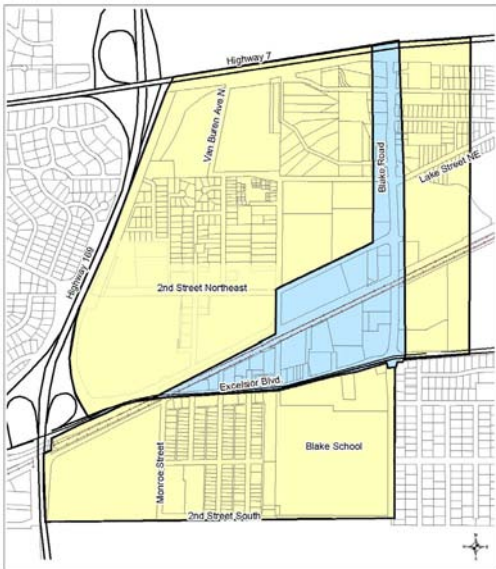


# Executive Summary

In 2001 Hoisington Koezler Group and the City of Hopkins began a study of “East End” area of the city. This is an area that has experienced ongoing changes and has been heavily influenced by changes in industry, transportation and in residential living patterns in recent years. In recent years the area lost two major industrial employers. A 1994 corridor study for Excelsior Boulevard initiated a series of roadway upgrades; the second phase, which lies within the study area, is now under construction. Finally, in the late 1990s, sixty-two new single-family homes were constructed in the area, the biggest single non-attached housing project to occur in Hopkins in decades.

Each of these changes has focused attention on the east end of the city and helped prompt this effort to take a more proactive look at future land use and market opportunities in this portion of Hopkins.

## STUDY AREA



The East Hopkins Land Use and Market Analysis focuses on an area of the community that lies just east of TH 169, within about a mile of downtown. The boundaries of the study area generally include Excelsior Boulevard on the south, Blake Road on the east, TH 7 on the north and TH 169 on the west. The primary portion of the study area (indicated in blue in the diagram at left) is the segment of the overall project area that is likely to see change in the short-term due to roadway improvements and property acquisitions (Excelsior Boulevard). The secondary portion of the study area (yellow) immediately surrounds the primary area.

## PLANNING AND REGULATORY CONTEXT

The study area is included in a variety of plans that will help shape its future. At the local level, Hopkins' Comprehensive Plan designates a pattern of future land use for the area and the Hopkins Zoning Ordinance further delineates the specific business and residential uses that are allowed on all of the parcels within the project boundary. Neither of these local tools was considered "an absolute" in assembling this study. The planning process and the land use concepts that emerged from this analysis were not constrained by present plans and ordinances, but were rather assembled based on an assessment of market conditions and a consideration of emerging development trends that encourage new, more flexible zoning provisions. Current plans were considered as background information in the preparation of this study. **Existing Land Use, Future Land Use, and Zoning** plans each impacts the study area and establishes a current direction.

## MARKET STUDY

In seeking to inform the planning processes for the study area, a market analysis was included. This market analysis was intended to provide: (1) an understanding of local development outlooks; (2) an identification of the area's most promising development niches; and (3) a general identification of the challenges for planners in seeking to maximize the area's development potential. Among the factors most directly contributing to redevelopment potential in the study area are the reconstruction/realignment of Excelsior Blvd., relocation of Alliant Tech, and SuperValu's vacation of a large parcel. Other important factors include a positive regional economic outlook and a strategic location.

From this detailed market analysis it was concluded that office development is the strongest market niche for the study area. And while the office market may not currently be as strong as it's been in recent years, this will remain the strongest market niche in the study area in the foreseeable future. Residential redevelopment is also viewed to have strong potential in the study area. Commercial redevelopment could potentially work here, but only as part of a mix that includes either, or both of the aforementioned uses.

