10. Economic Competitiveness and Economic Development

Chapter Highlights

Edina’s business and industrial parks provide space for regionally significant industry sectors. Businesses in these sectors, which command a high average wage and build wealth in the regional economy, value Edina’s business and industrial parks due to:

- freeway access
- airport proximity
- transit and employee parking
- a diverse labor pool
- good image and security
- proximity to hotels, restaurants, customers, and suppliers.

Workplaces are changing, and many are being designed to attract the next generation of workers. Edina’s business and industrial parks are aging and, in order to ensure their continued success, they will need to be updated and revitalized.

The health care sector is one of the fastest growing segments of the economy, both nationally and regionally. Growth is expected to continue as the large “baby boom” generation creates an increased demand for medical services. This has implications for the strong health care sector in the Greater Southdale area.

The retail industry is experiencing significant transformation as consumer shopping patterns change. Retail stores and shopping centers are rethinking their role and exploring ways to adapt successfully.

Smaller commercial nodes in Edina serve important functions in their neighborhoods, providing goods and services to area residents and building a sense of community and place. These are areas where smaller, locally-owned businesses typically find more affordable rents, property ownership opportunities, and access to a customer base.

Introduction

The Minneapolis Saint Paul region competes with other regions around the globe for talent and quality employment opportunities. The region ranks highly among its peers in a number of areas including household income, educational

Definitions

**Economic competitiveness:** the ability of the region to prosper in the global economy

**Economic development:** local strategies to enhance business formation and growth, job creation and tax base development

**Edina Industry Clusters**

**Traded industry clusters:** Related industries that bring wealth to the region by selling goods or services to other regions or nations. 2016 average wage, Hennepin County - $85,040

- finance and insurance
- corporate headquarters
- advanced business services (e.g. legal, engineering, accounting)
- med tech & med device
- science & water tech
- information technology
- advanced manufacturing

**Local industry clusters:** Businesses that sell primarily to consumers within the region. 2016 average wage, Hennepin County - $45,776

- health care
- retail trade
- educational services
- personal services
- leisure & hospitality
attainment, livability, infrastructure, environment, and business vitality. Nevertheless, maintaining and enhancing the region’s competitiveness requires constant attention and stewardship. Creating places that are attractive to businesses and talent is influenced significantly by cities throughout the region; cities are largely responsible for attending to the details of updating infrastructure, revitalizing aging business districts and housing supplies, and providing quality of life amenities like parks and trails; while, at the same time, maintaining a competitive tax structure.

The City of Edina plays an important role in the regional economy by providing employment locations for high wage industries in its business and industrial parks. The City also serves as regional hub for health care, retail, hospitality, dining, and entertainment. Edina contributes to the region’s economic vitality by providing well-located business and industrial parks, health care, excellent housing, schools, shopping, recreation, dining and entertainment, and other amenities important to residents’ quality of life and talent attraction to the region.

**Background**

**Economic Development in Edina**

The City of Edina has proactively pursued economic development for many decades. These efforts have helped create a balanced community with a diverse tax base, strong employment opportunities, and a plethora of goods and services for residents and visitors.

In recent years, the City has employed a full time Economic Development Manager who is positioned in the Administrative Department. The City strives to work with the local business community to sustain a regulatory environment that provides necessary safeguards without stifling business growth and creativity. These efforts include active involvement in the three local business associations: Edina Chamber of Commerce, 50th and France Business Association, and Explore Edina (the City’s convention and tourism partner).

In 2017, the Edina Chamber of Commerce initiated an Economic Development Committee so that they can remain an active and relevant force in matters of local economic significance.

**Commercial/Industrial Property Taxes**

In addition to the benefits of local employment opportunities, commercial/industrial facilities in Edina make an important contribution to the City and region by virtue of their tax base. Because Minnesota applies a higher rate to commercial/industrial properties, the tax yield for a commercial/industrial property is higher than a residential property. In 2017, commercial/industrial property represented 15 percent of Edina’s market value, but yielded 26 percent of its tax capacity (www.Edina.MN.gov). Edina contributes 40 percent of its commercial/industrial revenue generation back to other cities in the region through fiscal disparities.

