2040 Comprehensive Plan
St. Louis Park, Minnesota

THANK YOU TO ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE ST. LOUIS PARK COMMUNITY WHO PROVIDED INPUT TO THIS PLAN!

St. Louis Park City Council

- Jake Spano, Mayor
- Steve Hallfin, At-large A
- Thom Miller, At-large B
- Margaret Rog, Ward 1
- Anne Mavity, Ward 2
- Rachel Harris, Ward 3
- Tim Brausen, Ward 4

St. Louis Park Planning Commissioners

- Carl Robertson
- Jessica Kraft
- Claudia Johnston-Madison
- Courtney Erwin
- Lynette Dumalag
- Matt Eckholm
- Jim Beneke
- Alanna Franklin
- Lynne Carper
- Joe Tatalovich
- Lisa Peilen

Tom Harmening, City Manager

Adopted on August 5, 2019

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements ii

Chapter 1- Plan Vision & Purpose 1-1
- St. Louis Park Vision 3.0 1-1
- Strategic Priorities 1-2
- Comprehensive Planning 1-4
- Planning Process and Community Involvement 1-4

Chapter 2- Community Background 2-7
- Planning Context 2-7
- City Government 2-14
- Demographics 2-19

Chapter 3- Racial Equity 3-25
- Vision for Racial Equity 3-25

Chapter 4- Environmental Stewardship 4-29
- Vision for Environmental Stewardship 4-29
- Climate and Energy 4-31
- Parks, Open Space, and Natural Resources 4-45
- Water Supply 4-73
- Sanitary Sewer 4-84
- Surface Water Management 4-94
- Solid Waste 4-97
- Utilities 4-105

Chapter 5- A Livable Community 5-107
- Vision for a Livable Community 5-107
- Land Use Plan 5-113
- Economic Development and Redevelopment 5-142
- Housing Plan 5-157
- Public Art 5-193
- Historic Resources 5-194
- Plan By Neighborhood 5-197

Chapter 6- Mobility: Getting Around Town 6-205
- Vision for the Mobility System 6-205
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility 6-208
- Transit Mobility 6-225
- Vehicular Mobility 6-238
- Rail and Truck Freight 6-262
- Aviation 6-265

St. Louis Park MINNESOTA

Chapter 7- Community Health & Safety 7-267
Vision for Community Health & Safety 7-267
Community Health 7-268
Schools and Youth 7-277
Inspection Services 7-280
Fire Department Services 7-286
Police Department Services 7-290

Chapter 8- Implementation of the Plan 8-295
Individual Element Implementation Plans 8-296
System Plans 8-296
Specific Area and Topic Plans 8-296
Official Controls 8-296
Fiscal Devices 8-298
Capital Improvement Program 8-300

APPENDICES

Appendix A- Plan by Neighborhood

Appendix B- Water Supply Plan

Appendix C- Climate Action Plan

Appendix D- 2018 Capital Improvement Plan

Appendix E- Local Surface Water Management Plan

Chapter 1
Plan Vision & Purpose

St. Louis Park Vision 3.0

The City of St. Louis Park created its Vision 3.0 in 2017 culminating in the following five Strategic Priorities for the 2040 Comprehensive Plan:

- **St. Louis Park is committed to being a leader in racial equity and inclusion in order to create a more just and inclusive community for all.**
- **St. Louis Park is committed to continue to lead in environmental stewardship.**
- **St. Louis Park is committed to providing a broad range of housing and neighborhood-oriented development.**
- **St. Louis Park is committed to providing a variety of options for people to make their way around the City comfortably, safely and reliably.**
- **St. Louis Park is committed to creating opportunities to build social capital through community engagement.**

Racial Equity and Inclusion

Environmental Stewardship

Housing and Neighborhood Oriented Development

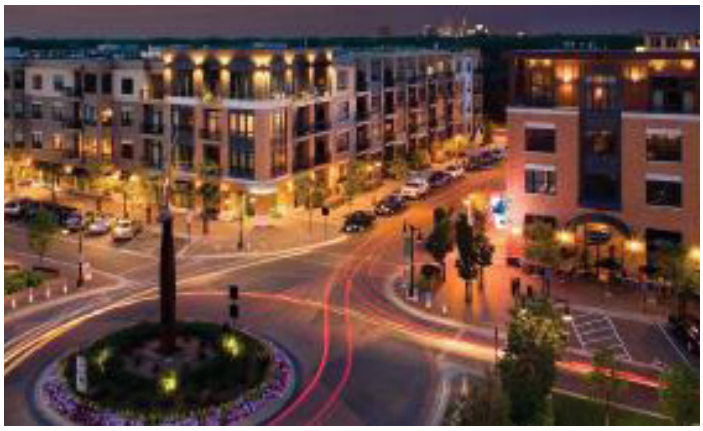
Mobility

Community Engagement

The City of St. Louis Park created Vision 3.0 in 2017 through a community-wide engagement process with over 1,500 people participating and providing input. This was the third time the city has conducted a visioning process to help shape its future. The intent of community visioning is to provide a big picture view on moving the community forward, and using it to design the city's 2040 Comprehensive Plan to reflect the priorities of the community and shape its future.

Vision 3.0 was conducted with a wide variety of people at many events and places around the community and on-line. The process included 38 community meetings, responses to twenty "questions of the week" presented community-wide through a variety of methods, a community survey, two Town Hall and two Facebook Live Town Hall meetings, and soliciting responses to the question, "What is your one wish for St. Louis Park's future?" from community members at a variety of community places and events. Over 4,600 comments were collected throughout the engagement process and five areas of emphasis were recommended from the input received in Vision 3.0:

1. **Develop Creative Housing Solutions**
2. **Develop Future-Focused Transit and Mobility Solutions**
3. **Continue to Lead in Environmental Stewardship and Ensure Access to Green Space for Future Generations**
4. **Prepare our Next Generation**
5. **Commit to Being a Leader in Racial Equity and Inclusion**



Strategic Priorities

These Vision 3.0 areas have been adapted by the St. Louis Park City Council to become five **Strategic Priorities** for the city to use in its long-range planning as well as its daily decisions and activities.

The five **Strategic Priorities** are:

» **St. Louis Park is committed to being a leader in racial equity and inclusion in order to create a more just and inclusive community for all.**

- Creating pipelines and opportunities for communities of color and indigenous people to be part of city leadership roles.
- Investing in small business and services owned by people of color and indigenous people.
- Expanding racial equity as an ongoing discussion within all areas of city business.
- Creating awareness and a learning environment where consequences and unintentional impact of our work and decisions are addressed.

» **St. Louis Park is committed to continue to lead in environmental stewardship.**

- Supporting Climate Action Plan strategies and goals through planning, education, resources, communication and implementation of programs and initiatives.
- Increasing opportunities to connect with nature in the city.
- Continuing to protect and improve the quality of natural resources, parks, lakes, creek, wetlands and surface water planning, and using green spaces effectively.
- Continuing to provide quality water to residents.

» **St. Louis Park is committed to providing a broad range of housing and neighborhood-oriented development.**

- Providing more diverse and creative housing choices to meet the needs of current and future residents while preserving existing affordable housing.
- Fostering and facilitating reinvestment and redevelopment of neighborhood-oriented businesses and services.
- Promoting locally owned small business, especially in indigenous, immigrant and communities of color.

- Conducting research to further understand what people want and need access to in the community, i.e., food, services, housing options, business opportunities, gathering spaces.

» **St. Louis Park is committed to providing a variety of options for people to make their way around the city comfortably, safely and reliably.**

- Continuing to expand the network of sidewalks, trails and bike facilities.
- Researching and implementing multiple and affordable mobility solutions for all.
- Fostering smart growth and transit-oriented housing development.
- Increasing pedestrian safety through crosswalk improvements and increased park and trail lighting.
- Expanding the number of north-south and east-west transit options.

» **St. Louis Park is committed to creating opportunities to build social capital through community engagement.**

- Fostering and facilitating transparency between the community and the City of St. Louis Park.
- Building strategies and opportunities to reach historically unheard voices and unseen communities within St. Louis Park.
- Building trust and deeper connections within communities of color and indigenous people.
- Connecting and engaging with St. Louis Park School District and other community organizations to meet needs of the current and future community.
- Continuing to support youth and future generations.
- Encourage Neighborhood Associations to deepen their reach and connections within the community.

The 2040 Comprehensive Plan incorporates and integrates these Strategic Priorities throughout, emphasizing the importance of each. Graphic symbols representing each of the Strategic Priorities are used to indicate links between the 2040 Plan's goals and the five Strategic Priorities.

VISION ST. LOUIS PARK - 1994

In 1994, the city undertook its first community visioning process. A committee of community members representing government, schools, businesses, community organizations, religious institutions, and residents adopted a vision statement to direct the city's future: "St. Louis Park: Our Community of Choice for a Lifetime."

Vision St. Louis Park identified strong community support for establishing a "New Urbanism" design framework to provide direction and identify opportunities to improve the city's livability and aesthetics. The manner in which public and private land uses, buildings and facilities relate to one another were guided by this framework.

Through this process, residents asserted their desire to rebuild and strengthen the sense of community, and recommended creating a new town center for the community. In 1996 more than 200 residents and business owners worked with a group of design professionals to create a concept plan for the new town center, known as Park Commons. This was an important step toward becoming a "livable" community.

The Park Commons incorporated the Livable Communities principles at a small town scale for the area along Excelsior Boulevard reaching north to connect to Wolfe Park, the Rec Center and the surrounding areas. Much of the city's Town Center concept has been realized through the development of Excelsior & Grand, a mixed-use area encompassing 15 acres, 644 housing units, 90,000 square feet of first floor retail, restaurants and service uses, and two public parking ramps that helped make the compact mixed use development possible. Excelsior & Grand has become a major focal point for the community. It includes a gathering space and provides connections for people to parks, jobs, shopping and other activities.

VISION ST. LOUIS PARK - 2006

In 2006, a second community-wide visioning process was undertaken to again invite community members to imagine the future of St. Louis Park. Over 1,200 people from all walks of the community participated in planning for the city's future. This second visioning process reinforced and built on the ideas found in the 1994 Vision, and the results of this second generation vision were incorporated into the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. This second Vision is centered on the concept of being a "Livable Community" that features better human interaction and connections which thereby enhance the quality of life in the community.

Comprehensive Planning

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

» A comprehensive plan carries out the city's future vision.

» It sets goals, strategies and priorities in a comprehensive manner and sets a clear image of the values the city as a governing body wants to achieve.

» It functions as a framework for the various community elements that are key to achieving the city's goals consistent with the city's chosen direction.

» It provides a touchstone to guide daily, weekly and monthly decision making.

» It looks at the city as a whole to help ensure coordinated plans and avoid future conflicts.

What Does a Comprehensive Plan Include?

A Comprehensive Plan includes key community elements that set forth the future direction of the city. Certain elements are required by State law to be addressed, including land use, transportation, housing, surface water management, public facilities, and capital improvements.

St. Louis Park's plan includes additional community elements including economic development and redevelopment, racial equity, climate and energy, community health and safety, and plan by neighborhood.

Why Are We Updating the Plan?

State law requires that all governmental entities in the Twin Cities metro area update their comprehensive plans at least once every 10 years. Local plans are reviewed and aggregated by the Metropolitan Council in order to achieve alignment of plans on a region-wide basis. The Metropolitan Council works with communities on several aspects of planning in order to determine if development can occur in various locations. It coordinates planning in order to have an efficient development pattern.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The 2040 Comprehensive Plan included two rounds of targeted community engagement activities - Fall 2017 and Spring 2018:

- Fall 2017 Neighborhood Planning Workshops and Community Survey
  - Four workshops conducted in the neighborhoods
  - Workshops attracted 130+ participants
  - Online survey attracted almost 1,100 participants
  - Neighborhood input at start of planning process
- Spring 2018 Community Survey
  - Online survey attracted 2,150 participants
  - Questions were focused on key topics and community input was used to develop the draft 2040 Comprehensive Plan

Planning Process and Community Involvement

The initial phase of community engagement for the 2040 Comprehensive Plan included four Neighborhood Planning Workshops, aimed at covering the city's seven Neighborhood Planning Areas and all 35 neighborhoods. Turnout for the Fall 2017 neighborhood planning workshops was high; over 130 residents participated, with 50 residents attending the meeting on November 28th for the Central and West Central Planning areas. The two-hour workshops took place at community centers located in the specific Neighborhood Planning Areas.

St. Louis Park MINNESOTA

The second phase of community engagement involved a community survey that focused on key topics related to the proposed updates to the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, including the following:

- Allowing additional housing types in low density residential neighborhoods, including accessory housing units and duplexes
- Allowing additional housing types in residential areas within walking distance of commercial centers/ corridors, transit services, and parks
- Availability of affordable housing
- Availability of diverse housing choices
- Allowing neighborhood buildings that contain a mix of commercial and residential uses in existing neighborhood commercial areas and along commercial streets
- Planning, designing, building and operating the city's transportation system to prioritize walking first, followed by bicycling and transit use, and then motorized vehicle use
- Pursuing shared use mobility options, such as bike, car or ride sharing systems
- Taking actions that impact climate change including reducing home energy consumption, vehicle emissions, and solid waste
- Recommended changes to land use designations in specific areas on the 2040 Future Land Use Plan Map

safe
proud
happy
live
good
neighbors
home
like
community
comfortable
character
grateful
feel
lucky
connected
blessedtown
content
great
fortunate
neighborhood
welcome
list
secure
belong
concerned
love
pleased
friendly
pretty
place
hopeful
nice
development
becoming
very
progressive
actually
excited
language
street
park
closed
folks
different
air
future
close
slp
disconnected
worried
connection
bee
lacks
challengi
26th
idling
glad
ago
sad
work
small
drive
cars
living
energized
discouraged
supported
vitality
isdst
council
sometimes
keep
location
positive
high
force
changing
block
heading
wonderful
quickly
young
focused
welcomes
loss
communityneighborhood
embrace
hour
investments
impatient
homey
nightmare
rising
stores
past
hate
when
description
parking
yet
missing
year
lady
done
feels
overall
mostly
overcrowded
walkable
pleasant
history
likes
some
warm
180
police
move
practice
privacy
want
quality
clogged
awesome
part
industrial
yday
clean
compared
safei
represent
improvement
safety
streetblock
satisfied
stay
wday
world
secluded
mindedness
look
idea
quiet
complacent
delighted
being
residents
oriented
optimistic
dinner
things
cross
control
planning
time
diverse
alone
sec
city
vision
resident
room
years
uneasy
continues
open
parties
confidently
possibilities
immediate
decreasing
appreciate
going
apprehensive
fantastic
support
crowded
generally
invade
author
central
mon
social
best
bought
engaged
efforts
space
bicycle
everything
traffic
think
its
mixed
air
big
public
potential
content
cars
drive
small
fortunate
great
happy
neighborhood
welcome
list
secure
belong
work
done
lady
missing
year
mostly
overall

Page intentionally left blank

Chapter 2
Community Background

Planning Context

St. Louis Park is an established first ring suburb of Minneapolis encompassing 10.8 square miles. The city lies immediately west of downtown and uptown Minneapolis and less than 14 miles from the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport (MSP). Located near the center of the Twin Cities, St. Louis Park is bordered by regional highways and bisected by regional bike trails providing phenomenal access within the metro. In a little more than 125 years, it has grown from a village of 45 families to a community of 47,486 residents. Residential areas comprise a major portion of the community with 35 established neighborhoods and the housing stock, mostly constructed following World War II, includes 24,885 housing units.

St. Louis Park offers an abundance of places to eat, shop, recreate and be entertained. Given its convenient central location, St. Louis Park is also comfortably close to all the Twin Cities amenities. Many of the city's residents have found St. Louis Park to be "a community of choice for a lifetime," benefitting from nationally recognized education and healthcare, engaged neighborhoods, 51 parks and 24 miles of bike trails. These are some of the reasons that St. Louis Park has been named five times as one of the 100 Best Places for Young People by America's Promise Alliance and one of the "Best Places to Live in the U.S." by Livability.com.

St. Louis Park has a sound economic base with commercial, industrial and apartment development comprising more than 60 percent of the tax base. The city is home to a variety of retail stores, restaurants, medical facilities, family-owned businesses, corporations, and places of worship. St. Louis Park also has a long-standing tradition of friendliness, community involvement and commitment to excellence that may contribute to the decision by some residents to make St. Louis Park their lifelong home.

Community Origins

The St. Louis Park area was home to the Dakota people prior to the arrival of the first European settlers. However it is unlikely there was much Dakota settlement that occurred in what is now St. Louis Park because of the predominance of marsh land. Most Dakota people settled near Bde Maka Ska, (formerly called Lake Calhoun) which is just east of St. Louis Park. The Dakota people were pushed west when white settlers came, and they ultimately were forced out altogether. There is little data available to map the movements and settlements of the Dakota people who occupied the general area.

The European settlers who followed in the 1850s were farmers, mostly British, Irish, or American-born. These settlers cleared the land of brush and trees to create farmsteads, which produced livestock and produce for a growing Minneapolis population. They also began to establish the social and political institutions that had guided and ordered their lives in earlier settlements, including government, education, and religious institutions.

The geographic history of St. Louis Park began when 31 Minneapolis Township residents signed a petition asking Hennepin County Commissioners to incorporate the Village of St. Louis Park. The petition was accepted, a vote was taken, and on November 19, 1886, the petition was officially registered and established the area, occupied by 45 families and known as "Elmwood," as a village.

The village derived its name, St. Louis Park, from the depot the Minneapolis and St. Louis Railroad planned to build in the village. The word "Park" was added to eliminate any confusion with St. Louis, Missouri. Community leaders believed the railroad, the iron horse of the late 19th century, would help transform the village into a center of trade and industry. Two of the village landowners and five businessmen from Minneapolis created the St. Louis Park Land and Improvement Company, the city's first developer, and during 1886 and 1887 platted three subdivisions in proximity to the original village center.

The goal of creating a robust industrial center was greatly aided in 1890 when the lumber baron, Thomas Barlow Walker, and a group of wealthy Minneapolis industrialists incorporated the Minneapolis Land and Investment Company to focus industrial development in Minneapolis rather than losing economic advantage to its rival St. Paul. Walker's company started to develop St. Louis Park for industrial, commercial, and residential use. By 1893, the village center of St. Louis Park had three hotels and many newly arrived companies in the surrounding area, the majority associated with agricultural implement manufacturing. During this time period, the village boasted over 600 industrial jobs. The growing community was characterized by a welcoming environment, being open to a variety of religions and cultures, and taking care of neighbors. Social divisions were primarily based on employment—farming vs. manufacturing.

The financial panic of 1893 altered the plans of developers and put a damper on the village's growth. Walker's interests turned to purchasing California timber, leaving St. Louis Park's growth to be determined by local interests.

Original Village of St. Louis Park

Generally, St. Louis Park's development progressed outward from the original village center, which was located where the Minneapolis and St. Louis Railroad (now CP Rail) intersected Wooddale Avenue. Development growth outward from this point was not strong however, and was overtaken by outward expansion from Minneapolis pressured by its own population growth. By 1883, the western boundary of Minneapolis was at France Avenue and may have continued to move westward had St. Louis Park not incorporated in 1886.

In the beginning, the village consisted of farm land (homesteads) organized in rectangular blocks according to township and range lines. The center of the village began to develop with small residential lots and a few businesses. In the late 1880s, spurred by a good national economy and the optimism of the newly created village, a half-dozen separate areas were platted around this center, which now contains the city's oldest buildings and is known as the Historic Walker Lake area.

In 1892, Walker's Minneapolis Land and Investment Company platted about 1,000 acres of previously platted and unplatted land using a layout influenced by George Pullman, who had built a model city in Pullman, Illinois. This subdivision, called the "Rearrangement of St. Louis Park", was organized around a grid of streets, streetcar line, railroads, and railroad spurs and loops to accommodate the needs of a growing new industrial suburb. Residential lots were platted 22 and 25 feet in width in 500 to 850-foot long blocks. These lots were intended to be combined to accommodate various sized houses. Industrial lots, 50 feet wide and ranging from 175 to over 500 feet in depth, were arranged along railroads and railroad spurs. These lots were also meant to be combined to accommodate the land needs of various sized industrial users.

Land speculation continued, in spite of the financial panic of 1893, and by the end of 1898 1,600 acres had been platted for industrial, commercial, and residential uses. Most lots were undeveloped and under the control of Walker's Minneapolis Land and Investment Company. Even though Walker owned several thousand unsold lots, other residents continued to divide up farmsteads. Between 1907 and 1913, Brookside, Browndale, Cedarhurst, and Fern Hill subdivisions were filed. By 1913, an additional 716 acres had been subdivided. Actual home building and commercial development tended to follow streetcar and railroad lines.

City Growth and Development Patterns

Many lots remained vacant until after the great depression of the 1930s. This time period shows a shift from industrial to suburban residential and commercial development patterns. Streetcars came, and the great depression hit the country and the village hard. Neighborhoods developed and local proximity became the indicator of social circles. Neighbors helped each other and developed some organizations for volunteering and helping.

Platting was sporadic and erratic, and resulted in inconsistent street names; for instance, there were five different "Summit Avenues." To remedy this situation, in 1933, Carol W. Hurd (who became Mayor in 1952) headed a committee to rename the streets. The committee decided on a system of alphabetical north/south streets extending from Minneapolis (France Avenue) westward. The last street, Jordan Avenue, was later reconstructed as Highway 169. Names similar to street names in Minneapolis and St. Paul were discarded. The second alphabet used names from states and Canadian Provinces and the third alphabet commemorated historic or patriotic names. The east/west streets followed a numbering sequence.

Vigorous home building occurred in the late 1930s, to accommodate the pent up need created during the depression. However, with the American involvement in World War II, all development came to a halt. When the war was over, home building boomed, filling existing vacant lots and prompting new land development. Sixty percent of the city's housing stock was constructed in a single burst of construction activity in the late 1940s and the 1950s and is reflective of its era and purpose—starter homes for GI Bill families. A strong sense of community developed during the post war era, as many of the new families moved into areas at the same time and raised their families together.

Residential development was closely followed by commercial developers anxious to bring goods and services to the new households. During the period between 1950 and 1956, 66 new subdivisions were recorded making room for 2,700 new homes. But the appearance of the new subdivisions was different from the city's original residential development. No longer were lots platted using a grid pattern. New development began using a new suburban ideal of cul-de-sacs, curvilinear street patterns, and a hierarchy of street types.

The current municipal boundary has existed mostly intact since 1954. In 1953 and 1954, two parcels, Kilmer and Shelard Park, were the final annexations. These parcels were originally in Minnetonka, but came to St. Louis Park because of the ability of St. Louis Park to provide sewer and water.

St. Louis Park was incorporated as a city in 1954. Most homes, schools, parks, bridges, and roads/highways were built during the 1950s and 1960s. Sewage and water systems were expanded. This era was characterized by good city governance, with adherence to sound financial management and decision-making.

Jewish migration from Minneapolis to St. Louis Park began as early as the late 1930s and was welcomed, not always the case in other communities. During the 1960s and 1970s, as children of the post WWII era moved into adulthood, many parents chose to stay in St. Louis Park. This retention of residents helped maintain the sense of the community and its stability.

As the community continued to shift away from its industrial origins to a more residential and commercial suburban community, the city was confronted with lingering environmental issues related to past industrial activities. For example, the Reilly Tar and Chemical Corporation's production of coal tar and creosote products and wood treatment processes over 50+ years resulted in environmental impacts to the industrial site's soil and groundwater, ultimately impacting city wells also. Environmental awareness was forced upon the community through such contamination issues, which resulted in the city taking a leadership role in developing sound environmental practices at the local government level.

Planning History

Village planning in St. Louis Park began as early as 1890 with a group of village founders who along with T. B. Walker and a group of Minneapolis industrialists formed the St. Louis Park Land and Improvement Company. T. B. Walker, carefully platted the "Rearrangement of St. Louis Park" for both housing and commerce. Large circular railroad loops, tied to the main railroad lines, established a unique form for the industrial area which is now near the intersection of Louisiana Avenue and Highway 7. The village center was planned just east of the industrial area near Walker and Lake Street. Housing sites were to be established around these areas, and the original plan identified possible streetcar routes to serve the area.

Modern municipal planning began in 1932 with the formation of a Planning Commission, which directed various area and city wide plans and formalized zoning. These legal land use controls emulated ordinances of many other cities and were consistent with current national practices. The village operated with a part time Council and no staff until 1954.

The postwar housing boom overwhelmed the part-time village government. The village had an outdated zoning ordinance, no comprehensive development plan, and no staff to create one. The form of government that was adequate to serve 7,000 people was no longer feasible as the population boomed. In 1954, voters approved a home rule charter that gave St. Louis Park the status of a city. That action enabled St. Louis Park to hire a city manager to assume some of the duties handled by the part-time City Council. In those days, the primary concerns were the physical planning of St. Louis Park, blocks, lots and streets, expanding sewer and water systems, paving streets, acquiring park land and building schools.

In 1956, a new major planning program commenced as a result of the rapid growth which occurred the decade following World War II. The city's first modern thoroughfare plan was adopted in 1958. A complete comprehensive plan, covering all major elements of the entire city, was adopted in 1968. The second major comprehensive plan was adopted in 1984 and amended in 1991 responding to the continuing evolution of the city.

Creating a Livable Community

The city has a long history of urban design influence, which was evident as early as 1958, when efforts to achieve high standards for buildings grew out of concern about the rapid growth of poor quality buildings. Efforts to promote high quality building construction has continued as evolving standards have been incorporated into official controls and encouraged through incentives.

St. Louis Park is a community that continually reinvents itself to best meet its future challenges and opportunities. The Comprehensive Plan, particularly the "A Livable Community" chapter, focuses special attention on those elements that will most directly influence the creation of a great place to live, work and gather as well as land use, redevelopment, housing, historic preservation and neighborhoods.

The city is designated by the Metropolitan Council as an Urban Center geographic planning area in the 2040 Regional Development Framework. The 2040 projections show slow, steady growth for the community, which will be accomplished primarily through redevelopment of certain sites that are positioned best in terms of physical condition, location, and market conditions, to accomplish the vision and direction established by the city.

Thrive MSP 2040 Community Designation

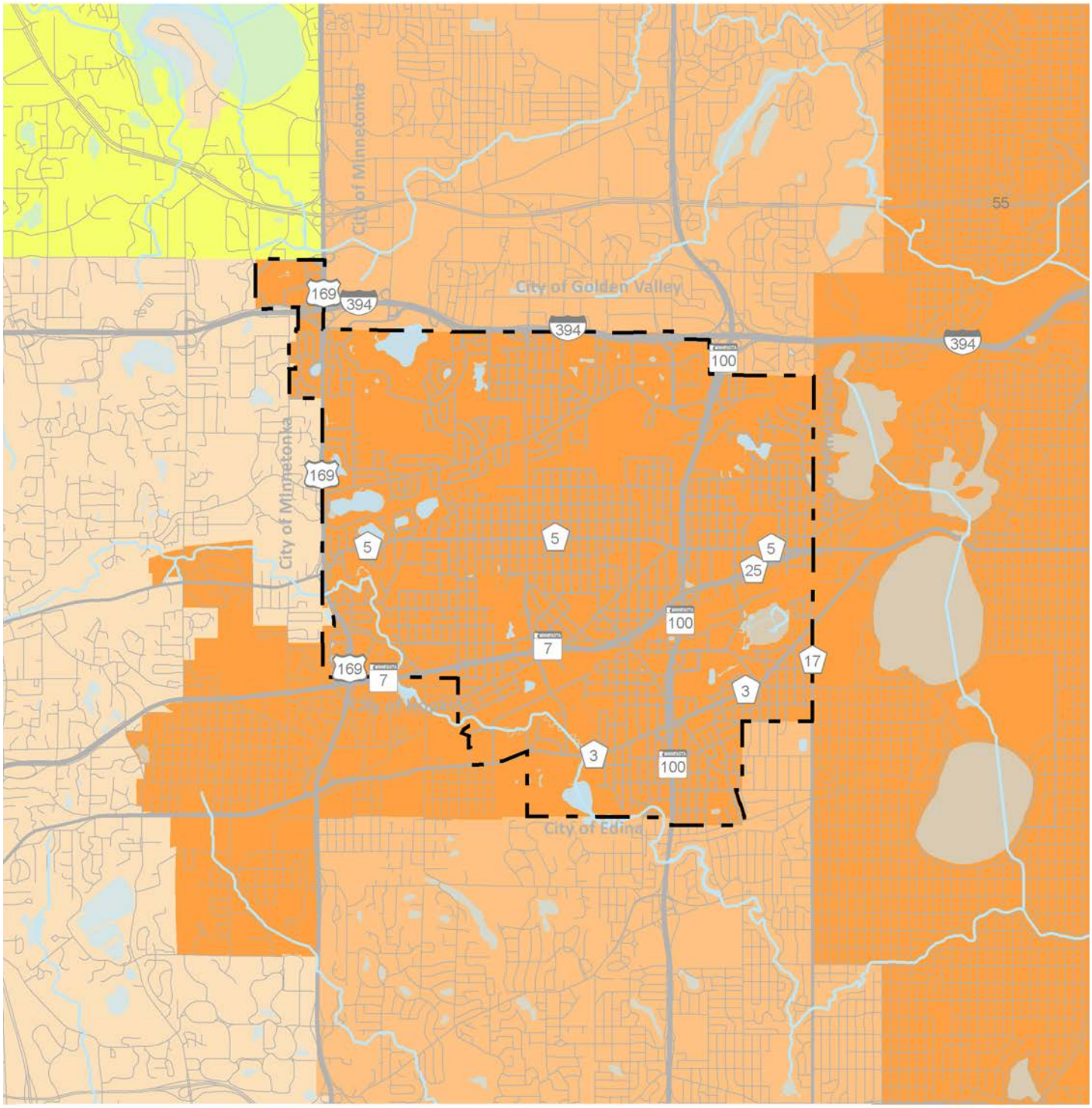
The Metropolitan Council assigns a community designation to each city and township on the basis of existing development patterns, common challenges, and shared opportunities- all of which may evolve as future development patterns change. The designation represents the dominant character of each community. St. Louis Park falls within the Urban Center designation. Cities in the Urban Center share similar development characteristics such as street grids planned before World War II. Because of more limited automobile use during their initial development, communities in the Urban Center are more conducive to transit use and walking for daily needs. Urban Center communities are experiencing redevelopment attracted to their vitality and amenities. Besides Minneapolis and St. Paul, other communities that share the Urban Center designation and have similarities to St. Louis Park include Columbia Heights, Hopkins, Richfield, and Robbinsdale.

THRIVE MSP 2040 URBAN CENTER POLICIES:

St. Louis Park has been designated as an Urban Center community. The following are examples of the policies Urban Center communities are expected to incorporate into their plans:

- Plan for new growth and redevelopment to occur at a density of at least 20 units per acre.
- Target opportunities for denser development around regional transit investments, such as the SWLRT station areas, at a minimum of 50 units per acre.
- Identify areas for redevelopment, particularly areas served by transportation options with a focus on affordable housing
- Lead detailed land use planning efforts around regional transit stations and other regional investments.
- Plan for and program local infrastructure needs (roads, sidewalks, sewer, water, and surface water) to meet future growth and redevelopment.
- Identify opportunities to improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation.
- Integrate and identify strategies for natural resources conservation and restoration.
- Implement best management practices to control and treat stormwater.
- Identify and address community resiliency.
- Support opportunities for urban agriculture and small-scale food production.

Figure 2-1. Thrive MSP 2040 Community Designation



Urban Center - Core City
Urban Center
Urban
Suburban
Suburban Edge
Emerging Suburban Edge
Rural Center
Diversified Rural
Rural Residential
Agricultural
Non-Council Area

St. Louis Park MINNESOTA

City Government

Structure of the City

St. Louis Park operates under the Council/Manager form of government. The elected city council sets the policy and overall direction for St. Louis Park. City employees, under the direction of the city manager, carry out council decisions and provide day-to-day city services. The city manager is directly accountable to the council.

Minnesota has two basic types of cities: home rule and statutory. The difference is the type of enabling legislation from which the municipality gains its authority. As a home rule charter city, St. Louis Park has a locally enacted home rule charter. The charter functions as a framework for governance, similar to the state constitution (albeit on a smaller scale).

Conversely, charter provisions can specifically restrict the powers of a city. Voters in home rule cities have more control over their city's function and responsibilities. Each home rule city has a Charter Commission, whose members must be a qualified voter of the city and are appointed by the district court in which the city is situated.

Mayor/Council

St. Louis Park voters elect a mayor and six city council members to four-year terms. The mayor and the two at-large council members represent all residents of the city; four ward council members are primarily responsible for representing the constituents living in their ward. The city's four-ward system is geographically based, as depicted in Figure 2-2.

During public meetings, these civic leaders make decisions about policies and programs by determining what the community can afford and judging what is best for the community's present and future well-being.

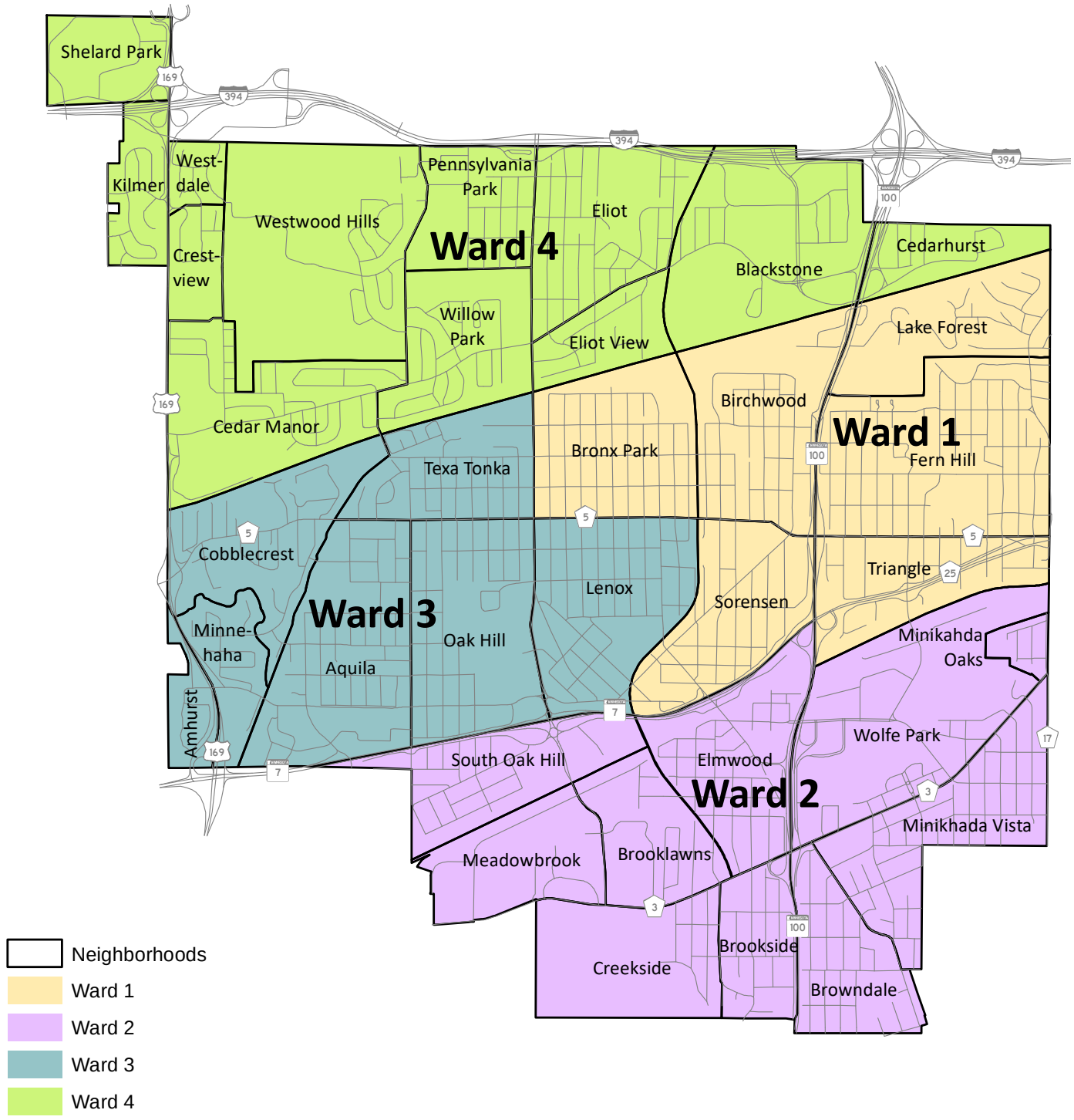
The terms of the council members are staggered so only three or four council members are on the ballot at any one time. Mayoral and council member terms are four years. There are no term limits, so the mayor and council members remain eligible for office indefinitely. Vacancies are governed by the city's home rule charter. Should the mayor or council member ever be unable to complete a term, the remaining members must follow the charter to determine whether an appointment should be made or a special election held.

Boards and Commissions

Boards and Commissions advise the council on policies and programs. Each board or commission has a specific purpose or role in the city government's decision-making process. The members of these advisory boards or commissions are appointed by the council. Current boards and commissions are:

- Board of Zoning Appeals
- Economic Development Authority
- Environmental and Sustainability Commission
- Fire Civil Service Commission
- Human Rights Commission
- Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission
- Planning Commission
- Police Advisory Commission
- Telecommunications Advisory Commission

Figure 2-2. City Council Wards



City Manager

The city manager is appointed by the council and serves as primary liaison with the council to inform them of relevant projects and issues and to recommend policy changes. The city manager enforces the city's home rule charter provisions and the laws, ordinances and resolutions of the city. It is the responsibility of the city manager to plan and define the organization for city administration, which will meet the goals and directives established by council.

City Departments

The city manager is responsible for establishing administrative policies and rules to administer the employment practices of the city. Part of this responsibility includes the development of an organizational structure to serve the needs and direction of the city as set by the council. Each department provides a distinct function within the city's operations. Current departments include:

- Administrative Services
- Community Development
- Engineering
- Fire
- Information Resources
- Inspections
- Operations and Recreation
- Police

Public Buildings

City Hall

The present City Hall building was built in 1963, and an earth sheltered garage was added to the building in 1980. Total floor area of City Hall is approximately 36,000 square feet on three levels. City Hall has been renovated over the past few years to provide a better functioning building, both for the public and employees.

Fire Stations

The city is served by two fire stations. Station 1 is located at Wooddale Avenue and Oxford Street and was originally built in 1966. Station 2 is located at Cedar Lake Road and Louisiana Avenue and was originally built in 1963. The City has both full time firefighters and paid-on-call fire fighters.

Early in 2006, several significant physical and operational deficiencies were identified in the Fire Station #1 and #2 facilities. Correcting these deficiencies and providing workable facilities for the next fifty years were identified as very important improvements to public safety. Subsequent studies determined that in order to maximize service delivery both fire stations would be reconstructed at their existing locations. This rebuilding process was completed in 2013 and the new facilities now accommodate the appropriate equipment and people to maintain excellent response and service delivery to the city.

Police Station

The Police Station, located south of City Hall, was built in 1993 and contains a dispatch center, jail with processing facilities and interview rooms, a property room and property processing room, shooting range, offices, and meeting rooms. Entry and exit from the Police Station is monitored and secured electronically.

The Police Department also maintains sub-stations at the Excelsior & Grand, Texa-Tonka, and West End shopping areas. These sub-stations are staffed with patrol officers while working in their districts to complete reports and follow-up. The Department also has police officers dedicated to servicing St. Louis Park schools as School Resource Officers (SROs): one serves the public high school, middle school, and elementary schools to teach the DARE program; and one serves the private schools in St. Louis Park (Benilde St. Margaret's, Groves Academy, Torah Academy, Jewish Day School, French Academy, Transitions Plus, Holy Family Academy, and Yeshiva of Minneapolis).

The Rec Center

The St. Louis Park Rec Center on 36th Street in Wolfe Park features an outdoor aquatic park, two indoor ice arenas—used by both the St. Louis Park High School and Benilde-St. Margaret High School boys and girls hockey teams—meeting and banquet facilities, and the city's Recreation Department offices.

Recreation Outdoor Center (ROC)

The ROC is a multi-use outdoor recreational facility located on the campus of The Rec Center. The facility provides a covered ice rink in the winter months for hockey, open public skating, broomball and other special skating events. In the spring and summer, it can be converted to a covered, turfed field for baseball, softball, soccer and lacrosse. The concrete floor can also accommodate special events such as the annual spring egg hunt, the Children First Ice Cream Social, movies in the park, or private events such as weddings or graduation parties.

Westwood Hills Nature Center

Westwood Hills Nature Center is a 160-acre natural area owned and operated by the city that features marsh, woods and restored prairie environments. The preserve is beautiful throughout the seasons and provides homes for many animals including deer, fox, mink and owls. Westwood naturalists conduct year-round educational programming to increase the understanding and appreciation of the natural world. Wood chipped and hard surface accessible trails are open from dawn to dusk year-round.

In 2016, the city conducted a study of the Westwood Hills Nature Center, which concluded that the current Interpretive Center Building was no longer able to meet the center's operational needs and the building was unrepairable. A master plan identifying future programming and facility needs was created, and a new Interpretive Center Building is planned to be constructed in 2019 and open in 2020.

Municipal Service Center (MSC)

The MSC occupies a nine-acre site on Oxford Street in the Oxford/Louisiana Industrial Park. An on-site garage and office facility houses public works, parks maintenance, utilities and solid waste staff, as well as most city vehicles and equipment. The MSC was remodeled and expanded in 2009-10 in order to provide more room for equipment, storage and employees.

