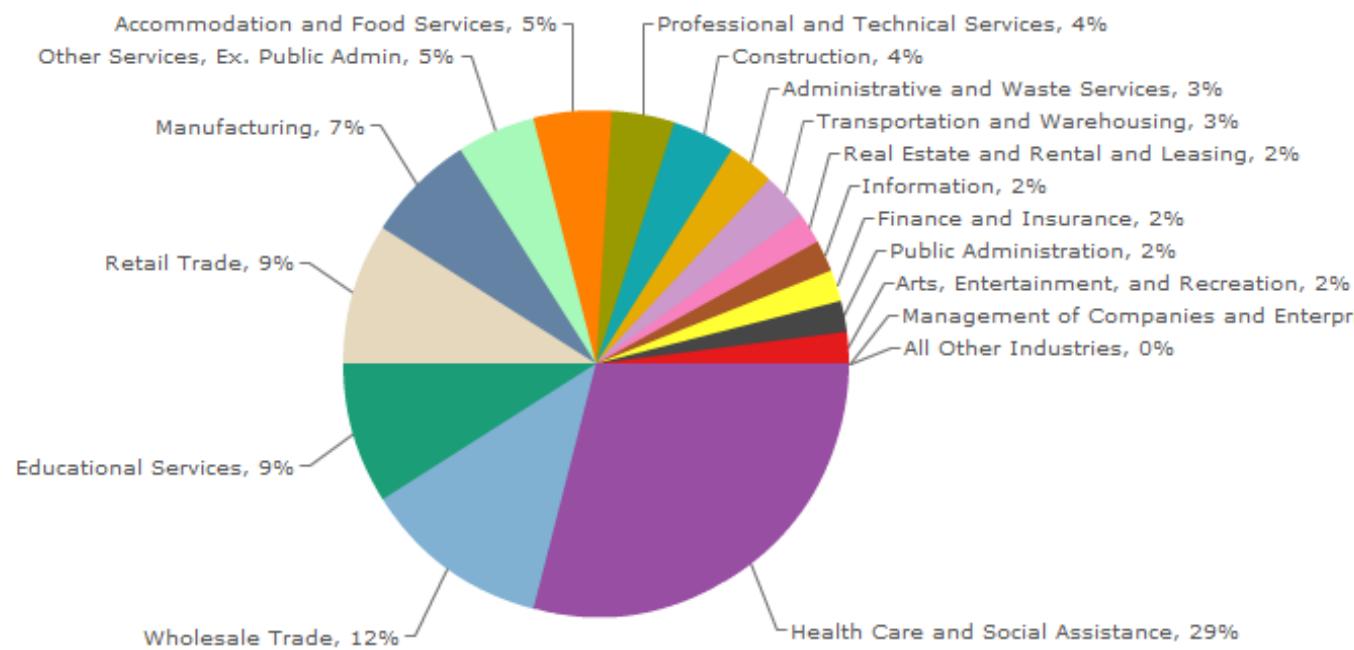


Source: [Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages](#), Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, 2nd quarter data; Metropolitan Council staff have estimated some data points.

## Employment by Industry in Hopkins

Select data to chart:

2009 ▾



Source: [Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages](#), Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, 2nd quarter data; Metropolitan Council staff have estimated some data points.

*Table B.1 – Employment Projections*

	<b>Minnetonka</b>	<b>Hopkins</b>
<b>2000, actual</b>	51,276	11,979
<b>2009, actual</b>	46,176	10,396
<b>2010, projected</b>	53,800	13,600
<b>2020, projected</b>	56,000	14,800
<b>2030, projected</b>	58,600	16,300

Source: Metropolitan Council Community Profile for Hopkins, Minnetonka, Minnesota. <http://stats.metc.state.mn.us> Last accessed May 1, 2011.

*Table B.2 – Average Annual Wages*

	<b>Minnetonka</b>	<b>Hopkins</b>	<b>Hennepin County</b>	<b>Twin Cities Region</b>
<b>2000</b>	\$45,880	\$36,597	\$42,229	\$39,062
<b>2009</b>	\$64,538	\$41,455	\$53,508	\$49,338

Source: Metropolitan Council Community Profile for Hopkins, Minnetonka, Minnesota. <http://stats.metc.state.mn.us> Last accessed May 1, 2011.

*Table B.3 – Top 10 Workplaces of Minnetonka Residents*

<b>Workplaces</b>	<b>Workers</b>	<b>%</b>
Minneapolis	4,795	20.3%
Minnetonka	3,844	16.3%
Edina	1,628	6.9%
Eden Prairie	1,518	6.4%
Saint Louis Park	1,507	6.4%
Bloomington	1,378	5.8%
Plymouth	1,152	4.9%
Golden Valley	888	3.8%
Saint Paul	834	3.5%
Hopkins	691	2.9%
Other	5,404	22.9%

Note: Workplaces and residences outside the seven-county area are counted in "Other".

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Local Employment-Household Dynamics:

[http://stats.metc.state.mn.us/metadata/LED\\_OD.htm](http://stats.metc.state.mn.us/metadata/LED_OD.htm)

*Table B.4 - Top 10 Workplaces of Hopkins Residents*

<b>Workplaces</b>	<b>Workers</b>	<b>%</b>
Minneapolis	1,772	21.0%
Minnetonka	853	10.1%
Saint Louis Park	711	8.4%
Hopkins	609	7.2%
Eden Prairie	591	7.0%
Edina	573	6.8%
Bloomington	481	5.7%
Saint Paul	400	4.7%
Plymouth	367	4.4%
Golden Valley	275	3.3%
Other	1,803	21.4%

Note: Workplaces and residences outside the seven-county area are counted in "Other".

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Local Employment-Household Dynamics:

[http://stats.metc.state.mn.us/metadata/LED\\_OD.htm](http://stats.metc.state.mn.us/metadata/LED_OD.htm)

*Table B.6 – Top 10 Residences of People Who Work in Minnetonka*

Residences	Workers	%
Minneapolis	4,522	10.7%
Minnetonka	3,844	9.1%
Plymouth	2,585	6.1%
Eden Prairie	2,384	5.7%
Maple Grove	1,632	3.9%
Saint Louis Park	1,561	3.7%
Bloomington	1,534	3.6%
Saint Paul	1,412	3.4%
Brooklyn Park	1,095	2.6%
Chanhassen	1,064	2.5%
Other	20,516	48.7%

Note: Workplaces and residences outside the seven-county area are counted in "Other".

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Local Employment-Household Dynamics:

[http://stats.metc.state.mn.us/metadata/LED\\_OD.htm](http://stats.metc.state.mn.us/metadata/LED_OD.htm)

*Table B.7 – Top 10 Residences of People Who Work in Hopkins*

Residences	Workers	%
Minneapolis	1,055	11.5%
Minnetonka	691	7.5%
Hopkins	609	6.6%
Saint Louis Park	497	5.4%
Saint Paul	415	4.5%
Bloomington	359	3.9%
Brooklyn Park	358	3.9%
Eden Prairie	353	3.8%
Plymouth	344	3.7%
Edina	234	2.5%
Other	4,266	46.5%

Note: Workplaces and residences outside the seven-county area are counted in "Other".

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Local Employment-Household Dynamics:

[http://stats.metc.state.mn.us/metadata/LED\\_OD.htm](http://stats.metc.state.mn.us/metadata/LED_OD.htm).

*Appendix C – Rates of Homeownership in Hopkins, Minnetonka and Surrounding Communities*

**Home Ownership Rate by Household, 2005-09.**



## Appendix D –Parcel Values Within the Redevelopment Site