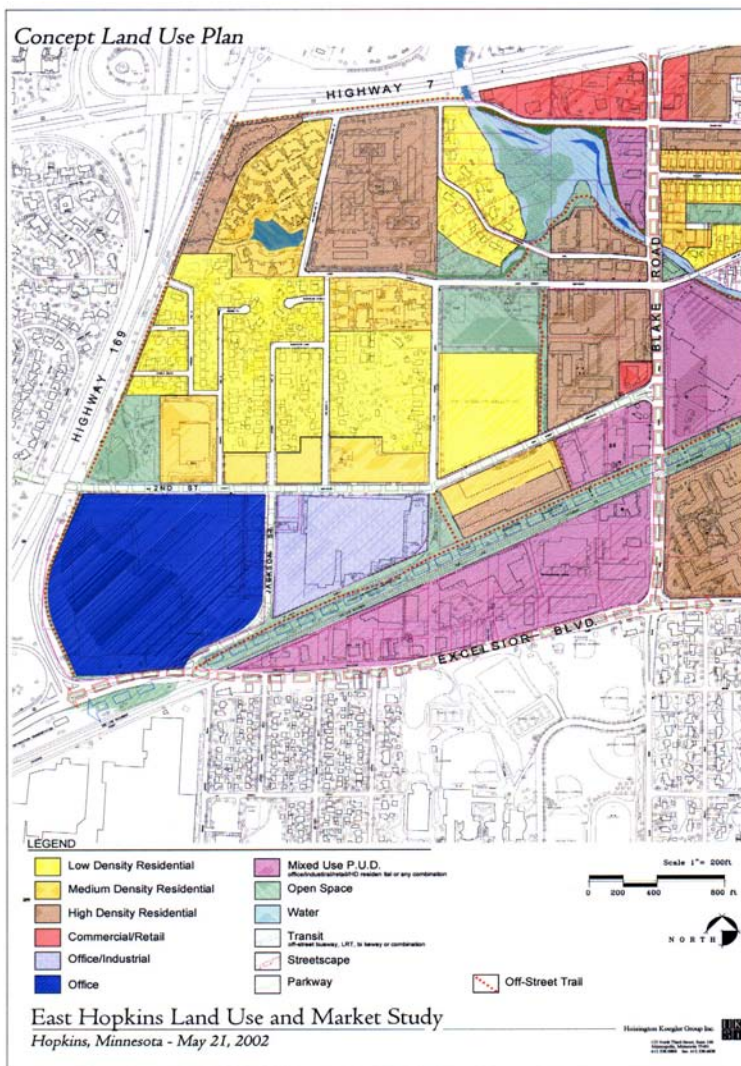
## TRANSIT IMPLICATIONS

The Southwest Transit Corridor passes through the study area and this fact contributed strongly to the Metropolitan Council's initial interest in this study. Alternately identified as corridor for Light Rail Transit, designated Busway, or Diesel Motor Unit, the rail line that slices through the study area is controlled by the Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority and remains a piece of the future regional transit puzzle. The potential of transit-oriented development was a contributing factor that impacted plan concepts throughout this study.

## LAND USE

While the primary study is the area likely to see the most immediate change, the broader secondary study area is where much of the change in the area converges and exerts the most force. The transit corridor mentioned above, Minnehaha Creek, and regional trails are all included within the secondary area, as are the sites recently vacated by the two major industrial employers. An understanding of the forces at work in the larger area as well as a picture of what the land uses should be in the future was an essential component in the creation of a redevelopment plan for the study area.