Library

The St. Louis Park Public Library is located at Library Lane and Gorham Avenue and is part of the Hennepin County Library System. The structure was opened in 1969 on a two-acre site. Library patrons have access to all county library system's resources, offering city residents the advantages of a large library system combined with a functional facility that fits the scale of development in the community and does not require a large land area.

Communications

The city's communications staff engages with residents and others through the city's website, digital and social media, print publications, ParkTV, media relations, and the City Hall reception desk. The communications division's goal is to collaborate with other city departments to provide quality content and information that responds to the needs of the community, promotes community engagement and fosters an open public process.

Digital media tools include the city website, a customer request management system, a reverse 911 system and a subscription service that provides text and email notifications on various topics of interest to residents.

Print publications mailed to all city addresses include the city newsletter, ***Park Perspective***, published four times per year (February, May, July and October); the parks and recreation registration brochure, published three times per year (March, August and November); and the annual city-school calendar produced in cooperation with the St. Louis Park Public Schools. Residents receive additional mailings throughout the year notifying them of citywide events as well as events happening in their neighborhoods or wards. The communications division also produces brochures, flyers, posters, signs, logos and print and digital ads as required to support city departments in their efforts to inform residents of city programs and events. The city's graphic designer is instrumental in these efforts and helps enforce the city's brand standards across all materials.

The role of social media has exploded in the past 10 years, with the city maintaining 13 social media accounts with about 30,000 followers. In addition, Nextdoor, a private social network for neighborhoods, reaches nearly a quarter of the city's households. Communications staff regularly interact with residents who comment or ask questions via the city's social media accounts.

ParkTV, the city's community access and government cable channels, provides nearly 400 hours of programming each year, including live broadcasts of city council and planning commission meetings. A production van travels to community events and varsity sports, providing live and recorded programming. Viewers can tune in through Comcast or CenturyLink, or on the city's website or YouTube channel.

The city handles a variety of media requests from local and national outlets, covering a range of topics, from questions about police activity or development projects to general inquiries about city initiatives and programs.

Demographics

Population Growth

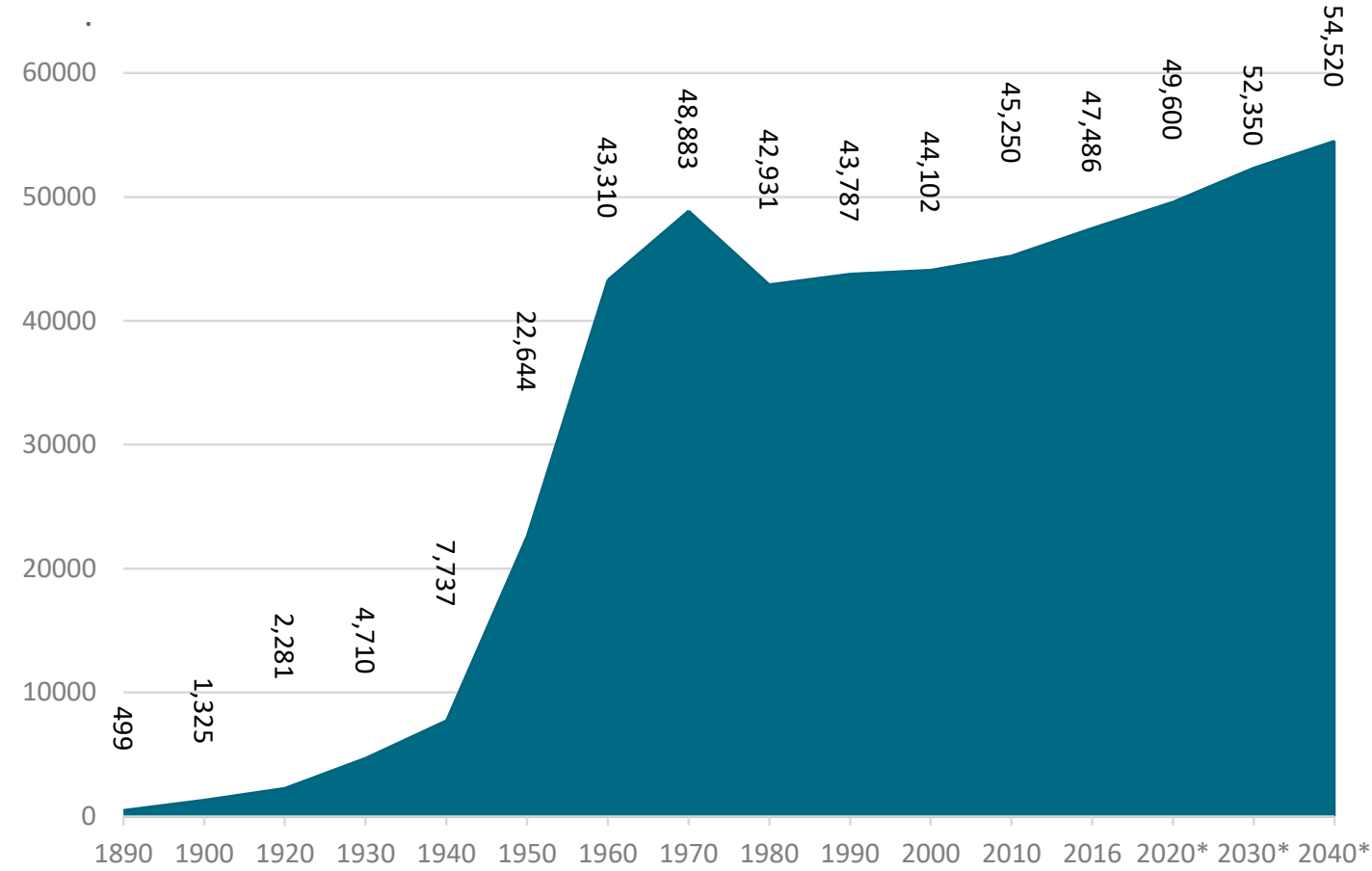
Population has fluctuated throughout St. Louis Park's history in response to economic development cycles, as illustrated in Table 2-1 and Figure 2-3. In 1950 St. Louis Park's population was 22,644 and this number grew quickly during the following decade, when St. Louis Park was the fastest growing suburb in the region. It peaked around 1970, with nearly 49,000 people, followed by a decline of almost 6,000 by 1980. Since then, the population has grown at a gradual but consistent rate. As of 2016, the city's population was 47,486 residents.

Table 2-1. Population Since 1890

YEAR	POPULATION
1890	499
1900	1,325
1920	2,281
1930	4,710
1940	7,737
1950	22,644
1960	43,310
1970	48,883
1980	42,931
1990	43,787
2000	44,102
2010	45,250
2016	47,486
2020*	49,600
2030*	52,350
2040*	54,520

**Forecasts for future growth from Metropolitan Council*
Source: US Census Bureau and Metropolitan Council

Figure 2-3. Population Since 1890



Population Distribution by Age

The population distribution by age is illustrated in Figure 2-4. Highlights include:

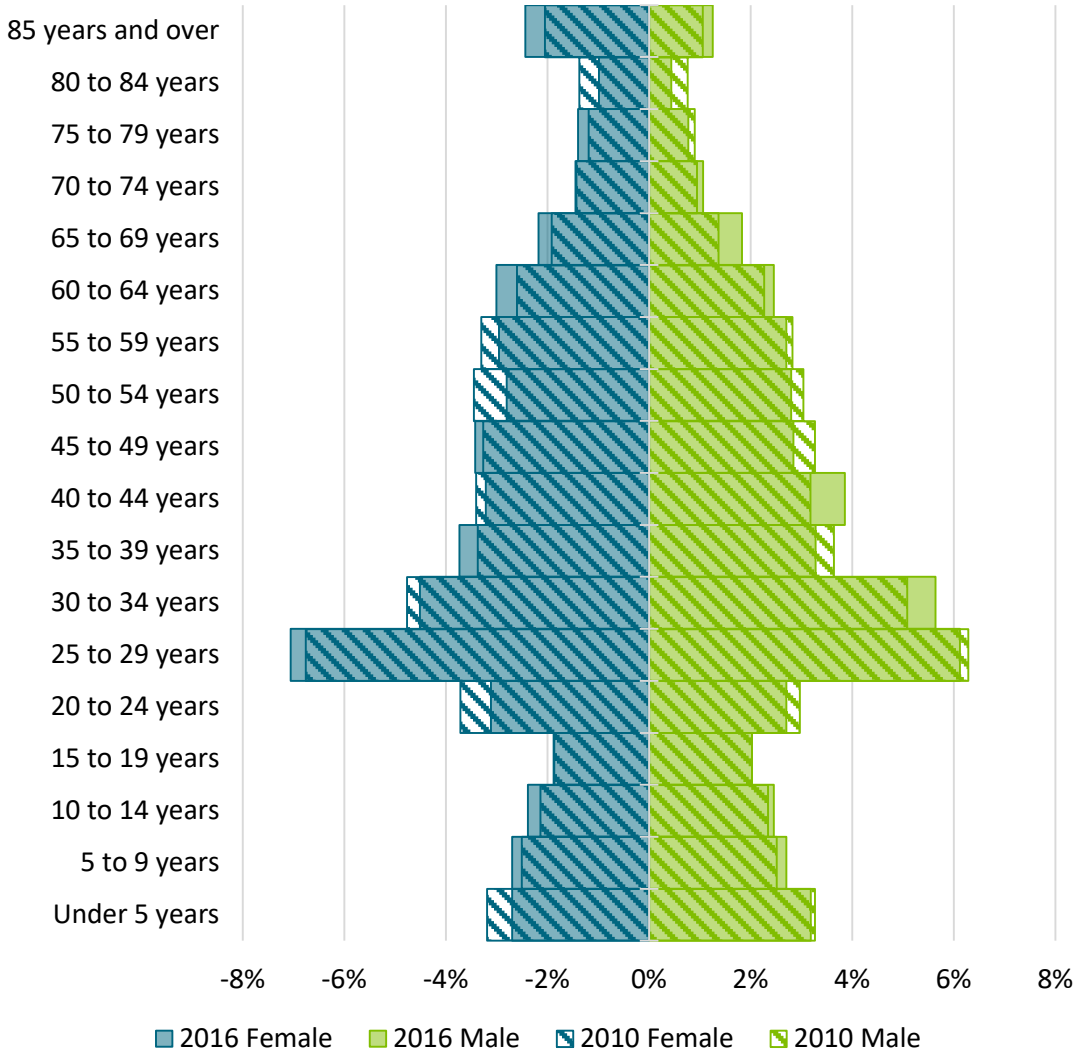
» The city's population grew in the past 10 years by 2,225 (4.9%). Younger and school aged groups and seniors increased in proportion, while mid-aged residents declined.

» The city's median age 35.4 is virtually identical to median age in Hennepin County (35.9 years) and the nation (35.8 years), and is just slightly lower than Minnesota (37.4 years).

» The greatest changes since 2010 include:

- Gains in the 60-69 young senior age group of 823 people (22.3%).
- Gains for the 35-44 work force age group of 546 (9%)
- Gains for 5-19 school age group of 678 (11%)
- Decline of children under 5 by 120 (-4.1%)
- Decline of the 50-59 aging work force group by 387 (-6.8%),
- Decline of 75+ seniors of 313 (-8%).

Figure 2-4. Population Distribution by Age



Household Characteristics

Figure 2-5 and Figure 2-6 illustrate the variety of household types in the city. Out of 21,743 total households in 2010, single female households comprised the largest household type (24%), followed by married couples without children (21%) and single male households (16%). Married couple with children households comprise 14% of households, a decline of 6% from 2000. National data indicates that family and household size has been decreasing across the U.S. for more than a century. Families with fewer children have combined with increases in life expectancy to create more empty nesters and single elderly person households, which leads to an increase in smaller families and households. The 1970s were a decade of "baby boom" children growing up and leaving their families to form separate households. Today the early "baby boomers" are reaching retirement age with an increasing amount of single person households.

Compounding this effect in St. Louis Park is the small physical size of the housing units constructed in the years immediately following World War II. By 2000, the housing market changed with increased demand for larger houses, which are in short supply in St. Louis Park. A St. Louis Park house that once accommodated families with two or more children is now more likely occupied by one or two persons.

Figure 2-5. Household Type by Quantity

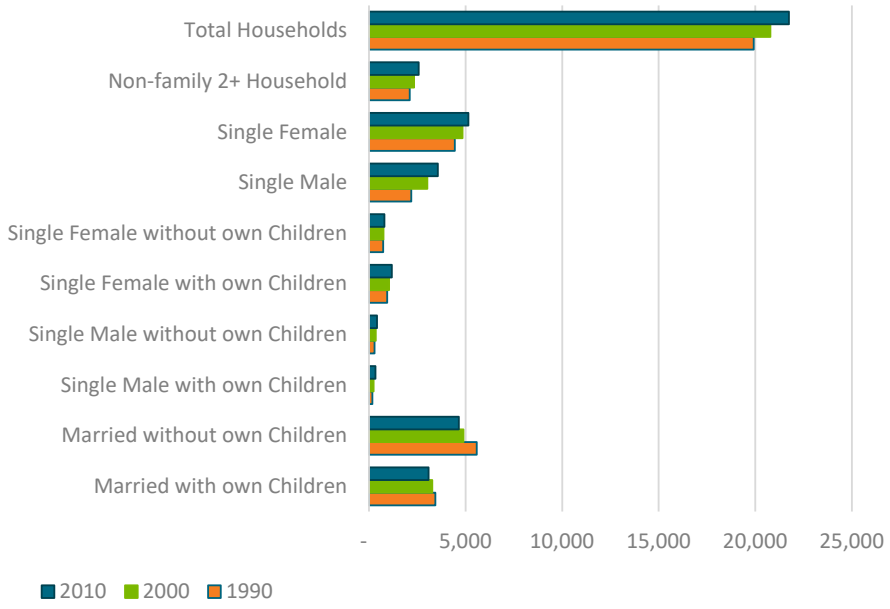
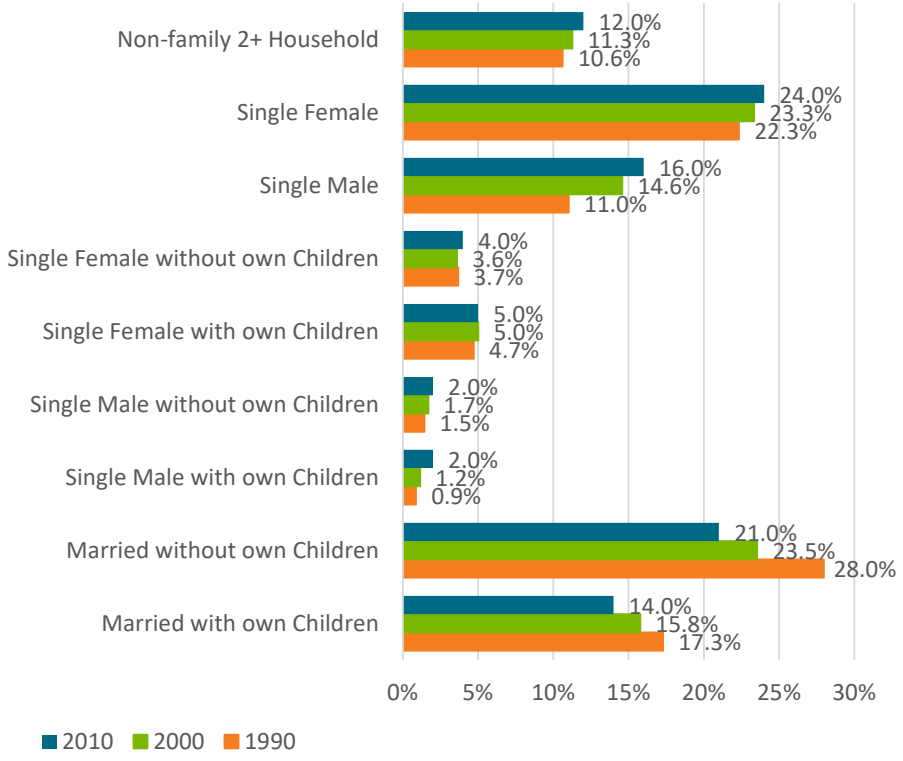


Figure 2-6. Household Type by Percentage



Source for both charts: Census 2010

Census 2010 Demographics

Table 2-2 highlights St. Louis Park demographic information compared to Hennepin County, the Minnesota and the U.S. Persons per family and household are smaller than the other categories. Income and age are similar to the County, State and U.S., however there is a noticeably smaller percent of households with persons under age 18.

Household Income

Median household income increased from approximately $50,000 in 2000 to $58,636 in 2010, and to $68,451 in 2016 (adjusted for inflation). Figure 2-7 illustrates the household income distribution of the city as a percentage of total households. A majority of households in St. Louis Park earn more than $50,000 per year.

Table 2-2. St. Louis Park Demographic Overview, 2010

	ST. LOUIS PARK	HENNEPIN COUNTY	MINNESOTA	UNITED STATES
Population	45,250	1,152,425	5,303,925	308,745,538
Households	21,743	475,913	2,087,227	116,716,292
People per Household	2.05	2.37	2.48	2.58
Persons per Family	2.82	3.07	3.05	3.14
Median Household Income	$58,636	$61,328	$57,243	$51,914
Median Age	35.4	35.9	37.4	35.8
% Households with Persons under 18 years	22.20%	28.60%	31.60%	33.40%
% Households with Persons 55+	18.80%	19.90%	22.80%	24.90%

Source: Census 2010

Figure 2-7. Household and Family Income (% of Total Households)

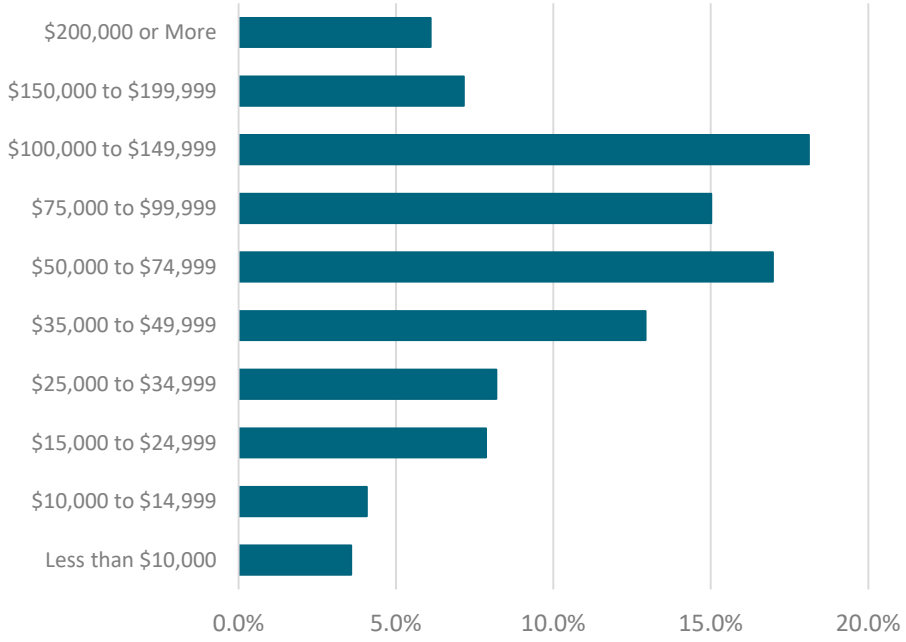
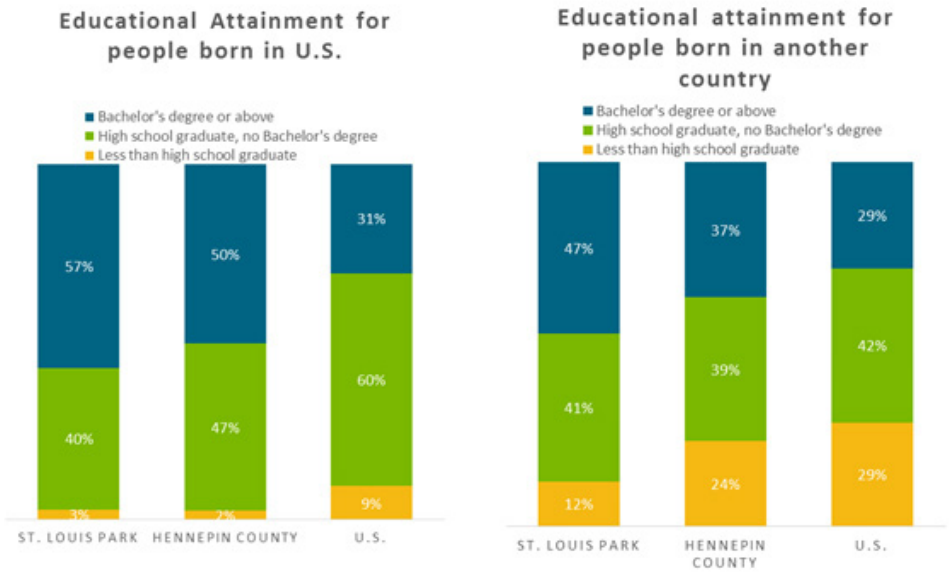


Figure 2-8. Educational Attainment for People Born in the U.S. and in Another Country -



Source: Census Bureau ACS 2012-2016

Education

Educational attainment is a key indicator of economic earnings potential. The availability of a well-trained and skilled workforce directly impacts the ability to attract quality economic investment to the community and offer higher wages and higher skilled employment opportunities to residents.

St. Louis Park residents are highly educated with 25% having some college or an associate's degree and more than 55% of residents having a bachelor degree or higher. People in St. Louis Park also have higher educational attainment rates now than in 2000.

Population, Households and Employment Projections

The Metropolitan Council estimates the population of St. Louis Park at 47,786 in 2016, growing to 54,520 by 2040, a 14.1% increase (6,734 residents).

The city's population will continue to grow from 2010 through 2040 by approximately ½ of one percent per year. This represents an increase of around 300 new residents each year. By decade the forecasts are for growth at a rate of 6.5% from 2010 to 2020; 5.5% from 2020 to 2030; and 4.2% from 2030 to 2040. Households are forecasted to continue to grow at a rate of approximately 150 households per year from 2010 through 2040, as shown in the table below.

Table 2-3. Population, Household and Employment Projections

YEAR	POPULATION	HOUSEHOLDS	EMPLOYMENT
2000	44,102	20,773	40,696
2010	45,250	21,743	40,485
2020	49,600	23,600	43,400
2030	52,350	25,220	45,300
2040	54,520	26,230	46,850

Source: Metropolitan Council

Page intentionally left blank

Chapter 3
Racial Equity

Vision for Racial Equity

St. Louis Park's vision for racial equity is to commit to being a leader in racial equity and inclusion in order to create a more just and inclusive community for all. The goal is to ensure all practices, programs and services of the city are fair, inclusive and equitable to all. From an elected, appointed and staffing perspective, our organization will mirror the community. We will strive for racial equity by building understanding of the issues in our organization and intentionally and proactively take measures that break down barriers to a just and inclusive community.

Where We Have Been

Population Growth by Race/ Ethnicity

St. Louis Park is becoming more racially/ ethnically diverse, as seen in Figure 3-1. As late as 1970, the racial make-up of St. Louis Park was over 99% White. By 2000, the White proportion of the population declined to 87.5% of the total population, and in 2016 was 81%. This change in racial/ethnic diversity follows national and statewide trends. The State Demographer (2015) noted that 19% of Minnesota's population identified themselves as non-white and projected an increase to 20% by 2020 and 25% by 2035.

A majority of St. Louis Park residents are of German descent. Norwegian and Irish ancestries have strong representation within the city. The city also has a large population of Swedish, English, Polish, Russian, and Sub-Saharan African descent. Twenty percent (9,475) of residents reported other ancestries in the 2016 US Census American Community Survey (ACS).

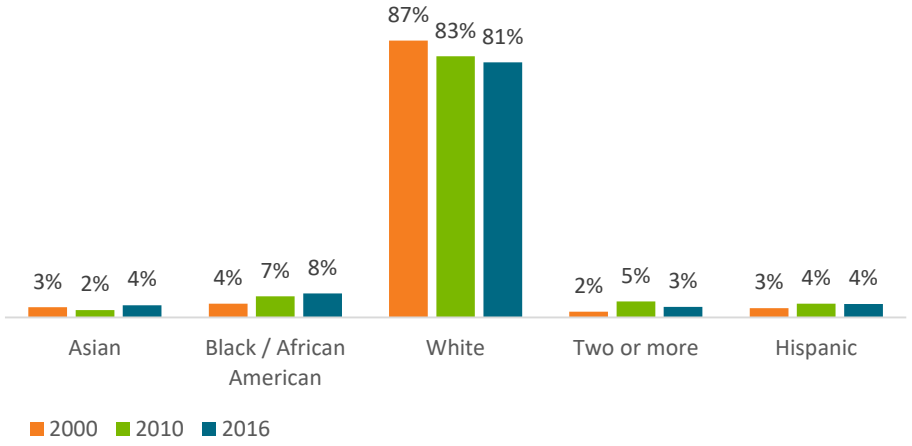
Household Income

As illustrated in Figure 3-2, household income varies significantly by race/ ethnicity. The median income for White households was almost $75,000 while the median income for Black/African American households was just $30,000. Similar disparities in poverty rates also exist. People of Color are much more likely to be in poverty than White people.

Education

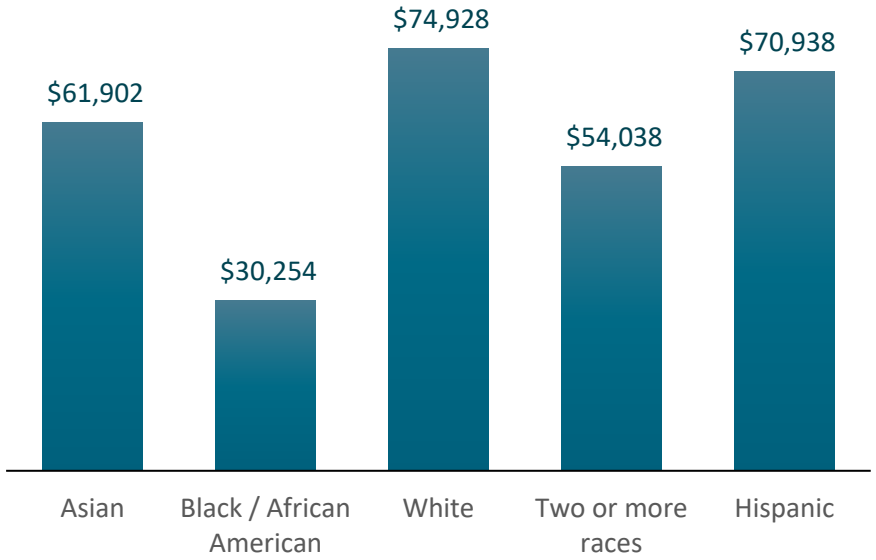
There are significant disparities in educational attainment among people of different races and ethnicities, as illustrated in Figure 3-3.

Figure 3-1. Population Growth by Race/Ethnicity 2000, 2010, 2016



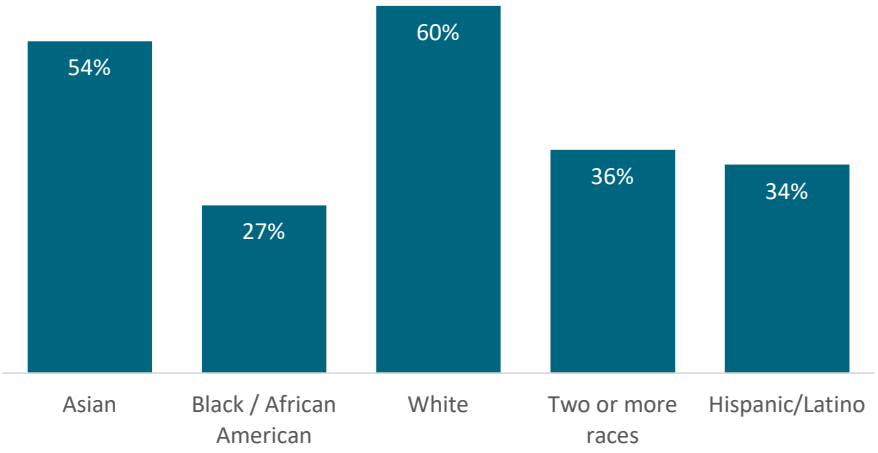
Source: Census Bureau 2000, 2010 & ACS 2012-2016

Figure 3-2. Median Household Income by Race/Ethnicity



Source: Census Bureau ACS 2012-2016

Figure 3-3. 2016 Percent of population over 24 with bachelor's degree or higher



Source: Census Bureau ACS 2012-2016

Advancing Racial Equity

In 2016 a team of St. Louis Park City Council members and city staff participated in a year-long program on advancing racial equity. This program was facilitated by the League of Minnesota Cities (LMC) along with the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) Center for Social Inclusion (CSI), and provided an introduction to the roles, responsibilities and opportunities for government to advance racial equity.

The city participated with the following goals in mind:

- Gain understanding of racial equity.
- Develop a shared racial equity analysis including definitions.
- Analyze policies and practices from a racial equity perspective.
- Strategize with others on how government can advance racial equity.

Where We Are Today

The city has developed a racial equity statement that is woven into the city's regular business and service delivery. Every department of the city created a racial equity action plan to ensure that practices, programs and services of the city are fair, inclusive and equitable. All city staff was provided professional development on racial equity, as well as on-going opportunities to deepen their understanding of racial equity issues and practices. The city council is also working with the Human Rights Commission, Multicultural Advisory Committee and other groups on ideas and direction for continued outreach and advancement of racial equity.

Where We Are Headed

For the future, work will progress toward creating a racial equity strategy that focuses on strategies for governance and change management in all of the city's practices, programs and services. For the city operations, the intent is to continue to improve city practices, business processes, work environment, and talent management processes.

Externally, the city will work with the community to break down barriers and increase community involvement by creating opportunities for community engagement.

Racial Equity Goals and Strategies

1. **Break down barriers in creating a just and inclusive community for all**

Strategies

A. Continue to expand efforts and processes to recruit persons from communities of color and indigenous communities for service on Boards and Commissions and other city leadership roles.

B. Consider people of color-owned and indigenous-owned small businesses and services in city purchasing practices and contracts where possible.

C. Expand racial equity conversations within all areas of city business.

2. **Ensure racial equity in city services and programs to make a tangible difference for all.**

Strategies

A. Apply a racial equity lens to all city work and city decisions.

B. Build a city workforce that reflects the racial make-up of our community at all levels in the organization.

C. Support city work areas and departments with new resources to engage and expand understanding and skill sets around racial equity.

D. Establish a racial equity assessment program to continually review the city's racial equity work.

E. Re-evaluate established city systems and processes to effectuate change in how the city conducts its business.

3. Continue to create opportunities to build social capital through community engagement

Strategies

A. Foster and facilitate transparency between community members and the city.

B. Build strategies and opportunities to reach historically unheard voices and unseen communities within St. Louis Park.

C. Build trust and deeper connections through outreach and community engagement with communities of color and indigenous people.

D. Connect and engage with St. Louis Park School District and other community organizations to meet the needs of current and future community members.

E. Encourage Neighborhood Associations to deepen their reach and connections within the community to include people of color and indigenous people.

Chapter 4
Environmental Stewardship

Vision for Environmental Stewardship

St. Louis Park's Vision 3.0 recommendation is to "continue to lead in environmental stewardship and ensure access to green space for future generations. One of the city's strategic priorities is "St. Louis Park is committed to continue to lead in environmental stewardship." This strategic priority includes supporting the Climate Action Plan goals and strategies, increasing opportunities to connect with nature, continuing to protect and improve the city's natural resources, and continuing to provide quality water to residents.

The environment and sustainability represents a broad concept in St. Louis Park. When discussing the "environment", the 2040 Comprehensive Plan is referencing the natural and man-made surroundings that comprise the city. The environment influences the way each resident, worker, or visitor relates to the city and influences the perception of the city held by people outside of it.

"Stewardship" refers to care for natural landscape elements like trees and urban wildlife, but also refers to care for human-impacted elements of the city: housing, businesses, trails, benches, parks, and air and water quality.

"Sustainability" as defined by the UN World Commission on Environment and Development is the capacity to "meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." This understanding of sustainability relates to how we live and operate in the city, both individually and collectively.

The city first developed as scattered farms, followed by a period of industrialization, then followed by urban development. Each stage of development dramatically altered the natural and built environment and added amenities that enhanced livability, mobility, and communication in the city. Thoughtful planning and design, paired with wise use of the city's land and resources, will be necessary to insure that the benefits enjoyed today can be passed without degradation to future generations within the community.

The Environmental Stewardship chapter includes the Climate and Energy section. This reviews the environmental background of the city and explains the challenges posed by climate change and energy usage and the potential to address these issues through new practices for the future. Other sections include Parks, Open Space, and Natural Resources, Water Supply, Sanitary Sewer, Surface Water Management, Solid Waste, and Utilities.

- Park and Open Space and Natural Resources includes environmental and sustainability initiatives such as: Urban Reforestation Program; Tobacco-Free Policy for Parks; Bee-Safe Policy; Care and upkeep of parks, recreational facilities, open spaces, and Natural Resources; Integrated Pest Management; Minnehaha Creek Watershed and District partnership; Community and edible gardens; Westwood Nature Center
- Surface Water Management includes environmental and sustainability initiatives such as: Stormwater BMP Incentive Program, Rainwater Rewards, Green Alleys
- Solid Waste includes environmental and sustainability initiatives such as: Organics Recycling, Recycling in the Park

Environment and Sustainability in Other Areas of Comprehensive Plan

Many other areas in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan include environment and sustainability initiatives. They will be identified throughout the plan by the environmental stewardship symbol. These include (but are not limited to):

- Land Use - "Livable Community Principles" e.g. mixed use areas, density, walkability, transit access
- Economic and Redevelopment – contaminated land, Green Building Policy, compact development and redevelopment, employment opportunities in the community, sustainable building practices
- Mobility – Complete Streets Policy, SWLRT, Living Streets, Connect the Park program, pavement management programs, alley paving
- Health – Healthy Eating and Active Living Policy; study food access in the community

Climate and Energy

Where We Have Been

Natural Environment

Geology

St. Louis Park's topography and soils were shaped by glaciers, which covered much of the North American continent as recently as 10,000 years ago. The city consists of two distinct landscapes. North of Minnetonka Boulevard, rolling uplands generally feature well-drained soils and intermittent wetland areas. South of Minnetonka Boulevard, the edge of a glacial outwash plain begins. It features relatively level topography with well drained, loamy sands underlain with gravel. The variable soils in both landscape areas of the city mean that particular attention must be paid to drainage patterns and construction types when development occurs.

Much of the original land form still exists in residential areas of the city, with some exceptions. Large cut and fill operations were undertaken by the railroad and for the construction of streets and major residential developments. There were also several gravel mines in the city. Gravel produced in St. Louis Park was used for concrete production and road construction, but mining in the city ceased in the 1960s. Further topographical change occurred as wetlands were filled throughout the city. Prohibited today, filling and construction on wetlands caused major changes for the city's drainage patterns, wildlife, and vegetation.

Trees and Vegetation

Trees and other vegetation throughout the city shape the spaces around us. Valued for aesthetic reasons, trees also serve a functional purpose in our landscape by reducing the urban heat-island effect. Trees shade hard surface areas, increase the energy efficiency of our buildings by shading them, cool the air with water that evaporates from leaf surfaces, absorb carbon dioxide to reduce the impact of greenhouse gas emissions, screen visual blight, and dampen noise coming from roadways and industrial properties. Other vegetation improves water quality of water flowing downstream and into aquifers underlying the city. More details about the city's programs and its substantial and growing urban forest and vegetation can be found in the Parks, Open Space, and Natural Resources section of this plan.

Wildlife

There is a diversity of wildlife in St. Louis Park. In addition to typical urban wildlife, there are also deer, fox, skunk, gophers, and raccoons present within the city. These species have a tendency to cluster around the city's major open space areas such as the Bass Lake Preserve wetland complex, Minnehaha Creek, or Hannon Lake. The desirability of these species depends on their characteristics; in some instances, they are welcomed into neighborhoods and viewed positively, while they are considered a nuisance in other neighborhoods. Further information about wildlife in the city can be found in the Parks, Open Space, and Natural Resources section of this plan.

Climate

St. Louis Park is located in a region that features a continental climate exhibiting wide seasonal variation. As a result, St. Louis Park experiences four distinct seasons that each have unique characteristics. For example, winter winds typically prevail from the north and northwest, while winds during the summer typically prevail from the south and southeast. St. Louis Park's climate has been changing more dramatically recently with increasing temperatures, humidity, average rainfall, frequency of heavy rainstorms, and flooding. Higher frequency of storm events results in more extreme wind conditions also. As a result, the region's growing season has gotten longer, the composition of trees is changing from North Woods species to trees that are better able to thrive in warmer weather, warmer lakes and rivers are changing fish habitats, and migration timing is impacted.

Temperature, precipitation, and wind extremes result in a need for site design that reflects the best practices currently available in the construction and design industries. Climate should be taken into account when addressing building orientation, window size and type, water and moisture management, and even material use.

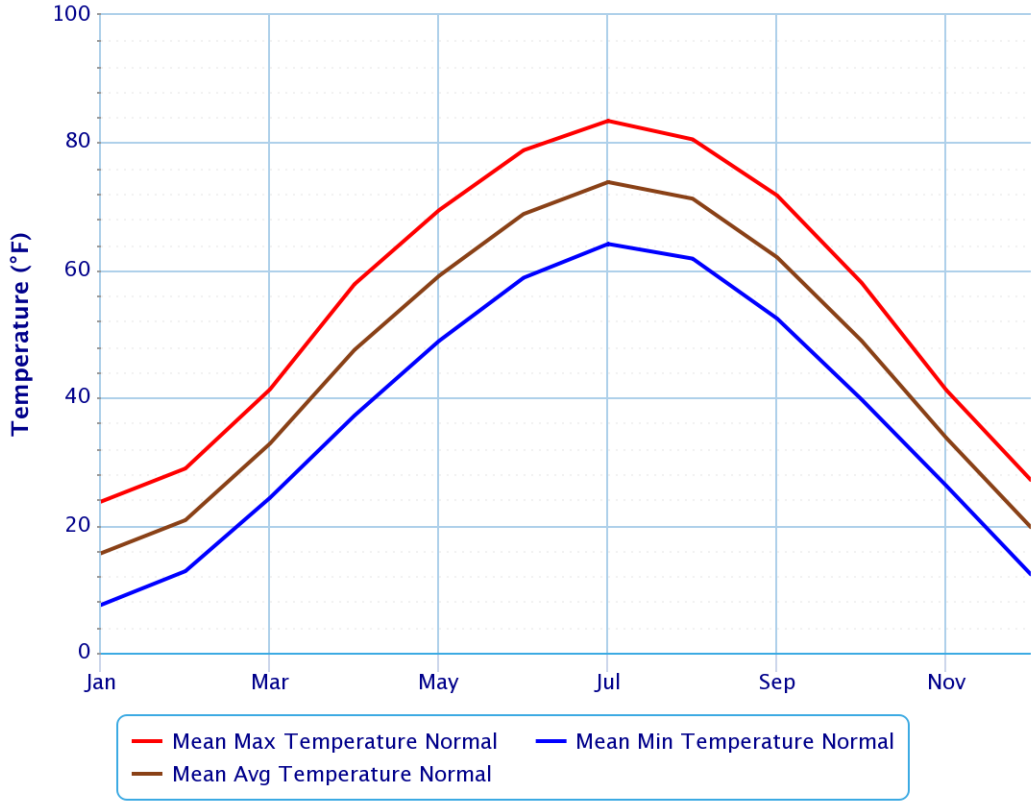
Temperature

Average and extreme temperature information, shown in Figure 4-1, reflects the region's cool winters and warm summers. Energy demand in St. Louis Park peaks during the parts of the year that have extreme temperature fluctuations, frequently during the winter and summer months.

St. Louis Park is part of a larger metropolitan area; because of the city's proximity to Minneapolis, there is an urban heat island effect that impacts the city's temperature throughout the year. Large amounts of concrete and asphalt cause moderately higher temperatures than they would be in a less urban environment. Additional vegetation and a reduction in land devoted to parking and roads would reduce this effect.

Capital investment for energy production and delivery relates to peak demand. If equipment and facilities are not sized to meet peak requirements, brownouts (partial power loss) or blackouts (full power loss) can occur. By adopting policies to reduce energy demand, energy use could be reduced throughout the city.

Figure 4-1. Average Monthly Temperature Range MSP Region



Precipitation

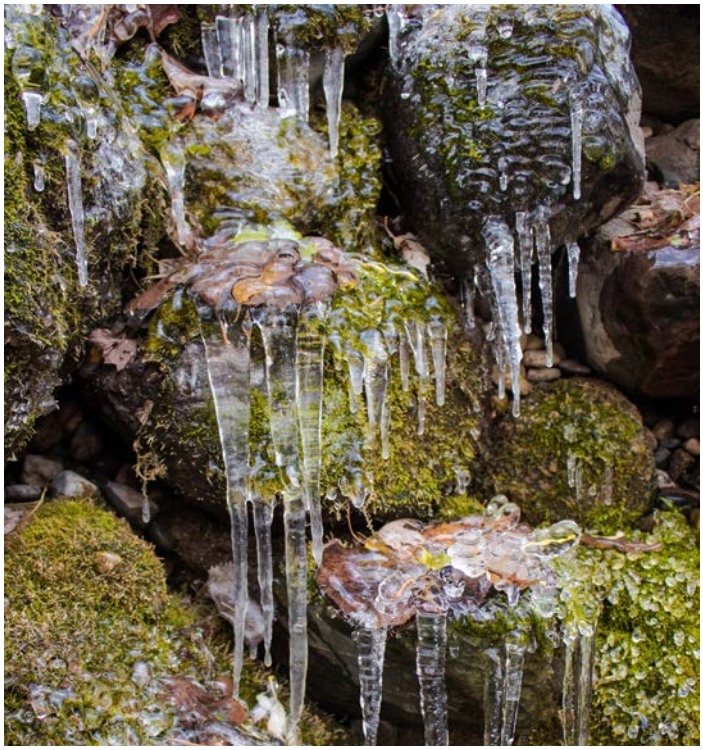
On average, St. Louis Park receives just over 32 inches of precipitation each year. Much of this falls as snow during the winter months.