The costs of implementing and delivering public services for commercial/industrial properties are lower than they are for residential properties. The League of MN Cities estimates that households generally consume $1.38 in services for every dollar paid while commercial/industrial properties consume $0.68 in services for every dollar paid. Office and industrial areas typically have an extremely low demand for services, where retail areas have a higher demand for police services. Because of the high cost of office finishes compared to other types of commercial-industrial construction, multi-story offices typically yield the most tax base per acre and have an extremely low demand for services. Figure 10.1 shows that the
highest commercial valuations in Edina (orange and red) are concentrated in the Greater Southdale area, at 50th and France, and at Grandview.
Current Conditions

Employment Density

The highest employment concentrations in Edina, as shown on Figure 10.2 above, are located along the regional freeway system. The areas with the greatest employment concentration are served by at least two freeways and public transit – the Greater Southdale area and the business/industrial park area north of I-494 along TH 100.

Employers value locations that allow them to access a diverse talent pool from throughout the metro area and are increasingly interested in transit service to reduce the cost of parking and respond to the increased interest in transit among the younger generation. While there is some potential to reduce commuting and congestion by creating employment locations close to where people live, the impact of these strategies is likely to be limited because many households include two active workforce participants and over the arc of their careers, they will likely change employers several times.

Figure 10.2: Employment Density

Employment density in Edina is most concentrated in the business and industrial parks along Trunk Highway 100, just north of I-494. Other concentrations are found near Grandview, 50th and France and the industrial parks along US 169.
Edina’s Industry Clusters

Traded Industry Clusters
Several traded industry clusters that sell goods and services to other regions or nations, are located in the Southwest metro and Edina’s business parks, as shown on the following maps prepared by the Metropolitan Council.
- Information technology
- Advanced manufacturing
- Headquarters and advanced business services
- Finance and insurance

The strong average wage ($73,122- $92,789) for these industries builds wealth and spending power in the region.

Local Industry Clusters
Edina has several significant clusters dependent on local or regional consumers including educational services, health care, retail trade, personal services, leisure and hospitality. Employee compensation is significantly lower in most local clusters, with the exception of health care.

Health Care is a cluster that has been targeted for special attention by the Edina Chamber of Commerce. Fairview Southdale Hospital has served the Southwest metro area since 1965. It is a full-service, 390-bed acute care center, specializing in maternal and newborn care, oncology, mental health treatment, eye care, vascular, spine, neurology, neurosurgery, urology, and orthopedic surgery and joint replacement. It provides complete outpatient care with a comprehensive 24-hour emergency department, urgent care for evenings and weekends, diagnostic radiology and imaging, and a same day surgery center. It also offers a wide selection of health education and wellness programs.

Figure 10.3: Edina’s Traded Industry Clusters.
Source: Metropolitan Council
In addition to the hospital, there are numerous smaller specialty clinics and medical offices serving Edina. Most are located in and around the Greater Southdale area.

**Edina’s Business and Industrial Parks**

The four areas shown in light purple on Figure 10.4 comprise the 390 acres of industrially zoned land in the City of Edina. These areas are well located on the region’s freeway and transit system and offer proximity to a diverse workforce, MSP international airport, as well as hotels and restaurants.

Over the decades, business and industrial parks in Edina met the needs of small to mid-sized corporate headquarters as well as businesses in key sectors of the regional economy including finance and insurance, medical technology, science and water technology, information technology, advanced business services (e.g. engineering, accounting, legal) and advanced manufacturing. However, Edina’s business and industrial parks, built out in the 1950s, 60s and 70s, are aging.

Properties in Edina’s business and industrial parks typically feature low-ceiling heights, lack windows and are not structurally suitable for vertical expansion, and this limits their attractiveness to many employers. Recently, several owner-occupied facilities were remodeled with substantial increases in amount of office space, windows and amenities for employees, such as outdoor patios and facilities for bicyclists. The economics of such substantial renovations may work for owner-occupants who factor in multiple objectives and have a long view of their investments, but the economics of renovating facilities do not seem to be working on a widespread basis yet for investors who own and lease out properties.

However, one property was substantially renovated by a landlord for a medical device firm in the park. The property owner removed many bays from the multi-tenant property creating a much better work environment for the medical device firm and an engineering lab. The medical device firm considered other locations in the metro area, but rather than build in a greenfield location in the Shakopee area, opted to remodel an existing facility because of the access to a broad spectrum of the workforce, transit service and proximity to health care industry partners in the southwest metro. This international firm...
also values access to area hotels, restaurants and MSP International for accommodating and entertaining business visitors.