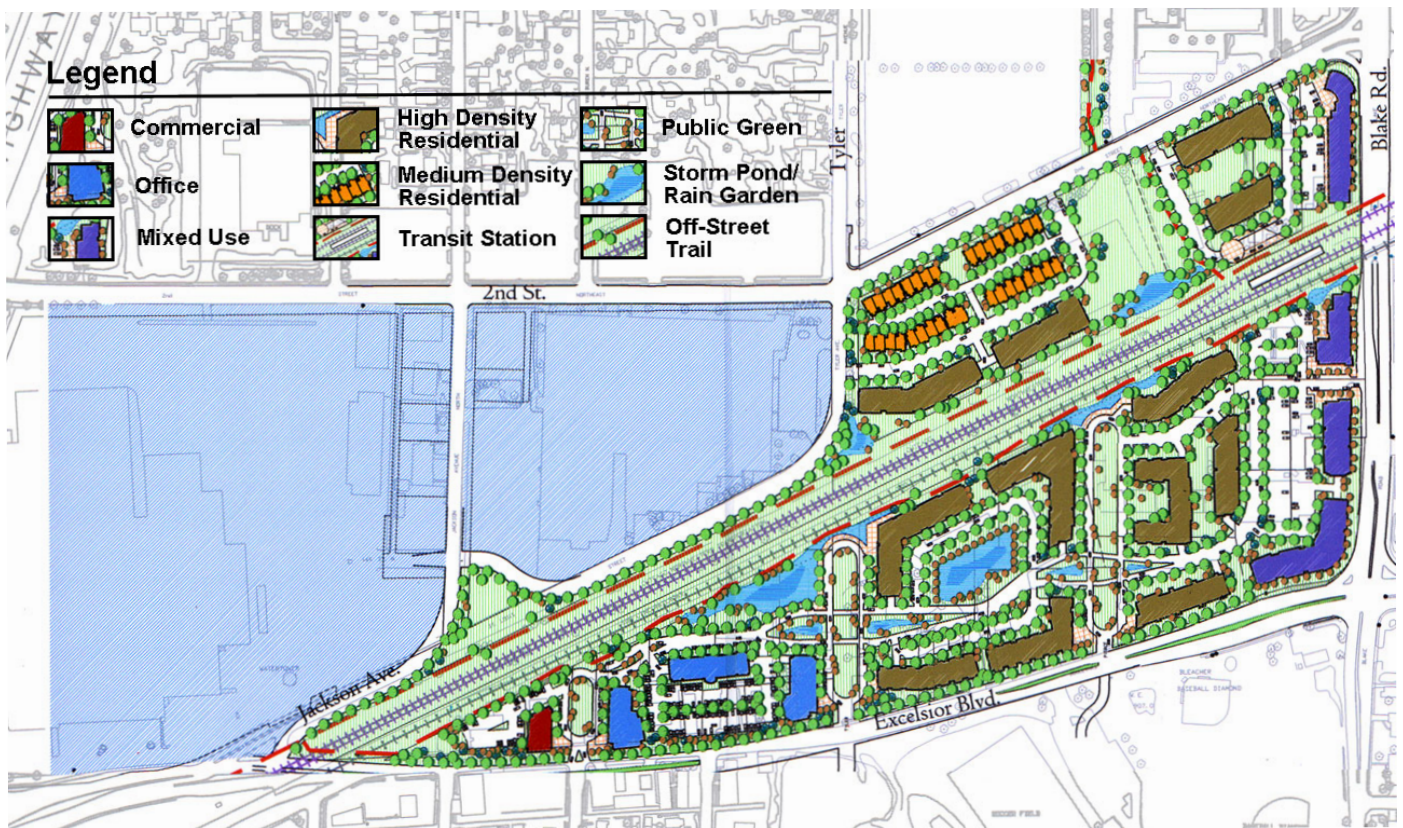
After several preliminary plans explored a broad range of ideas, a final Future Land Use Plan was created. A reflection of comments from City Staff and direction provided by the market analysis, the final Land Use Plan varied slightly from the City's current Land Use Plan, most notably in the creation of several parcels designated as "Mixed Use" in an effort to provide maximum flexibility for future redevelopment efforts within the area.



## REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

A closer look at the primary study area, the redevelopment concept focuses on detailed site planning and land use patterns within their urban physical context. Again a wide range of concepts were initially explored and again these concepts were reviewed with City Staff and refined to produce a single preferred alternative. Certain “givens” were included in each concept and eventually worked their way into the final concept. For example: each concept considered transit implications, but none was entirely dependent on this unknown commodity; each included a mix of uses that focused on providing density, a component critical to transit ridership and the financial realities of redevelopment; each sought to create open space amenity, contributing to an identity that the area currently lacks.

The final “Revised Redevelopment Concept” includes a mix of uses that reflects what were concluded to be the market realities for the study area. Redevelopment is clustered into “modules” of office, residential, or mixed uses that can ultimately be implemented in whole, or be phased in over time. More dense and urban in character than the area exists today, the plan reflects an urbanization that is consistent with a broader regional vision, and creates a strong identity for Hopkins that the area lacks today.



## IMPLEMENTATION/NEXT STEPS

It's true that several barriers to redevelopment exist: there is a lack of economic incentive for redevelopment, there are a lack of catalysts to promote redevelopment, the current layout of land uses and associated lack of any large parcels make it difficult to engage in any large-scale redevelopment, and the costs of redevelopment are significantly greater than development of "new" land on the urban fringe. All of these barriers point to a need for greater density if any sort of redevelopment is going to be financially realistic. Regardless, there are strategies that will help implement these changes over time. Adopting land use controls, working with current land owners likely to remain (e.g., Edco,) facilitating the SuperValu redevelopment, guiding transit planning, and phasing are all strategies that can incrementally contribute to the ultimate success of the planning efforts undertaken in this study. And lastly, the plan for redevelopment of the study area cannot materialize without public financial participation, necessary to assemble the sites and reduce the land costs to a point at which development is financially feasible. The final plan reflects a pattern of redevelopment "modules" that can be phased in over time as parcels become available or external pressures contribute to the need for redevelopment.