Table 4-1. Monthly Average Snowfall

MONTH	AVERAGE SNOWFALL (INCHES)
January	13.5
February	8.2
March	10.4
April	3.1
October	0.6
November	10.0
December	10.0

Note: A typical conversion rate for snowfall to precipitation is 10" snow = 1" precipitation when the temperature is between 28-34 degrees Fahrenheit. The snowfall: precipitation ratio varies according to temperature, with lower temperatures resulting in a smaller ratio.

The amount of precipitation has a dramatic and obvious impact on the city's natural and built environment. With moderate amounts of rain and snow, vegetation thrives in our region and there is an adequate supply of water for drinking, industrial and irrigation purposes. On the other hand, even minor snow events in the winter can cause the city's transportation system to grind to a halt and result in substantial municipal expenditures to remove snow from roads and trails and melt ice buildup with road salt.



Prior to settlement, the predominant vegetation in the area was that of an Oak Savanna: scattered oak trees with a prairie understory. The landscape was punctuated by scattered wetlands, lakes and wet prairies. This landscape has been replaced by a vegetated urban environment surrounding the remaining wetlands and lakes. As found throughout Minnesota, an abundant water supply reflects a level of precipitation adequate to maintain a thriving urban forest, lakes, and numerous wetlands.

The city's Surface Water Management Plan explains what happens to precipitation occurring in the city and describes how water is collected and treated. (A summary of the plan can be found in the Surface Water Management section of this plan.)

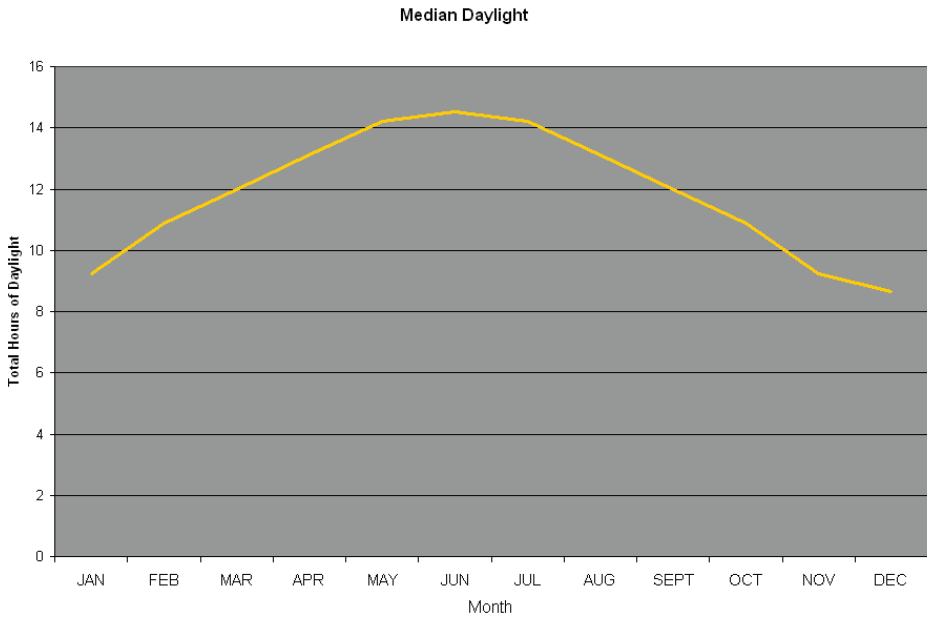
Wind

Driven by St. Louis Park's mid-continent location, wind speeds in the city average 10.5 miles per hour. The windiest times of the year are fall and spring with April being the windiest month of the year, when the average rises to 12.2 miles per hour. Gusting winds recorded in the area, however, have reached as high as 61 miles per hour. Winds tend to come from the north and northwest during the winter months and from the south and southeast during the summer months. Wind plays a major role in shaping the city's climate, with bone-chilling winds driving the apparent temperature down (wind chill) during the winter and bringing the warmest weather when the winds come from the south.

Sunlight

Despite the wide variation in temperature, precipitation, and wind, the region has a fairly solid amount of regular sunlight. According to records at the National Weather Service, the sun will shine 58% of all days in any given year – equating to about 212 sunny days each year. The amount of daylight, on the other hand, varies widely: in December, there is daylight for just over 8.5 hours each day, while June's longest days have over 14.5 hours of daylight.

Figure 4-2. Median Daylight by Month



Plans and Programs

Vision St. Louis Park (2005 – 2007)

In 2005-2006, the city engaged in a community-wide visioning process. Eight focus areas were identified and eight corresponding citizen-based Vision Action Teams were assembled for the visioning process, including an Environment action team. In 2007, the St. Louis Park Council developed and adopted four Strategic Directions to start carrying out the Vision St. Louis Park recommendations. One of the four Strategic Directions was "St. Louis Park is committed to being a leader in Environmental Leadership. We will increase environmental consciousness and responsibility in all areas of city business."

City Environmental Leadership

The city established an intradepartmental staff Environmental Group (E Group) to ensure that environmental activities are coordinated across all departments. In 2013, the city established a new 13-member Environment and Sustainability Commission also called Sustainable SLP. In 2015, the city added a full-time Environment and Sustainability Coordinator staff position.

Minnesota GreenStep Cities Program

In 2012, the council adopted a resolution authorizing the city to participate in the Minnesota GreenStep Cities Program. In 2017, the city fulfilled Step 3 of the program's five steps.

Xcel Energy's Partners in Energy Program and the St. Louis Park Energy Action Plan

Xcel Energy, the city's electrical utility, offers a program called Partners in Energy (PiE), helping communities create energy action plans. In 2015, St. Louis Park was the fourth city in Minnesota to take advantage of PiE, which resulted in a community-wide energy action plan with a goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2040, and 100% renewable electricity by 2025. The Energy Action Plan was started in 2015, finished in 2016, and implementation of strategies began in 2016 and finished in early 2018. Many of the goals and strategies in this plan were carried forward into the city's Climate Action Plan, adopted February 2018.

Ready & Resilient: A Guide to Extreme Weather

This weather guide aids in educating residents about climate conditions already being experienced in the region, resources the city offers, and actions individuals can take to mitigate the impacts of extreme weather and be better prepared for extreme weather. This guide is provided in every new resident welcome packet.

St. Louis Park Climate Inheritance Resolution

In 2016, the council adopted a climate inheritance resolution to establish the city's commitment to creating a St. Louis Park Climate Action Plan. This plan is intended to reduce St. Louis Park's greenhouse gas emissions to levels that will protect the community's children and grandchildren from the risk of climate destruction.

Where We Are Today

Discussions about changes in the region's climate currently represent an ongoing political debate about how man-made activity, including energy use, may or may not be impacting long-term climactic issues like growing season, temperature minimums and maximums, and precipitation characteristics. Regardless of the cause, long term climate change could impact the type of species that thrive in the city, the amount of irrigation required to maintain current vegetation, or the level of pest control necessary in the city's parks. Gradual changes in climate could also have substantial long-term impacts on the city's character and service delivery.

The city has made tremendous progress in its analysis, planning and implementation efforts related to climate and energy issues. Since the completion of the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, the city has adopted major policies that address climate and energy, including Green Buildings, Complete Streets, Environmentally Preferable Purchasing, and Zero Waste Packaging Policies. The city also initiated its Urban Reforestation Program and has been a committed participant in the following environmental programs: MN GreenStep Cities, MN Regional Indicators Initiative, and MN LoGoPep Pilot Cities.

The city reinforced its commitment to environmental stewardship in 2017 with the city's new vision, ***St. Louis Park Vision 3.0***, which includes as one of the five Strategic Directions – "St. Louis Park will continue to lead in environmental stewardship." In 2018, the city adopted its 2040 Climate Action Plan, which focuses on moving the city toward carbon neutrality by 2040.

Regional Indicators Initiative

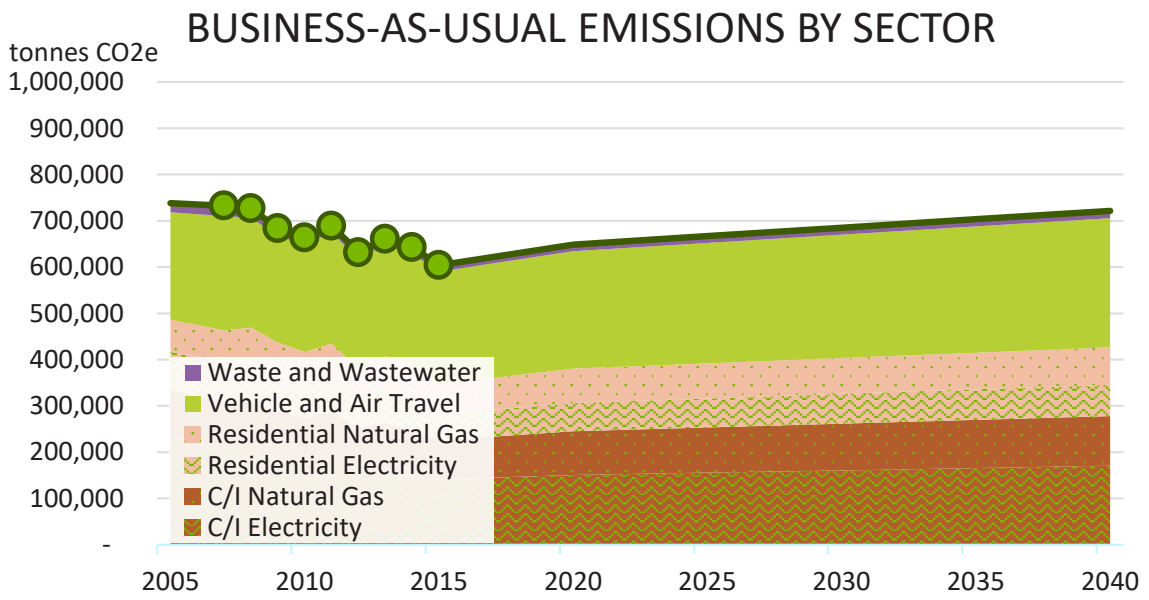
The Regional Indicators Initiative (RII) was created as a way to track the progress of cities involved in the GreenStep Cities Program. St. Louis Park was one of the first three cities to sign on as a pilot city for this study. Falcon Heights, Edina and St. Louis Park provided funding and agreed to release their resource consumption data for the 2008-2010 time period. This pilot study was successful in determining that data for city-wide sustainability indicators can be gathered, measured and analyzed annually in a relatively short time period and at a relatively low cost. The RII provides annual performance measurements for St. Louis Park for energy, water, travel, waste, and greenhouse gas emissions.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Through St. Louis Park's participation in the RII since 2009, an annual greenhouse gas emissions inventory has been completed for the city for 2007-2015. In addition, Figure 4-3 illustrates "business-as-usual" emissions projections through 2040. These projections reflect anticipated emissions if the city were to take no action to reduce its future emissions.

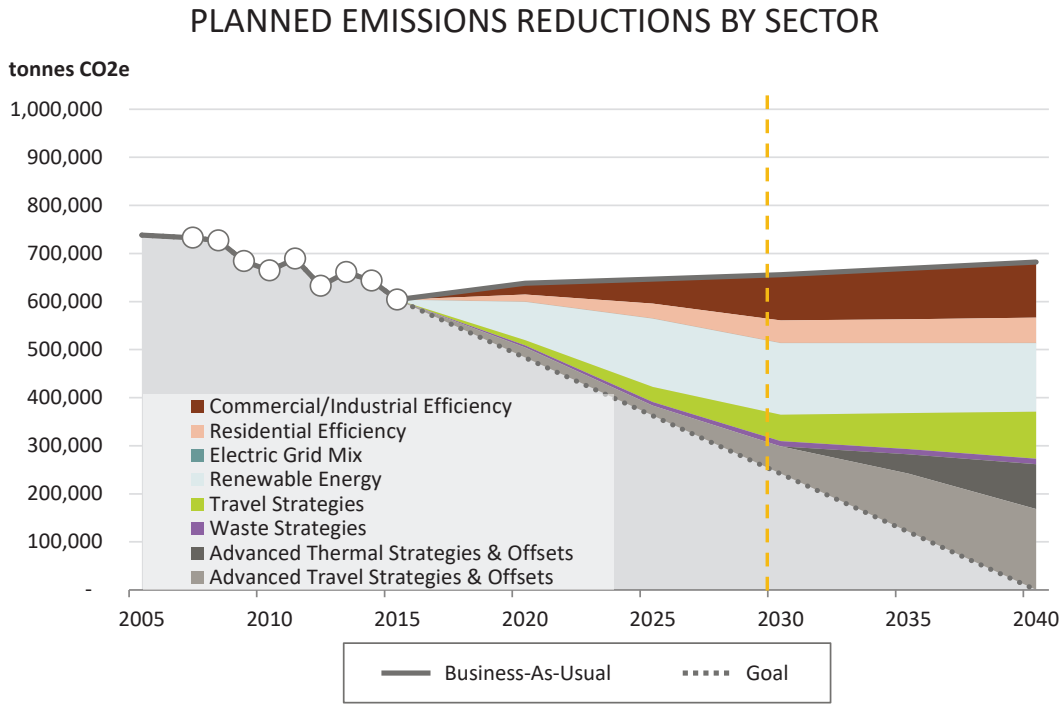
The LoGoPEP program developed the wedge diagram tool as a planning tool for communities to calculate and visualize strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Using the wedge diagram tool, St. Louis Park has been able to relate its baseline greenhouse gas emissions from each sector (building energy, transportation, solid waste, wastewater) with the impact of planned emission reduction strategies by sector. Figure 4-4 shows which emission reduction strategies are likely to have the most impact.

Figure 4-3. Business as usual emissions by sector.



Data from the Regional Indicators Initiative

Figure 4-4. Total emissions reductions by sector resulting from CAP implementation.



Climate Action Plan (CAP)

Climate change is altering the way communities think about their public and private infrastructure, operations, local resources, and social norms. The City of St. Louis Park adopted its Climate Action Plan (CAP) in 2018. The CAP's key overarching goal is for the city to achieve carbon neutrality by 2040, which means that the community's net greenhouse gas emissions are equal to zero. Carbon neutrality or net zero emissions is achieved by a combination of greenhouse gas emission reductions and the purchase of carbon offsets in an amount equivalent to the greenhouse gas emissions not eliminated through reductions. The CAP is a bold and inspiring, yet achievable, plan that provides a road map for achieving the city's climate action goals. With the CAP, St. Louis Park is leading the way in rethinking how local energy resources are used and how to leverage new opportunities for residents and businesses to reduce their impact on climate change.

The CAP establishes seven climate action goals to reduce greenhouse gases either emitted within the city's boundary (Scope 1 emissions), or emitted indirectly through the purchase of electricity or other energy sources (Scope 2 emissions) by 2030. These goals in general focus on reducing energy consumption in buildings, increasing renewable energy use, and reducing vehicle emissions, and reducing solid waste as compared to the CAP's business-as-usual forecast. Specific reduction targets for each goal and corresponding strategies were calculated using the LoGoPEP wedge diagram tool. These higher level goals and strategies are supported by more detailed initiatives and actions.

In order to help the community transition into the CAP and create momentum, the CAP identifies three kick-start projects:

1. Youth-led initiative to increase energy efficiency and renewable energy in the community.
2. Develop a climate action plan resource hub.
3. Install electric vehicle charging infrastructure in public parking lots.

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN GOALS

- CAP Goal 1 – Reduce energy consumption in large commercial and industrial (C/I) buildings by 30% by 2030, as compared to the business-as-usual forecast.
- CAP Goal 2 - Reduce energy consumption in mid-size commercial buildings by 30% by 2030, as compared to the business-as-usual forecast.
- CAP Goal 3 – By 2030, design all new construction to be net-zero energy.
- CAP Goal 4 - Reduce energy consumption in residential buildings by 35% by 2030, as compared to the business-as-usual forecast.
- CAP Goal 5 – Achieve 100% renewable electricity by 2030.
- CAP Goal 6 – Reduce vehicle emissions by 25% by 2030, as compared to the business-as-usual forecast.
- CAP Goal 7 – Achieve a 50% reduction in waste by 2030.

The CAP's seven climate action goals could achieve an estimated 62% reduction in greenhouse gases from the business-as-usual forecast. In order to address the remaining 38% of greenhouse gases, six advanced long-term strategies have been identified in the CAP. For the final push to achieving carbon neutrality in 2040, these six strategies are more aggressive measures for addressing greenhouse gases from natural gas use in buildings as well as emissions from both vehicle and air travel. These advanced strategies are listed on page 4-44.

The CAP also includes recommendations for how the city's operations can be improved to help achieve carbon neutrality by 2040. The city has an opportunity to serve as leaders and provide visible examples for the community on how these climate action goals can be achieved.

St. Louis Park Vision 3.0

In 2017, the city completed its Vision 3.0, which involved a major community input process, and identifies residents' top five values, which includes "care for the natural environment," and five recommendations, including "Continue to lead in environmental stewardship." Based on the recommendations of Vision 3.0, the council adopted five Vision Strategic Directions in 2018, including:

St. Louis Park will continue to lead in environmental stewardship:

- Supporting Climate Action Plan strategies and goals through planning, education, communication and implementation of programs and initiatives;
- Increasing opportunities to connect with nature in the city;
- Continuing to protect and improve the quality of natural resources, parks, lakes, creek, wetlands and surface water planning, and using green spaces effectively;
- Continuing to provide quality water to residents.

Metropolitan Council's Thrive MSP 2040 Resilience Plan

In 2015, the Metropolitan Council adopted Thrive MSP 2040 as its new regional development plan, which includes seven policies to guide regional land use and development. One of these policies is ***Building in Resilience: Promote sensitive land use and development patterns to contribute toward achieving Minnesota's adopted greenhouse gas emission goals at the regional scale, and to develop local resiliency to the impacts of climate change.*** The plan also recommends communities' roles related to achieving this policy, which include:

- Addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- Reducing water use, energy consumption, and greenhouse gas emissions;
- Protect and enable the development of solar resources (cities are required to address as a goal, policy or strategy);
- Consider the development or use of community solar gardens;
- Address impacts to local economies, resources, and infrastructure systems;
- Identify local cost-saving measures that could result in reducing waste, conserving water, and improving energy efficiency;
- Participate in programs such as MN GreenStep Cities and the Regional Indicators Initiative.

Programs

Urban Reforestation Program (2009)

Urban Reforestation is the ongoing program of planting and maintaining trees in the city with the goal to provide a healthy and diverse tree population and support the city's vision regarding environmental stewardship. Urban reforestation will be achieved by replacing past, current, and future tree losses along corridors and in parks with a diverse selection of trees, prioritizing native species where possible.

Green Step Cities

In 2017, St. Louis Park achieved Step 3 of the state sustainability program used by over 120 cities, counties, and tribal communities across Minnesota. To achieve Step 3 status, the city was required to implement a minimum of 16 best practices and complete a minimum of 27 actions across GreenStep Cities' five best practices areas: Buildings and Lighting, Land Use, Transportation, Environmental Management, Resilient Economic and Community Development.

Minnesota LoGoPEP Pilot City (2016)

LoGoPEP (Local Government Project for Energy Planning) is a program that provides energy related planning tools for local governments in conjunction with the MN Regional Indicators Initiative. In 2016, St. Louis Park was one of five cities that helped inform and test energy planning tools designed to help city and county staff with regards to energy planning for updating their comprehensive plans. As part of this program, a wedge diagram tool was created for energy and greenhouse gas reduction planning. St. Louis Park was the first to apply the tools in its 2017 climate action planning process to help set goals and strategies. Using the wedge diagram tool enabled the city to identify specific strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the Climate Action Plan.

Policies

Green Building Policy (2010)

The city adopted its Green Building Policy in 2010 with the goal of promoting buildings that are energy efficient, economical to operate, environmentally responsible, and healthy places to live and work that further enhance the community's quality of life. Development projects subject to the Green Building Policy are required to complete a Green Building Review to ensure that buildings, equipment, and sites meet energy efficiency and water conservation targets. Compliance with this policy is applicable to all new building projects of 15,000 sq. ft. or greater and renovations of 50,000 sq. ft. or greater that receive at least $200,000 in financial assistance from the EDA or the city, and to all new and renovated multifamily residential buildings and all renovations of detached single-family or owner-occupied housing receiving financial assistance from the EDA or the city.

Complete Streets Policy (2013)

The city adopted its Complete Streets Policy in 2013. Complete Streets consists of the planning, scoping, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of roads in order to reasonably address the safety and accessibility needs of users across all ages, abilities, and transportation modes. In order to develop and maintain a safe, efficient, balanced, and environmentally sound transportation system for people of all ages and abilities, the City of St. Louis Park aims to incorporate a Complete Streets philosophy that expands transportation choices for all transportation and development projects.

Complete Streets will help St. Louis Park reduce greenhouse gas emissions as more people choose an alternative to the single occupant vehicle, thereby improving air quality and alleviating public health concerns.

Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy (2015)

This policy was adopted in 2015 in order to promote environmentally responsible practices such as conserving energy and other natural resources, reducing the impacts of pollution, supporting strong recycling markets, reducing materials that need to be landfilled or incinerated, and more. Additional language in the policy supports sourcing locally, ethical business practices, responsible treatment of workers, child labor prevention, human rights, safety and wellness, fair trade, transparency, economic equality and social justice.

Zero Waste Packaging Policy (2017)

Adopted in 2017, this policy requires all licensed food establishments to use reusable, returnable, recyclable or compostable single-use food packaging. If the packaging is used to serve food on-site, appropriate recycling and/or organics recycling receptacles and hauling service must be in place.

Renewable Energy Access

Solar Access

Increasing interest in the use of solar heating, passive solar design, and solar power makes access to direct sunlight increasingly important. However, due to the city's relatively flat topography and extensive urban forest, there are many locations where solar access is already limited. Future changes to city ordinances could include provisions to guarantee solar access in some form. It is anticipated that the use of and interest in solar power will increase by 2040.

The University of Minnesota has developed a high-resolution statewide solar resource map that allows cities to calculate how much electricity they could potentially receive from locally installed solar energy systems. This data (see Figure 4-5) was used to calculate the solar resource or "solar reserves" in St. Louis Park. The solar reserves are how much solar energy is reasonably economically available for development, similar to the way in which oil or gas reserves are measured. The solar map shows the good sites for solar installations and helps identify where there may be land use conflicts with solar development.

Figure 4-5. Gross Solar Potential. Data from MN LoGoPEP Program.

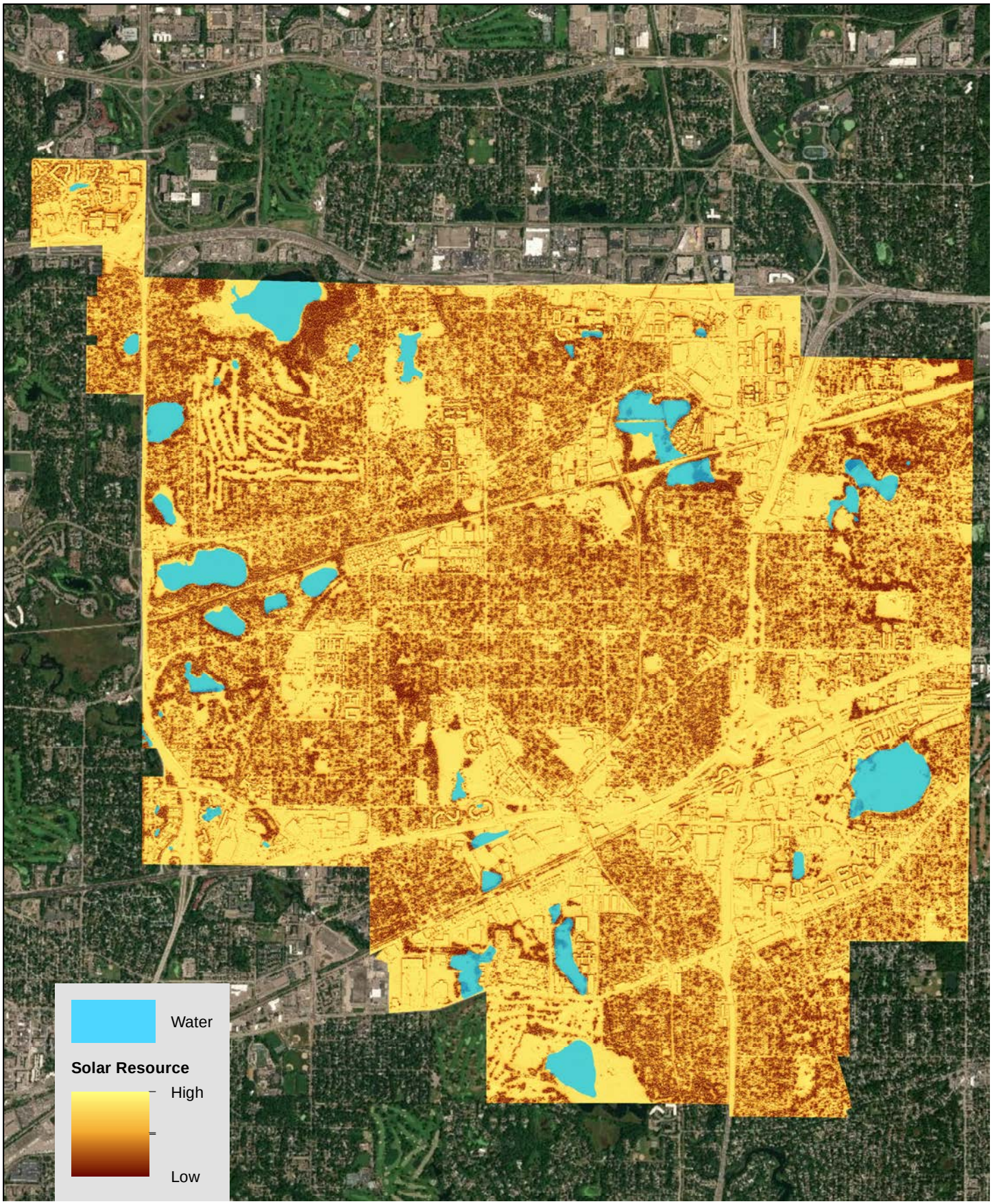


Table 4-2 shows the amount of solar energy reasonably available for development in St. Louis Park. The gross potential includes the total available resource, regardless of location; rooftop capacity and generation include only the resource available on the rooftops of commercial buildings located in the city.

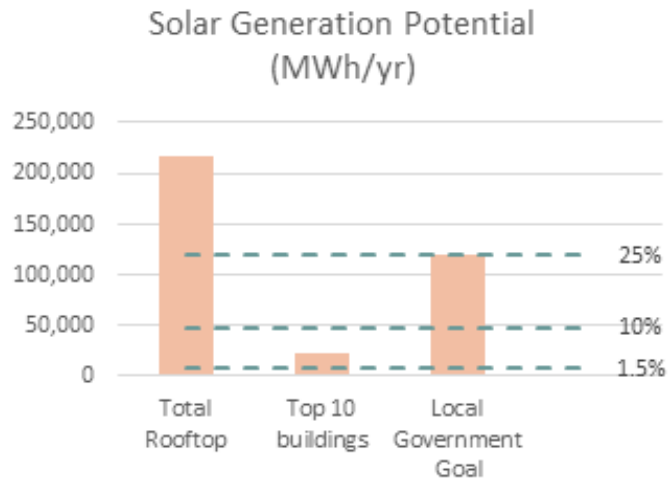
Table 4-2. St. Louis Park Rooftop Solar Resource

GROSS POTENTIAL	ROOFTOP POTENTIAL	GROSS GENERATION POTENTIAL	ROOFTOP GROSS GENERATION POTENTIAL
12,028,048 MWh/yr	2,167,135 MWh/yr	1,202,804 MWh/yr	216,713 MWh/yr
ROOFTOP CAPACITY	**TOP 10 ROOFTOP POTENTIAL**		
167 MW	22,495 MWh/year		

Data from Metropolitan Council and MN LoGoPEP Program.

The total capacity of the economic rooftop solar resource in St. Louis Park is 167 MW, equal to approximately 55% of all the electricity consumed in the city. This means that if the city wanted to maximize its entire rooftop solar resource, it could set a solar generation goal of up to 45% on-site solar generation (note: this is an upper limit and does not consider individual site limitations due to roof structure, ownership, or local regulations that might limit solar installations). The State mandates 1.5% of electricity must be generated from solar by 2020; St. Louis Park could achieve this goal if solar were installed on the ten buildings with the greatest solar potential.

Figure 4-6. Example of Solar Potential and Community Goal.



Data from MN LoGoPEP Program.

If buildings undergo high levels of energy efficiency investment, the solar resource could meet a higher percentage of electric needs. The energy efficiency and solar resources are, in this analysis, calculated independently of each other.

Solar installations are not limited to rooftop applications. This analysis does not include ground-mount systems, but the city will want to develop criteria for where they would and would not allow solar installations. For instance, commercial parking lots or public right of ways may make good solar resources, while areas planned for future development or park space may not. These criteria can be used to recalculate potential solar generation and redefine future solar goals for local development.

Xcel Energy's Community Energy Report states that 11 businesses and 12 residences have solar installations. The business installation has a capacity of 253 kW, and the residential installations combine for 79 kW. In 2016, these residential installations reported a total 5,711 kWh of production.

The City of St. Louis Park is helping lead the way toward carbon neutrality with its own buildings. In 2017, solar arrays were installed on the Municipal Service Center and on Fire Station 2. Four city buildings are now 100 percent electrically powered by renewable energy—City Hall, the Police Station and both fire stations—through the Renewable Connect program offered by Xcel Energy.

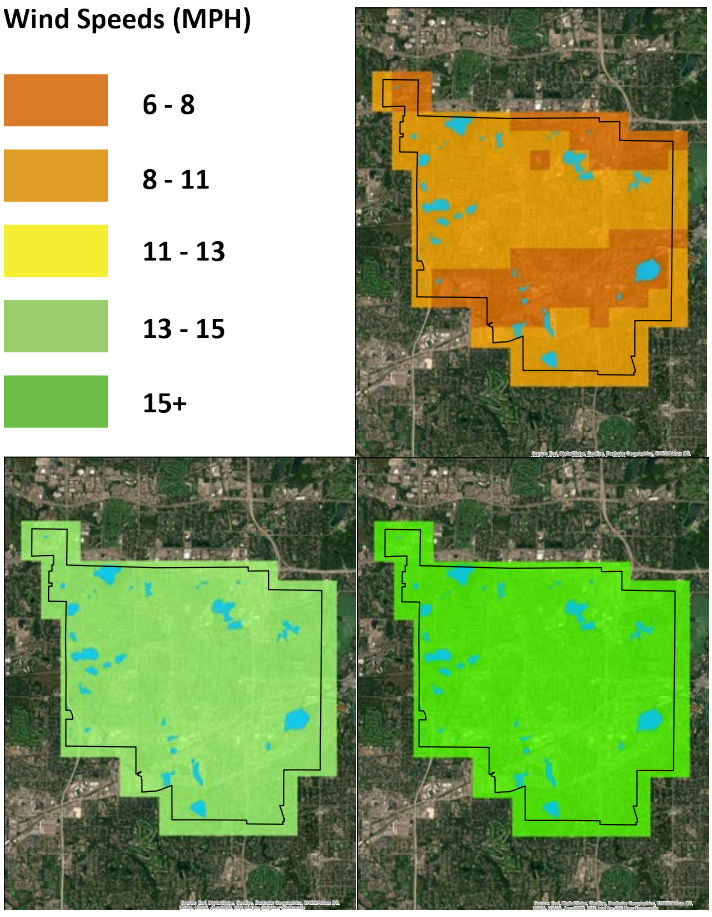
Wind Access

Wind direction and speed play an important role in the design of our community. Although much of the city is already laid out, redevelopment occasionally provides an opportunity to make modifications to better accommodate the wind. Windbreaks can reduce wind speed by up to 80 percent, dramatically improving conditions for people walking outdoors during the winter months. Design elements like windbreaks can also improve the energy efficiency of homes and commercial properties throughout the city.

St. Louis Park is a suburban community with some urban characteristics and varying suitability for towers above a certain height. The Minnesota Department of Commerce developed wind speed maps at a 500-meter resolution to give a general sense of the wind resource at various tower heights, these are not adequate for a specific site assessment (Figure 4-7).

A good rule of thumb is that 12 mph is typically the minimum average annual wind speed for a good wind resource. At 30 meters, much of St. Louis Park has an average wind speed of less than 11 miles per hour, below the optimal speed needed for a productive wind energy system, suggesting that taller towers would be necessary from a production standpoint. At 80 meters, wind speeds are between 13 and 15 mph, above the minimum windspeed recommendations. At 100 meters, wind speeds are up to 15 mph and higher. While there may be some opportunity to capture the resource at taller tower heights, it may not be feasible in St. Louis Park; the taller towers may run into resistance if residents do not agree that tall wind turbines fit the community's character.

Figure 4-7. Wind speeds at different tower heights: 30 meters, 80 meters, and 100 meters



Source: MN Department of Commerce

Residents and businesses also have the opportunity to participate in Xcel Energy's Windsource® or Renewable*Connect programs. These programs provide the clean energy benefit of having local wind (and solar) energy, although the economic benefits of clean energy development are realized elsewhere. According to Xcel Energy, five (5) businesses are subscribed to a total of 28,310 kWh of wind energy, 1,149 residences are subscribed to a total of 2,898,297 kWh of wind energy.

Where We Are Headed

St. Louis Park is committed to environmental stewardship and community sustainability.

Climate Action Plan Implementation

Implementation of the Climate Action Plan (CAP) has begun with the plan's recommended kick-start projects, which include the following:

- Youth-led initiative to increase energy efficiency and renewable energy in the community.
- Develop a Climate Action Plan resource hub.
- Install electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure in public parking lots.

The city will use the CAP's Appendix C, which outlines the implementation schedule for all of the CAP's 2030 goals and initiatives through 2040 as well as the 2040 advanced strategies. Implementation will include making changes to and/or adding the city's policies, ordinances, programs, practices, and communication methods.

GreenStep Cities

The city plans to continue to work towards achieving Steps 4 and 5 over the next few years. To achieve Step 4 status, the city is required to gather data or metrics for a minimum number of environmental elements in order to create a baseline by which the city can compare itself over time. Core elements include: Buildings & Lighting; Transportation Modes & Miles; Open Space, Parks & Trees; Stormwater; Waste Water; Renewable Energy; and Climate. Step 4 status requires measurement of these seven core elements along with five additional elements of the city's choice. St. Louis Park's participation in the Regional Indicators Initiative and LoGoPep and its completion of the Climate Action Plan provide a base of data for pursuing Step 4.

SolSmart

The city plans to participate in the SolSmart program, which is a national designation program recognizing cities, counties, and towns that foster the development of mature local solar markets by making it faster, easier and more affordable to go solar. Their national team of experts provides no-cost technical assistance to help local governments address solar barriers and become "open for solar business." In recognition of their achievements, communities receive designations of SolSmart Gold, Silver, and Bronze.

Living Streets Policy

To support neighborhood livability, the city believes that streets must be vital, healthy places. The city is working on a Living Streets Policy that will include building integrated public rights-of-way that will enhance the livability of the city's neighborhoods. The Living Streets Policy will inform decision-making throughout all phases of transportation projects. Some of the Living Streets principles include:

- Invest in neighborhood livability.
- Promote travel by walking or bicycling.
- Enhance the safety and security of streets.
- Improve the quality of stormwater runoff.
- Support the urban forest.
- Improve the aesthetics of streets

Community-Wide Sustainability Awareness and Understanding

Using the CAP Resource Hub as a foundation, the city is working to broaden and diversify its communications regarding community sustainability. Since the concept of sustainability encompasses such a broad range of community elements, topics, issues, and stakeholders, the city's approach to building community awareness and understanding will need to include a variety of communication methods.

Community-Wide Sustainability Plan

Using the CAP as a foundation, the city has a goal to develop a 2040 Sustainability Plan that addresses the broader elements of making a community sustainable. Sustainability encompasses the city's natural environment, built environment, transportation, utilities, economic conditions, education, public health, recreation and social systems. A sustainability plan could address resiliency and adaptation to potential changes and challenges in the future such as climate, changing energy resources, technology, and demographics.

Climate and Energy Goals and Strategies

1. Pursue the 2040 Climate Action Plan (CAP) goals to reduce greenhouse gases that are either emitted within the city's boundary (Scope 1 emissions) or emitted indirectly though the purchase of electricity or other energy sources (Scope 2 emissions).

Strategies

Pursue the 2040 Climate Action Plan (CAP) goals by carrying out the following strategies (partial list from CAP):

A. Develop a Climate Action Plan Resource Hub to provide people with information about energy efficiency and renewable energy.
B. Promote and support retrofitting existing buildings to increase energy efficiency.
C. Promote and support updating of building operations to use best management practices for increasing building energy efficiency.
D. Engage building occupants and homeowners in sustained behavior changes that increase energy efficiency.
E. Strengthen the city's Green Building Policy and expand the number of new and renovated buildings that are constructed to achieve the Green Building Policy standards.
F. Protect solar access in new developments to enable potential development of solar energy systems.
G. Encourage and incentivize community stakeholders to purchase solar power or other renewable purchasing options offered by utilities or developers or to install on-site solar energy systems.
H. Grow environment and sustainability awareness/ outreach for residents and businesses.
I. Reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by encouraging residents and businesses to replace existing vehicles with more fuel-efficient models, including electric vehicles (EVs), and by expanding EV charging infrastructure.

2. Pursue the 2040 Climate Action Plan (CAP) Advanced Strategies to reduce remaining greenhouse gases from natural gas use in buildings as well as emissions from both vehicle and air travel.

Strategies

A. Explore opportunities for combined heat and power or using thermal energy grids as power supplies.
B. Encourage fuel switching from fossil fuels to renewable sources or buying carbon offsets.
C. Consider including Scope 3 emissions in future emissions inventories and plan revisions, such as emissions from travel by residents and employees occurring outside the city (vehicle and air travel), emissions from products brought into the city, emissions from the use of products sold in the city, emissions from third-party distribution and logistics, and others.

3. Develop a 2040 Sustainability Plan that broadens the scope of the Climate Action Plan.

Strategies

A. Conduct a sustainability assessment of the city's existing natural environment, built environment, economic and social systems' conditions, policies/ programs, and interconnections.
B. Establish the city's sustainability vision, guiding principles, and goals.
C. Identify key sustainability indicators and measures.
D. Create a sustainability plan as a stand-alone plan or integrated into the Comprehensive Plan that establishes sustainability policies/strategies and actions.

Parks, Open Space, and Natural Resources

St. Louis Park's Vision 3.0 includes the recommendation to "Ensure Access to Green Space for Future Generations." Further, the strategic priority of leading in environmental stewardship includes: "increasing opportunities to connect with nature in the city" and "continuing to protect and improve the quality of natural resources, parks, lakes, creeks, wetlands, and surface water planning and using green spaces effectively."

St. Louis Park is committed to preserving, enhancing and providing good stewardship of our parks. The purpose of this section is to provide a guiding plan for parks, open space and natural resources management.

St. Louis Park's parks, open space, and natural resources play an important role in making the city a desirable place to live, work and play. Parks deliver community benefits far beyond each park's borders. They improve our physical and psychological health, enhance community life, provide outdoor experiences and serve as anchors for strong neighborhoods.

St. Louis Park has 52 parks of diverse sizes, amenities and opportunities for recreation. Since the city is fully developed, the focus for the future is on upgrading, expanding, and improving the park system to meet the recreational needs of citizens throughout their lifetimes.

Where We Have Been

History

Over the past 120 years, parks, open space and recreation planning in St. Louis Park has experienced robust change. In its early days, parks were not seen as a priority mainly because there was so much vacant land for children to play in. Some of the Village's (as it was known then) parks were first dedicated by the original developers of the Village. Jorvig Park, the Village's first park, was likely the park donated by the Minneapolis and St. Louis Railway in exchange for the Village naming itself the Village of St. Louis Park. Other lands became park and open space through tax forfeiture. These lands were essentially low, wet areas with soils unstable for building purposes.

Recreation planning was evident early on in the city's history. At a Village Council meeting in December, 1912, a committee was instructed to find a place for a toboggan slide and skating rink in response to citizen interest. In 1937 the Village Park Board was created with the aim of focusing on playgrounds and developing a park system for the Village. Supervised play areas were first established in the summer of 1948 with the first full-time playgrounds at Oak Hill, Fern Hill, Lenox School, Carpenter Park, and the village athletic field (now the High School). The following summer the first organized, expanded summer recreation program was created, and by 1951 the summer recreation program ran from June 25th through August 10th at 15 playgrounds. That same year the first Little League game was held. The old St. Louis Park Community Center was opened on W. Lake Street in November 1953.

In the mid-1950s city officials recognized that the population was expanding and urbanization of the community was occurring at a rate faster than the community's ability to provide necessary park and open space areas. The city also needed to improve existing parks for the use and enjoyment of residents and to protect them from the dangers of flooding. In 1959, the city had its first park bond sale to acquire land and to improve park and open space areas. Most of the initial improvements consisted of grading, seeding, drainage facilities, and basic play equipment.