Some notable southwest metro office employers have migrated to downtown Minneapolis and the North Loop to attract millennial talent. Features like transit, bike and pedestrian access as well as an environment rich with dining and entertainment options are attractive to this highly sought-after generation of young workers. There are early indications that suburban office, flex-office and value office environments have an opportunity to be competitive in the future due to the loss of parking and related cost increases downtown and in the North Loop. While the millennial generation may be attracted to downtown in the early years out of school, as they establish families, some may be motivated to find different housing, school and the lifestyle options. Edina’s convenient location, amenities and high quality schools are likely to be attractive.

Edina’s Major Business and Industrial Park Employers
- Regis
- Western National Insurance Group
- SpartanNash
- Barr Engineering
- Dow Water Process- Filmtec
- Dougherty Staffing
- BI Worldwide (sales incentives)
- Arkray USA (med instruments)
- Gilbert Electrical/ Mechanical Contractors

Business and Industrial Park Infrastructure and Amenities

Transit, Sidewalks, Trails Parks
Amenities and infrastructure in Edina’s business and industrial parks are also dated. Business and industrial parks developed in the metro area in the 1990s integrated sidewalks and trails to better address the needs of transit users and of employees interested in walking or running during a break or over lunch. Some developments integrated commercial amenities valued by businesses and employees at the entrances to business and industrial parks including banking, child care and dining. Some offered picnic tables and trails adjacent to attractive storm water detention facilities and small park areas. More recently, bicycle paths have been connected to regional trails and also to transit stops to help with “last mile” connections between transit and employment locations. Enhanced transit stops with thoughtful sidewalk and trail connections encourage transit use and would address safety issues, which can be a barrier to transit users in areas that lack sidewalks, especially in winter conditions.

Storm Water
The storm water management systems in Edina’s business and industrial parks are outdated. The City recently retained a consultant to prepare a plan for managing storm water in Pentagon Park. Similar studies are needed for the city’s largest business park, located north and west of the I-494/TH 100 interchange. Nine Mile Creek passes through this area, which has implications for potential flooding and storage of floodwaters. The area is also characterized by poor soil conditions, which makes redevelopment and revitalization of the area more expensive. District storm water management options could be evaluated as part of revitalization planning for the area. There may be opportunities to partner with Nine Mile Creek Watershed District and the Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail managed by Three Rivers Park District to create amenities in the City’s largest business/industrial park, which could serve as a stimulus to private reinvestment.
Regionally Significant Retail/Commercial Areas

Edina is home to two regionally significant commercial areas

- Greater Southdale Area – a 739-acre district developed beginning in the 1950s, includes a regional hospital and related specialty clinics and approximately 2.8 million square feet of retail space. The district includes: Southdale - the nation’s first indoor shopping mall; Galleria – the MSP region’s high end shopping mall; a Westin Hotel; a concentration of furniture and design-related retailers; five grocery stores, five pharmacies (not including clinic/hospital), banks, offices, condos, apartments and numerous retail and dining options.

- 50th and France- Edina’s “downtown” is a district that is located in both Edina and Minneapolis. Properties on the east side of France are located in Minneapolis. The 25-acre area (Edina only) includes properties developed from the 1930s to the present day. The district meets the daily needs of area residents with a full-service grocery, movie theater, two pharmacies, post office, banks, small medical and dental practices, salons, national and local clothing stores, boutiques, and a growing number of dining establishments.

Smaller Commercial Nodes

Edina’s quality of life is enhanced by smaller commercial nodes focused primarily on the needs of local residents. Wooddale/ValleyView, Grandview, 70th and Cahill and 44th and France serve primarily neighborhood markets and typically involve locally-owned businesses and property owners from Edina or with strong ties to the community. In addition to providing goods and services to area residents, the smaller commercial nodes in Edina help build a sense of community and place.

Workforce

The Greater MSP region enjoys a high concentration of Fortune 500 headquarters and privately held, globally leading companies like Cargill. There’s a rich ecosystem of business and professional services and other infrastructure to support these global firms. As the baby boom generation retires, it is very important for these companies and others throughout the metro area to compete successfully for talent on a national and global basis. By 2020, the McKinsey Global Institute projects a shortfall of 85 million high and middle-skilled workers globally. For the MSP...
region, labor force shortages topping 62,000 are projected by 2020 (MN DEED MSP Regional Forecast Overview, November 2017).

This competitive issue is motivating initiatives by organizations like GREATER MSP and the Itasca Project. These initiatives are designed to:

- Attract diverse young talent from around the globe to the MSP region (www.makeitMSP.org)
- Tap the full potential of the region’s human capital by reducing disparities in education and employment (The Itasca Project - competitive workforce)
- Strengthen the connection between employers and higher education to reduce the skills mismatch, helping employers find the talent they need and helping job seekers find the work they want (www.realtimetalent.org)

Like employers throughout the MSP region, Edina employers are experiencing talent recruitment challenges and report that prospective employees seek transit access, housing within their household’s budget, quality of life amenities and ongoing training and education to remain relevant in their field of expertise.

**Broadband Infrastructure**

In the world today, many aspects of daily life depend on or are enhanced by the Internet and reliable broadband infrastructure. Significant growth in capacity will be needed to address the increasing demands of businesses, residents and major institutions for information, communication, commerce, education, recreation, health care, telecommuting, security and life-style enhancement.

At this time, the City of Edina has limited baseline information and has not explored opportunities to ensure that the competitive advantages of excellent broadband service are available to the City’s businesses, institutions and all city residents.

![City of Edina Internet and Broadband Network](image)

**Figure 10.7: City of Edina, Major Fiber Routes**

**Edina: A Community of Learning.** Edina has a prized education system of high-quality public schools. This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan recognizes the importance of extending the benefits of education to the entire community.

Edina benefits from its location with access to TH-169, TH-62, TH-100, and I-494. Access to these roadway facilities and other regional attractions (e.g., MSP Airport, Mall of America, and Southdale) well positions the community to be economically competitive. As Edina’s business and industrial facilities grow, opportunities to attract new talent and hire already present local talent will increase. To potentiate these opportunities, the City, through its Economic Development Office, can work with the school system to expose students to new businesses and the skills they will require in future employees.
Trends and Challenges

Changing Workplaces

Workplaces are changing and many are being designed to attract the next generation of workers who have grown up on mobile technology and relate to space differently. According to CBRE, a global real estate and investment firm, since 1970 office space decreased from 600+ square feet per worker to approximately 160 square feet per worker and by 2030 traditional workplaces will be in the minority. Already 30-50% of new workplaces in western economies designed for major corporations reflect next generation thinking. The new workplaces involve a wide variety of spaces: retreat and collaborative settings; spaces that are calm or stimulating; spaces for introverts and extroverts; and an environment that supports well-being, providing air, water, light, fitness and nourishment. Amenities are provided within and around to find solitude, stimulation, engaging activities and build a sense of community. Also important is the rediscovery and nurturing of authentic local identity and culture. Because of the pace of change it will be important to build flexibility into everything. 

https://www.cbre.com/research-and-reports/future-of-work

Co-working represents another important trend in the evolution of the workplace, providing space for occasional or consistent telecommuters as well as building an entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Employers and developers seeking to create facilities that better meet the needs of today’s operations and workforce must choose between renovating existing facilities, building on redevelopment sites or building on greenfield sites. Greenfield sites, located in more distant suburbs such as Shakopee, Lakeville or Rogers, are the least expensive from a construction perspective but offer limited access to workforce or transit. Public transit providers find the economics of serving these remote areas challenging and some employers in remote suburbs have opted to provide private bus options, while employees spend long, un-paid hours commuting. The high value of properties and land in the core cities and inner ring suburbs for uses such as housing, retail and consumer-oriented services creates a demand for conversion of properties in employment-oriented business, office and industrial parks to housing or consumer-oriented businesses; significant amounts of employment-oriented land in the core cities and inner-ring suburbs have converted.

Edina’s Business and Industrial Parks

During the recession, manufacturing employment in the seven-county metro area declined substantially, resulting in significant vacancies in business and industrial parks throughout the area. During the recession, new uses came into Edina’s business parks at an accelerated pace. According to brokers in an October 2017 focus group, Edina made a change to its zoning ordinance approximately 12 years earlier to allow for assembly (e.g. religious organizations) and other purposes. Edina’s zoning ordinance now allows for churches, schools, storage and athletic facilities. This is not the case in Eden Prairie, Chaska and some other suburbs. Because such uses are not allowed in some other suburban business and
industrial parks, Edina may see an increased concentration of such uses.