During the late 1970s and through the 1980s many diverse programs, activities and facilities were being implemented and constructed. In the early 1970s, the original Rec Center was built, including one indoor ice sheet and an outdoor Olympic-sized pool. In addition to the Rec Center, additional land purchased through federal block grants became the Westwood Hills Nature Center. The city began the process of planting trees, building trails planning and constructing the main interpretive building.

Many ponds were created in city parks during this time to improve water quality. The Clean Water Act led to the creation of many NURP (Nationwide Urban Runoff Program) ponds promoting the holding and potential filtering of runoff storm water before it moves into the nearby discharge system (underground pipes).

The late 1970s also saw the rise of urban forestry as a program of the Parks and Recreation department. This program was a response to the spread of Dutch elm disease through St. Louis Park's urban forest, which consisted predominantly of American elm trees. The spread of Dutch elm disease prompted the city to dedicate resources to urban tree management and the diversification of tree species in the urban forest.

In the 1970s and 1980s organizational sports offerings began to expand to other sports in addition to the standard baseball, football and basketball. Youth soccer participation exploded along with the introduction of girls' sports and opportunities to participate in traveling team sports. The increased demand for athletic facilities required the development of large athletic field complexes to meet the needs of the community.

The park dedication program and tree preservation program were both initiated during the 1980s. These programs provided large amounts of money to support park redevelopment and tree planting. Many neighborhood parks such as Cedarhurst, Knollwood Green, and Blackstone Park were developed utilizing these funds.

In the early 1980s Oak Park Village apartments were developed. The city-owned property to the south and west of this development was contaminated with creosote, prompting the city council to recommend it for redevelopment as a permanent green space/park. This property was eventually redeveloped into Louisiana Oaks Park. Many trails and trail connections were also implemented during this time period, including the George Haun Trail, which is a 1.25 mile loop around Bass Lake.

By the late 1980s year-round outdoor activities became a focus and the Northern Lights Winter experience was established in Oak Hill Park. This winter wonderland installed over 20,000 colored lights into trees, surrounded by a skating oval, hockey rink and a bobsled-like slide called the Stendelslide. Everything but the Stendelslide is still actively used and in place today.

The late 1990s and early 2000s witnessed the beginning of the renovation period within the city's park system. Many park infrastructure items and facilities were renovated and replaced, including trails, play structures, tennis courts, sun shelters, and athletic fields. The largest and most significant renovation and expansion was at The Rec Center in 1997, which added another indoor ice sheet, banquet room, meeting room, office area, and the Aquatic Park.

In the late 2000s to 2017 the community's focus shifted to a holistic approach to healthy living that included the construction of additional community gardens, a greater emphasis on walking and biking to community recreational facilities, more sustainable environmental features, and more year round facilities. The city studied the feasibility and possible locations for a future community center in 2014, and in 2016, the Recreation Outdoor Center (ROC) was added on to the Rec Center facility. The ROC is a year-round community asset, from skating in the winter months, to concerts, special events and community gatherings in the spring, summer and fall.

The park system is also a metro-wide leader in inclusivity and racial equity, and has programmed recreational opportunities for a variety of community needs, including women only and men only swimming days for religious purposes.

Recent Accomplishments

From the late 2000s through 2017, there were numerous physical and program improvements:

Parks

- Renovated historic Lilac/Old Roadside Park in 2015.
- Purchased property in 2016 at France and 40th Street for some additional park land and single-family homes.
- Installed LED trail lights throughout the city.
- Replaced city park lights with LED lights.
- Installed lighting control systems in all illuminated ball fields to create efficiencies for electricity usage.
- Designed all park buildings for longevity and conservation including steel roofing, hardy siding, high energy furnaces, and plumbing controls to conserve water.
- Implemented rain gardens when practical and possible, including those in Northside Park.
- Revised turf maintenance procedures to include minimal fertilizer and pesticide usage when possible.
- Relocated the city's skate park to Carpenter Park in 2017, which also addresses storm water management by creating an underground stormwater detention system beneath the skate park.
- Adopted Tobacco-Free Policy for Parks in 2013 to prohibit use of tobacco products on any St. Louis Park-operated recreational facilities.

The Rec Center

- Replaced systems to increase energy efficiency at the Rec Center:
  - Dehumidifiers, cooling towers, and refrigeration systems were replaced with energy efficient systems.
  - Interior and exterior lights were converted to LED lights.
  - Low emissivity ceilings were installed in both indoor ice rinks.
  - Pool pumps and filters were replaced to reduce water, electrical, and chemical usage.
- Constructed the Recreation Outdoor Center (ROC) in 2016 to host year-round events including winter skating, concerts, special events, and community gatherings.

Westwood Hills Nature Center

- Upgraded plans for the Westwood Hills Nature Center
  - A new Master Plan was written for the Westwood Hills Nature Center
  - Conceptual design of a new 12,000-15,000 square feet Interpretive Center Building was initiated in 2017.

Natural Resources

- Became a "Bee-Friendly" city by defining eight parks where no pesticides are sprayed. It also revised the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program to lower chemical inputs into parks/city-owned properties.
- Created a Master Natural Resource Management Plan for the Westwood Hills Nature Center to enhance the diversity and resiliency of the plant communities.
- Completed a city-wide tree inventory in 2010 to identify the composition of the urban forest. The inventory guides future tree planting decisions in order to make the city more diverse and more resistant and resilient to diseases, insects, and pests.
- Created 4 new community gardens based upon a study to determine demand, public space available, and location for most equitable installations of gardens.
- Initiated annual discount tree sale to public to promote diversification of tree canopy on private properties.
- Developed a buckthorn removal program.

Community Partnerships and Initiatives

- Partnered with the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District to restore a stretch of Minnehaha Creek between Meadowbrook Avenue and Louisiana Avenue to create the Minnehaha Creek Preserve.
- Worked with the St. Louis Park School District to maintain shared-use parks and to coordinate volunteer activities.
- Continued work on the "Children First" movement, an original initiative to St. Louis Park that encourages adults to positively support children of all ages. Work includes:
  - Providing structured year-round activities for young people of all ages
  - Improving youth connections to existing facilities and services
  - Finding creative ways to incorporate positive development into the everyday lives of children
- Partnered with SEEDs to plant edible playgrounds throughout the city as part of the city's Summer Park Playground Program.
- Launched the Health in the Park initiative with funding from the Center for Prevention at Blue Cross Blue Shield in 2013. Action groups established from this program include active living, healthy eating and mental wellbeing.
- Coordinated volunteer efforts to honor the city's goal of supporting a connected and engaged community. In 2016 over 1,360 volunteers contributed over 10,000 hours to the community, making possible:
  - Adopt a Park
  - Adopt a Garden (Gardening planting and maintenance)
  - Arbor Day and Community Tree Planting events
  - Basketball in the Park
  - Community Emergency Response Team
  - Creek clean-ups
  - Youth sports
  - Halloween party at Westwood Hills Nature Center
  - Hydrant Hero
  - Parktacular
  - Police Reserves
  - Special events
  - Westwood Hills Nature Center volunteer services

Equity Initiatives

- Conducted outreach, programming, and events to accommodate diverse cultural backgrounds and to be responsive to St. Louis Park residents
- Implemented women-only and men-only swimming nights at the Aquatic Center
- Programmed women-only fitness classes
- Adapted Recreation programming opportunities for special needs citizens
- Hired a Community Outreach Coordinator
  - Manage facility rentals
  - Youth sports
  - Playground programs
- Made scholarships and volunteer opportunities available to assist with costs of programs
- Partnered with Community Education to provide opportunities for seniors
- Held events like Community Link to offer families information, services, and resources that may be difficult to access, including: bike repair, employment resources, and health insurance information

Where We Are Today

Today, St. Louis Park has 52 parks covering over 850 acres (see Figure 4-8 on page 4-52). Park amenities include the Rec Center with the outdoor aquatic park, two indoor ice rinks, and the Recreation Outdoor Center (ROC); the Westwood Hills Nature Center, bike and walking trails, a skate park, sliding hills, a splash pad, fishing, athletic fields and much more. Since the city is fully developed, the focus for the future is on upgrading, expanding, and improving the park system to meet the recreation needs of citizens over their lifetime. The city continues to place an emphasis on preservation of existing amenities, long-term planning, improvements to facilities and infrastructure, the continuation of recreational and leisure time opportunities, and focuses on creating a healthy environment for living, working, and playing in the city. Components of the Park system are described below.

Park Facilities

St. Louis Park categorizes the park land owned and operated by the city in five groups: neighborhood parks, community parks, open space, community playfields, and historical parks.

Neighborhood Parks

There are 30 neighborhood parks with an average size of 5.26 acres. Among the amenities found in neighborhood parks are play structures, athletic fields, community gardens, ponds, athletic courts, lakes, trails, sun/picnic shelters, park buildings, limited parking, sliding hills and winter skating areas. Table 4-3 lists the neighborhood parks in St. Louis Park.

Table 4-3. Neighborhood Parks

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	SIZE (ACRES)
Ainsworth Park	5.1
Bass Lake Park	1.1
Birchwood Park	4.5
Blackstone Park	0.9
Bronx Park	2.9
Browndale Park	10.7
Cedarhurst Park	1.0
Cedar Manor Park*	9.22
Center Park	1.8
Edgebrook Park	12.4
Fern Hill Park*	5.5
Ford Park*	10.6
Jackley Park	0.6
Jersey Park	3.2
Justad Park	0.7
Knollwood Green	1.2
Meadowbrook Manor Park*	.09
Minikahda Vista*	5.1
Nelson Park*	7.9
Oregon Park	2.1
Parkview Park*	0.2
Pennsylvania Park	5.4
Rainbow Park	0.7
Roxbury Park	2.0
Shelard Park	7.2
Sunset Park	1.9
Sunshine Park	0.7
Texa-Tonka Park	20.9
Twin Lakes Park	28.0
Webster Park*	1.5
Willow Park	2.7

**Parks that have a public/non-profit or public/private partnership involved in ownership, maintenance, or upkeep.*

Community Parks

There are 8 community parks. The smallest community park is Carpenter Park at 7.4 acres and the largest is Westwood Hills Nature Area at 160.2 acres. Common community park features are play structures, athletic fields, community gardens, trails, boardwalk, lakes, wetlands, general park buildings, public art, and wildlife.

Other characteristics frequently included in community parks are ponds, athletic courts, sun/picnic shelters, amphitheaters, sliding hills and winter skating areas. Table 4-4 lists the community parks in St. Louis Park.

Table 4-4. Community Parks

COMMUNITY PARK	SIZE (ACRES)
Aquila Park*	30.0
Carpenter Park	7.4
Dakota Park	20.4
Louisiana Oaks Park	44.6
Northside/Northside Rotary Park	8.8
Oak Hill Park	13.8
Westwood Hills Nature Area & Center	160.2
Wolfe Park	32.3

**Parks that have a public/non-profit or public/private partnership involved in ownership, maintenance, or upkeep.*

Park Open Space

There are 21 park areas designated as open space. The smallest open space area is the town green at 0.44 acres and the largest is Minnehaha Creek/Basin at 168.8 acres. Open space park areas typically include lakes, ponds, fountains, benches, public art, trails, athletic facilities, creeks, dense vegetation, and docks/landings. Table 4-5 lists public open space locations managed by the Parks and Operations Department.

Table 4-5. Park Open Space

PARK OPEN SPACE	SIZE (ACRES)
Bass Lake Preserve	61.9
Cedar Manor Woods	5.5
Flag & 22nd	16.7
Frederick Avenue	1.7
Hampshire Park	3.3
Hannon Lake	31.4
Hurd Park	3.1
Isaac Walton League Creekside Park	1.8
Kilmer Pond	3.4
Lake Cobblecrest	10.4
Lake Victoria	10.6
Lamplighter Park*	12.2
Meadowbrook Lake	21.2
Menzel Park (Mpls. Park Bd)	0.6
Minnehaha Creek/Basin	167.8
Minnehaha Creek Preserve	50.0
Otten Pond*	3.5
Sunset Ridge Wetlands	10.2
Town Green*	0.44
Utah Pond	1.9
Westdale Ponds	1.9
Westling Pond	4.0

Community Playfields

There are 5 community playfield areas identified in St. Louis Park. The smallest community playfield is Elie Park/Tower Park at 2.6 acres and the largest is Cedar Knoll Park/Carlson Field at 7.9 acres. Community playfields typically include athletic fields, trails, park buildings, and general recreation areas. Table 4-6 lists community playfields in St. Louis Park:

Table 4-6. Community Playfields

COMMUNITY PLAYFIELD	SIZE (ACRES)
Cedar Knoll Park/Carlson Field	7.9
Elie Park/Tower Park	2.6
Freedom Park/Paul Frank Field	2.8
Keystone Park	3.3
Walker Park	3.7

Historical Parks

There are two historical parks identified in St. Louis Park. The smallest historical location is Jovig Park at 0.6 acres and the largest is Lilac Park/Old Roadside Park at 2.4 acres.

Table 4-7. Historical Parks

HISTORICAL PARK	SIZE (ACRES)
Jorvig Park	0.6
Lilac Park/Old Roadside Park*	2.4

Lilac Park/Old Roadside Park

There is one remaining roadside park in St. Louis Park (Lilac/Old Roadside Park) along the original Lilac Way/Highway 100 corridor. St. Louis Park was originally home to two of seven elaborate roadside parks that were constructed in the late 1930s as a showcase of "roadside beautification," including the original Lilac Park and Roadside Park. Wayside parks were built in the "rustic" style using natural materials, such as wood and stone, and were given extensive plantings of lilacs and other flora.

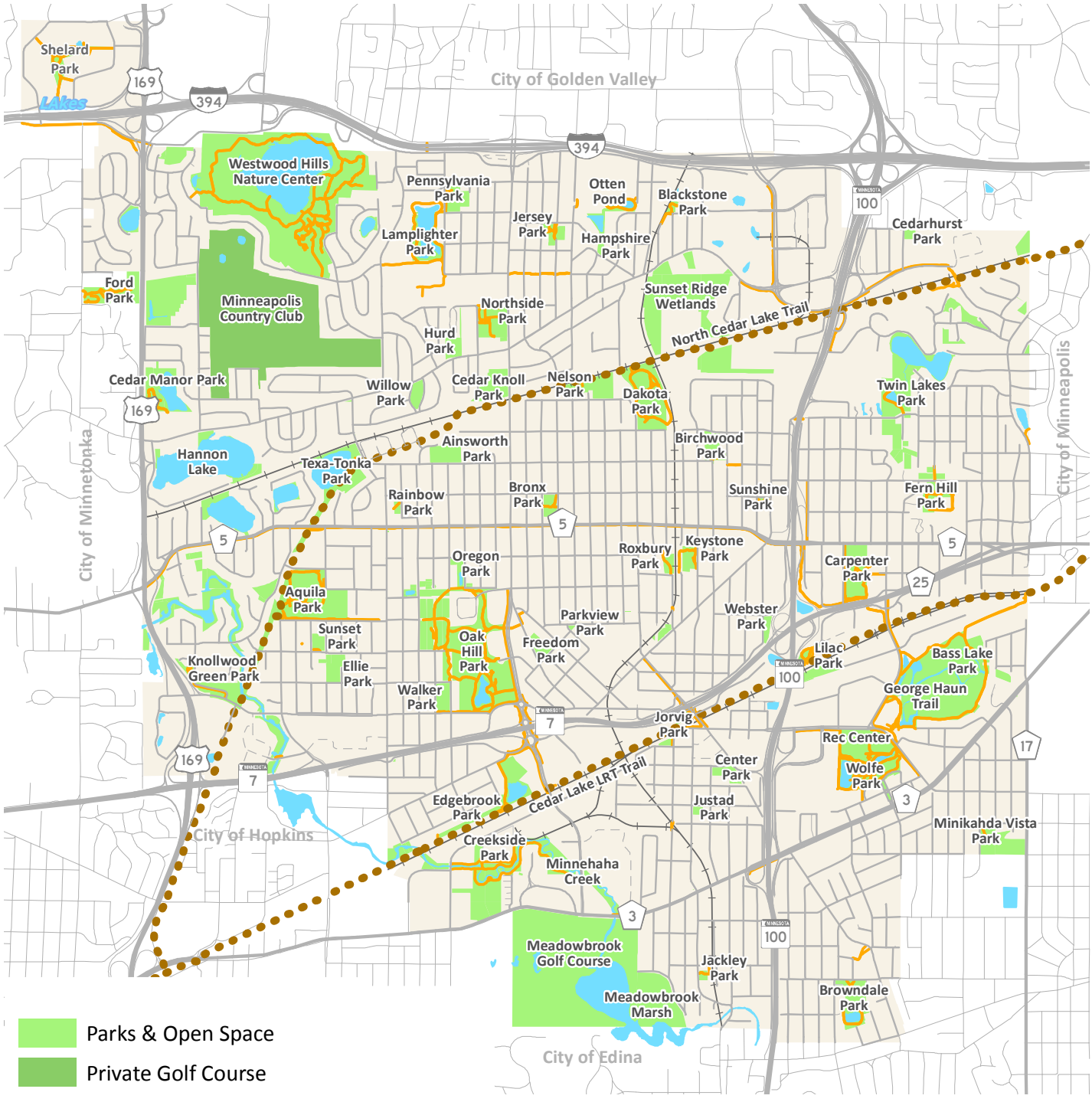
In 2015 the original Lilac Park was eliminated due to the expansion of Highway 100. Roadside Park was restored as a historical park, and has since been renamed to Lilac Park. A restored beehive fireplace was relocated to the new Lilac Park and the grounds and landscaping have been restored to highlight the historical significance of the area. The park features additional historic structures including restored stone picnic tables, a council ring, and a walking trail.

Off-leash Dog Areas

The growth of urban areas in the Minneapolis and St. Paul area has made open space for dogs increasingly scarce. Local park ordinances prohibit dogs from being off-leash which has left many dog owners without a place to exercise their dogs. The creation of "off-leash dog" areas within parks has given dogs and park users an opportunity to coexist in public areas.

St. Louis Park has created two off-leash dog park areas at Dakota Park and at Cedar Knoll Park. The established dog parks have fenced in locations for dogs to play and interact with other dogs. Enclosed play areas prevent off-leash dogs from infringing on the rights of other community residents and park users. Off-leash dog parks also serve as gathering places where pet owners socialize. The city is exploring other locations for additional dog parks.

Figure 4-8. Parks and Open Space



Source: City of St. Louis Park, 2018

2018 City of St. Louis Park
Community Development

Golf Courses

Two golf courses, Meadowbrook and the Minneapolis Golf Club, are located in St. Louis Park and represent a significant amount of open space. Meadowbrook is owned and operated by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and the Minneapolis Golf Club is privately owned. If an opportunity to acquire either land or a golf course becomes available, the city will carefully evaluate options related to additional land for the park system.

Regional Parks, Open Space and Trails

Several major regional trails pass through St. Louis Park. One possible future north/south regional trail is shown in the Metropolitan Council's 2040 Regional Trail Search Corridors as part of the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan. It is shown generally located along the existing CP Rail MNS Spur railroad track that runs north and south through the city (See Figure 4-9 for a general alignment).

The railroad is owned by the Canadian Pacific Railway (CP Railway) and is in active use. A feasibility study of the potential for a trail was conducted by Three Rivers Park District to identify general public concerns, potential construction and environmental challenges that affect the development of a trail, a future trail layout, and possible federal funding sources to pay for construction.

There are not any regional parks or open spaces within St. Louis Park, and none are planned at this time. However, if development opportunities become available, they may be pursued by the city in conjunction with Three Rivers Park District and/or the Metropolitan Council.

Improvements and Maintenance

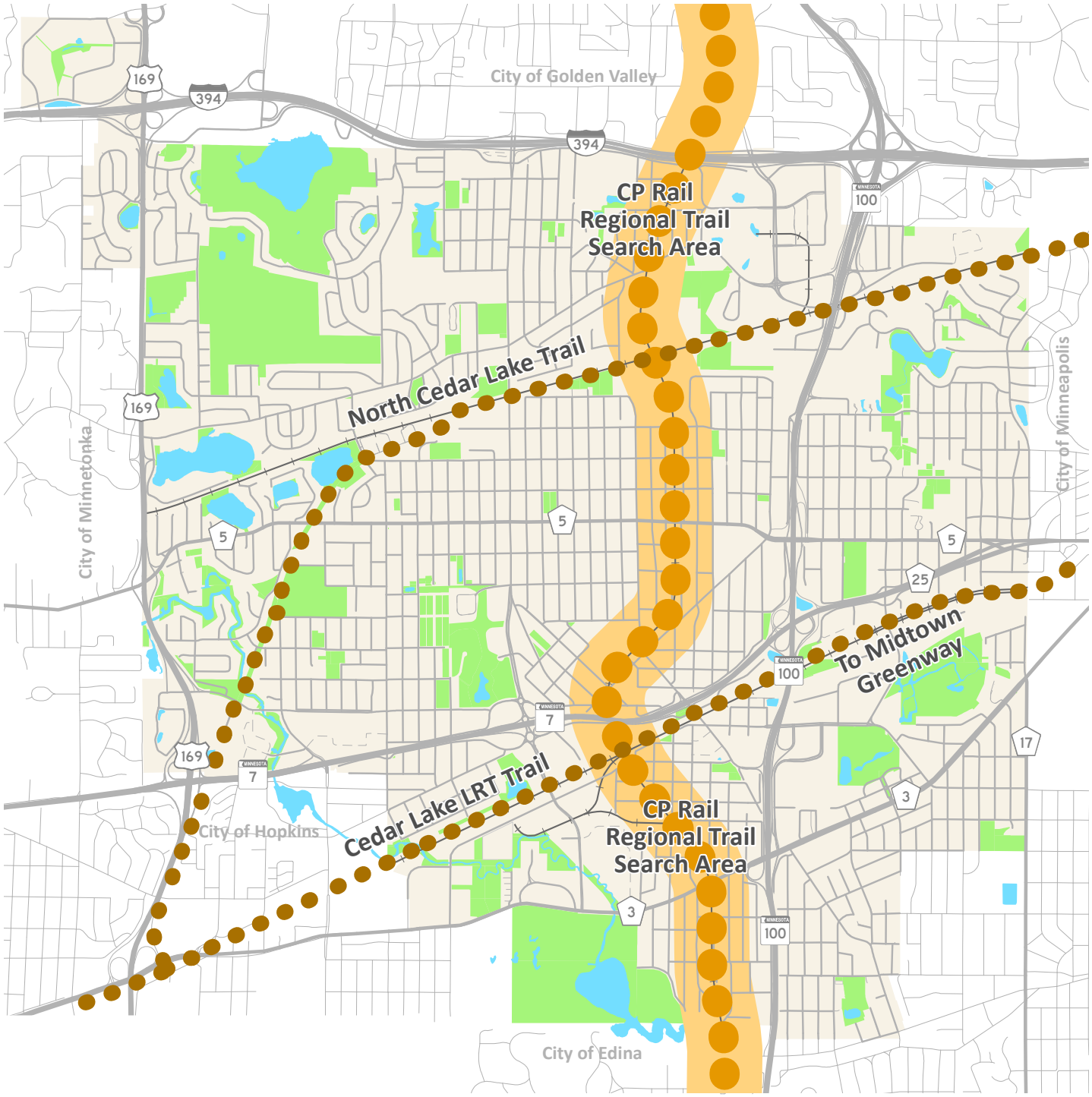
The city Parks and Recreation Department keeps an inventory of all park property and facilities. Table 4-8 is a general maintenance schedule for specific park elements and is based on current practices.

Table 4-8. Improvements

IMPROVEMENT	SCHEDULE
Basketball Courts	
Stripe and resurface	4-6 years
Re-construct	10-15 years
Tennis Courts	
Stripe and resurface	4-6 years
Re-construct	10-15 years
Parking Lots	
Seal Coat	7-9 years
Mill and overlay	18-22 years
Re-construct	38-42 years
Paved Trails	
Mill and overlay	14-16 years
Re-construct	28-32 years
Play Features	
New structure and container	13-15 years
Water Features	
Aeration	Summer maintenance
Fish stocking	Per Mn/DNR
General maintenance	
Tree pruning	9 years

Safety checks are conducted regularly on park equipment and facilities. Park improvements and park equipment replacement are continually prioritized and reprioritized as conditions change. The city's Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) schedules improvements on a five-year basis. It is revised annually with input from user groups, neighborhoods, athletic associations and other stakeholders. As a park improvement project approaches, Parks and Recreation Staff conduct a public input process to determine the specific improvements to be made.

Figure 4-9. Regional Trail Map



Source: City of St. Louis Park, 2018

2018 City of St. Louis Park
Community Development

Figure 4-10. Park Amenities Matrix

	FACILITIES									SUMMER RECREATION																		WINTER RECREATION							
	Wi-Fi	Public Art	Concession Area	Off-Leash Dog Park	Off-Street Parking	Park Building	Picnic/Sun Shelter(s)	Restroom (seasonal)	Special Use Building	Batting Cage(s)	Baseball/Softball Field(s)	Basketball Court(s)	Canoe Landing**	Community Garden	Drinking Fountain	Fishing*	Horseshoes	Open/Nature Area	Outdoor Grill(s)	Picnic Table(s)	Play Structure	Regional Trail	Paved Trail(s)	Sand Volleyball Court(s)	Skateboard Park	Soccer Field(s)	Swimming Pool/Splash Pad	Tennis Court(s)	Figure Skating Rink	Hockey (end boards only)	Hockey Rink	Kicksledding**	Sliding Hill	Snowshoeing**	Warming House	X-Country Ski Trail
Ainsworth - 7700 28th St. W.							●				●	●		●						●	●					●							●			
Aquila - 3110 Xylon Ave. S.	●				●	●	●	●			L	●			●				●	●	●	●	●					8					●			
Bass Lake - 3450 Glenhurst Ave.							●														●								●							
Bass Lake Preserve - 3501 Beltline Blvd.					●													●					●					2							
Birchwood - 2701 Zarthan Ave. S.	●	●			●	●		●			●	●			●		●			●	●								●		L				●	
Blackstone - 6094 16th St. W.							●					●							●	●	●		●													
Bronx - 2900 Idaho Ave. S.											●	●					●			●	●		●													
Browndale - 4955 Morningside Rd.	●	●				●		●			●	●			●					●	●		●						L		L		L		●	
Carpenter - 4900 Hwy. 7			●		●					●	●				●					●	●		L		●			3							
Carrol Hurd - 7520 Cedar Lake Rd.														●																					
Cedar Knoll - 2541 Nevada Ave. S.			●	●	●					●	L				●					●															
Cedar Manor/Lake - 9350 Cedar Lake Rd.																		●			●												●			
Cedarhurst - 1601 Natchez Ave. S.																			●	●	●															
Center - 3750 Wooddale Ave.																				●	●									L						
Creekside - 7341 Oxford St.					●								●					●																		
Dakota - 2643 Dakota Ave. S.				●	●		●			●	L				●					●	●	●	●										●			
Edgebrook - 3920 Pennsylvania Ave. S.																				●	●	●	●													
Elie - 3450 Wyoming Ave. S.											●				●					●																
Fern Hill - 4421 28th St. W.	●				●		●	●			●	●			●					●	●		●			●		1			●					
Ford - 2115 Ford Rd.					●		●								●					●	●		●													
Freedom - 3261 Gorham Ave.			●				●	●			●				●					●																
Hampshire - 6520 18th St. W.																		●		●	●															
Jackley - 4215 Brookside Ave.							●				●	●								●	●		L						L							
Jersey - 1601 Jersey Ave. S.							●					●					●			●	●		L						●							
Jorvig - 6210 W. 37th St.									●											●	●	●														
Justad - 5917 Cambridge St.							●					●			●		●			●	●															
Keystone - 3034 Alabama Ave. S.																							●			●							●			
Knollwood Green - 3450 Flag Ave. S.												●								●	●		●													
Lamplighter - 1800 Pennsylvania Ave. S.																●		●					●	2												
Lilac - 3401 Salem Ave. S.		●																		●		●	●													
Louisiana Oaks - 3520 Louisiana Ave. S.	●	●	●		●	●	●	●			●				●					●	●		L			L							●			●
Meadowbrook Manor - 4072 Meadowbrook Ln.							●					●								●	●															
Minikahda Vista - 3901 Inglewood Ave. S.							●				●	●			●				●	●	●					●							●			
Nelson - 2500 Georgia Ave. S.	●	●			●	●		●				●		●	●					●		●									L			●		
Northside - 2200 Louisiana Ave. S.			●		●		●			●	●				●					●	●		●					2								
Oak Hill - 3201 Rhode Island Ave. S.	●	●			●	●	●	●			●				●				●	●	●		L				●		L		L		L		●	
Oregon - 3100 Oregon Ave. S.																	●			●	●															
Otten Pond - 1440 Dakota Ave. S.																							●													
Parkview - 6801 33rd St. W.						●	●					●					●			●	●								●		L				●	
Pennsylvania - 1459 Pennsylvania Ave. S.							●			●	●	●			●					●	●															
Rainbow - 2908 Sumter Ave. S.																				●	●															
Rec Center - 3700 Monterey Drive	●	●	●		●			●	●						●												●		L		L					
Recreation Outdoor Center (ROC) - 3700 Monterey Drive	●				●				●						●														L		L					
Roxbury - 3110 Brunswick Ave. S.												●								●	●															
Shelard - 390 Ford Rd.												●		●						●	●		●													
Sunset - 3328 Xylon Ave. S.																				●	●															
Sunshine - 2900 Vernon Ave. S.												●								●	●		L													
Texa-Tonka/Lake Victoria - 2750 Virginia Ave. S.					●									●						●	●	●	●			●										
Twin Lakes - 4750 26th St. W.							●				●	●								●	●		●													
Walker - 3500 Pennsylvania Ave. S.																										●										
Webster - 3301 Webster Ave. S.														●						●	●															
Westwood Hills Nature Center - 8300 W. Franklin Ave.	●	●			●		●	●	●				●		●	●		●		●	●		●									●		●		
Willow - 2500 Rhode Island Ave. S.												●								●	●															
Wolfe - 3700 Monterey Drive	●	●			●	●	●	●				●			●	●			●	●	●		L	1									●			

St. Louis Park MINNESOTA

Park Design Standards

St. Louis Park has an excellent park system that has served residents for many years. The park system has provided opportunities for special events, sports, family gatherings and many other social and recreational activities. Over time the system ages, and many facilities need repairs, reconstruction, or redevelopment. To ensure continuation of the high quality of the parks, the city has created design standards for the reconstruction and development of new park facilities. Park buildings incorporate design elements such as foundation requirements, roof-slope criteria, unifying color and material schemes, updated mechanical systems, and other environmentally sustainable design features.

Replacement Policy

The city has 43 parks with playground equipment. The playground equipment is replaced on a rotating basis every 13 to 15 years due to wear and tear. The city solicits input from the neighborhood to determine what the new structures should include, and does most of the demolition and installation with existing city staff expertise. Approximately 95 percent of the city's outdated playground equipment is donated to "Kids Around the World", which replaces old and damaged portions of the structure and repurposes the equipment in other countries. Play equipment from St. Louis Park has been donated to many communities including those in Jamaica, Poland, and Dominica.

Kids Around the World Park

Recreational Facilities & Programming

Many recreational facilities are owned and operated by the City of St. Louis Park for use and rental by the community, and play host to hundreds of events a year. These facilities include the Rec Center and the ROC's ice arenas and outdoor aquatic park, an amphitheater, splash pads, picnic shelters, park pavilions, play structures, skate park, outdoor winter ice rinks, trails, Westwood Hills Nature Center, banquet and meeting rooms, athletic fields and courts, and off-leash dog parks. These events are mostly housed at Wolfe Park, Louisiana Oaks, and Aquila Park. Rentals include multiple 5k runs, and dog, bike, and kite flying events.

From mid-December to mid-February the city maintains nine ice rinks and staffs five park buildings for patrons to use as a warming house facilities. Patrons can reserve the building or ice rink during the warming house season.

Rec Center

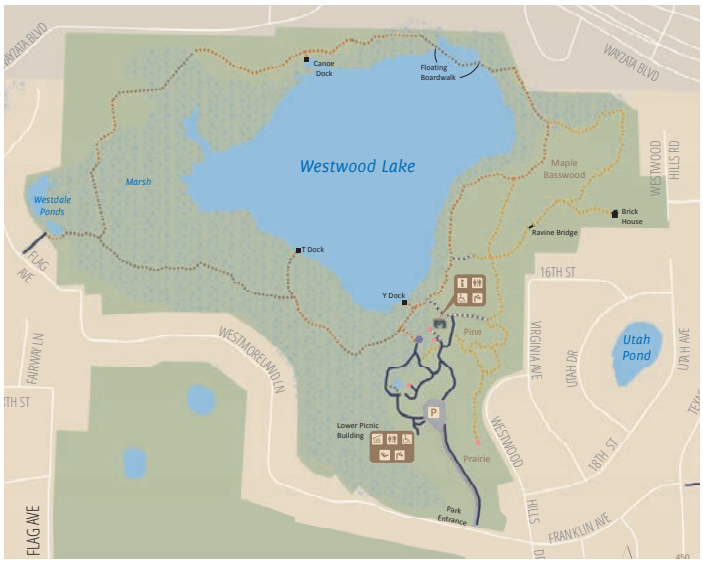
The Rec Center is one of the busiest municipal facilities in St. Louis Park with an average of over 360,000 visitors each year. The original Rec Center was built in 1971 and included an indoor ice arena, outdoor pools and meeting space. In 1997 a second sheet of ice was added and the outdoor pool was converted to an aquatic park. In 2016, with financial support through the St. Louis Park Hockey Association, the Recreation Outdoor Center (ROC) was added on to the Rec Center facility. The ROC is a year-round community asset, from skating in the winter months, to turf in the spring and dry floor activities in the summer and fall, to include concerts, special events and community gatherings in the spring, summer and fall.

Programming at the Rec Center includes: ice skating lessons, adult and youth hockey, summer hockey camps, open skating, broomball, Penny Carnival, open basketball, scuba diving classes, lap swimming, and swimming lessons.

Westwood Hills Nature Center

The City of St. Louis Park acquired its first parcel of park land at Westwood in 1958 from the former Westwood Hills Golf Course. Throughout the 1960s, Westwood was the site for a summer camp conducted by the Parks and Recreation Department. In 1976, the city gave thoughtful consideration to the natural amenities of this park and the need to provide a broader range of park spaces in an urban setting. A plan for the 160-acre site was prepared, and the Westwood Hills Environmental Education Center was established as the name for the facility.

Figure 4-11. Westwood Hills Nature Center



The site includes a lake, marshes, grassland, woodland, and fauna that provide enjoyment, and opportunities for preservation and study. The marsh, woods and restored prairie are beautiful throughout the seasons and provide homes for many animals including song birds, deer, fox, mink, coyotes, wild turkeys, hawks and owls. The site is dominated by Westwood Lake and a remnant maple-basswood forest. The interaction of the lake, the hillside, soil, moisture, and temperatures produces an exceptional, dynamic, and complex ecosystem with diverse flora and fauna. Over three miles of trails provide access to all of these areas.

Infrastructure including trails, boardwalks, docks, observation nodes, a parking lot and entrance driveway were added along with an interpretive center building, which was constructed and opened to the public in June of 1981. This building is the location for formal programs and exhibits, as well as an office and storage facility for staff.

Westwood Hills Environmental Education Center provides educational programs year-round for all age groups. Over 29,000 individuals per year on average participate in formal programs with many more informal visits for hiking, bird watching, wildlife observation, and picnicking. Programs include raptors, live animals, puppet shows, community events, bird watching walks, Jr. Naturalists, and archery.

The city council recognized that the current Interpretive Center Building no longer met current operational needs of the center, and the building was also deemed unrepairable. In 2016, the city conducted a study of the Westwood Hills Nature Center, and created a master plan that identified future programming and facility needs. The most considerable outcome of the plan is the construction of a new Interpretive Center Building which is planned to be constructed in 2019 and open in 2020. City residents believe the Westwood Hills Nature Center is an extremely important community asset and has been labeled the “Gem of the City”.

Athletic, Recreational, & Educational Programming

The city prides itself on quality community-based special events, facility services, and programming services. The city plans a wide range of special event, family, youth, and adult programs annually, and incorporates racial equity and healthy initiatives throughout the planning process. Examples of programs and events include a community celebration (Parktacular), concert series, kids’ penny carnival, holiday events, fireworks, kids’ garage sale, ice cream social, an egg hunt, athletic tournaments, and many other educational opportunities. These activities help create a positive and healthy community.

Athletic, recreational and outdoor educational programs are key assets to the community. Programs, leagues and camps are offered to all age groups throughout the year at a variety of locations. Athletic opportunities include t-ball, baseball, tennis, kickball, volleyball, soccer, basketball, martial arts, skateboard camps, broomball, skating lessons, and hockey.

Recreational opportunities include art programs, dance programs, family programs, holiday specials, yoga, field trips, pre-school activities, summer playgrounds, winter rinks, little tot drop-in, indoor open skating & hockey, and fabulous Friday specials.

The city's programs, events, and facilities are based on the interests and the needs of the community. Programming is adapted yearly based on the number of participants in each age category, regional and national trends, and cultural interest. Recent trends include special events, youth sports tournaments, low impact sports, and non-traditional individual sports and activities. The programming offered by the city has evolved along with the demographics of St. Louis Park.

Outdoor recreation and environmental educational programs are offered at Westwood Hills Nature Center all year long. Residents and non-residents of all ages can enjoy opportunities to learn about and experience wildlife, plants, and natural sciences. Opportunities include snowshoeing, fire building, day camps, canoeing, full moon hikes, bird watching hikes, maple syrup tapping, ice fishing, animal tracking, and more.

The Summer Park Playground Program takes place during the summer months from June through the end of July for youth ages 4 to 12. The program is held at 11 parks around the city and consist of three hour sessions Monday through Thursday in which youth participate in games, crafts, and other activities at their local park. Programming includes visits from a Playground Naturalist from Westwood Hills Nature Center, Activity Specialists that bring art projects, and an Edible Playground Instructor who helps youth plant edible playgrounds in the park system.

The Summer Park Playground Program also puts on Friday programs, a Youth Safety Camp, and a three week adventure camp in August.

A large community festival site can be created in the "West End" by Gamble Drive between Park Place Boulevard and Duke Drive. The 35,700 square foot area is designed to host up to one large event a month bringing new events, visitors and revenue to the city.

Natural Resources

The natural resources of St. Louis Park provide a valuable connection to the environment for residents, visitors and individuals working in the city. Stewardship of these resources is the responsibility of multiple city departments and various county and state agencies.

Most often, however, the natural resources of St. Louis Park are served by the city's Department of Operations and Recreation. The Department operates the Westwood Hills Nature Center; conducts the city's forestry, landscape, vegetation management (i.e. weed control); wildlife management; invasive species; and native restoration programs. It also coordinates its efforts with the Engineering Department on water-related issues and is the liaison to natural resource organizations.

Even though St. Louis Park is a fully developed community, it retains several important natural resources within its borders, as noted below.

Minnehaha Creek

Minnehaha Creek is a major natural waterway that runs through the southern part of St. Louis Park. During part of the year, the creek can be used for canoeing, its primary recreational purpose, and there are several canoe landings in the city on publicly owned land. Additional park land was recently acquired from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to restore and preserve the riparian buffer, which is a vegetated area near the stream, in this stretch.

As the creek passes through the city, land use along its borders becomes increasingly intense. Land use policy along the creek is set by the city; however, the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) plays an increasingly important role in regulating the health of the creek and of the water flowing into it. In 2004, Minnehaha Creek was listed by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) as an impaired waterway. It is the mission of the MCWD to manage and protect the water resources of the watershed. As a result, city officials work in an increasingly coordinated manner with the MCWD to realize the shared goals for the creek.

Figure 4-12. Minnehaha Creek Preserve

Trails and Creek Re-meander

In 2009 Methodist Hospital, the MCWD and the city completed a project to recreate the natural meander in the creek near the Hospital property. The restored meander returned the creek to a more natural shape and restored the wetland vegetation, improving habitat for wildlife in the area and promoting many ecological benefits of the creek. An elevated boardwalk and canoe landings were installed to increase public access, and educational signage was added throughout the site.

The overall outcomes of the project include: increased capacity for floodwater, additional stormwater capture, slowed flow of the creek allowing for filtering of pollutants, enhanced fish and wildlife habitat, and enhanced the recreation and public access of the creek.

The Methodist Hospital Creek project provided a strong example for how the MCWD can manage and restore wetlands within the District, and in 2012 the MCWD and the city started restoration work to return natural curves to the previously-straightened stream in the southwestern area of St. Louis Park. Through restoration and re-meandering, the stream now treats polluted stormwater from more than 80 acres that previously flowed untreated into the creek, prevents erosion by slowing down water, creates fish and wildlife habitat, and connects the creek to historic wetlands. It connects more than 600 housing units within walking distance of transit connections, and the project has created a great asset for the community.

The Minnehaha Creek Preserve opened in July, 2015 and features 2,200 feet of boardwalk and 4,600 feet of paved trail around the restored stretch of Minnehaha Creek between Meadowbrook Avenue and Louisiana Avenue. The project was financed, in part, by a grant from the Clean Water Fund, and is the cornerstone of the Minnehaha Greenway, which is a stretch of more than 50 acres of continuous green space along Minnehaha Creek.

Urban Forests, Lakes and Wildlife

Trees in our Parks

Thousands of trees thrive throughout the city's park system, growing in varied topography, terrain and conditions. A mix of hardwood species exist in the parks with the most common tree species found in the lowlands being box elder and cottonwood. There are also remnant stands of maple, basswood, black cherry and bur oak trees scattered within several parks. These trees once occupied the oak savannas of pre-settlement areas.