When asked about this conversion to other uses, representatives of major development firms in the metropolitan area participating an October 2017 economic development focus group, indicated that uses like churches, storage and schools create a lack of coherence and confusion about the purpose and image of the business and industrial park areas. When asked if the city should let this trend toward schools, churches and storage continue, they responded that it would result in the area “spiraling downward”. Instead, they recommended a focus on revitalizing the buildings and public realm in the business and industrial parks and creating a clear focus on quality employment opportunities.

The developers identified “value office” as an emerging market for the types of property found in Edina’s business and industrial parks. Property owners are renovating these properties by adding windows to dark concrete structures, increasing office employment for tech, marketing, sales and management in open floor plans, and adding amenities like patios. Smaller corporations – many that spin off larger corporate headquarters in the metro - typically integrate management, sales and technology with some production and warehousing functions and such buildings can work well for them. The transition to “value office” increases employment at converted buildings. Typically parking may be available in areas previously used for truck parking or truck movement on site, but some parking challenges may occur. Strengthening infrastructure to encourage people to use transit and bicycles can reduce parking demand. Possible adjustments to parking requirements should be examined in revitalization planning for the area.

**Retail Transformation**

The retail industry is experiencing transformation as consumer shopping patterns change to on-line shopping and home delivery. Retail stores and shopping centers are rethinking their role in this rapidly changing environment and exploring ways to successfully adapt. Creating “an experience” that consumers can’t get on-line is critical to generating traffic to support brick and mortar stores. These changes, which are underway globally, are expressed in higher vacancies and turnover in the retail sector in the Greater Southdale area and at 50th and France.

Research by CBRE, *The Future of Retail 2030*, indicates that a number of technology trends will impact how we make purchases. From a real estate perspective, technology and other trends are expected to have the following impacts:

- Independent stores and food and beverage operators will be more prevalent
- The traditional in-store physical point of purchase will disappear, resulting in fewer employees
- Wellness establishments will grow and there will be a diverse offering of fitness options
- Mundane purchases will be ordered and delivered without traditional “shopping” and consumers will increasingly see retail as a social and leisure experience
- The divide between retail and leisure will blur. Leisure activities including cinemas, food and beverage, bowling,
ice skating will bring traffic; retailers will create opportunities for an experience in their stores.

- People will spend money on products, services and experiences, with an increased emphasis on experiences
- Personal ownership of vehicles will be reduced dramatically and fleets of driverless vehicles will reduce the demand for parking

**Regionally Significant Retail/Commercial Areas**

Edina’s regional retail districts are evolving with mixed-use lifestyle developments emerging in the 50th and France and Greater Southdale/Galleria/Centennial Lakes areas of Edina. These developments include:

- More dining and entertainment options
- New hotel, condo and residential rental developments
- An increased focus on pedestrian-oriented environments with the Promenade in the Southdale area and attractive outdoor plazas
- The location of a Life Time Fitness “diamond level” club at Southdale – with co-working, advanced dietary, physical therapy, chiropractic and proactive medical care

**Health Care as an Opportunity**

The health care sector is one of the fastest growing segments of the economy nationally and regionally. Growth is expected to continue as the large “baby boom” generation creates an increased demand for medical services. The 65+ population, which typically accounts for the highest per capita health care spending, is expected to grow in Hennepin County by 37% between 2015 and 2025 and by 71% between 2016 and 2040.

Some notable trends for this sector include:

- Many specialty clinics, medical offices and other facilities prefer close proximity to hospital campuses
- In addition to an aging population, investment in new technology will drive facility renovation and new construction
- Cost containment is driving a trend to lower cost delivery settings, including medical office buildings, urgent care and day-surgery facilities
- New payment systems will favor medical office space that creates opportunities for collaboration to help providers minimize costs and maximize outcomes
- Patient recovery in hotels located near medical campuses, removes patients from high-cost hospital beds, while allowing them to conveniently access medical services. Such hotels can also serve family members of hospitalized patients. Several such facilities have been created in the MSP metro area in recent years, including Hilton hotels near Abbott Northwestern and TRIA Orthopedic in Bloomington and a Marriott Courtyard near TRIA Orthopedic in Woodbury.

Medical offices can generate significant tax base and diverse employment opportunities, while providing important services to residents of Edina and the southwest metro. As the retail footprint shrinks and changes in the Greater Southdale area, the growth of the health care sector presents an important opportunity for the community.
Smaller Commercial Nodes

Smaller commercial nodes such as Wooddale/ValleyView, Grandview, 70th and Cahill and 44th and France serve important functions in their neighborhoods, providing services to area residents and building a sense of community and place. The businesses and properties are often family-owned. Such businesses and properties experience transitions when owners retire, sell or pass businesses or properties to the next generation. Reinvestment of the properties varies based on owner goals. In some cases, retail uses are no longer as competitive and there has been a transition to office and dining.

Examples include:
- transition of a former service station at Wooddale Valleyview to a neighborhood dining establishment
- the transition of Durr at 44th and France from retail to mixed use (office and retail)
- redevelopment of the Edina Cleaners site at 44th and France to mixed use, including residential and dining

Some properties may become physically obsolete and/or less desirable. Second or third generation property owners may not be focused on active management or reinvestment in the properties, or struggle with decision-making among multiple family members. There may be trouble attracting quality tenants and the areas may experience higher turnover. Such areas cease to meet resident needs and no longer serve a role in building a sense of community. In such cases, the city and neighboring property owners have an interest in redevelopment or revitalization and maintaining an attractive tenant mix. In the case of Wooddale/Valleyview, the City recently invested in improvements to the public realm.

The independence of the business and property owners in the smaller commercial nodes is both a strength and a weakness. Malls and strip centers have more control over store hours, address shared maintenance (e.g. snow plowing, seasonal plantings and decorations) and coordinate marketing and promotional activities. A business and property owners association was established at 50th and France 75 years ago and special legislation established a special services district at 50th and France, which addresses maintenance of the parking ramps and the public realm in the district. The Association’s primary focus in recent years has been the annual Edina Art Fair, which also serves as a primary source of revenue for the group.

Some businesses and property owners at 44th and France are affiliated with the Linden Hills Business Association, but the level of engagement, particularly among property owners does not appear to be consistent or strong. Business and property owners associations do not exist at Edina’s other commercial nodes – 70th and Cahill, Wooddale/ValleyView, Grandview or the Greater Southdale Area.

Business and property owners associations can serve several vital functions in maintaining the economic vitality and community orientation of smaller commercial nodes. Key functions include:
- clarifying a vision and strategy for the node, including a strategic tenant mix
- regular communication among stakeholders
- strengthening design and appearance
- working together on marketing and promotion
• coordination of shared parking and other tactics to strengthen a district.

Engagement of property owners is critical, because they determine the tenant mix and ultimately make the investments needed to keep an area adapting to market changes over time. Because change is occurring on so many fronts at once – demographic, transportation, housing, technology, and the ways consumers “shop”, it is especially important for independent business and property owners to share information and strategies to adapt successfully.

**Workforce**

**Workforce Attraction**

Edina contributes to the region’s capacity to attract talent to the region by offering vibrant places to live, recreate, shop and work. Awareness of millennial preferences should be incorporated into revitalization planning.

**Education and Training**

The pace of change is expected to accelerate, requiring up-skilling of the workforce on an on-going basis. For Edina, there are implications for both the employers who need appropriately skilled talent and residents, who may want to improve their skills. Although Edina does not have a public university or college campus, Minnesota State University Mankato located its extended campus in the metro area in Edina at 7700 France Ave South, offering a range of academic programs, from professional certifications to undergraduate and graduate degrees.

**Diversity and Inclusion**

Globally leading companies seek workforce diversity because a diverse workforce has been documented to increase innovation, provide stronger connections to a more diverse customer base and achieve better decisions and financial results. Cities, chambers and businesses across the county have adopted initiatives to promote diversity and inclusion and create welcoming communities.

**Broadband Infrastructure**

Access to high speed internet, through reliable broadband infrastructure, is critical for health care education and government institutions, commercial and industrial areas as well as residential areas.

Some counties and cities have undertaken a variety of initiatives to ensure competitive and equitable service in their communities. Strategies include:

- Establish “build once/open access” policies and install conduit during major road reconstruction and other redevelopment projects, especially in congested areas, to ensure competition, redundancy resilience and minimize the cost and disruption associated with updating underground infrastructure.
- Establish broadband readiness guidelines to encourage developers to bring conduit new and renovated buildings to make them ready for broadband.
- Addressing internet access limitations faced by residents of older apartment buildings, which can limit resident access to education, health care and work-related communications.
- Building broadband infrastructure shared by cities, school districts and other institutions to reduce costs and improve services, including traffic control.
Goals and Policies

Revitalize Edina’s Business and Industrial Parks
Goal: Prepare small area plan(s) for the business and industrial park areas with a focus on repurposing and revitalizing the building stock to create a vibrant and attractive location for corporate headquarters, technology companies and other businesses offering high wage employment opportunities.