The city has an active tree planting and replacement program in the parks with the goal of establishing a diversity of tree types to create a healthier, more natural urban forest environment. Over the past 10 years, tree planting in parks, has been accelerated with hundreds of new, diverse trees planted.

Westwood Hills Nature Center Improvements

The city is focused on enhancing the diversity and resiliency of the plant communities at Westwood Hills Nature Center to increase their value as both wildlife habitat and to enhance their utility as outdoor classrooms. To accomplish this goal, the city created a Master Natural Resource Management Plan. Management strategies began in 2016 and include control of invasive species through mechanical means, herbicide application, and prescribed burns where applicable. Seeding and planting of native trees, shrubs, and herbaceous species occur where necessary to replace invasive species.

Restoration

The city wooded areas are currently heavily infested with buckthorn, garlic mustard, and exotic honeysuckle. An invasive plant management and native plant restoration plan has been implemented, including a Buckthorn Control Program

Shoreline management and restoration has been actively pursued through invasive species control and native vegetation plantings. Purple loosestrife, once a dominant species found in and along most of the city's wetlands and ponds, has now been reduced, and in some places eliminated through cooperative efforts with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MnDNR). Other bio-control options are on the horizon.

The city has planted native vegetation to replace eroded and turf grass areas along shorelines of many of our lakes and ponds. This native vegetation serves storm water management purposes and also provides habitat and food sources for the city's native waterfowl and animal population. It also inhibits geese from using nearby park turf areas. Shoreline restoration projects will continue.

The city also encourages private homeowners to plant native vegetation in their yards. The city's Native Vegetation Permit allows private properties to grow native flora over six inches tall in over 25 percent of their yard.

Dutch Elm Disease

The city continues its 40-year battle to identify and promptly remove trees infected with Dutch Elm Disease (DED). Over the past 10 years the city has identified and removed approximately 500 trees per year. Unfortunately, the city is losing large trees that have the greatest environmental, aesthetic and social impacts and values to a community.

Bur Oak Blight

A new disease called Bur Oak Blight (BOB) has been identified in the Twin Cities area and is affecting bur oak trees in St. Louis Park. BOB mimics the symptoms of oak wilt disease, with lots of brown leaves appearing in a tree's crown and falling off during the latter half of the growing season, typically late to mid-July. BOB tends to be most prevalent during growing seasons that start out cool and wet. Successive years of BOB can kill an infected tree. The best treatment for BOB is a fungicide treatment administered by a St. Louis Park-licensed tree service in the early spring.

Tree Maintenance

A healthy urban forest needs care and maintenance. The city is committed to an active tree pruning program along streets, boulevards and in the parks. The goal of the pruning program is to properly manage and revitalize tree resources and investment. It also reduces hazards and impediments to traffic. The city prunes each boulevard and park tree on a seven to ten year rotation.

Tree Planting and Replacement

St. Louis Park is one of the few cities to actively support and plant trees along the street right-of-way (often referred to as the boulevard). In an effort to reduce the loss of tree canopy from diseases or other factors, the city implements an annual boulevard tree replacement and planting program. Each boulevard and park tree lost to a disease or other factor is replaced within a year of removal, if conditions are right.

The city plants approximately 500 trees per year within boulevards and city parks. The plantings diversity goal is to follow the 10-20-30 rule, which states that no more than ten percent of one species, no more than twenty percent of one genus, and no more than thirty percent of one family should be planted throughout the city.

The city strives to fill in as many current boulevard tree vacancies as economically feasible by filling in areas where no boulevard tree is currently or has ever been planted. This tree planting and replacement program culminates in a rich, hardy tree stock diverse in species, size and age, which is better suited to survive an unforeseen injurious invasive pest or disease epidemic.

St. Louis Park is losing trees on private residential property through disease, construction and other factors. There are approximately two to three residential trees lost for every one tree planted. The city offers numerous tree resources for private residents to maintain and diversify the city's canopy. Private tree replacement through new development or through the city's Annual Tree Sale is will allow the city to maintain a robust canopy and diversify trees on private properties.

The city's zoning ordinance requires the protection or replacement of significant trees on all public and commercial property and the replacement of trees on public land on a one-to-one per caliper basis. However, the city's tree preservation ordinance does not cover the single family areas of the city, where the city is experiencing the greatest tree canopy loss. Future policies should look at ways to achieve a one-for-one replacement for trees on private property.

Water Bodies

St. Louis Park has numerous water bodies within its boundaries including Wolfe Lake, Westwood Lake, and Bass Lake. The shoreland areas in the city are in good condition in some areas. Where residential property directly abuts the water bodies, however, there are some potential ecological problems. To improve the water quality of the city's water bodies, a buffer area between a typical suburban lawn and the lake should be provided.

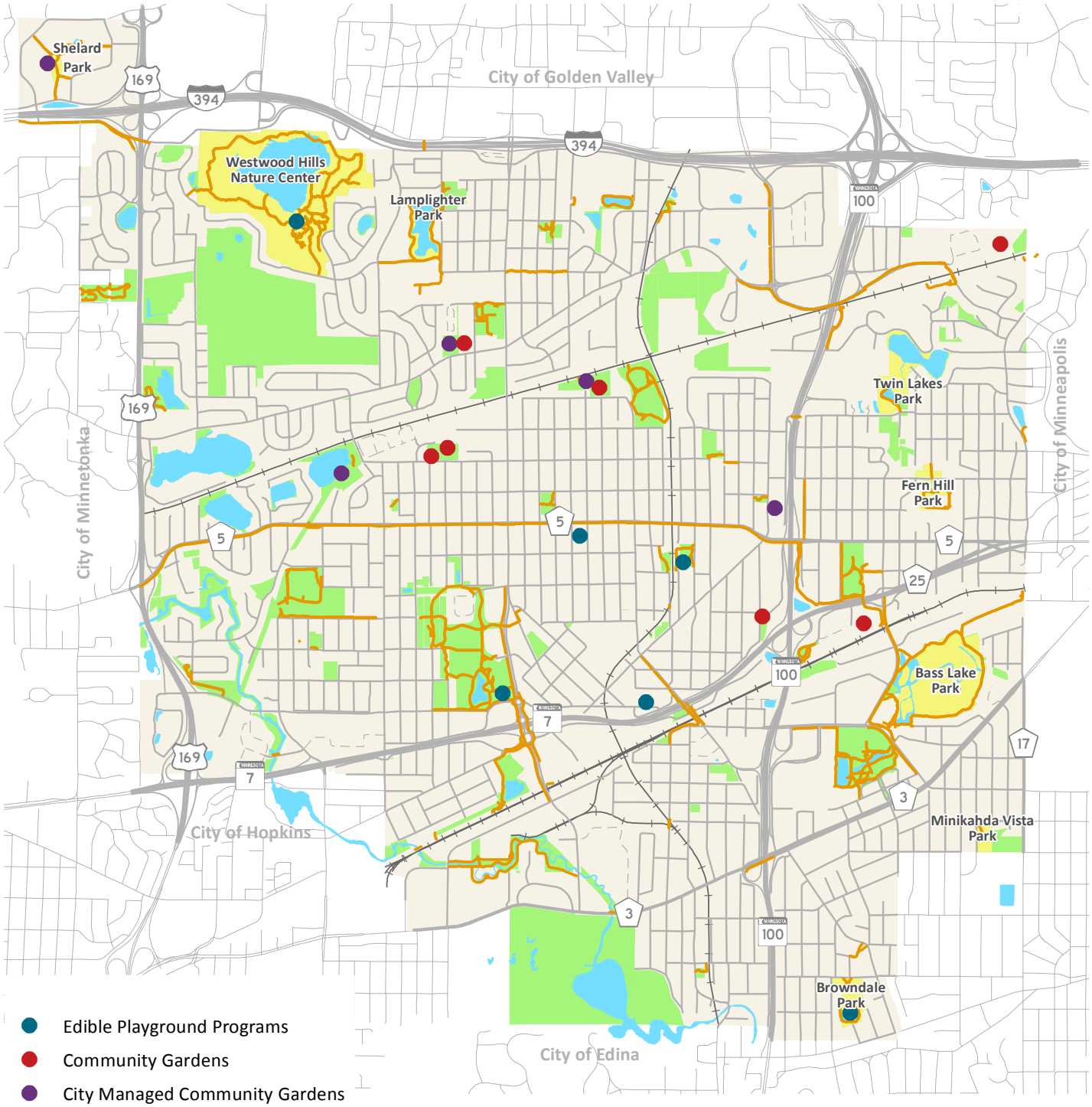
Water bodies in the city are not of sufficient size to accommodate major commercial or recreational fishing or recreational activities because of the type and size. Frequent recreational activities include canoeing, rowing, and pedestrian and bicycle activity on trails surrounding the lakes. City staff, in cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, has implemented a program entitled "Fishing in the Neighborhood" (FIN). This unique program stocks fish in three water bodies (Wolfe, Westwood and Lamplighter), providing St. Louis Park youth an opportunity to learn to fish in a pleasant and relaxed environment.

Citizen-Assisted Monitoring Program (CAMP) is a resident volunteer program to monitor water quality of the water bodies within St. Louis Park through the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services program. Water quality of the water bodies in St. Louis Park are measured on a bi-weekly basis from April-October. Volunteers collect a surface water sample to help the city and other water managers document water quality impacts and trends. The lakes monitored in St. Louis Park include Twin Lake, Westwood Lake, South Oak Lake, and Cobblecrest Lake.

Wildlife Management

An abundance of wildlife thrives in St. Louis Park, which is a testament to the natural elements found throughout the community. The natural resource ecosystems required for all of the wildlife are intact, promoted and managed for this aspect in conjunction with other human-related functions, such as storm water storage and recreation. Striving for a greenway approach for wildlife ecosystems is ideal and could be accomplished through preservation of existing public and private open space, partnering with private open space landowners to keep the land as open space (i.e. conservation easements), and purchase of open space.

Figure 4-13. Bee Friendly Parks, Community Gardens, and Edible Playground Programs



Source: City of St. Louis Park, 2018

2018 City of St. Louis Park
Community Development

Bee Friendly

In 2015, the city passed a resolution declaring St. Louis Park a "Bee-Friendly" city. The resolution defines eight parks where no pesticides are sprayed and dandelions and white clover are promoted including: Shelard Park, Lamplighter Park, Westwood Hills Nature Center, Twin Lakes, Fern Hill Park, Bass Lake Preserve, Browndale Park, and Minikahda Vista Park.

The city is dedicated to increasing education about bees and bee-friendly landscaping, and promotes the creation of bee habitats throughout the city, on public and private property. In addition, the city has revised the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program to lower chemical inputs into parks and city-owned properties. A map of the city's Bee-Friendly parks can be found at Figure 4-13.

Deer Management

The balance between wildlife populations and their respective biological carrying capacities (the available land/habitat for wildlife species to thrive) and those of human populations is delicate. If the tolerance level of people to wildlife impacts (cultural carrying capacity (CCC)) is out of balance, the human population, and often times the wildlife population, suffers. Natural habitats once rich in diverse plant life will be foraged while residential landscapes are preyed upon and potentially decimated. Other considerations and impacts such as the increased potential of deer/auto accidents and the potential threats of disease spread (i.e. Lyme disease) are considered when managing wildlife such as deer.

To manage this delicate balance requires actions to reduce wildlife populations. For deer in St. Louis Park, the CCC is closely monitored, with a management program effectively in place. This management program will continue into the foreseeable future and will be aided by the fact that surrounding cities have begun active management (control) programs within their jurisdictions, thereby lessening population pressure on St. Louis Park lands and deer herds.

Canada Goose Management

St. Louis Park has partnered with University of Minnesota and the DNR in the past for Canada goose control. Each season an inventory is taken of the high goose incidence areas within the city, with population control the goal. Control is necessary to reduce geese impacts (primarily defecation onto park turf and trails) to human recreation and community livability.

Previous control efforts, combined with an annual inventory, provide reasonable and effective management of the geese. The city is in the process of revising the Canada Goose Management Plan and will begin implementing new management techniques.

Invasive Species

St. Louis Park partners with other local, regional and national government organizations to deal with potentially severe invasions and outbreaks. For example, the city has an Emerald Ash Borer Preparedness Plan to respond to the anticipated invasion of Emerald ash borer.

Dutch Elm Disease is a fungal disease that was first introduced to the state in 1961 and is now found within every county in Minnesota. Oak Wilt Disease is caused by a nonnative fungus that invades the water vessels of oak trees and eventually kills most infected trees. The city combats both Dutch Elm Disease and Oak Wilt Disease by identifying, marking, and removing infected trees in a timely fashion.

Eurasian Milfoil and the Curly Leaf Pond Weed are invasive aquatic plants that are found and being treated in Wolfe Lake.

The city stopped planting maples in 2012 in preparation for arrival of the Asian Long-horned Beetle. This invasive species is not currently in St. Louis Park, but the city is proactively diversifying the tree stock in anticipation of its arrival.

Invasive plants are also found throughout the city, including Buckthorn, Leafy Spurge, and Garlic Mustard. Buckthorn is found throughout city land and a management program will be fully implemented in 2018. The management program categorizes city properties on a scale of eradication, control and lower priority. Land with little Buckthorn are on the eradication list, properties with some Buckthorn are being controlled, and those with a lot of Buckthorn are low priority as they are too difficult to control. Leafy Spurge is found at the Westwood Nature Center and the city is working with the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources on a bio-control plan. Garlic Mustard is also found at Westwood Nature Center and is being pulled and treated where feasible.

Healthy Living

The city is a leader in promoting healthy eating and active living and has been a partner in Active Living Hennepin County since 2006. St. Louis Park recognizes the built environment influences active living opportunities and that nature plays a vital role in human health and well-being. In 2013, the city council passed the Healthy Eating and Active Living Policy to encourage the development and implementation of policies and practices that support and promote healthy eating and active living in St. Louis Park. More detailed information can be found in the Health Section of this Plan.

Access to Parks

Active living means incorporating physical activity into one's daily lifestyle. St. Louis Park is dedicated to providing the option for its residents to lead active, healthy lifestyles through active non-motorized transportation (walking, bicycling, skateboarding, etc.) and through recreation. All city residents live within ¼ mile of a city park or the regional Cedar Lake LRT Trail and multi-use network. Providing a safe, accessible, and equitable network of sidewalks and bike lanes to get to city parks and major destinations has been one of the city's top priorities. In 2013, St. Louis Park adopted the a ten year capital improvement program "Connect the Park" to fund 12.8 miles of new sidewalks, 3.62 miles of new trails, and 35.4 miles of new bikeways. More detailed information can be found in the Mobility Section of this Plan.

Community and Edible Gardens

Community gardens contribute to St. Louis Park's desire to be a city where healthy living is a way of life. The city owns and manages five community gardens, and seven additional community gardens are privately operated throughout city neighborhoods. The city also manages six edible gardens as part of the Summer Park Playground Program. Community gardens offer many benefits to the city including an increased sense of community ownership and stewardship. Studies show that community gardeners and their children eat healthier diets than non-gardening families. Community gardens also provide opportunities for inclusivity, bringing together people from all backgrounds (age, race, culture, and social class), offering unique opportunities for cultural exchange between new immigrants, residents, and other gardeners, and providing access to neighborhood grounds and other community information points.

Climate Change

Trees that require a moister, cooler climate, such as sugar maples, have been dying off in large numbers over the last decade due to the change in climate. In response, the city is planting hardier tree species that grow well in drier climates, including native species if they are available. The city has been aggressive in removing potential hazard or poor structure trees, due to a high occurrence of stronger winds and ice storms. The city is also planting more perennial forbs to replace annual flowers, which require more watering.

To increase the city's resiliency, city departments collaborate on infrastructure projects when feasible. The skate park and underground stormwater system in Carpenter Park is a recent example. The stormwater system treats a 42-acre watershed and provides level surfaces for the skate park. The system was awarded the Minnesota Erosion Control Associated (MECA) 2018 Environmental Excellence Award.

In the short term, climate change is causing a wetter climate in Minnesota, with increased rainfall events and higher water levels. This is allowing for additional recreational opportunities within the city, including a longer season for canoeing in Minnehaha Creek.

Equity Initiatives

The city is focused on providing equitable programs, infrastructure, and opportunities that fit the needs and desires of all population segments in St. Louis Park. Some equity initiatives include: men-only and women-only swim events, adaptive recreational programs for individuals with developmental disabilities, yoga and pool exercises for senior populations including, and programs for youth and young adults.

Where We Are Headed

St. Louis Park is committed to providing parks that enhance the community's livability and vitality and provide a strong anchor for neighborhoods. The city will continue its efforts to maintain an integrated and balanced system of parks, open space, trails and recreational opportunities that accommodate the changing needs of its citizens. Future park and recreation planning will be influenced by changing demographics, trends in recreation programming and increased awareness of the natural environment. It will be important for the city to evaluate and plan to accommodate changing needs and evolving trends.

Neighborhood Vision for the Park System

The city held a series of neighborhood planning workshops in late 2017 to gather input from city residents. Attendees were asked to identify their neighborhood's most important features and answer questions regarding businesses, housing, health and safety, natural areas, and parks and recreation.

Parks, recreation, trail facilities, trees, and green space were ranked as the top neighborhood features. Residents highly value the existing park system, and frequent neighborhood parks and playgrounds, existing trails, the Rec Center, Westwood Hills Nature Center, ice rinks, and aquatic facilities. Additional facilities suggested include indoor park facilities, trails and trail lighting, community gardens, improvements to the existing dog park or a new dog park, and more park amenities.

Support was expressed for continued efforts to improve the natural areas in the city including tree planting, lake and wetland maintenance, preservation, enhancement, and the addition of green spaces, and an increase in native vegetation and pollinator friendly habitats.

Changing Demographics and Emerging Recreational Trends

Changing Demographics

As the population of St. Louis Park ages and diversifies, it will be important to respond to the changing recreational needs of city residents.

Aging Baby Boomers

According to the state demographer, by 2040 more than 1 in 5 people in the Twin Cities will be an older adult (65+), including Baby Boomers. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), regular physical activity is one of the most important things aging adults can do for their health, as it can prevent and lower the risk for heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, depression and some cancers.

Diversification

Since 2000, the city has become more diverse. The percentage of white residents has decreased 7 percent, while the number of residents of color has increased 55.7 percent. To respond to the changing demographics, the city will continue to actively address racial, age, and income inequities by providing infrastructure, programming, and opportunities for a more diverse population.

Emerging Recreational Trends

Recreational trends are constantly evolving based on national and local interests. The City of St. Louis Park stays up to date and engaged with national and regional recreational associations to learn about current parks and recreational trends. Additionally, in response to community engagement surveys, the city actively incorporates community feedback and ideas into its programming and facility plans.

Park Facilities

Neighborhood Parks

The city does not have any current plans to acquire additional land for park purposes. From time to time, however, the city may have the opportunity to acquire privately owned land. These opportunities should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Redevelopment may also provide opportunities to obtain new park land. Through the requirements for park dedication, up to 10% of any property that is being platted may be dedicated to the city.

In 2016 the city purchased additional land for park purposes near 40th Street and France Avenue. The city will determine the best use for the land, which could include an active park, a passive park, or a dog park, and some single-family residential lots.

Community Parks

Two golf courses, Meadowbrook and the Minneapolis Golf Club, are located in St. Louis Park and represent a significant amount of open space. If an opportunity to acquire either land or a golf course becomes available, the city will carefully evaluate options related to additional land for the park system. Potential uses for this land include space for active community parks with room for play fields and various community facilities.

Park/Open Space/Trails

There are large areas of open space within the city that are currently not programmed. It may be possible to utilize some of these areas through partnerships with the MCWD or Three Rivers Park District. Establishing green corridors connecting parks may be a desirable direction for the city. New connections via sidewalks and trails are important to the city, and priorities are established in the Sidewalk and Trails Plan (included in the Mobility chapter of this plan). Providing opportunities for residents to live active lives is of high importance within the city. Efforts should be made to provide additional trail connections to major destinations and areas of recreation, including the Minnehaha Creek boardwalk and trail access near Knollwood Target.

Shared Use Parks

The city has developed partnerships with public and private schools to provide additional park land that otherwise would not be available for St. Louis Park residents. There are approximately 13 parks that have a public/non-profit or public/private partnership. If in the future any private or non-profit entity no longer wants to have the shared use park, the city should consider the opportunity to acquire the property for city park purposes.

Privately-Owned Publicly Accessed Parks

As development occurs and the population density in St. Louis Park increases, retaining green space and recreational opportunities is increasingly important. It may be desirable to partner with private developers to provide public access to private land. In addition, the city will continue to require park dedication and a minimum of dedicated outdoor recreational areas for residential development.

Open Space

Preserving the city's green space is vital to the long-term health of the community. To accomplish this, the city should retain the community's existing park and open space according to the city's Disposition of Public Land Policy. The Resolution for the Disposition or Use of Public Land was adopted in 1997 and seeks to preserve parks, open space, and wetlands and other lands that serve a present or future public purpose, meet the goals of the Comprehensive Plan, provide open space for flora and fauna, and provide environmental protection. The eligibility of the land to be vacated includes:

- The city council must find that the land in question has no existing or future public need or use.
- The land must not have been acquired by the city through tax forfeiture or dedication.
- The land must not be designated on the Comprehensive Plan as park land.
- The land requested to be vacated must be under the jurisdiction of the city.
- The city shall not vacate easements across any wetland.
- A resulting right-of-way vacation will not land lock any existing parcel or lot of record.

Regional Trails

To meet the needs of the region in 2040 and beyond the Metropolitan Council 2040 Regional Development Framework indicates a potential for a new north/south regional trail. It is shown generally located along the existing CP Rail MNS Spur railroad track that runs north and south through the city (See Figure 4-9 for a general alignment). It measures 3.7 miles in length from the northern to the southern city limits, and has a right of way that varies in width from 65 to 280 feet. Land use adjacent to the track is a combination of single family residential, office, commercial and industrial. The railroad is owned by the Canadian Pacific Railway and is in active use.

A feasibility study of the potential for a trail was conducted by Three Rivers Park District to identify general public concerns, potential construction and environmental challenges that affect the development of a trail, a future trail layout, and possible federal funding sources to pay for construction.

Local Trails

Access to and within existing parks via local trails is valued by the St. Louis Park community, and efforts to increase local access should continue. A healthy park system includes a connected network of sidewalks and trails that connect local parks to larger community and regional parks and trails.

Facilities and Programming

The city desires to maintain high quality facilities and programs that meet the needs of the community. As the demographic makeup of St. Louis Park evolves, the city should actively engage the community to provide programming that meets the interests and desires of residents. Efficient operations of space and resources will continue to be implemented to help create a resilient park and facility system.

Natural Resources

Preservation, maintenance, and diversification of the city's natural, ecological, and scenic resources will remain a high priority for the city. The city will continue efforts to combat invasive flora and fauna species, and incorporate natural vegetation and trees to expand the city's tree canopy.

Healthy Living

St. Louis Park recognizes that the built environment influences active living opportunities and that nature plays a vital role in human health and well-being. Healthy living includes a well-connected and maintained park system that is in close proximity to where people live and work, access to open space and recreational activities, pesticide free parks and habitats, and a vibrant, robust and resilient natural environment. The city should continue to expand healthy living initiatives for all residents regardless of age, income, ability, or cultural background.

Climate Change

To reach the city's Climate Action Plan goal of 2040 carbon neutrality, park facility projects should take an aggressive role in adopting strategies to increase energy efficiency. Parks should also partner with other city departments to install collaborative infrastructure projects when possible to create a resilient park system. Park facility projects should also partner with watershed management organizations on land and water resource planning when feasible.

Equity Initiatives

The city is focused on providing equitable programs, infrastructure, and opportunities that fit the needs and desires for all segments of populations in St. Louis Park. The city should evaluate universal accessibility of park facilities and programming to ensure the community's assets are welcoming to all.

Parks, Open Space and Natural Resources Goals and Strategies

The city has an excellent, balanced park system. The city's plans and programs under its past comprehensive planning effort, coupled with efforts to obtain grants and aids in preserving major natural amenities, have been successful. However, opportunities for expansion of the park system still exist.

The city intends to continue providing the high quality system of parks, recreation and open space as a valuable component of strong neighborhoods and a livable, healthy, resilient, vital and equitable community.

Park System Goals

1. Preserve an integrated and balanced system of park and open spaces including:

- Neighborhood parks to provide park and open space close to residential development.
- Community parks for recreation activities.
- Community parks for citywide use for active and passive recreation.
- Historical parks that preserve the history of the area.
- Indoor facilities such as the Rec Center and the ROC that provide an aquatic park, skating rinks and meeting room space for the residents.
- Environmental areas such as the Westwood Hills Nature Center, providing places for people to experience nature.
- Undeveloped open spaces for natural vegetation, linear trails and as a relief for storm water storage.
- Regional and local trails.

Strategies

A. Systematically upgrade existing park shelters, playground structures, trails and other park amenities to meet the changing needs of the community, in accordance with the improvement schedule, and prioritize improvements that will have the most positive impact on equity outcomes.

B. Provide flexible and equitable spaces to accommodate changing trends in demand for park and open space programming.

C. Involve the neighborhoods being served and the community to help shape park facilities and the use of open spaces within the city.

D. Continue programs to promote volunteer efforts to assist with park amenities and aesthetic appeal.

E. Continue to support the park/school partnership and to coordinate park use with educational providers. If in the future any private or non-profit entity no longer wants to have the shared use park, the city should consider the opportunity to acquire the property for city park purposes.

F. Continue to support partnerships with outside entities.

G. Implement established design standards for park buildings, and install art and educational tools in all new and updated facilities.

H. Explore the need and options for additional dog parks.

I. Carefully evaluate options related to additional land for the park system if an opportunity to acquire either land or a golf course becomes available.

J. Consider the opportunity to acquire the property for city park purposes if in the future any private or non-profit entity no longer wants to have the shared use park.

2. Take steps to enhance and improve energy and environmental efficiency in our park areas and park buildings to increase resiliency and combat climate change.

Strategies

A. Implement alternative vegetation management within the city's park areas.

B. Periodically conduct energy audits for all park buildings. Utilize audit results when planning for long term capital improvements to the park buildings to ensure compliance with the Energy Action Plan and the Climate Action Plan.

C. During redevelopment of any park areas incorporate rain gardens, natural vegetative buffers, and other stormwater management techniques best suited to that park area, where appropriate.

D. Increase environmental justice by planting more trees in areas of low income, which are often the same areas with the most impervious surfaces.

3. Seek permanent and reliable funding sources for parkland acquisition, capital improvements.

Strategies

A. Ensure park dedication or a park dedication fee is collected for all new development where possible.

B. Use trail dedication fees and other available funds to add trail links to connect neighborhoods to regional trail systems, parks, schools, and other destinations.

C. Maintain a five-year Improvements Plan to implement planned park improvements.

D. Continue partnerships with youth organizations to collaborate on park improvements on a shared-use basis.

E. Evaluate and revise the park dedication fee ordinance, and forecast park and trail dedication funds to accurately assess opportunities for funding for capital projects and acquisitions.

Recreation Goals

1. Promote healthy living through the use of park and open spaces for active and passive recreation, organized sports, picnic facilities, and environmental programs, youth and adult leagues and programs, and special events for all ages, abilities, and cultural backgrounds.

Strategies

A. Educate all residents in the community on the wealth of recreational and educational opportunities and pursuits that exist in the parks system, and identify an ongoing process to measure cultural responsiveness to ensure that opportunities, activities, and practices are meeting the community's needs.

B. Market programs and facilities using brochures, cable television, the internet and other available promotional avenues in a clear and available manner for all residents.

C. Enhance park and trail opportunities for the city through partnerships with other governmental agencies including the Three Rivers Park District and surrounding cities.

D. Evaluate and plan for the future demand for available youth and adult park areas. Offer new ideas and facilities that will provide the opportunity to expand entertainment programming, athletic leagues, cultural and artistic opportunities, family schedule-friendly programs, healthy lifestyle/holistic classes, and community wide special events.

E. Eliminate as many participation barriers (i.e. disability, financial, cultural, etc.) as possible for the delivery of outstanding service.

F. Promote opportunities for people to build connections with their peers, neighbors, and the greater community by supporting intergenerational and intercultural programs, activities, and events.

2. Integrate the trail system through and between parks and open space within the city.

Strategies

A. Continue to maintain trails throughout parks in the city, and coordinate capital improvement planning to improve pedestrian and bicycle connections to and within parks.

B. Identify high-use trails and consider appropriate trail surface materials to encourage safe, accessible use of the trail.

C. Work with Minnehaha Creek Watershed District to develop park trails along Minnehaha Creek, where appropriate.

D. Review trails throughout the parks system and consider if connections to the regional trail system or to other parks may be appropriate.

E. Provide additional trail connections to major destinations and areas of recreation, including the Minnehaha Creek boardwalk and trail access near Knollwood Target.

F. Provide adequate lighting in parks and on trails.

Natural Resource Goals

1. Establish, retain and maintain parks or open space along and adjacent to lakes, ponds and wetlands for public access, storm water detention, and resource protection.

Strategies

A. Make habitat modifications and improvements that will benefit fish, wildlife, and native plantings within the city's park and open space areas.

B. Use Best Management Practices (BMP's) to buffer lakes, ponds, wetlands and streams with native grasses and other ecologically appropriate plant species. Where possible, use buffers on public lands where appropriate to encourage residents, business owners, and developers to emulate best practices.

C. Develop a natural resources inventory for the city's system of parks and open spaces.

D. Continue to increase pursuit of ecosystem approach to natural resource management.

2. Enhance use of Westwood Hills Nature Center.

Strategies

A. Maximize opportunities for enjoyment, educational opportunities, study and observation of nature.

B. Minimize disruption to the park to preserve the character of the park's habitat and associated native flora and fauna.

C. Implement the Westwood Hills Nature Center Master Natural Resource Management Plan.

D. Construct a new Westwood Hills Nature Center building to meet the current and future needs of the community.

3. Recognize Minnehaha Creek as a shared community asset.

Strategies

A. Acquire and maintain public ownership of the banks of the creek and parks along the creek throughout the city where possible.

B. Maintain high quality canoe landings and seek to maximize use and access at strategic locations.

C. Retain and improve the natural vegetation and amenities along the creek by working with the Minnehaha Creek Watershed district to protect it and provide a natural setting for its enjoyment and use.

D. Restrict future development from the shoreline in order to protect the integrity of the creek and natural vegetation.

E. Support shared property ownership agreements, including conservation easements, in locations where property owners are interested in improving public access to the Creek.

F. Educate the public about the Creek by providing information on its course from Lake Minnetonka to the Mississippi River, the location of access to recreational opportunities on the Creek, and methods to improve its ecological health.

4. Collaboratively maintain the natural environment of the city.

Strategies

A. Protect, maintain, diversify, and expand the city's tree canopy, and continue boulevard tree planting and replacement programs.

B. Continue injurious pest sanitation efforts and programs and develop partnerships and future invasive pest management plans.

C. Continue planting native plant species, including the restoration of wooded and native shorelines, throughout city and in all city park and landscaping efforts.

D. Continue the boulevard and park pruning and maintenance plan on a 7-10 year rotation.

E. Offer community gardening opportunities as need and interest arises.

F. Partner with other public projects to improve the city's natural resources (Bass Lake Preserve, Minnehaha Creek re-meander)

G. Continue to support policies for pollinators throughout the city, and encourage edible and pollinator-friendly landscapes on residential properties.

H. Implement tree protection and replacement policies that seek to achieve a one-for-one replacement for trees on private property.

I. Periodically revise and update the city's management and implementation procedures for invasive species

J. Incorporate diverse cultures into natural resources through community gardens, SEEDs program with summer playgrounds, FIN program, events (such as Parktacular, tree plantings, et al.), presentations (at schools and targeted groups).

5. Support policies and practices that will create a more resilient natural environment to combat climate change.

Strategies

A. Pursue invasive species management with other organizations and cities.

B. Reduce ornamental plantings and plant more native varieties and begin to plant varieties for southern growing hardiness zones.

C. Reduce mowing and increase areas of native forbs and grasses

D. Promote alternative and native vegetation planting on residential lots

Water Supply

Ensure a Safe & Sufficient Water Supply for Future Generations

One of the strategic priorities for environmental stewardship stated in the city's Vision 3.0 is to continue "to provide quality water to residents."

The St. Louis Park Water Utilities mission is to provide an uninterrupted supply of safe, high quality water to its customers. Water treatment operators pump, treat and deliver water to homes and businesses. In addition, Water Utilities staff also educate children and adults about drinking water and the system delivering it.

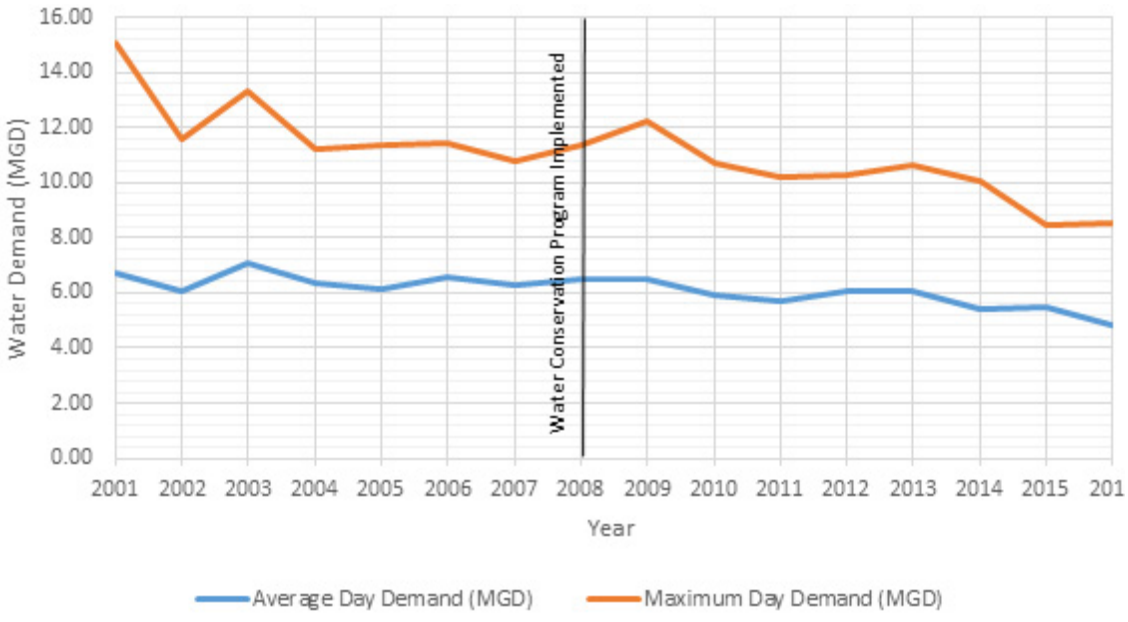
The city routinely updates its water supply plan, water rates and capital improvement plan to ensure that the plan is current and effective to meet the city's needs into the future. The purpose of the water supply plan is to ensure a safe and sufficient water supply now and in the future. The plans serve as guides for construction, operation and maintenance of the municipal water system.

Where We Have Been

Historical Water Use

St. Louis Park completed a DNR Water Emergency and Conservation Plan in October 2008 which was reviewed in conjunction with the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. Water use from 2001 to 2016 is illustrated in Figure 4-14.

Figure 4-14. Water Use, 2001-2016



More detailed information is provided in the current and previous DNR Water Supply Plans.

Trends noted over the past 10 years include:

- The population served has risen and fallen over the past 10 years ranging from 45,216 to 47,502.
- Some of the reduction in total per capita demand, average day demand and peak demand is related to loss of some commercial/industrial customers. However, most of the downward trends are likely due to the city's commitment and focus on water conservation efforts.

Growth has not occurred as rapidly as projected in previous plans, which projected the 2017 population served to be 48,610 people whereas the reported 2017 population served was approximately 47,221 people. However, future growth and increased population and resulting water demand is anticipated, as addressed in a following section.

Some key water demand factors to note include:

- Average Daily Demand: The average daily demand (total annual demand divided by 365) has begun to exhibit a downward trend over the last decade. The past five-year average is 5.3 MGD, which is a decrease from the five-year average of 6.5 MGD reported in the 2008 DNR Water Supply Plan.
- Maximum Daily Demand: Maximum daily demand over the past decade has also been exhibiting a downward trend. Maximum daily demand often occurs between June to September because of the increased water use on landscape watering, vehicle washing, and other outdoor activities. It is greatly influenced by weather patterns and drought conditions. The average maximum day was 11.6 MGD in the 2008 plan and is currently 9.3 MGD.
- Peaking Factor: The water demand peaking factor is the ratio of the average maximum day to the average day. The DNR has set a goal of reducing the average ten-year peaking factor to less than 2.6. St. Louis Park achieved this goal with a ten-year average peaking factor of 1.76 for 2008-2017. This was improvement over the previous peaking factor from 1998– 2007, which was 1.79.
- Residential Per Capita Water: The DNR has set a goal of reducing the most recent five-year average residential per capita water demand to less than 75 gallons per capita per day (gpcd). The city's recent five-year average exceeds this goal and is 60 gpcd, which was an improvement over the previous five-year average of 78 gpcd reported in the 2008 plan.
- Total Per Capita Water Demand: Total per capita water demand for St. Louis Park has begun to exhibit a downward trend since the adoption of the city's 2008 Water Conservation Plan. Over the last decade, the average total per capita water demand is 113 gpcd, which is a decline from the average of 145 gpcd reported in the 2008 plan.
- Unaccounted (Non-revenue) Loss: Unaccounted for water use is the volume of water withdrawn from all sources minus the volume of water delivered. The value represents water "lost" by miscalculated water use due to inaccurate meters, water lost through leaks or water that is used but unmetered or otherwise undocumented. The DNR has set a goal of reducing unaccounted for water to less than 10%. St. Louis Park's recent five-year average unaccounted-for water was 15%. This was an improvement over the previous five-year average of 16% reported in the 2008 plan. The unaccounted-for water has been greatly reduced the past two years due to water meter replacements and is at 7%.

Aquifer Management

From 1917 to 1972, a company in St. Louis Park operated a coal tar refinery and wood preserving plant known as the Republic Creosote Company. Releases of coal tar and creosote to the environment contaminated the soil and groundwater around the site with polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH). Low levels of PAH were detected in some of the St. Louis Park municipal water supply wells. Six wells were closed prior to 1981 and the area was eventually declared an EPA Superfund site. Under the terms of a 1986 Consent Decree and Remedial Action Plan, municipal wells (SLP-4, SLP-10, and SLP-15) have since been reopened with granular activated carbon (GAC) filtration units that effectively remove PAH from the drinking water. The 1986 Consent Decree required the continuous pumping of municipal wells SLP-4 and SLP-10 or SLP-15. The program of continuous pumping coupled with GAC treatment effectively controlled the spread of contamination and allowed the city to use the wells to produce safe high quality water to meet the demands of residents.

Where We Are Today

Aquifer Management

The city is engaged with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to amend the 1986 Consent Decree and Remedial Action Plan. One of the key changes being implemented is the use of current, risk-based water quality standards for PAH to replace outdated water quality criteria from 1986. Because of this change the city will be able to operate its water supply system based on water demand without a need for continuous pumping to control PAH contamination. If state or federal water quality standards change in the future, the amended Consent Decree and Remedial Action Plan requires that those new standards be used to assess water quality.

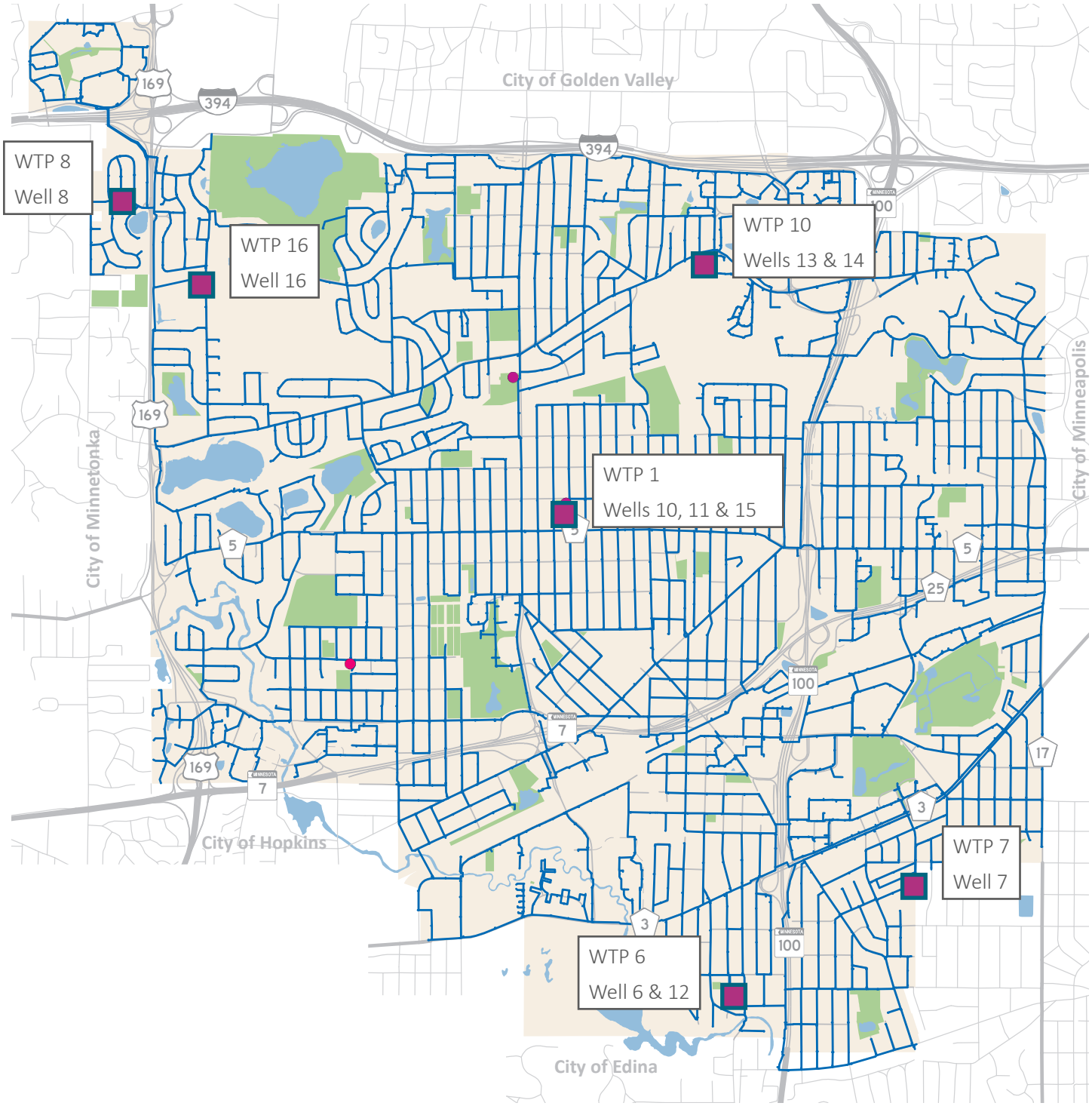
Water Facilities

The St. Louis Park water system consists of 10 wells, six treatment plants, four reservoirs, three elevated water towers, and distribution components including pipes, valves, and hydrants, as shown in Table 4-9, Figure 4-15, and Figure 4-16.