1. Create small area or district plans for Edina’s business and industrial park areas. Work with adjacent cities – Bloomington, Minnetonka, Eden Prairie. Involve developers and property owners in understanding the revitalization and investment challenges and in crafting a range of solutions. Work with adjacent suburbs and transit agencies to provide excellent transit service.

2. The small area plan(s) should consider investments in sidewalks, transit amenities and public realm improvements to stimulate private sector investment in revitalization.

Capitalize on Expected Growth in the Health Care Sector
Goal: Capitalize on growth trends in the health care sector. Plan a health care district in the Greater Southdale area that creates an exceptional experience for patients, family members and employees.

1. Convene a health care task force to research the potential growth of the health care sector in Edina. Identify and characterize the land use, real estate, workforce and transportation implications for redevelopment and revitalization of the Greater Southdale district. Create a vision and a plan to create an exceptional health care district.

Attract High Quality Employment Opportunities
Goal: Retain, attract and support employment opportunities in innovative and creative industries, such as technology and medical devices.

1. Collaborate with the private sector to become a desired location for innovative and creative industries such as technology and medical devices.

2. Identify and create or encourage appropriate public and private sector retention, attraction and support tools and systems, including co-working.

Adapt Successfully to Dynamic Market Changes in Regional Retail Areas
Goal: Support strong public-private alliances, relationships and communication channels at 50th and France and the Greater Southdale. The alliances should actively engage property owners and provide information and resources that enable public and private sector decision-makers to adapt strategically in an era of significant on-going change in the retail sector, major demographic shifts and related generational needs and preferences, technology, transit, transportation and housing choices. A shared vision, guiding principles and meaningful on-going dialogue can help property owners, business owners, residents and the city navigate the significant forces of changes that are reshaping communities.

1. Support the creation of an association in the Greater Southdale area that engages major institutions and property owners to work together to revitalize the Greater Southdale area consistent with the small area plan guiding principles.

2. Provide support to the 50th and France Association to enable the association to adapt successfully to dynamic changes underway in the market. Near term, research into implications of market changes and a strategic tenant mix could guide infill of the current influx of available retail space and future redevelopment opportunities.
3. Work with Metro Transit to provide Bus Rapid Transit service on “Line 6” (U of MN, Downtown, Uptown, France Ave) to reduce traffic congestion and improve employee and customer access to the regional retail areas, while reducing parking demand.

**Encourage Vibrant Neighborhood Commercial Nodes**

Goal: Encourage vibrant neighborhood commercial nodes that meet resident needs for goods and services and build a sense of community. Take steps to encourage locally-owned small businesses.

1. Stimulate effective property and business owners associations at each of the neighborhood nodes, focusing on the area’s economic niche and tenant mix and strategies to support that economic niche including design and appearance, and marketing and promotion.
2. Develop policies to support the inclusion of locally-owned small businesses in new development projects – especially in cases that involve a significant change in rent.
3. Encourage location of co-working in neighborhood commercial nodes
4. Work with Hennepin County’s Open to Business to promote technical assistance services available to small business owners

**Workforce**

Goal: Participate in regional efforts to ensure that a highly skilled and productive workforce continues to be a competitive advantage of the MSP region.

1. Connect targeted employers in Edina to regional talent attraction and development initiatives led by GREATER MSP and other organizations.
2. Strengthen and explore opportunities to diversify higher education access in Edina.
3. Explore city and chamber-led diversity and inclusion efforts. Identify approaches that are well-suited to Edina and pursue implementation.

**Broadband Infrastructure**

Goal: Ensure that Edina residents and businesses have access to world-class broadband infrastructure at competitive rates.

1. Establish a broadband taskforce with a charge to explore models used by other cities and counties to ensure world-class broadband infrastructure to residential and commercial/industrial areas as well as public institutions and spaces.
2. Evaluate “build-once” open-access options to encourage competition, and minimize the cost and disruptions associated with updating underground infrastructure.
3. Consider “broadband readiness” policies (Example: St. Louis Park)
4. Address social equity considerations associated with the provision of broadband access in older apartment buildings.