Table 4-9. Summary of Well Data

WELL NO.	AQUIFER	CAPACITY (GALLONS PER MINUTE)	STATUS OF OPERATIONS
Well 3	Platteville- St. Peter	NA	Abandoned
Well 4	Prairie du Chien- Jordan	1200	Active
Well 5	Prairie du Chien- Jordan	NA	Inactive-Water Level Monitoring
Well 6	Prairie du Chien- Jordan	1200	Not operational- Requires WTP Upgrade
Well 7	Prairie du Chien- Jordan	NA	Water Level Monitoring
Well 8	Prairie du Chien- Jordan	1200	Active
Well 9	Prairie du Chien- Jordan	N/A	Not Operational. May be sealed.
Well 10	Prairie du Chien- Jordan	1250	Active
Well 11	Mt. Simon- Hinckley	1200	Active
Well 12	Mt. Simon- Hinckley	1150	Active
Well 13	Mt. Simon- Hinckley	1200	Active
Well 14	Prairie du Chien- Jordan	1100	Active
Well 15	Prairie du Chien- Jordan	1250	Alternate
Well 16	Prairie du Chien- Jordan	1150	Active
Well 17	Mt. Simon- Hinckley	NA	Abandoned
Total Capacity of Active & Alternate Wells – 9600 gpm/ 13.8 MGD* Firm Capacity (Largest well out of service) – 8400 gpm/ 12.1 MGD *When Wells 10 & 15 are both running their combined capacity is 1400 gpm			

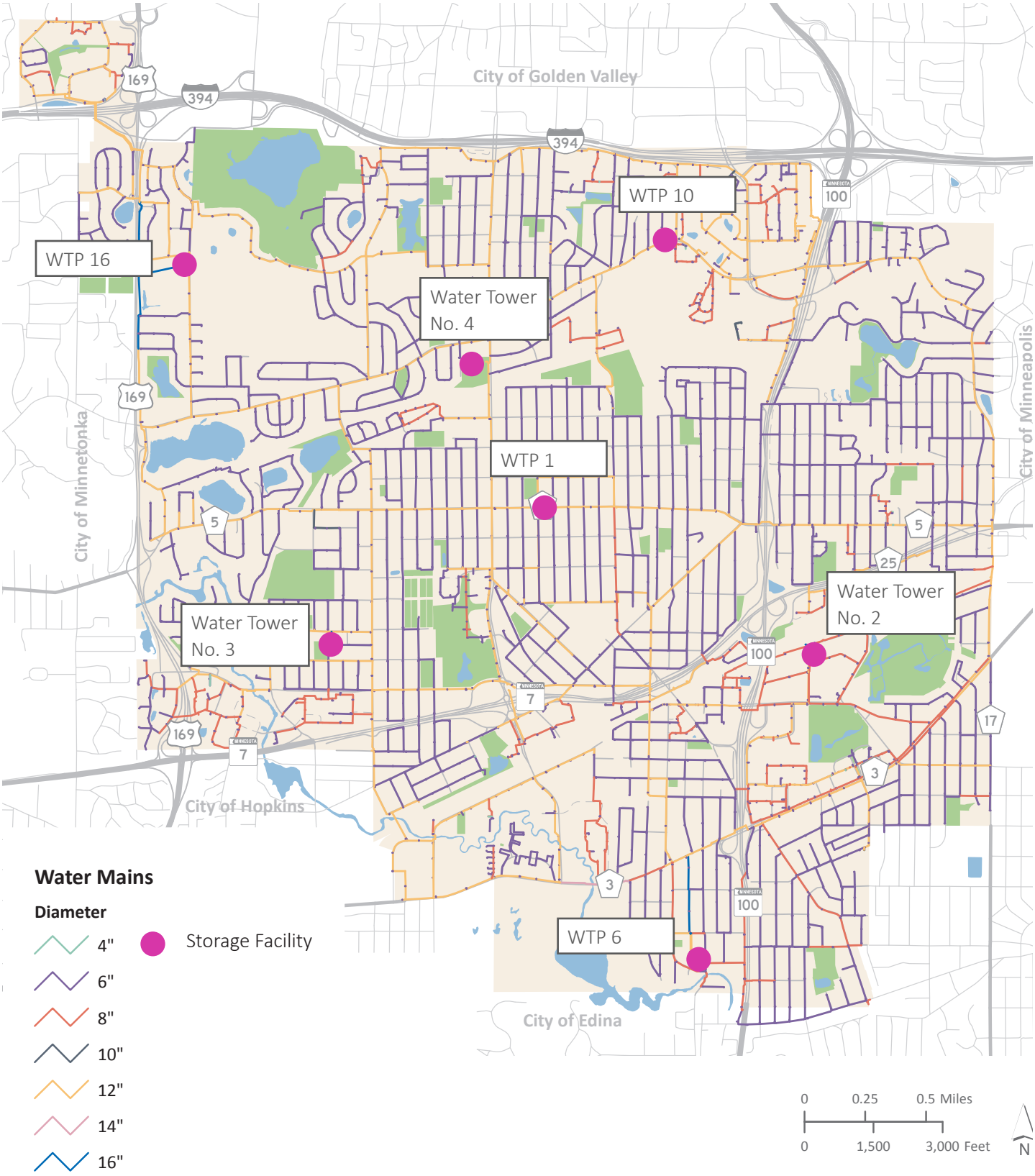
Figure 4-15. Water Treatment Plants



Source: City of St. Louis Park

2017 City of St. Louis Park

Figure 4-16. Water Distribution System



Source: City of St. Louis Park

2017 City of St. Louis Park

Water Supply

The City of St. Louis Park derives its supply of water from a series of 10 active wells that draw on the Prairie Du Chien-Jordan and Mount Simon-Hinckley aquifers. The wells are located throughout the city. The total water production capacity of the city's active and alternate wells is 9600 gpm (13.8 MGD). The firm capacity of the system, which assumes the largest well out of service, is 8,400 gpm (12.1 MGD). To meet the needs of the system, firm capacity should equal or exceed the maximum day demand in accordance with American Water Works Association recommendations. The current firm well capacity exceeds the most recent 5 year average maximum day demand of 9.3 MGD.

Water Treatment

The city has six treatment plants (WTPs) that are located near city wells. The city's ground water contains many minerals that affect overall water quality, and its treatment plants are designed to remove the nuisance minerals iron and manganese through a filtration process. Some of the wells contain elevated levels of radium, and these wells require filtration and additional chemical injection to reduce the amount of radium to acceptable levels. Two wells also require additional treatment to remove organic contamination.

Currently, the city is treating the contaminated ground water at WTP 1 with granular activated carbon (GAC), which lowers the levels of contaminants to trace levels that meet all state and federal requirements established in remedial action programs. GAC is no longer needed at WTP 4. In addition, chlorine is added at all WTPs to the water to prevent contamination from microorganisms; and to improve taste and odor. Minnesota statutes also require the addition of fluoride for the protection of children's teeth.

The city was advised in early 2016 of exceedances of health risk levels, set by the MDH and at much lower limits than those of the EPA, for some types of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) at WTP 4. Before receiving the advisory, the city was already working with MDH to develop a short-term solution to lower VOC levels at WTP 4. This short-term solution lowered certain VOC levels, including vinyl chloride, at WTP 4, but other VOCs such as trichloroethene (TCE) continued to increase, prompting the city to install an air stripping process at WTP 4.

Operators check the treatment system every day for proper operation of the filtration and chemical systems to ensure that water quality standards are met. The operation of the water treatment process is controlled by a programmable logic controller (PLC) that transmits operational data to a system control and data acquisition system (SCADA) which allows the treatment plants and wells to be remotely operated and monitored.

Water treatment plant capacity is 9600 gpm (13.8 MGD) and exceeds the most recent 5 year average maximum day demand of 9.3 MGD.

Table 4-10. Water Treatment Plan Capacity and Maximum Day Demand

MAXIMUM WTP CAPACITY	MAXIMUM DAY DEMAND (AVG. LAST 5 YEARS)
9600 gpm/ 13.8 MGD	9.3 MGD

Water Storage

The city's water storage capacity is 9.5 million gallons and the system consists of three, one-million gallon elevated water tanks, two underground concrete reservoirs with a capacity of 3.5 million gallons, and two ground level steel reservoirs with a capacity of three million gallons. It is recommended that total storage equal or exceed the average daily demand of 5.3 MGD. The total capacity of 9.5 million gallons provides the city with sufficient capacity in the event one or more storage facilities needs to be taken out of service without compromising the city's ability to meet demand. The ground and underground reservoirs are located at the WTPs with high capacity pumps that put water into the system. The elevated tanks are strategically located in the city to maintain equal pressure throughout the water system.

Table 4-11. Water Storage Capacity and Demand

TOTAL STORAGE CAPACITY	AVERAGE DAY DEMAND (OF LAST 5 YEARS)
9,500,000 Gallons	5,300,000 Gallons per day

Table 4-12. Water Storage Structures

STRUCTURE NAME	TYPE OF STORAGE STRUCTURE	STORAGE CAPACITY (GALLONS)
Tower 2	Elevated storage	1,000,000
Tower 3	Elevated storage	1,000,000
Tower 4	Elevated storage	1,000,000
WTP No. 1	Ground storage	1,500,000
WTP No. 6	Ground storage	1,500,000
WTP No. 16	Underground	1,500,000
WTP No. 10	Underground	2,000,000
Total		9,500,000

Water Distribution System

The water distribution system consists of watermain ranging in size from 6 inch to 12 inch in diameter and located throughout the city. The strategic location of the elevated tanks and WTPs provides the city with a consistent pressure. The system is designed with 12-inch and 10-inch trunk lines and six-inch branch lines that deliver water to most of the city's residential areas. A hydraulic model of the distribution system was initially completed in 2000 and updated in 2013. It is used as a dynamic tool for development and redevelopment planning and supports policy makers in decision making to address infrastructure needs. The hydraulic model will be continuously updated to reflect changes made within the distribution system as well as in response to changes in water system demands.

Alternate Water Sources

Six Interconnections with adjacent distribution systems have been established and can be used for emergency and auxiliary water supply. All six emergency interconnections are subject to water availability. They are utilized only with prior authorization and coordination with the requesting city.

The City of St. Louis Park currently has interconnections with the cities of Minnetonka, Plymouth, Golden Valley, Hopkins, and Edina. The interconnects are not metered and a valve is manually opened and closed for emergency water supply between cities.

Table 4-13. Alternate Water Sources

OTHER WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM OWNER	CONNECTION SIZE (INCHES)
Plymouth	8" Plymouth main connected to a 12" SLP main (Betty Crocker Drive)
Minnetonka	6" Minnetonka main to 6" SLP main (Ford Road)
Golden Valley	6" 1300 Flag
Golden Valley	6" Douglas & Ottawa
Hopkins	8" Excelsior & Powell
Edina	8" Wooddale & 44th

Water Conservation

The city implemented a Water Conservation Plan in 2008 through the DNR Water Emergency and Conservation Plan. The plan addressed both conservation on the supply side (leak detection and repairs, metering), as well as on the demand side (reductions in usage). In the past 10 years the city has revised its water rates structure to provide conservation pricing, conducted on-going water supply system improvements such as meter improvements and leak detection, and participated in educational efforts.

Results of conservation efforts are measured based on the water demand, water losses, and peak demand trends. The residential per capita per day values, peaking factor and unaccounted-for water values have each shown a downward trend since conservation efforts were implemented in 2008. The residential per capita demand has been reduced from an average of 78.5 gpcd in 2008 to 60 gpcd currently. The peaking factor has been reduced from an average of 1.79 in 2008 to 1.76 currently. Unaccounted water has been reduced from an average of 16.1% in 2008 to 15% currently, and 7% in the last 2 years.

Where We Are Headed

Aquifer Management

The city continues to use a comprehensive sampling program to monitor water quality of the aquifers and track trends of contaminants of concern set by the MDH. Providing modern, robust drinking water treatment plants will limit the spread of contamination from an affected well. The city also maintains drinking water treatment plans "on the shelf" so upgrades can occur quickly if needed.

Water Demand Projections

The projected annual water demand through 2040 is summarized in Table 4-14. The Metropolitan Council provided the projected populations for the years 2020, 2030, and 2040. The population projections for all other years were extrapolated.

The Metropolitan Council projects a population increase from 45,250 in 2010 to 49,600 in 2020. Additionally, the population is projected to increase to 52,350 in 2030 and 54,520 in 2040. Growth is anticipated to occur at a steady rate per year between MCES future projections.

The population served by the city's water system is reported annually with every DNR Water Use Report. For projection of 2018 through 2019, the increase between the reported population served and the projected 2020 population was averaged and incrementally added annually. A similar method was used to project populations from 2020-2030 and 2030-2040. The Metropolitan Council "Thrive MSP 2040 Forecasts" indicate that the anticipated total population and population served are equal.

As discussed previously, over the last decade the total per capita water demand has trended downwards. The projected total per capita demand is based on the average total per capita demand over the last ten years and is equal to 123 gpcd. The most recent five-year average total demand is 113 gpcd. The city considered reducing the total per capita demand estimate in the projections due to this lower five-year average, but felt it may not be sustainable depending on water usage of future commercial and industrial establishments.

The projected average day demand is equal to the total per capita per day times the projected population. This is then divided by one million to get the average day demand in MGD. The maximum day demand is based on the average annual peaking factor over the last ten years, which was found to be 1.76. For each year the average day demand is multiplied by the peaking factor to obtain the maximum day demand in MGD.

Table 4-14. Projected Annual Water Demand

Year	Projected Population and Population Served	Tot. Per Capita Water Demand (GPCD)	Avg. Daily Demand (MGD)	Max. Daily Demand (MGD)
2018	48,730	123	6.0	10.5
2019	49,165	123	6.0	10.6
2020	49,600	123	6.1	10.7
2021	49,875	123	6.1	10.8
2022	50,150	123	6.2	10.9
2023	50,425	123	6.2	10.9
2024	50,700	123	6.2	11.0
2025	50,975	123	6.3	11.0
2026	51,250	123	6.3	11.1
2027	51,525	123	6.3	11.2
2030	52,350	123	6.4	11.3
2040	54,520	123	6.7	11.8

GPCD – Gallons per Capita per Day
MGD – Million Gallons per Day

The 2030 Comprehensive Planning effort projected significantly higher water demands due to population projections and higher per capita water use projections. The 2008 projections, were based on demand of 145.3 gpcd and a peaking factor of 1.79. Water conservation and efficiency programs have been effective in reducing the key parameters used in calculating water projections. The comparison between previous planning effort projections and the current ones are summarized in Table 4-15.

Table 4-15. 2030 and 2040 Comprehensive Plan Comparison

YEAR	POPULATION SERVED	AVERAGE DAY DEMAND (MGD)	MAX DAY DEMAND (MGD)
Previous 2030 Projection	51,500	7.48	13.39
Current 2030 Projection	52,350	6.4	11.3
Previous Ultimate	51,500	7.48	13.39
Current 2040 Projection	54,520	6.7	11.8

Future Water System Needs

The city's future water utility will need to meet future growth and the resulting increase in water demand. Current well, water treatment plant, and storage capacities are compared to the future demand projections in Table 4-16, Table 4-17, and Table 4-18. The current firm capacity of the wells is 12.1 MGD, and current capacity of the treatment plants is 13.82 MGD. Well and the water treatment capacity must be able to meet or exceed the maximum day demand, which is projected to range from 10.3 to 11.8 MGD between now and 2040. The current firm well capacity of 12.1 exceeds the needed capacity in 2040 by 3% and the water treatment plant capacity of 13.82 will exceed the needed capacity by 17%. The total storage capacity of the existing storage structures equals 9.5 MGD. The projected average day water demand between now and 2040 ranges from 6.0 to 6.7 MGD. The current storage volume exceeds the future average day demand in 2040 by 42%. In summary, the capacity of current wells, water treatment plants, and storage facilities meet the future demands based on the 2040 population projections.

Table 4-16. Well Capacity and Demand Projections

WELLS	CURRENT CAPACITY (MGD)	2040 MAXIMUM DAY DEMAND (MGD)	REMAINING CAPACITY (MGD)
Firm Capacity	12.1	11.8	0.3

Table 4-17. Water Treatment Plant Capacity and Demand Projections

WATER TREATMENT PLANT	CURRENT CAPACITY (MGD)	2040 MAXIMUM DAY DEMAND (MGD)	REMAINING CAPACITY (MGD)
WTP Capacity	13.8	11.8	2.0

Table 4-18. Water Storage Facilities Capacity and Demand Projections

WATER STORAGE FACILITIES	CURRENT CAPACITY (MGD)	2040 AVERAGE DAY DEMAND (MGD)	REMAINING CAPACITY (MGD)
Total Storage	9.5	6.7	2.8

Water Conservation Plan

An updated Water Conservation Plan is included in the 2018 DNR Water Supply (See Appendix to this Comprehensive Plan). The city plans to continue the water conservation techniques employed over the last 10 years and annually evaluate and expand them as appropriate. The city employs conservation billing strategies for water and rates are evaluated annually.

The city plans to participate in outreach efforts such as consumer confidence reports, billing inserts, social media distribution, presentation to community groups and schools, facility tours, and community events such as the Fall Open House and Eco Fair. In addition, the city plans on-going staff training on conservation techniques.

Capital Improvement Plan & Preventative Maintenance

The city is committed to capital reinvestment of the Water Utility to achieve the goals and policies set forth and maintain the long-term sustainability of the Utility. A Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is in place to cover expansion (if needed) and repair of the water system and is updated annually.

As discussed in this plan, the capacity of current wells, water treatment plant, and storage facilities meet the future demands based on the 2040 population projections and land use map. If significant changes were to occur, such as the addition of a large water user, the water plan and resulting CIP would be updated.

The current water treatment plants are meeting government regulations related to water quality. Although not anticipated, if a currently unregulated water constituent becomes regulated or existing regulations become more stringent, the future planning efforts and CIPs would also need to be adjusted.

Preventative maintenance is extremely important in the life of a water supply and distribution system. Preventative maintenance is scheduled as follows:

- Production wells pulled every 6-8 years.
- Water treatment plant GAC replacement and rehabilitation as needed.
- Leak detection monitoring occurs for the entire water system each year.
- Valve operation program - scheduled as time permits.
- Hydrant flushing and inspection program - semi-annual program spring and fall
- Storage facility maintenance: warranty inspection at 2 years, touch up repairs at 10 to 12 years, total reconditioning at 20 to 25 years.
- Valve, meter, equipment, etc. upgrades and replacements are budgeted and scheduled as necessary.

Water Supply Goals and Strategies

1. Provide an uninterrupted supply of safe, high quality water to St. Louis Park customers through proper operation and maintenance of the water supply system.

Strategies

A. Continue the current preventive maintenance on all water supply and treatment equipment to prevent unexpected breakdowns.

B. Continue to evaluate the basic maintenance and operational guidelines to provide responsive and cost-effective maintenance of the Water Supply System.

C. Continue to implement the Wellhead Protection Plan.

2. Provide for the treatment and delivery of water in the most energy efficient manner.

Strategies

A. Continue to participate in the Xcel Energy time-of-day energy program.

B. Conduct periodic reviews of the energy use to insure the energy saving equipment is operating at peak performance.

C. Continue to research energy conservation techniques that may apply to the water treatment and delivery system.

D. Continue to install variable frequency drives at wells and high service pumps to conserve energy and enhance operational control.

3. Encourage reduced water consumption.

Strategies

A. Continue to enforce the mandatory sprinkling restriction through education and enforcement.

B. Continue education programs related to responsible personal use of water.

C. Continue the system-wide leak-detection program.

D. Continue to enforce the installation of water saving fixtures.

4. Provide education to consumers on water supply, treatment and conservation.

Strategies

A. Continue presentations to community groups and schools, facility tours, and community events.

B. Continue other outreach efforts such as consumer confidence reports, billing inserts, distribution of information through social media.

C. Continue to partner with local and national organizations that specialize in water related education.

Sanitary Sewer

Sanitary Sewer management is an important aspect of our urban environment. Citizens in today's cities generate significant amounts of waste. The proper disposal and management of these wastes is critical for the maintenance of public health, the protection and preservation of our water resources, and the area's future growth.

The Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES) operates the metropolitan-wide sewer system and requires that the city submit a Sanitary Sewer Plan as part of the comprehensive plan update every ten years. The plan is reviewed to ensure conformance with MCES's 2040 Water Resources Policy Plan and the Metropolitan Council's Thrive MSP 2040 to ensure that the Council's regional wastewater system has adequate capacity to serve the future needs of the region. Conformance for wastewater means that, within the Metropolitan Urban Service Area, communities are meeting the overall density expectations identified in Thrive MSP 2040.

This section of the Comprehensive Plan demonstrates the city's conformance to the regional plan. The Sanitary Sewer Plan serves as an inventory of the city's sanitary trunk facilities and a guide for completing any future trunk upgrades.

Where We Have Been

In St. Louis Park, sanitary sewer management encompasses both local and regional systems which together transport, treat and dispose of waste water.

Regional System

The largest sewer lines serving the city are called metropolitan interceptors and are operated and maintained by the MCES. The city's system collects liquid waste from homes and businesses and delivers it to the MCES system interceptors. Waste treatment occurs at the treatment plant in St. Paul, and the city is assessed for its share of the treatment costs based on sewage flows. Since it is difficult and costly to increase system capacity, the present sanitary waste control system must be closely managed to operate efficiently. Careful projections of future demands on the system based on growth and changes in land use are essential for planning increases in system capacity.

City Sanitary Sewer System

The sanitary sewer system provides sanitary waste collection for every home and business within the city. The local sewer system, owned and managed by the city, includes sewer connections, sewer main lines, lift stations, and manholes which collect and transport liquid wastes to the regional system as well as treatment facilities (Figure 4-17).

Where We Are Today

Sanitary Sewer Facilities

St. Louis Park uses a conventional system in which gravity serves as the driving force to move the wastewater through a network of downward sloping pipes. The sanitary sewer system follows the normal contour of the land, but some areas do not provide the elevation required for a gravity system to work. In these cases lift stations collect and pump the wastewater to a higher level where the gravity system can work.

St. Louis Park's sanitary sewer system transports wastewater to three MCES interceptors. The MCES interceptors transport the sanitary sewage to the Metro treatment facility in St. Paul where it is treated and discharged into the Mississippi River. St. Louis Park's sanitary sewer utility is presented in Figure 4-17, Table 4-19, and Table 4-20. The city does not have any intercommunity service agreements.

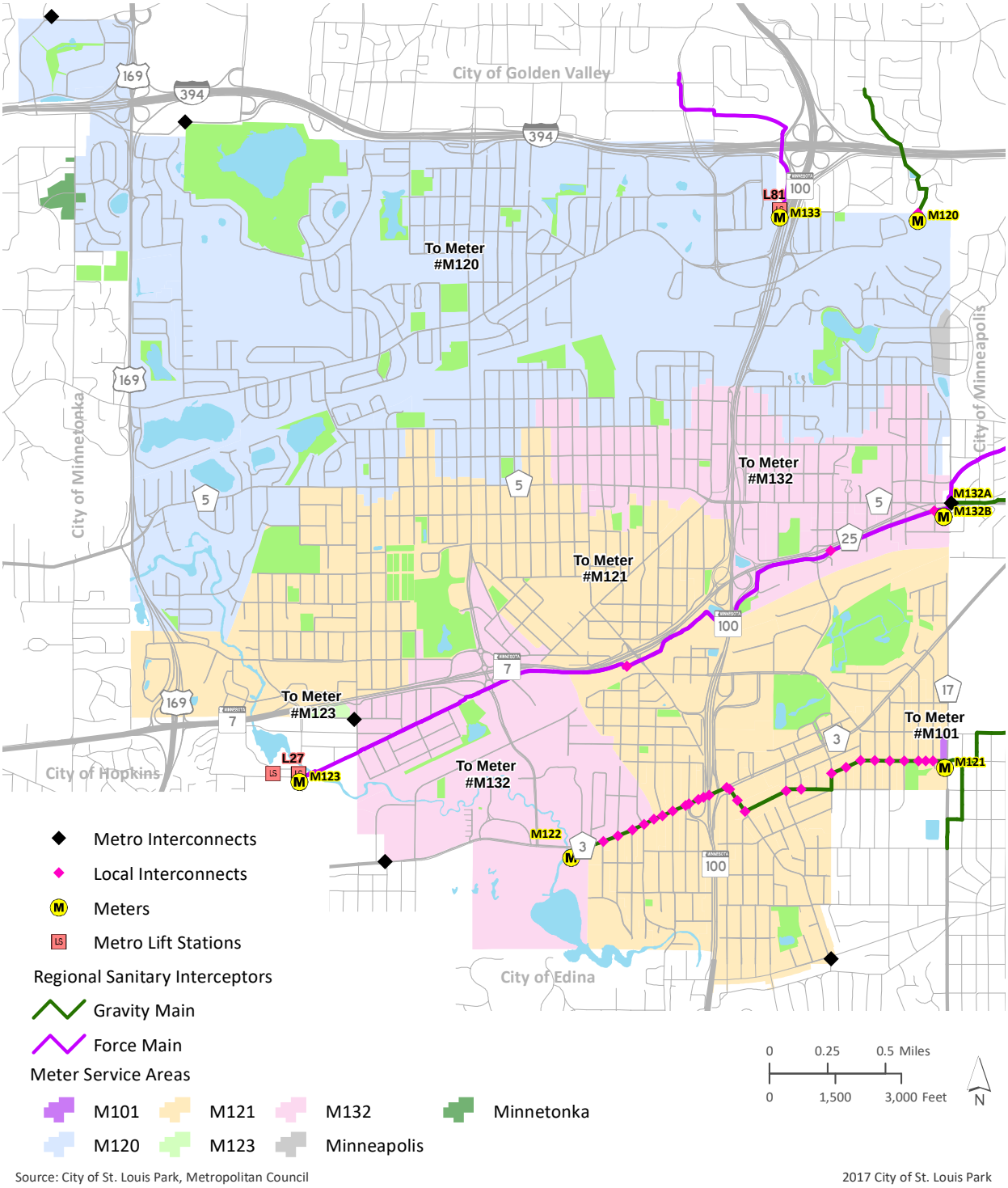
Table 4-19. St. Louis Park Sanitary Sewer System By-the-Numbers

SEWER CONNECTIONS	SEWER MAIN LINES
13,579	758,468 ft.
LIFT STATIONS	**MANHOLES**
23	3,276

Table 4-20. St. Louis Park Sanitary Sewer System Connections

	CONNECTIONS
Residential	11,606
Multi-Family	1,200
Institutional	108
Commercial	592
Industrial	73
Total	13,579

Figure 4-17. Regional Sanitary Sewer System



Source: City of St. Louis Park, Metropolitan Council

2017 City of St. Louis Park

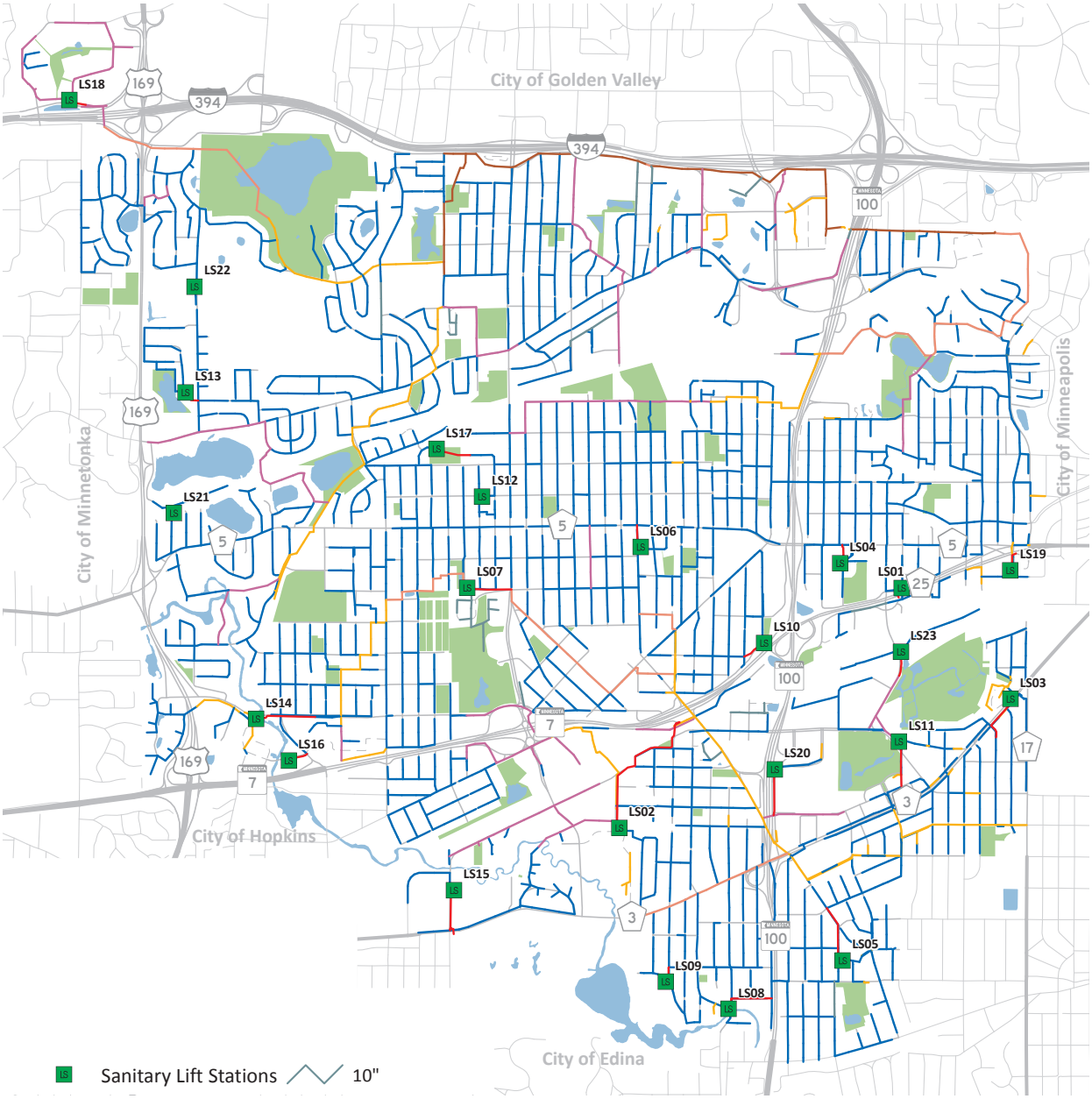
Lift Stations

The city's sanitary sewer system consists of 23 lift stations ranging in size from a 100 gallon per minute (gpm) to a 4600 gpm lift station. The lift stations have been sized to handle buildout of their respective service areas. Table 4-21 summarizes the capacity information for each of the lift stations. The locations of the lift stations are shown in Figure 4-18.

Table 4-21. Lift Station Capacities

LIFT STATION NO.	NUMBER OF PUMPS	PRESENT CAPACITY (MGD)	ULTIMATE CAPACITY (MGD)	FORCE MAIN SIZE (INCHES)	CAPACITY IN GPM
LS 1	2	0.94	0.94	8	650
LS 2	3	13.25	13.25	16	4600
LS 3	2	0.50	0.50	6	350
LS 4	2	0.22	0.22	4	150
LS 5	2	0.94	0.94	8	650
LS 6	2	0.14	0.14	4	100
LS 7	3	1.87	1.87	12	1300
LS 8	2	0.58	0.58	6	400
LS 9	2	0.29	0.29	4	100
LS 10	2	0.32	0.32	4	220
LS 11	3	0.55	0.55	8	380
LS 12	2	0.22	0.22	4	150
LS 13	2	0.43	0.43	4	150
LS 14	2	0.43	0.43	6	300
LS 15	2	0.86	0.86	6	600
LS 16	2	0.14	0.14	6	100
LS 17	2	0.14	0.14	4	100
LS 18	2	1.44	1.44	10	1000
LS 19	3	1.87	1.87	12	1300
LS 20	2	0.71	0.71	6	495
LS 21	2	0.81	0.81	4	280
LS 22	2	0.29	0.29	4	200
LS 23	2	0.29	0.29	6	200

Figure 4-18. City Sanitary Sewer System



Source: City of St. Louis Park

2017 City of St. Louis Park

Trunk Sewer Mains Connected to MCES System

The design flow and maximum capacity of trunk sewer mains that flow to the MCES system are summarized below.

Table 4-22. Trunk Sewer Mains Connected to MCES System

LOCATION	FORCEMAIN DIAMETER (IN.)	INLET DIAMETER (IN.)	DESIGN FLOW (GPM)	MAX CAPACITY (GPM)	COMMENTS
Lift Sta. No. 1 (4602 S. HWY 7)	8	9	650	650	Pumps into MCES FM to M132
Lift Station No. 2 (6504 Excelsior Blvd.)	16	18	4600	4600	Pumps into MCES FM to M132
Lift station No. 19 (3036 Glenhurst Rd.)	12	15	1300	1300	Pumps into MCES FM to M132
NE area of 4330 Cedar Lake Rd.	N/A	30	887	6279	Flows into MCES LS at M120 from West
NE area of 4330 Cedar Lake Rd.	N/A	18	592	1608	Flows into MCES LS at M120 from East
W. 39th St. & France Ave.	N/A	33	1180	8096	Flows into MCES at M121
Emergency MCES LS West End 18" FM	N/A	30	887	6279	Flows to & through MCES emergency LS, then to 4330 Cedar Lake Rd. (M120)

Existing Wastewater Flows

The total flows are measured by MCES at meter locations leaving the city. Annual and monthly flow data from MCES indicates that the ten-year average flow is 4.97 MGD and the average annual per capita wastewater flow is approximately 107 gallons per day (GPD). The average dry weather (winter) flow is 4.89 MGD and corresponding per capita amount is 105 gpdc.

Where We Are Headed

Population, Employment, and Wastewater Forecasts

The comprehensive wastewater plan is developed in part to portray the condition of the St. Louis Park wastewater collection system under future flow conditions, assuming that the population and employment forecasts are achieved. The purpose in developing the future plan is to anticipate future changes to the system that may be required and to allow for the development of a sustainable capital improvements program for the wastewater collection system. The Thrive MSP 2040 population, household and employment forecasts in ten-year increments through 2040 were used in generating wastewater flow projections and in maintaining the required consistency with all parts of the comprehensive planning effort.

Table 4-23. Metropolitan Council Projections for St. Louis Park

YEAR	POPULATION	HOUSEHOLDS	EMPLOYMENT
2010	45,250	21,743	40,485
2020	49,600	23,600	43,400
2030	52,350	25,220	45,300
2040	54,520	26,230	46,850

Since 100% of St. Louis Park is considered sewered by MCES, the projections in Table 4-23 represent sewered and total components. In addition, the above projections apply to the Metro Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) since sanitary sewer flow from St. Louis Park is treated at the Metro WWTP.

The 2040 land use map, growth and redevelopment projections, and MCES historical metershed data were used to determine forecasts by MCES metersheds, as seen in Table 4-24.

Table 4-24. 2040 Projections by MCES Metershed

Metershed	Population	Households	Employment
M120	19,273	9,147	17,858
M121	22,896	10,934	15,193
M132	12,351	6,149	13,799

Table 4-25. Projected Total Average Annual Flow Projections (MGD) by Metershed

Year	M120	M121	M132
2020	2.13	1.70	0.95
2030	2.16	1.74	0.99
2040	2.17	1.74	0.99

Infiltration and Inflow

General

The Metropolitan Council appointed a task force that met in 2003/2004 to address the impacts of excess inflow and infiltration (I/I) on the regional system. I/I describes clear water that enters wastewater collection systems and consumes capacity of the conveyance and treatment systems. Inflow is typically stormwater that increases peak flow in the wastewater system during and after rainfall events from point sources such as broken manhole covers, sewer cleanouts, sump pumps, foundation drains, and rain leaders. Infiltration is typically groundwater that gradually enters the wastewater system through cracks and openings in sewer mains, service laterals, joints, and deteriorated manholes. It was determined that the cost for source removal of I/I was much more cost effective than the cost to store, convey and treat excess I/I. Therefore, the current program focuses on source removal within the communities and regional system.

In 2009/2010 the Metropolitan Council Demand Charge Task Force reviewed goals of the current program including a possible demand charge. The recommendation was to implement an on-going program similar to the existing I/I program. However, instead of a mandatory demand charge, discretion was left with MCES to institute a demand charge if a community is not working towards meeting its I/I Goal.

Included within the MCES 2040 Water Resources Policy, adopted in May of 2015 and more recently amended, is the establishment of I/I goals for all communities discharging wastewater to the regional system. The I/I Goal is the maximum allowable discharge to the regional wastewater system expressed as a peak hourly flow rate measured in million gallons per day (MGD). The I/I Goal is equal to the adjusted average dry weather flow (ADF) multiplied by the respective peak hourly factor. The ADF is based upon a ten-year rolling average of meter flow data and is adjusted upward by population growth for future forecasting. As part of the ongoing I/I efforts a procedure manual is updated by the Metropolitan Council for the subsequent program year.

The city's Sanitary Sewer Plan addresses the MCES specific requirements. Communities with excessive I/I will still be required to eliminate it within a reasonable time period.

The Council has also established I/I goals for each metershed, and the City of St. Louis Park is currently meeting its metershed goals (Table 4-26). In the past St. Louis Park was on MCES's excessive I/I list. However, the city implemented an extensive I/I mitigation program that included flow monitoring and analysis, as well as other measures, to identify and correct high I/I areas.

Table 4-26. Current MCES Metershed Goals for St. Louis Park

METERSHED	ADJUSTED TOTAL DAILY FLOW (MGD)	PEAK HOURLY FLOW FACTOR	I/I GOAL (MGD)
M120	2.46	3.30	8.13
M121	1.84	3.40	6.26
M132	1.06	3.60	3.83

Table 4-27. I/I Averages for St. Louis Park since 2007

YEAR	POPULATION	AVERAGE ANNUAL (AA) FLOW (MGD)	AVERAGE DRY (AD) WEATHER FLOW (MGD)	PEAK MONTH (PM) FLOW (MGD)	BASE I/I AA - AD (MGD)	AVERAGE WET WEATHER I/I PM - AD (MGD)	PM TO AA RATIO
2007	44,896	5.48	5.27	5.80	0.21	0.53	1.06
2008	45,216	5.18	5.10	5.53	0.08	0.42	1.07
2009	47,221	4.96	4.81	5.32	0.16	0.51	1.07
2010	47,221	4.88	4.85	5.17	0.03	0.32	1.06
2011	45,250	5.37	4.98	6.05	0.38	1.07	1.13
2012	45,505	4.78	4.73	5.19	0.04	0.45	1.09
2013	47,221	4.67	4.41	5.28	0.27	0.87	1.13
2014	47,411	5.09	4.48	6.59	0.61	2.11	1.29
2015	47,502	4.70	4.63	4.95	0.07	0.31	1.05
2016	47,502	4.64	4.58	4.88	0.06	0.31	1.05
Average Flow (MGD)		**4.97**	**4.78**	**5.48**	**0.19**	**0.69**	**1.10**
Average I/I Per Capita (GPCD)						**14.87**	
Average I/I % over Avg. Day						**10.00%**	
Average I/I % over Base Sanitary Flow (Avg. Dry)						**14.70%**	

Existing I/I

Sources of I/I in the sanitary sewer system include cracks and openings in sewer mains, service laterals, joints, and deteriorated manholes and sewer clean outs, as well as possible sump pump foundation drain or rain leader connections.

Older areas consisting of clay pipe and pre-1970 era homes have been identified as higher sources of potential I/I. Pre-1970 era residential housing areas account for 63% of the total residential homes. The City has inspected approximately 75% of the private sewer connections and watch for a constant flow of clear water. There are no private sewer systems in the city beyond sewer connections being inspected by City staff.

The EPA guide for estimating infiltration and inflow compares average dry weather (winter) flows to annual average and peak month flows to determine the average amount of I/I entering the system. The table below summarizes average annual, average dry weather and peak month flows for the last ten years. It also compares the various flows to help quantify the amount of I/I entering the system on an average basis.

Comparing annual average (AA) to average dry weather (AD) the average flow attributable to I/I is approximately 0.19 mgd or 4.10 gallons per capita per day, which could be considered the base I/I. The average peak month (PM) to annual average ratio is 1.1. This equates to an average I/I contribution of approximately 0.69 mgd during wet weather periods.

By looking at flows over the course of a year it is possible to quantify I/I on an average basis. However, it is much more difficult to determine peak instantaneous or peak hour events that are mostly associated with inflow. A one (1) inch rainfall event could have a large impact on the system or minimal impact depending upon the duration and intensity as well as other factors for each particular event. Typically, no two events are the same, and at best patterns can be determined for general rainfall amounts.

The city conducted an initial I/I study in 2007, and monitoring results pointed to four areas of the city's collection system (NW, Central, and two East Central areas) that had high potential I/I during rainfall events. Flow monitoring continued through 2015 to further isolate I/I within the four areas. The results of the flow monitoring have been used to guide the city's on-going mitigation plan.

A sanitary sewer televising/inspection program started in late 2014 and a sewer lining program began in 2015. Approximate city costs (not including staff time) for I/I remediation is summarized in Table 4-28.

Table 4-28. I/I Remediation Costs Since 2009

YEAR	APPROXIMATE COST OF I/I REMEDIATION
2009	$10,900
2010	$19,300
2011	$16,100
2012	$16,100
2013	$20,700
2014	$6,900
2015	$400,600
2016	$400,000

On-going Mitigation Plan

The city has a proactive program consisting of policies, ordinances and strategies with the goal of identifying and correcting I/I.

A summary of on-going and future activities and programs & costs intended to mitigate I/I include:

- Four-year cleaning and maintenance program on the main sewer lines and bi-annual maintenance program on the sanitary sewer lift stations.
- Provide current information on the Sanitary Sewer System infrastructure through video inspection.
- Continue to evaluate the main lines for structural integrity, inflow and infiltration, using the process to establish a proactive CIP to correct any deficiencies through the most effective methods. Televise every four years.
- Sewer Lining (Approx. 3 miles/yr)- $400,000/year
- Manhole inspection & repair (lining)- $25,000/year
- Manhole Cover Replacement- $25,000/year
- Employee education – NPDES annual training
- City Code that promotes reduced I/I – The current code prohibits owners, occupants or users of any premises to direct into or allow any storm water, surface water, water from air conditioner systems, oil or other material to drain into the sanitary sewer system

Requirements & Standards for Mitigating I/I

In addition to the strategies and programs described above, the city has established local ordinances that prohibit clear water discharges from sump pumps, foundation drains, rain leaders into the sewer system and requiring the disconnection of such connections. City Code Sec. 32-96 is listed below. The Minnesota State Plumbing Code 714.2 covers prohibited water discharge.

» St. Louis Park City Code Sec. 32-96 Adoption of certain regulations by reference.

A. Metropolitan Council Environmental Services Regulations. The waste discharge rules for the metropolitan disposal system are adopted and incorporated in this article by reference.

B. State Plumbing Code. The Minnesota State Plumbing Code is incorporated in this article by reference. Such code shall apply to all public sewer connections required by this article.

Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems (SSTS)

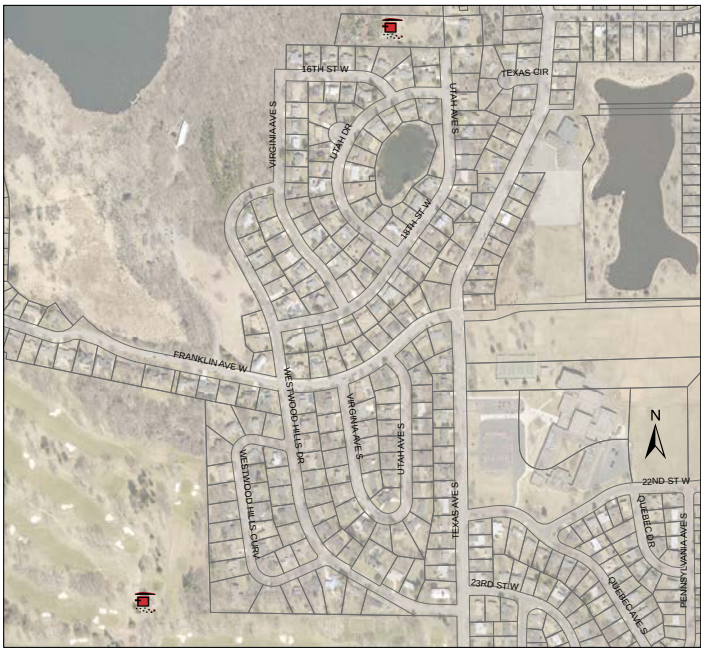
MCES projections do not include any unsewered areas in St. Louis Park. St. Louis Park City Code Sec. 32-91 requires all properties to connect to the public sewer. The city currently has two subsurface sewage treatment systems (SSTS). The locations are shown in Figure 4-19.

The city's management program for subsurface sewage treatment systems (SSTS) is covered by the Minnesota State Statutes 115.55 and 115.56, Minnesota Rules applying to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Chapters 7080, 7081, 7082 and 7083 and Hennepin County Ordinance 19. The City ordinance that applies to SSTS is Sec. 6-211 and is attached in the appendix.

Capital Improvement Plan & Preventative Maintenance

The city is committed to capital reinvestment of the Sanitary Sewer Utility to achieve the goals and policies set forth and maintain the long-term sustainability of the utility. A Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is in place to cover expansion (if needed) and repair of the sanitary sewer system and is updated annually. No new trunk sewers are planned that require connection to the Metropolitan Disposal System.

Figure 4-19. Subsurface Sewage Treatment System (SSTS) Locations in St. Louis Park



LEGEND

Existing SSTS

ARTICLE VII. INDIVIDUAL SEWAGE TREATMENT SYSTEMS CODE

- Sec. 6-211. Code adopted. The city adopts and incorporates by reference Hennepin County Ordinance Number 19, Individual Sewage Treatment System Standards for Hennepin County. One copy of such ordinance shall be marked "City of St. Louis Park Official Copy," and such copy shall be kept on file in the office of the city clerk, and shall be open to inspection and use by the public.
- Sec. 6-212. Permit required. A permit from the city is required for all work as specified in the individual sewage treatment system standards. The applicant must submit a permit application, complete plans and evidence of state licensing.
- Sec. 6-213. Fees. Permit fees shall be set from time to time by the city and a schedule of such fees is listed in appendix A to this Code. Such fees must be submitted to the city before a permit will be issued.

Sanitary Sewer Goals and Strategies

1. Provide the community a municipal sanitary sewer collection system that will enable optimum transportation of sewage with minimum interruption

Strategies

A. Continue the four-year cleaning and maintenance program on the main sewer lines and bi-annual maintenance program on the sanitary sewer lift stations.

B. Continue to evaluate the basic maintenance and operational guidelines to provide responsive and cost-effective maintenance of the Sanitary Sewer System.

2. Provide current information on the Sanitary Sewer System infrastructure through video inspection

Strategies

A. Continue to evaluate the sanitary sewer lines for structural integrity, inflow and infiltration, using the process to establish a proactive CIP to correct any deficiencies through the most effective methods. Televise every 4 years.

B. Incorporate the inspection process with an efficient maintenance program.

3. Continue to Mitigate Inflow and Infiltration in the Sanitary Sewer System

Strategies

A. Implement on-going I/I Mitigation Plan included in this plan.

B. Continue to systematically investigate areas of concern identified through flow monitoring.

Surface Water Management

Introduction

St. Louis Park views its natural systems as a community asset that contributes to environmental and human health, connects neighborhoods, and provides recreation and economic value.

The city's surface waters include lakes, creeks, and wetlands, and St. Louis Park is located within two watersheds—Minnehaha Creek and Bassett Creek. These two watersheds are under the jurisdiction of Watershed Management Organizations (WMOs), the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) and the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (BCWMC).

Where We Have Been

Prior to incorporation as a city, St. Louis Park grew by filling and draining wetlands, creating ditch systems, and using existing waterbodies for stormwater management. This type of development led to undersized stormwater infrastructure and degradation of natural resources.

More recently, however, surface water management has become a critical component of St. Louis Park's comprehensive planning. Its Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) was first developed in 2001 and established a stormwater management plan for the city, integrating flood control with wetland and water quality needs. The SWMP was prepared in conformance with Minnesota Statutes 103B.235 and Minnesota Rules 8410.

Upon completion of the first generation SWMP, the city began to identify capital projects to prevent flooding and improve water quality by utilizing maintenance projects that expanded the capacity of existing stormwater facilities.

The current SWMP was updated in 2009 and provided a comprehensive planning guide for the city in preserving, protecting, and managing water resources within the community. The document established the goals and policies for surface water management, such as surface water quality, wetlands protection and restoration, surface water quantity, flood control, groundwater protection, erosion and sedimentation control, recreation, habitat and shoreland management, education and public involvement, and funding.

The 2009 SWMP emphasized meeting the policies and requirements of watershed organizations and other local, state, and federal agencies. The projects identified in that plan focused on upgrading existing facilities to the water treatment standards of that time in an effort to meet water quality regulations and reduce flooding of private property and streets.

Where We Are Today

The city is updating its 2009 Surface Water Management Plan, and it is currently under agency review. The city is transitioning the stormwater management program from traditional ponds to other treatment measures that better remove pollutants and reduce volume. The city is also responding to changes in stormwater management rules from local watershed regulatory agencies and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). The new regulations address treating stormwater on not only new construction, but redevelopment and linear projects such as new streets and highways.

In addition to regulatory changes, the city is adapting the stormwater management program to respond to updates to predicted rainfall volumes as detailed in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAH) Atlas 14. Updated analysis of historic frequency of heavy rainfall events shows an increase from 5.9 inches in 24 hours to 7.8 inches in the same time period.

The city controls or owns 30% of the city's land area through parks, streets and right-of-way, and the city has implemented alternative treatment practices to reduce pollutants and control volume. For example, in the most recent pavement improvement projects, the city has been implementing best management practices (BMPs) such as pervious pavers, tree trenches and specialized manholes.

In order to go above and beyond regulations, and further influence surface water management on the remaining 70% of lands in private ownership, the city has also partnered with local watershed districts and private developers to advance multiple goals. For example, within the Brownie Lake watershed the Shops at West End development incorporated regional subsurface stormwater treatment and an infiltration vault underneath a large parking lot area, a green roof, and tree trenches. As a result of this project, the amount of nutrients discharging to the lake were reduced dramatically, by 48 pounds annually, far exceeding the ten-year reduction goal of 10 pounds annually for Brownie Lake.

The city also constructed a regional stormwater treatment facility in Carpenter Park, a city-owned parcel in the Bass Lake Preserve watershed. The project includes construction of a sub-surface stormwater treatment facility for a 42-acre watershed, which is projected to remove 27.6 pounds of total phosphorus from the watershed, annually. This treatment BMP is expected to almost double the existing stormwater treatment that discharges to Bass Lake Preserve, a significant wetland complex in the city that directly discharges to Bde Maka Ska.

Where We Are Going

The city seeks to improve surface water quality and reduce stormwater volumes. The challenges facing the city in the next 20 years are to develop a stormwater management plan for a fully developed community with an aging infrastructure, increased water quality standards, and anticipated increased rainfall events as a result of changing climate.

In order to address these goals and challenges the city must leverage partnerships to incorporate stormwater BMPs during planning and design of development and redevelopment projects. These BMPs aid in reducing runoff volumes and help minimize the quantity and concentration of pollutants in stormwater runoff. The indirect benefit of using these BMPs is that they help minimize the stress on the city's aging infrastructure.

The city also commissioned the development of a model which simulates hydrologic, hydraulics and water quality conditions throughout the city. The model provides the city with information about optimal locations to place BMPs for maximal effectiveness, and it evaluates the overall effectiveness of proposed BMPs associated with development and redevelopment projects.

During the development of its SWMP, the city partnered with its watershed management organizations, local businesses, and the public to identify mutual goals, opportunities and challenges related to surface water quality and stormwater management. Through this outreach the SWMP will incorporate a city-wide integrated and collaborative approach to maximize stormwater and natural system opportunities through land use changes.

Surface Water Management Goals and Strategies

1. Proactively work to reduce pollutants from storm water runoff

Strategies

A. Identify and construct regional treatment facilities.

B. Incorporate treatment and Best Management Practices (BMP's) in pavement management projects.

C. Promote and fund water treatment and infiltration projects through the Rainwater Rewards program.

D. Partner with private landowners and redevelopment projects to construct regional treatment facilities.

2. Provide education and outreach to community

Strategies

A. Educate and ensure that every person understands the stormwater and natural systems and where stormwater goes.

B. Promote stormwater runoff treatment programs, such as the Rainwater Rewards Program.

C. Continue to work with Westwood Hills Nature Center programs.

D. Sponsor clean up and planting events near surface water resources.

3. Enhance floodplain management to better identify flood risks

Strategies

A. Delineate floodplain using current rainfall information and data in stormwater modeling.

B. Utilize stormwater models to predict and identify at risk properties and categorize the level of risk.

C. Identify regional storage and management solutions.

4. Expand city's role in erosion and sediment control

Strategies

A. Enforce city rules and requirement for erosion control on both public and private construction projects.

B. Continue to maintain and repair existing BMP's as necessary.

C. Enhance the current street sweeping program by increasing frequency and efficiency of sweeping techniques.

D. Continue to implement BMPs in all parks and public works maintenance activities.

5. Continue partnerships with Minnehaha Creek Watershed District and the Bassett Creek Water Management Organization on stormwater management

Solid Waste

Solid waste includes garbage, recyclable materials, organic materials, yard waste, appliances, bulk waste and other solid waste from residences or commercial properties. Disposal of this enormous amount of waste has the potential to negatively impact the environment and public health. Waste reduction, reuse and recycling practices hold the greatest potential to reduce the amount of waste being disposed. St. Louis Park is committed to helping its residents reduce waste and increase recycling.

Management of solid waste involves the collection, transport, recycling or disposal of waste materials in an effort to reduce their effect on public health and protect public safety and the environment. The Minnesota State Legislature has set an aggressive recycling goal of reaching 75% recycling by 2030. The city has placed growing emphasis on reducing the amount of solid waste generated by the city by implementing programs and activities that support reuse, recycling and organics and yard waste composting.

Where We Have Been

History of Solid Waste Program

- 1940s- City began contracting for garbage collection service for single family homes.
- 1982 – Curbside recycling pilot began with 2,200 participating households.
- 1984- Citywide recycling program implemented for single family homes.
- 1997 – City began the organized collection process for solid waste collection services.
- 2008- City expanded the curbside program to allow smaller businesses and multifamily residential buildings to participate in the program if their waste could be handled with garbage carts and recycling bins.
- 2013- City rolled out a residential curbside organics program for the collection of food scraps and other compostable material, and also switched to a single-stream recycling program, which allows cans, bottles and paper to be comingled in a single cart.

Leader and Innovator in Solid Waste

St. Louis Park has continued to expand efforts to promote waste reduction and reuse and increase the materials collected for recycling, including:

- Being an early adopter of organics collection when it added residential curbside service in 2013 and organics drop-sites for multifamily residents in 2017.
- Adopting a Zero Waste Packaging ordinance to reduce waste generated by food and beverage containers sold in restaurants and other food establishments.
- Adding events to promote the reuse of clothing, gardening supplies and building materials.
- Expanding the types of materials collected for recycling at annual cleanup events.
- Contracting for residential curbside collection of textiles and small household goods.
- Being the first city in the state to set a minimum capacity requirement for recycling in multifamily buildings

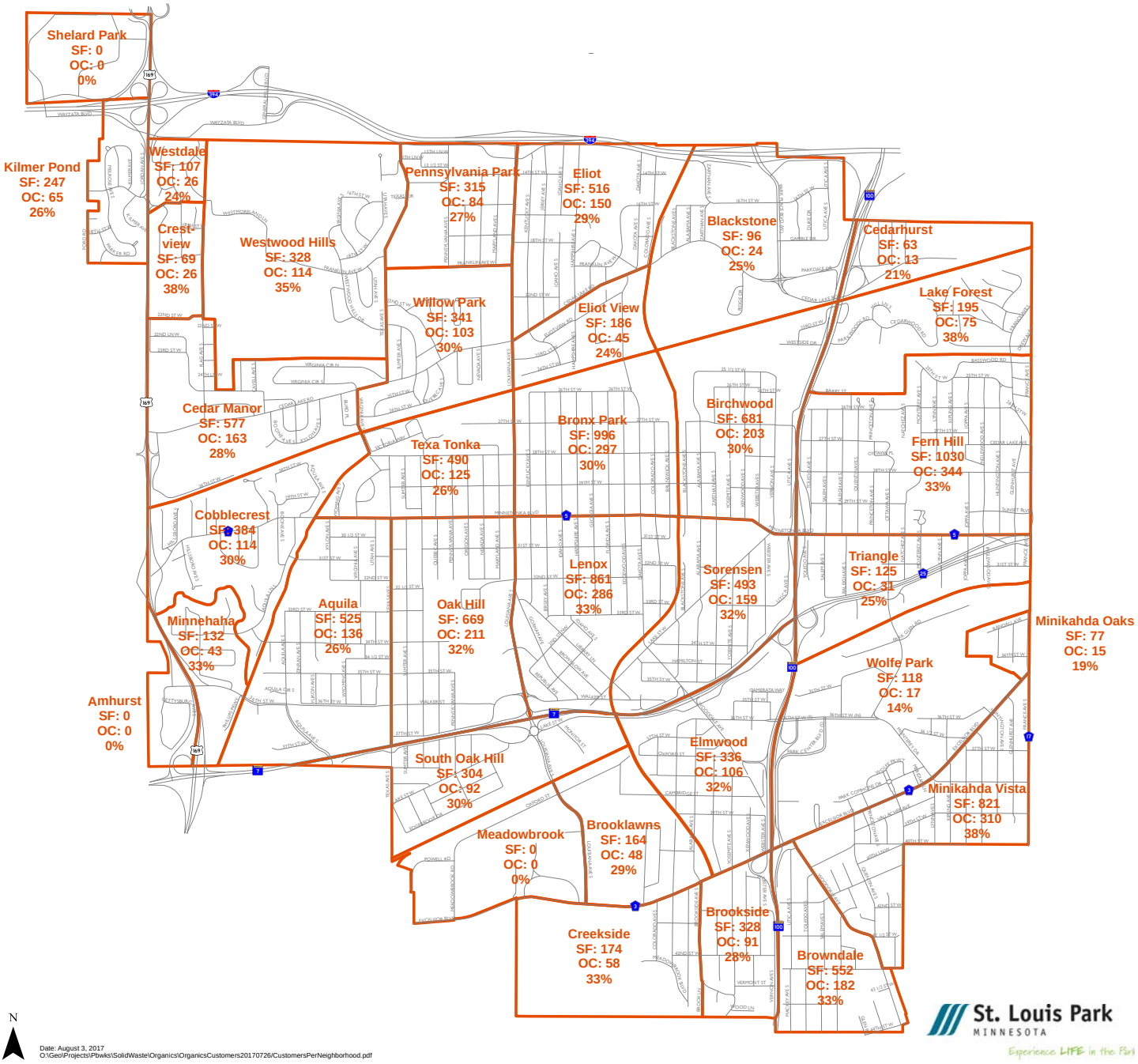
Single-stream Recycling

In 2013 the city's residential recycling program made the switch to single-stream recycling. This program allows residents to commingle their recyclable paper, bottles and cans in a wheeled cart. Previously the city used dual-stream recycling, where cans and bottles were collected separately from papers in plastic totes. This change to single-stream recycling followed an industry trend to switch because of improved technology at the material recovery facilities (MRF) that accept, sort and market recyclable material. The change brought about several benefits, including allowing the city to switch to every-other-week recycling collection, reducing collection truck traffic, idling and wear and tear on city streets. Placing recyclables in lidded carts also greatly reduced litter.

Organics

The city implemented a curbside residential organics program at the end of 2013 for the collection of food scraps, papers such as tissues and paper towels, and certified-compostable food and beverage containers. Initially there was an additional fee to participate. However in 2017 it was included in the solid waste rates and participation doubled from 15% in December 2016 to 30% in November 2017. Figure 4-20 shows organics participation by neighborhood.

Figure 4-20. Organics Participation by Neighborhood (Jan 2018)



SF: Single-family homes with city solid waste services
OC: Homes with organics service.
%: Percent of households participating

Guidance and Goals from Hennepin County

St. Louis Park works with Hennepin County to reach recycling goals set by the Minnesota State Legislature. The city works regularly with the county to standardize educational messages and provide feedback to the County on its Solid Waste Management Master Plan.

Program Funding

The Select Committee on Recycling and the Environment (SCORE) was established by Governor Perpich to provide a funding source for solid waste programs throughout Minnesota. SCORE funds are derived from a state tax on residential and commercial garbage collection and disposal fees, set at 9.75% and 17% respectively. These funds are distributed to counties for solid waste programs, particularly recycling collection. Since 1988 the city has received annual grants from Hennepin County as an aid in supporting the residential curbside recycling program that serves all single family through four-unit residential structures. The County's share of SCORE funds is divided between cities on a proportional basis by the number of households.

The current 2017-2020 SCORE funding policy will continue to fund city recycling programs, but will gradually shift to support organics. The collection of food scraps and other organic material for composting has been identified as the greatest opportunity to reduce trash coming from households in the city. In 2017, 20 percent of funding was allocated to organics programs. By 2020, half of the funding will be dedicated to supporting organics.

Where We Are Today

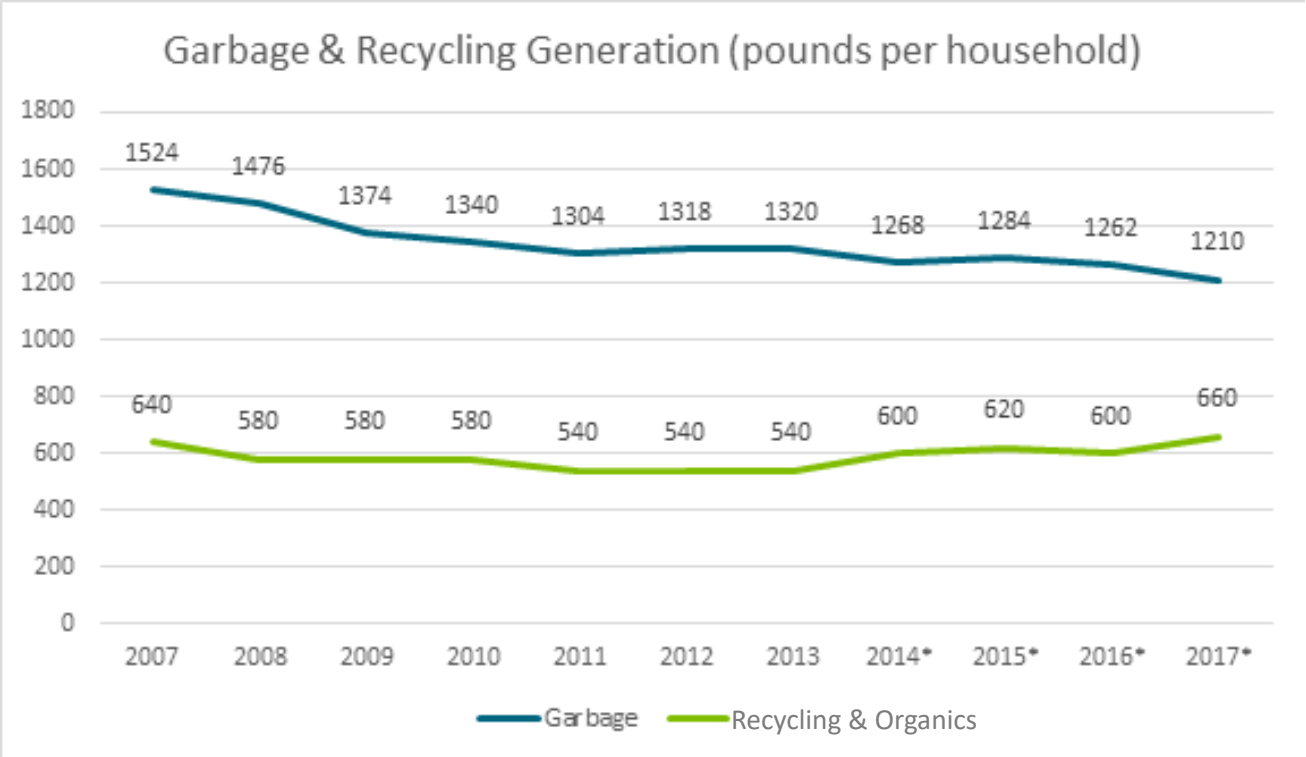
Collection System

Residential Solid Waste History

The city has organized collection through contracts with private haulers for residential collection of garbage, recycling, organics and yard waste for single family homes through four-unit residences.

Figure 4-21 shows that the amount of garbage collected through the city's residential solid waste program over the past ten years has decreased by 2%. During that same time frame the residential recycling rate has grown by one-third of one percent as a result of adding the organics program in 2013, which provides for the collection of food scraps for composting.

Figure 4-21. Comparison between Garbage & Recycling Generation (pounds per household per year)



The reduction in traditional recycling of cans, bottles, paper, and boxes is due to the fact that solid waste is tracked by weight. Recyclables in general are now manufactured with fewer and lighter materials. For example, products that were once packaged in heavier glass bottles and jars have switched to lightweight pouches or cartons. Also, changes in consumer behavior, such as the switch from newspapers to online news have affected recycling rates.

The organics and expanded recycling programs have helped to reduce the total amount of garbage from 10,000 tons in 2000 to 7,425 tons in 2017 (Table 4-29).

Table 4-29. Annual generation by ton for material collected through the city's Residential Solid Waste Program

YEAR	GARBAGE (TONS)	RECYCLING (TONS)	ORGANICS (TONS)
2000	10,004	4,033	0
2007	9,300	3,861	0
2017	7,425	3,510	476

In addition, recycling, organics and yard waste now account for approximately 51% of the total waste generated, which represents an improvement over the figure of 43% from ten years earlier.

Textile Recycling

A surprising amount of textiles are thrown in the trash each year. In addition to encouraging donations to the local charities and holding clothing swaps, the city provides curbside collection of textiles and small home goods for reuse and recycling. The current program began in 2017 when the city entered into a contract with Simple Recycling.

Yard waste collection and brush site

Yard waste, such as leaves, grass clippings, branches, brush, and garden waste, are collected separately from garbage through the residential solid waste program (it has been illegal to put yard waste in the trash since 1992). Yard waste collected in bags must be placed in either paper or certified compostable plastic bags. The city's brush site became available to residents in 2013 for discarding branches, brush or logs that were too big for pickup through the residential collection program. The city also provides free compost, mulch and screened black dirt to residents at the site.

Organics drop-sites for residents of multifamily buildings

In July 2017, the city piloted an organics drop-site program for residents living in multifamily buildings. The program was successful and became permanent in October 2017. Residents of apartments, condominiums and townhomes without city collection service can drop off organics at one of the collection sites around the city.

Disposal

Where does the garbage go?

Approximately one-half of all residential solid waste generated in St. Louis Park is recycled or composted. The remaining garbage is either incinerated or put in landfills. There are no active landfills in St. Louis Park, but several old landfill sites are within its boundaries.

St. Louis Park's residential garbage goes to the Hennepin Energy Recovery Center (HERC), a waste-to-energy facility. The HERC burns garbage and uses the heat to produce steam. The steam is used to generate electricity, which is sold to Xcel Energy, and powers 25,000 homes each year. In addition, HERC provides steam for heating and cooling to the downtown Minneapolis district energy system and Target Field. HERC also reclaims 11,000 tons of ferrous metal from garbage each year. Bulk items that cannot be recycled or burned are put in landfills.

Where do the recyclables go?

Recyclables collected through the city's program are delivered to Waste Management's Recycle America material recovery facility (MRF) where they are sorted, baled and marketed for recycling in Minnesota, the United States and internationally. Textiles and small home goods collected through the textile recycling program are delivered to a consolidation facility in Michigan where the material is sold, with approximately 20% going to thrift organizations, 50% going to be recycled as rag, absorbents, and insulation, 25% is exported as secondhand clothing and about 5% is identified as unusable and unrecyclable.

Where do the organics and yard waste go?

Organics and yard waste collected through the city's program are delivered to Specialized Environmental Technologies' (SET) facilities in the Twin Cities metro for composting. Organics are composted at SET's commercial composting facility in Dakota County. Yard waste is composted at SET's commercial composting facility with organics or at its yard waste facilities in Burnsville or Shakopee. The city receives some of the finished compost, which is free to residents and community gardens.

City Policy and Initiatives

Solid Waste Ordinance (Chapter 22)

The city's solid waste ordinance was revised in 2017. The revised ordinance modernizes definitions, brings the city curbside program requirements in line with current practices, clarifies and improves recycling requirements for multifamily buildings, adds recycling requirements for commercial buildings, revises standards for backyard compost bins and updates bulk material container (dumpster) requirements.

Multifamily Recycling

For some time the city has required multifamily building owners to provide their residents with the opportunity to recycle. In 2017, changes were made to the specific requirements for these programs. Most significantly, a minimum recycling capacity requirement was set to help ensure that sufficient recycling capacity is available in buildings. In addition, an educational requirement was created to address issues of contamination and confusion for multifamily residents. Going forward, property managers will need to provide recycling information to all residents on an annual basis.

In 2017-2018, the city was selected to host a Minnesota GreenCorps member through the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. This allowed the city to do extensive outreach to multifamily properties, gather data on existing recycling services and provide educational materials to property managers.

Commercial Recycling

In 2018, the city adopted the state law into city code for recycling at existing commercial buildings. More specific requirements were also set for new construction, including the requirement that any building with a licensed food establishment will be required to provide organics recycling.

Zero Waste Packaging Ordinance

St. Louis Park's Zero Waste Packaging Ordinance took effect January 1, 2017, and requires that licensed food establishments use packaging that is reusable, recyclable or compostable when serving food and beverages that are intended for immediate consumption, regardless of where the item is consumed (on site or taken to-go). If the packaging is used to serve food on-site, appropriate recycling and/or organics recycling receptacles and hauling service must be in place.

Parks Recycling

The city received a Hennepin County Public Space Recycling Grant in 2016 to improve recycling in city parks. Recycling carts were added to 41 parks, and recycling collected increased by 204% during the first year. Standard signage was also added, which included images of recyclable materials that can be placed in the cart. In 2018 the city will be expanding recycling education for park users that rent spaces for special events to increase recycling and decrease contamination in recycling carts.

Event Recycling

Staff supports event recycling whenever possible. Events can include large celebrations such as Parktacular and small gatherings such as neighborhood block parties. Resident volunteers trained through the Recycling Champions program have been mobilized to assist event attendees with sorting recyclables and compostables from the trash. In 2018 the city was awarded a Minnesota Recreation and Parks Association Award of Excellence for this volunteer mobilization effort.

City Programs

In addition to curbside collection programs, the city is directly involved in events and educational activities to promote waste reduction and recycling as well as special collection events for problem materials.

Reuse Events

In 2017 the city began hosting clothing and gardeners' swap events as a way to promote reuse. Anyone was welcome to participate, free of charge. The city plans to host more reuse events in the coming years.

CLOTHING SWAPS

In the two clothing swap events:

- 210 people participated
- 2,700 pounds of clothing and accessories were brought
  - 1,555 swapped
  - 965 pounds donated to charities

Spring and Fall Cleanup Days

Twice a year, the city provides a cleanup day event for residents. At these events the city charges a fee to accept material for disposal, recycling or reuse. Such events highlight the city's commitment to the environment by providing convenient disposal options to discourage illegal dumping and collecting items that have limited recycling options.

Winter Mini-Cleanup

The city held its first winter cleanup event in 2018. This was a mini version of the regular cleanups both in time and scope. Residents were able to drop off confidential papers for shredding, batteries and holiday lights and electrical cords. These items are all problem materials in the curbside recycling program. Providing convenient opportunities for residents to properly discard these items helps reduce contamination in recycling.

Education and Outreach

Public works staff provides information and education through various media to encourage waste reduction and recycling. Educational efforts focus on reducing waste, increasing recycling and organics, properly disposing of problem materials and encouraging backyard composting. Education is provided through the city's website, social media, Park Perspective newsletters, the Sun Sailor newspaper, ads in the City-School calendar and individual mailings. Staff members also host workshops and open houses, visit with residents, attend public events, and meet with school children to teach them about garbage and recycling. Most recently, staff leveraged social media using Facebook and Instagram accounts to share images of common and not-so-common items and how to recycle or dispose of them. The photos are accessible through the city's Facebook page photo album called the "Know Before You Throw Guide."

Recycling Champions

The Recycling Champions program was launched in 2017 to engage residents who are interested in learning more about recycling. Residents serve as ambassadors in the community and share what they learn with family, friends and neighbors.

In the first year of the program, 70 residents signed up and 50 attended training to serve as Recycling Champions in the community. Several volunteered at events, shared resources at neighborhood parties and educated fellow residents on topics related to recycling. City staff continues to work with these enthusiastic volunteers to promote quality recycling and waste prevention in the city.

Community Partnerships

In 2018, the city partnered with the Recycling Association of Minnesota (RAM) to increase awareness and participation in the city's organics program. RAM worked in the city to educate residents through presentations at neighborhood meetings and educational workshops for new and existing organics participants. RAM's work was funded through a Hennepin County Green Partners Grow Grant. City staff continues to work to identify community partners as well as other innovative ways to reach residents with information on waste reduction, reuse and recycling opportunities.

Where We Are Headed

Future Initiatives

Optional Every-Other-Week Garbage Collection

The city conducted an every-other-week garbage pilot from September 2017 – March 2018 to test the use of an every other week garbage collection frequency for residents that produce small amounts of trash. The city added this service option for garbage collection beginning January 2019.

Compost Use

The city promotes the use of compost to residents because it builds healthy soils through increasing water and nutrient holding capacity and reducing erosion, among other benefits. Beginning in 2018, the city's contract for composting organics and yard waste includes a requirement for finished compost to be made available to residents, community gardens and special events each year. The city's climate action plan includes using compost as a soil amendment for public and private construction projects as one of many actions to support the plan. The city will also consider adding compost use to the Environmental Purchasing Policy and will explore further use of compost in construction projects through the city's Storm Water Management Plan.

Source Separated Organics

In 2019 the city began collecting organics and yard waste separately. This new collection method allows organics to be processed more efficiently and reduces the space that the city's material takes up in the processing area at the commercial composting facility. This collection method also allows the city to more accurately track the amount of food scraps and other organics that are collected through the program and better address contamination issues. The organics program has had a very low contamination rate since the program began in 2013, and has maintained a 1.5% contamination rate for the past two years.

Support Deconstruction

Construction and demolition are sources of large volumes of waste, however it is not often included in discussions of recycling and reuse. Most often when a building is taken down, it is bulldozed and much of the material is landfilled, though metal and concrete are often recycled. Deconstruction of homes and businesses can preserve the value of materials for future use. Windows, doors, fixtures and even lumber can be carefully removed such that they can be repurposed by others. The city has begun partnering with Hennepin County and others to support deconstruction in St. Louis Park. The city will work to lead by example by considering and opting for deconstruction when possible on publicly owned structures. In addition, staff will educate residents and the private sector on deconstruction options. In partnership with local non-profits, the city will host a new event to collect usable building materials in fall 2019.

Solid Waste Goals and Strategies

1. Continue to Provide Education and Outreach to Community

Strategies

A. Incorporate innovative or non-traditional outreach methods to educate community members on recycling and waste reduction.

B. Create and provide multi-lingual education.

C. Focus education on event recycling for users of city-owned properties.

D. Identify opportunities for internal education.

2. Support and Increase Waste Reduction

Strategies

A. Continue to improve and enforce the city's zero waste packaging ordinance.

B. Adopt a waste reduction plan to achieve a 50% reduction in garbage, citywide, by 2050.

C. Continue to adjust city solid waste rates to support pay-as-you-throw rate model.

D. Continue to explore deconstruction opportunities in residential and commercial demolition projects.

3. Support Repair/Reuse/Recycling/ Composting Markets

Strategies

A. Ensure that city purchases include recycled content.

B. Work toward a requirement that approved compost is used for city parks, roads, private development and construction projects.

C. Develop and implement a soil management policy for any construction projects (public/private) to improve organic content of soil through the use of compost.

4. Increase Recycling & Organics Recycling

Strategies

A. Increase residential organics recycling participation to 50% by 2030 and 80% by 2040.

B. Continue to support multifamily recycling by identifying properties to include in residential collection program and research the feasibility of incorporating small dumpster service in future city contracts for small to mid-sized multifamily buildings.

C. Educate and enforce the commercial and multifamily recycling requirements of the Solid Waste Ordinance.

D. Improve public space event recycling through increasing availability of recycling containers, improving signage, mobilizing volunteers and other best management practices.

Utilities

Phone, Cable and Internet Services

Telephone service is provided primarily by CenturyLink, which was formerly Qwest. CenturyLink provides local service in 14 states including Minnesota. It is a leading provider of voice, video and data services across America.

Cable services are provided primarily by Comcast. Comcast was founded in 1963, and provides service in 40 states and in the District of Columbia. Across the nation, they provide cable to more than 24 million customers, high-speed Internet to more than 14 million customers and digital voice service to more than 6 million customers.

Both CenturyLink and Comcast provide traditional cable tv, telephony, and Internet services. Dish and Direct TV are two active satellite TV providers.

In addition to CenturyLink and Comcast, communications services are also available through Time Warner Telecom, US Internet, Arvig, Verizon, AT&T, Sprint and others.

Small Cell Wireless Ordinance

On May 30, 2017, Governor Mark Dayton signed a bill amending the state's Telecommunications Right-of-Way User Law. This law restricts the city's ability to control installation of small cell wireless technology in public right-of-way. Under the new law, cities may continue to require a permit to install small wireless facilities, however, the law significantly limits the city's ability to deny the proposed installations.

Electric Service

Xcel Energy provides electrical service in St. Louis Park. Based in Minneapolis, Xcel Energy operates in eight states. The company was formed in 2000 upon the merger of Minneapolis-based Northern States Power (NSP) and Denver-based New Century Energies.

Natural Gas

Centerpoint Energy (formerly Minnegasco) provides natural gas to St. Louis Park. Centerpoint operates in six states, and is the largest distributor in Minnesota.

Fiber Optics Service

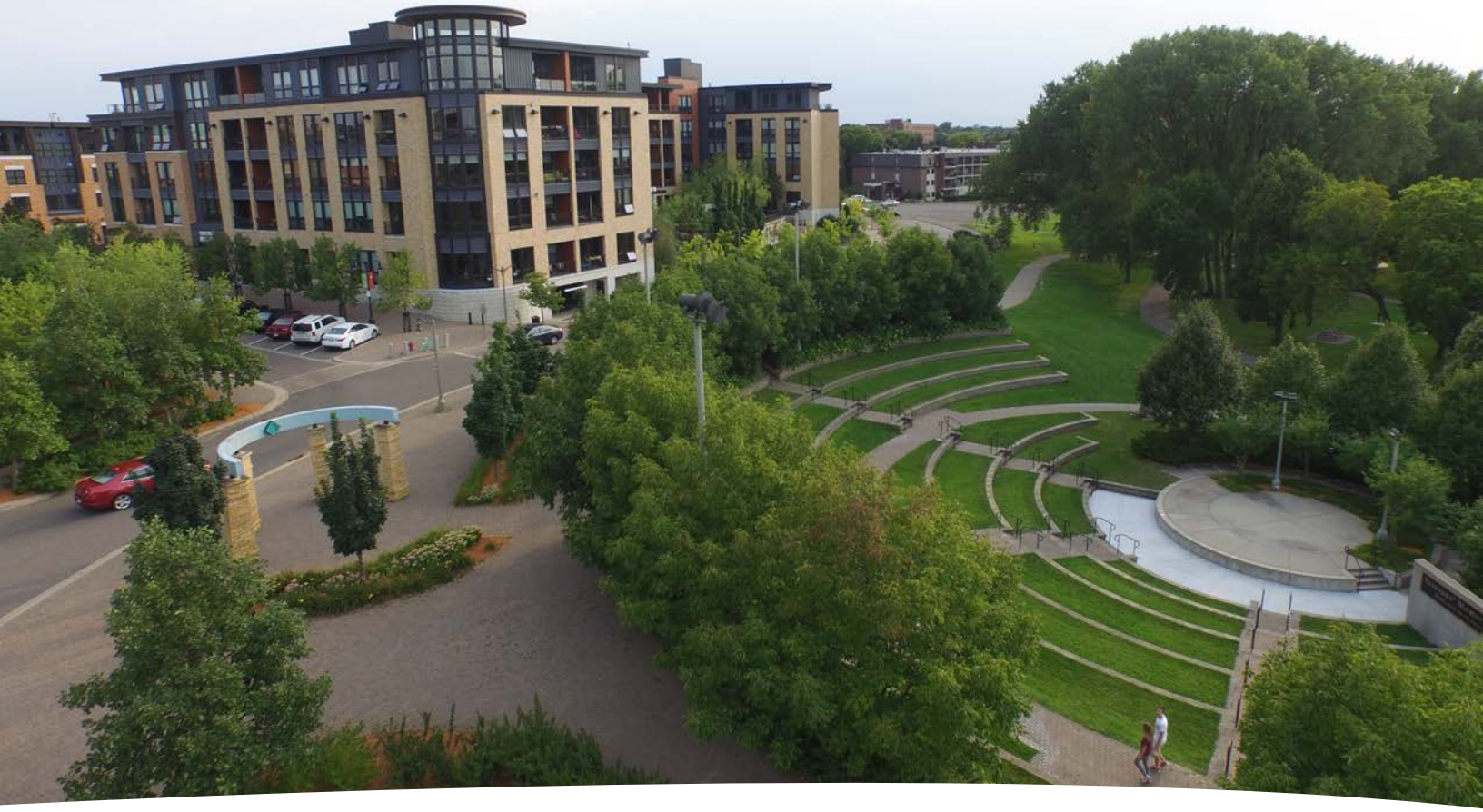
The city, St. Louis Park School District and LOGIS (Local Government Information Systems) collectively own approximately 50 miles of fiber optics. The fiber is spread throughout the community, but is also concentrated at locations of city and school owned buildings, where demand for service by these two organizations is greatest.

St. Louis Park has adopted the goal of being a technology connected community. To pursue this goal, the city will:

1. Continue to take advantage of public works construction projects to inexpensively install at least conduit to support future fiber connections;
2. Use existing and additional fiber conduit to build redundant fiber connections to major public buildings to support disaster recovery and business continuity; and
3. Consider leasing unused fiber strand capacity to other parties to accelerate deployment of high-speed broadband capacity to homes and business as part of an overall community and economic development strategy.

In 2017, over 8 miles of fiber infrastructure were built; redundant fiber connections added and a disaster recovery site was established to help keep critical services operational. Fiber strand capacity was also leased to Arvig and to US Internet to support fiber-to-the-home and business (also known as "fiber-to-the-premise"). This helps improve choice, competition, and state-of-the-art broadband in the city. Similar efforts are programmed to continue in the future.

Page intentionally left blank



Chapter 5
A Livable Community

Vision for a Livable Community

St. Louis Park's land use and development is guided by its vision of creating and maintaining a very "livable community." As a result of Vision 3.0, one of the city's five Strategic Priorities states "St. Louis Park is committed to providing a broad range of housing and neighborhood-oriented development." The city's vision for land use and development is focused on creating livable neighborhoods with a variety of housing choices and access to neighborhood-oriented businesses, services, recreation and gathering spaces. The community's ten Livable Community Principles embrace the best design practices from the past and the present for creating a complete and connected community that integrates housing, schools, shops, workplaces, parks, and civic facilities essential to the daily life of the community.

St. Louis Park's Livable Community Principles consist of:

1. Walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods
2. Life-cycle housing choices
3. Higher density, mixed-use development
4. Human scale development
5. Transit-oriented development
6. Multi-modal streets and pathways
7. Preserved and enhanced natural environment
8. Attractive and convenient public gathering places
9. Public art, heritage, and culture
10. Unique community and neighborhood identity

To achieve St. Louis Park's Vision 3.0 and Livable Community Principles, the land use plan provides guidance for the community's desired land use patterns, mix of uses, density, site/building design, and neighborhood planning. The Livable Community Principles are intended to provide guidance at multiple geographic scales—community, neighborhood, street, block front, and individual parcel—for future redevelopment, infill development, and public infrastructure reinvestment.

Although many redevelopment parcels and adjacent street patterns may not be readily conducive to Livable Community design, there is a need to find ways to adapt these principles without compromising their general intent. Redevelopment and infill development must look beyond the boundaries of the project and consider how pedestrians, local residents, and nearby workers are affected. All development adds to and fits within the larger context of the block front, street, neighborhood, and community.

Walkable, Mixed-Use Neighborhoods

The most important aspect of an ideal walkable neighborhood is that it provides convenient connections. People should be able to easily and safely connect to parks, shopping, services, food, and other amenities within their own neighborhood or nearby. Neighborhoods should be small enough so that services are within a five-minute walk (1/4 mile). Neighborhoods should have identifiable edges, a focal point, and public gathering spaces. Housing should be located with convenient access to neighborhood shops, parks, transit, pedestrian and bike paths, and public open spaces.

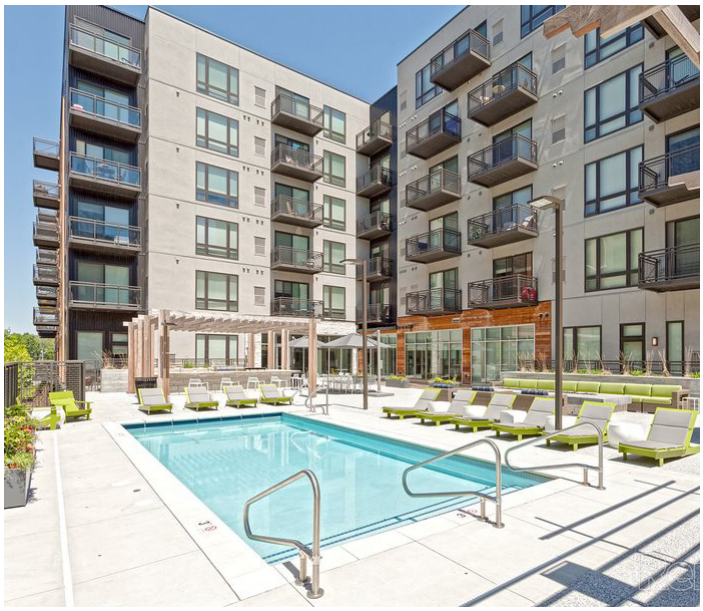
Ideally, neighborhoods consist of a network of interconnected streets rather than dead-end streets, which limit neighborhood connections by reducing social contact among neighbors and forcing all traffic onto arterial streets. Residents may be forced to travel unnecessarily long distances or drive to reach close destinations. Interconnected streets provide multiple choices to travel between two points, and distribute traffic without loading most traffic onto one or two main streets. Residents also come to know, interact with, and identify with their neighborhood and neighbors by way of these connected street patterns.

Factors that determine whether design is pedestrian-oriented include pedestrian safety, distance between home and required services, orientation and scale of buildings, and aesthetics. Pedestrian-oriented design encourages some frequently needed uses to be located within neighborhoods. Encouraging pedestrian activity actually increases safety in neighborhoods, since the presence of people deters crime. Pedestrian needs and destinations change depending upon age. Connecting neighborhoods to parks, schools, recreation, retail, services, and regional systems all need consideration.

Life-Cycle Housing Choices

St. Louis Park's reputation as a desirable community to live in means existing residents want to stay and new residents are attracted to moving to the city. Both existing and new residents are interested in the availability of housing choices that fit where they are in their household's life-cycle. The city's Vision 3.0 process identified affordable housing as an important community value and that affordable housing means different things to different people. Housing choices are different based on where a household is in its life-cycle, e.g. first-time home buyers, current income level, increasing household size, and empty nesters/seniors. One of the Vision 3.0 recommendations is to "Develop Creative Housing Solutions" that address households' lifecycle and affordability needs. As a result, one of the city's five 2018 Strategic Priorities states: "St. Louis Park is committed to providing a broad range of housing and neighborhood-oriented development." This means that the city will encourage the provision of housing choices to meet the needs of its residents through all stages of life.

Examples of households' different life-cycles and housing needs include first-time buyers looking for single-family homes in St. Louis Park that are affordable compared to similar and potentially newer homes in other communities. Empty nesters trading single-family detached housing for condominiums, townhouses or some other form of housing where maintenance is low. Older people often again desire to rent. Other elderly housing incorporates such types of housing as assisted living. Neighborhoods ought to encourage interaction between people of all ages, cultures, and socioeconomic status. A range of housing choices allows people to stay within a neighborhood throughout their life cycles. This provides stability to the neighborhood and to the larger community. When housing types are mixed within neighborhoods, even closer life-long ties to the community can be achieved.



Higher Density, Mixed-Use Development

Historically, commercial development in the city contained buildings oriented toward the street with upper story office and residential uses. Zoning Ordinances adopted in the 1950s outlawed new mixed use buildings, requiring instead a separation of uses for new construction. This development pattern, although intended to increase the quiet enjoyment of residential areas, also had the unintended result of single story strip commercial development with large parking lots abutting the street and single story warehouse retail surrounded by parking lots. Overcoming this development pattern will take considerable time. Improving pedestrian access to these areas in the meantime will require considerable effort. New commercial developments typically follow suburban development patterns because these have been accepted by commercial users and financing organizations. One important challenge facing supporters of this kind of development will be to convince institutions to support these development and community principles.

Mixed-use development means two or more uses are contained within the same building. Residential mixed-use also means mixed-income housing, mixed types of housing on the same block, and higher density development. Sometimes there is a perception that high density means congested streets. In fact, high density often results in reduced automobile trips, because higher densities can support local retail and services as well as transit, all of which can reduce automobile trips.

Transit Oriented Development

Funds for building and expanding highways are not keeping up with congestion, and expanding highway capacity generally increases demand. Effective public transit is an alternative to the automobile which is more sustainable both in long term infrastructure costs and energy conservation. Design for and around transit is very important to the long-term viability of any community.

Land use plays an important role when considering transit. As many activities as possible should be located within easy walking distance of transit stops. This includes jobs, shopping, and services, and housing.

Ideally, every neighborhood would have a transit stop to enable residents' connection to the wider community without being dependent on an automobile. Many neighborhoods have low population and job densities, which limit the feasibility of either economically prudent or convenient transit service. Therefore, economically efficient transit must provide a balance between serving a wide area and providing frequent service.

Human-Scale Development

Great buildings and site design not only serve the private enterprise for which they are constructed, they also positively contribute to the character of a community and can find a place in the heart of the people who live there. There are certain design characteristics that contribute to creating great buildings:

- Commercial buildings should be sized in proportion to the width of the street at a minimum ratio of 1:4 building height to street width. Low commercial buildings do a poor job of defining streets. If a road is too wide, cars drive too fast. Commercial buildings should be at least two stories high.
- Buildings should have a human scale. Taller buildings may be brought into human scale by creating intimate details on the first floor and setting back upper stories.
- Buildings should be required to be built to a fixed line instead of a minimum commercial building setback.
- Windows are required on all sides of a building. This improves the appearance of buildings and allows more light from the building to light the adjacent sidewalks.
- Buildings require detail and adornment.
- Buildings should reflect local materials and climate. Buildings which respond to environmental conditions such as light and weather are more efficient and sustainable.
- Buildings should be built of lasting and quality materials.
- Building siding applications, window proportions, porch dimensions, entrances, roof pitches should meet material and design requirements.

Human scale development allows people to connect with one another. Sidewalks of ample size with street trees and pedestrian lighting allow people to move freely throughout a neighborhood. Exterior architectural elements such as porches and balconies invite interaction with passers-by. Windows that open to the street allow observation, increasing safety. Meeting places such as parks and coffee shops reinforce interaction. Fences, gates, low walls, gardens, steps, front porches, and stoops are all transitional elements allowing connections.

Human scale development is achieved when parking is accommodated on the street, to the rear of buildings, or in parking structures.

Multi-Modal Streets and Pathways

Streets are part of the public realm and define the community by street width, landscaping, architectural edges, street lights, street furniture, etc. Streets also serve as neighborhood edges and define blocks. As connectors, streets must serve both local needs and those of people passing through and must serve vehicles as well as pedestrians. Some separation is desirable between pedestrian and vehicles, and this buffer can be achieved through means such as allowing on-street parking and landscaping features.

Many streets were originally designed primarily to move automobile traffic smoothly. In addition, many areas of the city were originally developed without sidewalks. Highway construction and road expansions have limited neighborhood-to-neighborhood accessibility, and in some cases, safe pedestrian crossings of major streets and safe access to desirable community destinations are scarce.

The role of streets to define neighborhood edges, allow safe pedestrian and bike movement, and provide for local needs will need to assert a greater importance in the future. Sidewalks separated from car traffic by landscaped boulevards or parked cars increases pedestrian safety. Pedestrian-oriented street design also means interesting, safe, and easy pedestrian movement within a community.

Consideration must also be given to barriers to pedestrian activity, such as busy streets, highways, and railroad tracks.

- New subdivisions and large infill developments should incorporate building, block, lot, and street designs that support Livable Communities principles.
- One asset of older urban design which was eliminated in newer suburban design is the alley. Alleys serve a utility function, i.e. vehicle parking, garbage removal, and utility lines, thereby leaving streets along property frontages to be more aesthetically pleasing, functional, and supportive of community interactions.
- Commercial buildings should be built to a fixed line consistent with the adjacent street frontage, rather than built with a minimum setback requirement or with on-site parking between the building and the street.
- The needs of pedestrians, bicycles, and transit must be considered in the mobility network, as well as the siting and orientation of buildings adjacent to the public realm. The needs of automobiles, truck, loading and service areas must also be considered, but negative impacts upon other modes and the public realm should be minimized. Adding sidewalks and bike lanes on streets where none exist can be challenging for neighborhood residents in terms of existing vegetation, costs, and maintenance expectations but should be balanced with the broader community needs for a strong mobility network.

Preserved and Enhanced Natural Environment

The city seeks to preserve and enhance the integrity of the natural resources within the community and each neighborhood. Natural resources include lakes, ponds, creeks, other drainageways, wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, trees, and vegetation. A livable community strives for a well-designed balance between nature and development to preserve natural resources, protect waterways from pollution and erosion, reduce air pollution, create aesthetic and recreational amenities, and protect property values. Preservation and enhancement of the community's unique natural features also serves a source of community and neighborhood identity. For St. Louis Park, Minnehaha Creek, lakes, wetlands, and remaining wooded areas are the most significant natural features.

Attractive and Convenient Public Gathering Places

Public gathering places are a primary focus of Livable Community design, as well as a value identified in the city's Visioning process. Public gathering places are defined as both public (parks, plazas, civic facilities, schools, libraries) and private spaces (religious facilities, cafes, entertainment venues, etc.) that provide opportunities for public gathering. Such places provide opportunities for social connections and also connect people to jobs, shopping, entertainment, recreation, and transit. Public gathering places can be focused at community and neighborhood centers or dispersed within neighborhoods and are the fabric that holds neighborhoods together as a community.

In the 1970s when large quantities of multi-family housing were constructed, a lack of park land was identified as a community issue. City codes did not require park dedication unless the land involved was already designated on the Comprehensive Plan as park. Rather than requiring public park land dedication for all multi-family development, the city codes were amended to require privately designed outdoor recreation spaces for these developments in addition to collecting park and trail dedication fees (cash in-lieu-of-land) to improve the city park system.

Neighborhoods are also enhanced when a proper transition separates or transitions the spaces between the public realm and neighborhood dwellings. Fences, gates, low walls, gardens, steps, front porches, stoops, stairs, and landscaping are all elements that aid the transition from public to private space.

Public Art, Heritage, and Culture

Public art enhances community pride and the civic prominence of important public places. It includes outdoor sculpture, fountains, gardens, and building decoration. Public art also may include unique design in street furniture and transit shelters.

Historic buildings, landmarks, and artifacts link the past, the present and the future and can provide meaning and context to the life of the community.

Cultural activities provide residents with diverse backgrounds (ethnic, religious, etc.) and interests with opportunities to celebrate and share their cultures, increasing the sense of belonging to all community members and increasing awareness of the cultural beliefs and values of other people in the community.

Unique Community and Neighborhood Identity

St. Louis Park's unique history, community development, diversity of neighborhoods, and innovative community planning enable the city to maintain and enhance its unique identity and sense of place. The Park Commons "town center" development was primarily the result of the community's desire for having a vibrant downtown in the community and strengthening the community's sense of identity.

Traditionally, neighborhoods have functioned as important social networks that energize and stabilize the community. Neighborhoods can provide support for individuals and families and a source of friendship and companionship. St. Louis Park has 35 neighborhoods, which are the backbone of the community's unique identity, and many of them have active neighborhood organizations.

Optimal neighborhood size is a function of how far a person would be willing to travel as a pedestrian without using some other mode of transportation. This distance is typically about 1/4 mile, or a five-minute walk. Optimum neighborhood size is based upon this "willing to walk" distance. The community is committed to neighborhood planning as a means to enhance the livability of each neighborhood and strengthen the unique identity of each neighborhood.

Land Use Plan

Where We Have Been

Residential

Village Center

Residential development in St. Louis Park emanated out from the original village center, which was at the intersection of the Minneapolis & St. Louis Railroad (now Canadian Pacific Railroad) and Wooddale Avenue, followed by the growth from Minneapolis into the western suburbs. Some of the earliest houses were constructed by Monitor Works, a manufacturer of grain seeders, for factory workers. A few of these houses still exist in the Elmwood neighborhood.

A wide variety of housing stock was constructed over time ranging from cottages and factory-built housing to large contemporary units with Queen Anne, Prairie, English Tudor, Cape Cod, Colonial, and rambler designs in between. However, the most common house type in St. Louis Park is the Cape Cod or small rambler built during the housing boom which occurred after 1939.

Post-War Housing Boom

From 1940 to 1950, growth averaged the equivalent of seven people moving into St. Louis Park every day! This dramatic population increase was due to a pent up demand for housing resulting from the depression of the 1930s and World War II, which brought construction to a standstill. After the war, returning veterans, easy home financing through the G.I. Bill, FHA amortized 30 year loans, and "assembly line" type construction methods spurred the flurry of home construction in St. Louis Park where previous land speculation had already created thousands of platted building lots.

In 1949, Donovan Construction Co. received approval to build Meadowbrook Manor (recently renamed Era on Excelsior) overlooking Meadowbrook Golf Course at the Excelsior Boulevard and Louisiana Avenue intersection. At the time, this development of 556 apartments in 58 buildings was the largest multi-family housing development in the Midwest.

High Density Infill

Since the boom period of the 1940s and 1950s, very few single-family homes have been built in St. Louis Park. Of the 11,623 single-family homes in the city in 2017, 96% of these homes built prior to 1970. Most of the new housing constructed during the past 60 years has been apartments, condominiums, and townhouses. The city experienced an apartment boom in the 1960s, first with smaller apartment buildings, then with the construction of larger apartment buildings in subsequent decades. All of the townhouses and condominiums in the city were built after 1970. Over the past decade the city has seen a resurgence in the construction of apartment buildings.

Commercial

Village Center

By the 1890s, development of a commercial village center was noticeable. Three hotels, a grocery store, drug store, and other development existed in and around a block of brick buildings constructed by T. B. Walker around what is now Lake and Walker Streets. A streetcar line connected this block with Minneapolis. However, T. B. Walker's original vision for the village changed, first due to the financial panic of 1893, and then the depression of the late 1890s. At the end of World War I only seven scattered retail stores operated in St. Louis Park.

The streetcar provided easy access to shopping and employment opportunities in Minneapolis and may have contributed to the failure of a strong "downtown" to develop. Except for a few buildings in the Historic Walker Lake district, including the original Walker Building, the original commercial center no longer exists.

Automobile-Oriented Retail

As transportation shifted away from streetcar to automobile, the retail and service areas moved toward highways as a response. In the 1940s, the 30,000 square foot Lilac Way was constructed on the northeast corner of Excelsior Boulevard and Highway 100, the busiest intersection outside of Minneapolis and St. Paul at the time. Lilac Way was the first shopping center in the state, but was demolished in the late 1980s to make way for a redevelopment project.

In 1950, Miracle Mile, which is still located on the southeast corner of Excelsior Boulevard and Highway 100, was the most prominent shopping area outside the two downtowns of St. Paul and Minneapolis. Across from Miracle Mile, on the north side of Excelsior Boulevard, Park Village was constructed in 1995 and provided restaurants, movie theater, and a variety of other small retail businesses. Park Village is adjacent to the city's second Target store, which opened in 1986, and a Byerly's grocery store, which opened in 1980.

Knollwood Mall was constructed adjacent to MN Highway 7 in 1956, and until development of the "Dales" was the largest shopping center in the western suburbs. The regional significance of this shopping center diminished over time with major retail stores leaving and the center reorganizing its retail and service composition to stay viable.

The nearby Knollwood Village, which opened in 1977 next to the Knollwood Target store, is a community retail strip center consisting of a variety of large and small retail businesses. In 2015, the Knollwood Mall property owner reinvested and repositioned the mall as The Shoppes of Knollwood.

Employment

Manufacturing and Railroads

Initial industrial development in St. Louis Park sought opportunities to work together with Minneapolis investors to capitalize upon the village's strategic location. The earliest industrial development consisted of factories manufacturing mostly farm implements, such as Monitor Works.

After the financial panic of 1893, industrial base diversification became an objective to lessen the vulnerability to economic swings. The location of three railroads through the village helped that endeavor. Grain elevators were located along railroad corridors to store grain until ready for milling. In fact, the nation's first tubular concrete grain elevator was completed in 1899 on the site just southeast of Highway 7 and Highway 100. Initially called "Peavey's Folly", this experiment became a model for later concrete elevators, which replaced wood elevators which were subject to fires and grain explosions. This elevator is recognized by the Historic Landmark Register, and is now part of the NordicWare campus.

In 1910 the Milwaukee Railroad constructed the Bass Lake Yard, a major railroad classification and switching yard. This yard could handle 1,800 cars on 28 tracks. Prior to 1913, the Great Northern also built a classification yard in St. Louis Park, the Cedar Lake Yard, just east of Highway 100 which peaked with 900 cars and 12 tracks. Both yards were still active in the 1950s.

Reilly Tar and Chemical Corporation also found an 80-acre location in the heart of the original industrial core and began operations in 1917. This operation treated the wooden railroad ties necessary for building and repairing railroad lines with a preservative to prevent rotting. This enterprise closed its St. Louis Park operation in 1972 and moved to another state. Creosote, the chemical preservative used in this procedure, has left significant pollution and has presented impediments to redevelopment of the site, although the 1980s and 1990s did see some residential and park redevelopment in the area.

The Great Depression had a significant impact on St. Louis Park. A major industry, Monitor Company (manufacturers of grain seeders), merged with Minneapolis Moline and closed its St. Louis Park factory. The city council, in an attempt to provide jobs for unemployed local residents, initiated work programs using money from the Works Progress Administration (WPA). A new high school, sewers, and water mains were built through the WPA during this period.

Industries continued to locate in St. Louis Park after the depression, including several heavy industrial uses. At the end of World War II, eight gravel mines were in operation. Three new industrial parks were planned and platted to invite lighter industrial uses to provide jobs for the growing population.

Clean Up and Conversion

However, as the population of St. Louis Park grew, many industrial uses were found to be incompatible with residential uses because of noise, smell, and appearance. Gravel mines were depleted. Some industrial buildings became functionally obsolete because new industrial technology demanded larger buildings with higher ceilings. The number of acres devoted to industry has been consistently decreasing. In 1985, 850 acres were zoned for industrial uses. As of 2018, that number has decreased to 345 acres.

Many former industrial sites were eventually replaced with residential or other commercial uses. Beginning in the 1980s, the city has been successful in cleaning up and redeveloping former industrial and railroad-related lands for residential development and park land, such as the Louisiana Oaks Park and Bass Lake Preserve areas.

Medical Center and Services

As St. Louis Park grew in population, the need for services also grew. In the late 1940s a group of 11 ex-army doctors started a clinic in a small building on Excelsior Boulevard known as the St. Louis Park Medical Center. In 1983, the St. Louis Park Medical Center merged with the Nicollet Clinic to form the Park Nicollet Clinic. In 1993, Park Nicollet Clinic merged with Methodist Hospital (another long-standing St. Louis Park medical institution) to become Park Nicollet Health Services. Park Nicollet has continued to grow, adding new and expanded clinics in St. Louis Park, such as heart and vascular, cancer, and eating disorder centers. In 2013, Park Nicollet merged with HealthPartners, making it the second largest medical clinic in Minnesota after the Mayo Clinic in Rochester.

Where We Are Today

Existing Land Use

In 2018, the municipal boundaries of St. Louis Park contain an area of just over 10.5 square miles (6,908.75 acres) and approximately 13,800 parcels. The existing mix and pattern of land uses reflects the community's original development pattern, the boom development period of the 1940s-1960s, infill areas that developed later, as well as areas that have experienced dramatic change through more recent redevelopment projects. Distribution of existing land uses is summarized Table 5-1 and illustrated in Figure 5-1.

Table 5-1. Existing Land Use, 2018

EXISTING LAND USE	GROSS ACRES	NET ACRES	% NET
Single Family Detached	2,343.49	2,310.29	33.44%
Single Family Attached	131.25	122.11	1.77%
Multifamily	378.26	368.06	5.33%
Mixed Use Residential	18.73	18.73	0.27%
Retail & Other Commercial	337.98	337.97	4.89%
Office	136.51	132.64	1.92%
Mixed Use Commercial	11.14	11.14	0.16%
Industrial & Utility	373.82	344.64	4.99%
Mixed Use Industrial	10.71	10.71	0.16%
Institutional	321.99	302.04	4.37%
Park, Recreational, or Preserve	823.85	497.97	7.21%
Golf Course	292.39	249.99	3.62%
Railroad	129.05	119.89	1.74%
ROW	1,518.48	1,510.11	21.86%
Undeveloped	81.08	73.01	1.06%
Water/Wetlands	-	499.45	7.23%
Total	6,908.75	6,908.75	100.00%

Source: City of St. Louis Park, HKGi 2018

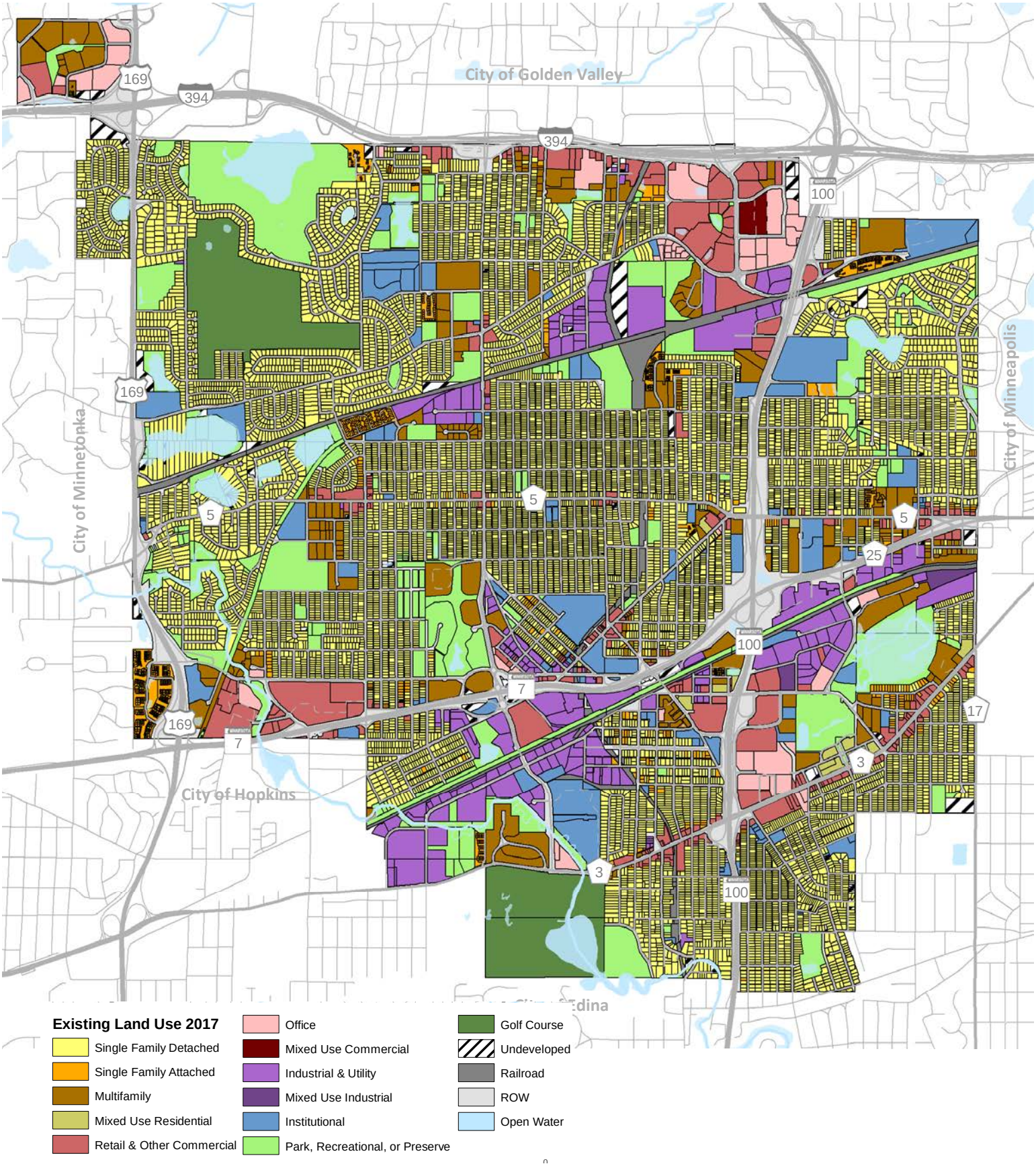
Residential

Residential land uses account for approximately 40% of all existing land within St. Louis Park. The city differentiates between existing residential land uses by housing type:

- Single family detached
- Single family attached
- Multifamily

Single family detached accounts for about 82% of all existing residential land and 33% of all land in the city, followed by multifamily residential at 13% of existing residential land, and single family attached at 4%.

Figure 5-1. Existing Land Use 2017



Commercial

Existing commercial land uses account for approximately 5% of the city's land (338 acres) while existing office uses account for approximately 2% of the city's land (133 acres). Existing commercial land in St. Louis Park encompasses a broad range and scale of uses, including retail, service, entertainment, and office. These commercial areas typically function as commercial centers, commercial corridors, or neighborhood commercial nodes. Existing office land use primarily includes larger scale multi-property office areas and two medical centers with some larger stand-alone office building properties existing in the city. Commercial uses also exist in the city's evolving mixed-use areas.

Industrial

Currently about 5% of the city's land area, or 345 acres, is in industrial use. This existing industrial land contains approximately 2.8 million square feet of total floor area in 101 industrial buildings. The average industrial building size in St. Louis Park is 28,624 square feet and the average for year built is 1962. The majority of industrial buildings in St. Louis Park are owner-operated single-tenant facilities with low clearance ceiling heights between 12 feet and 16 feet.

Public

It is estimated that public land uses comprise around 40% of the land within the city's boundaries. Public land is categorized into the following use types:

- Public right-of-way, including streets, sidewalks, boulevards, trails, and alleys
- Recreational parks, playgrounds, and open spaces
- Public spaces that define the community's identity such as The Town Green in Park Commons, Shelard Park, and Louisiana Oaks Park
- Public and quasi-public institutions, including city buildings, schools, places of worship, and community centers
- Public facilities

These civic spaces are used in a multitude of ways to enhance mobility and access to community amenities available to people.

Aggregate Resources

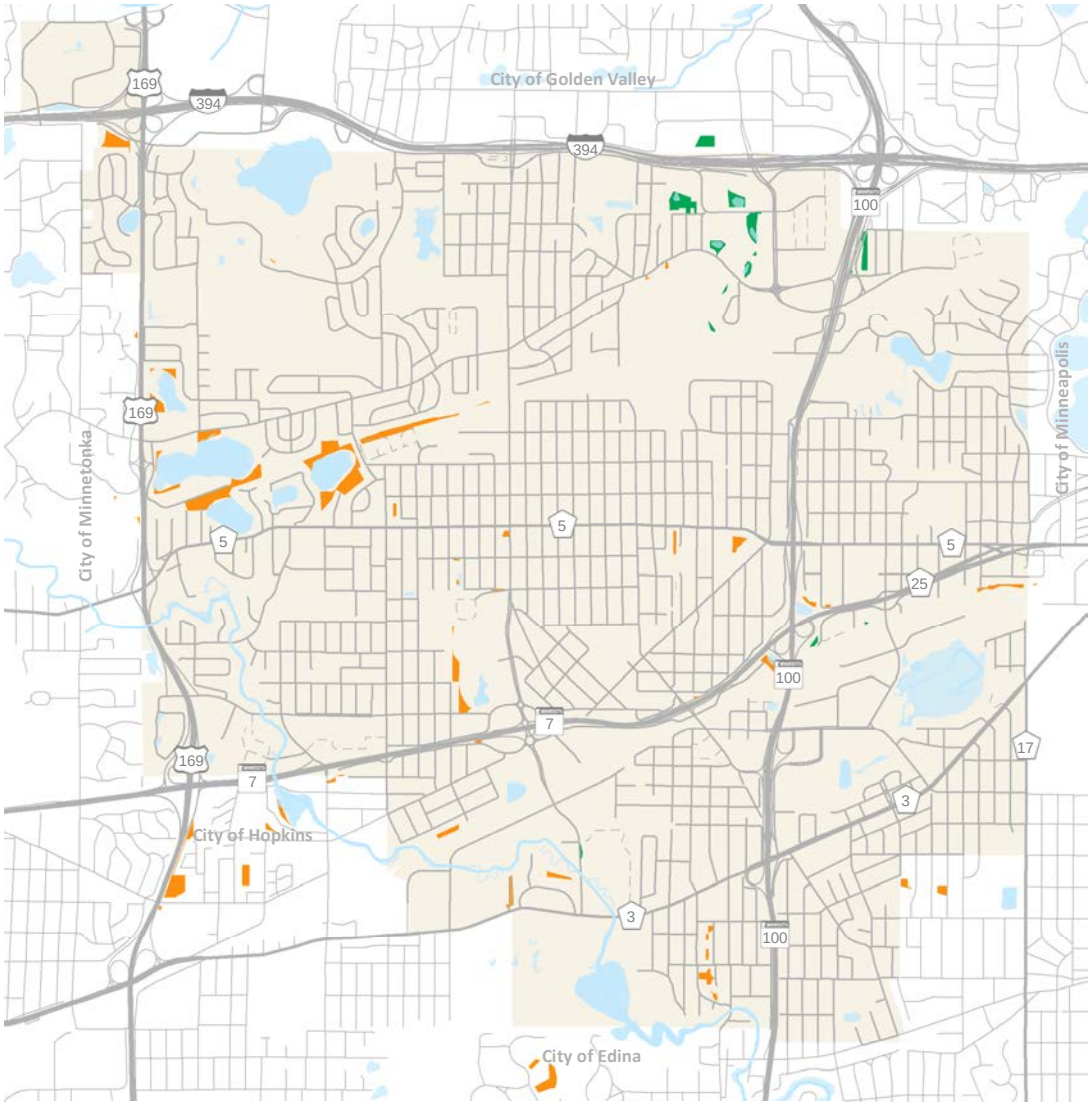
The Metropolitan Council requires cities to identify the location of aggregate resources within the community based on the Minnesota Geological survey. A few areas of aggregate resources were identified in St. Louis Park, as seen in Figure 5-2. The two classes of aggregate resources identified are defined below.

» Class 3: Des Moines Lobe deposits; >20% of bulk natural aggregate retained on #4 sieve; deposit >20 feet thick; overburden <10 feet thick; water table is shallow (< 20 feet); good to limited subsurface data. Material moderate to good quality. Thickness set at 20 feet for computing volume of aggregate resources.;

» Class 6: Des Moines Lobe deposits; >20% of bulk natural aggregate retained on #4 sieve; deposit 10-40 feet thick; overburden <10 feet thick; water table deeper than 20 feet; good to limited subsurface data. Material moderate to good quality. Thickness set at 20 feet for computing volume of aggregate resources.

While St. Louis Park had a history of resource extraction in the 20th century, the activity ceased in the city decades ago. It is unlikely that any of the remaining aggregate resources in the community will be extracted because the community is fully developed.

Figure 5-2. Aggregate Resources 1997



Aggregate Resources 1997

Des Moines Lobe Sand and Gravel > 20 ft thick, moderate to good quality (Class 3)

Des Moines Lobe Sand and Gravel 10-40 ft thick, moderate to good quality (Class 6)

Place Types Framework

St. Louis Park's existing land use and development patterns have been significantly shaped by the community's natural landscape features, rail lines, and major roadway corridors. Building upon these strong physical elements, the city has adopted a placemaking approach to its land use and development planning. Rather than relying on a traditional framework of land use classifications, separated into residential, commercial, and industrial uses, the city has taken a more holistic placemaking approach to identifying the types of places that are desired in the community. In the 2040 Plan, these Place Types are established as a framework to analyze existing land uses and development patterns, as well as future land use and development directions. The Place Types framework consists of the following:

- Neighborhoods
- Districts
- LRT Corridor Station Areas
- Commercial Centers
- Commercial Corridors
- Neighborhood Commercial Nodes
- Employment Areas

The Place Types framework is mapped in Figure 5-3.

Neighborhoods

The city has established 35 neighborhoods which encompass all land within the community. Each neighborhood is a building block of the overall community with the residential areas representing the core of each neighborhood. Individual neighborhood boundaries are primarily defined by major edges within the community, such as railroad corridors, major streets, or natural features. These neighborhoods are categorized by their mixes of housing densities and are mapped in Figure 5-4.

Low Density Residential Neighborhoods

About half of the neighborhoods (18) contain predominately low density residential land uses, including the following:

- Bronx Park
- Brooklawns
- Brookside
- Browndale
- Cedar Manor
- Cobblecrest
- Creekside
- Crestview
- Eliot View
- Kilmer Pond
- Lake Forest
- Lenox
- Minikahda Oaks
- Minikahda Vista
- Pennsylvania Park
- South Oak Hill
- Westwood Hills
- Westdale

Medium and High Density Residential Neighborhoods

Just two (2) neighborhoods contain predominately medium density residential land uses – Cedarhurst and Amhurst. Four (4) neighborhoods contain predominately high density residential land uses – Shelard Park, Triangle, Meadowbrook, and Wolfe Park.

Mixed Density Residential Neighborhoods

St. Louis Park's mix of residential land uses is distributed around the community. Eleven (11) or about one- third of the community's neighborhoods contain a significant mix of residential land uses, including the following:

- Aquila
- Birchwood
- Blackstone
- Elmwood
- Eliot
- Fern Hill
- Minnehaha
- Oak Hill
- Sorensen
- Texa Tonka
- Willow Park

Figure 5-3. Place Types Framework

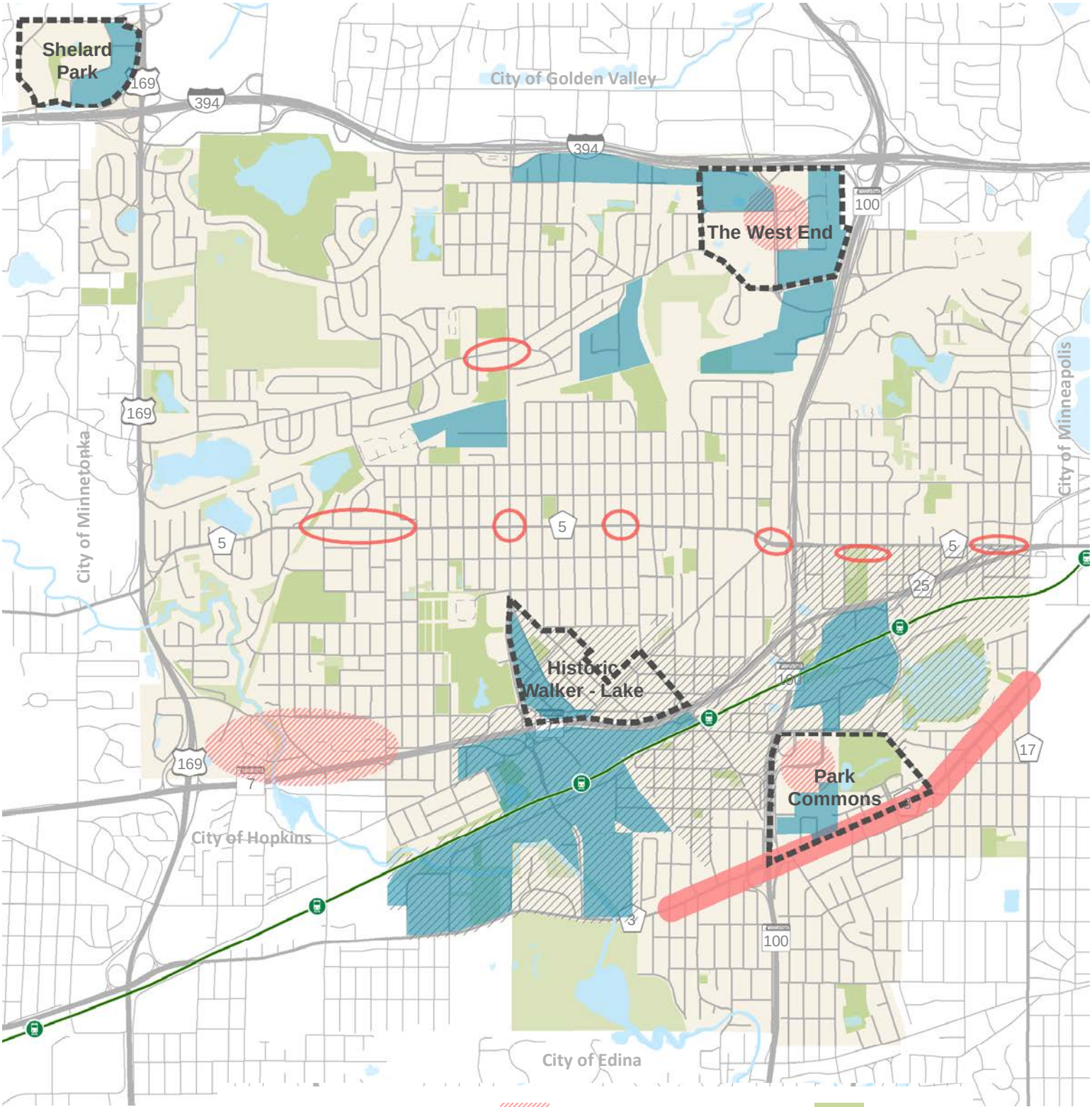
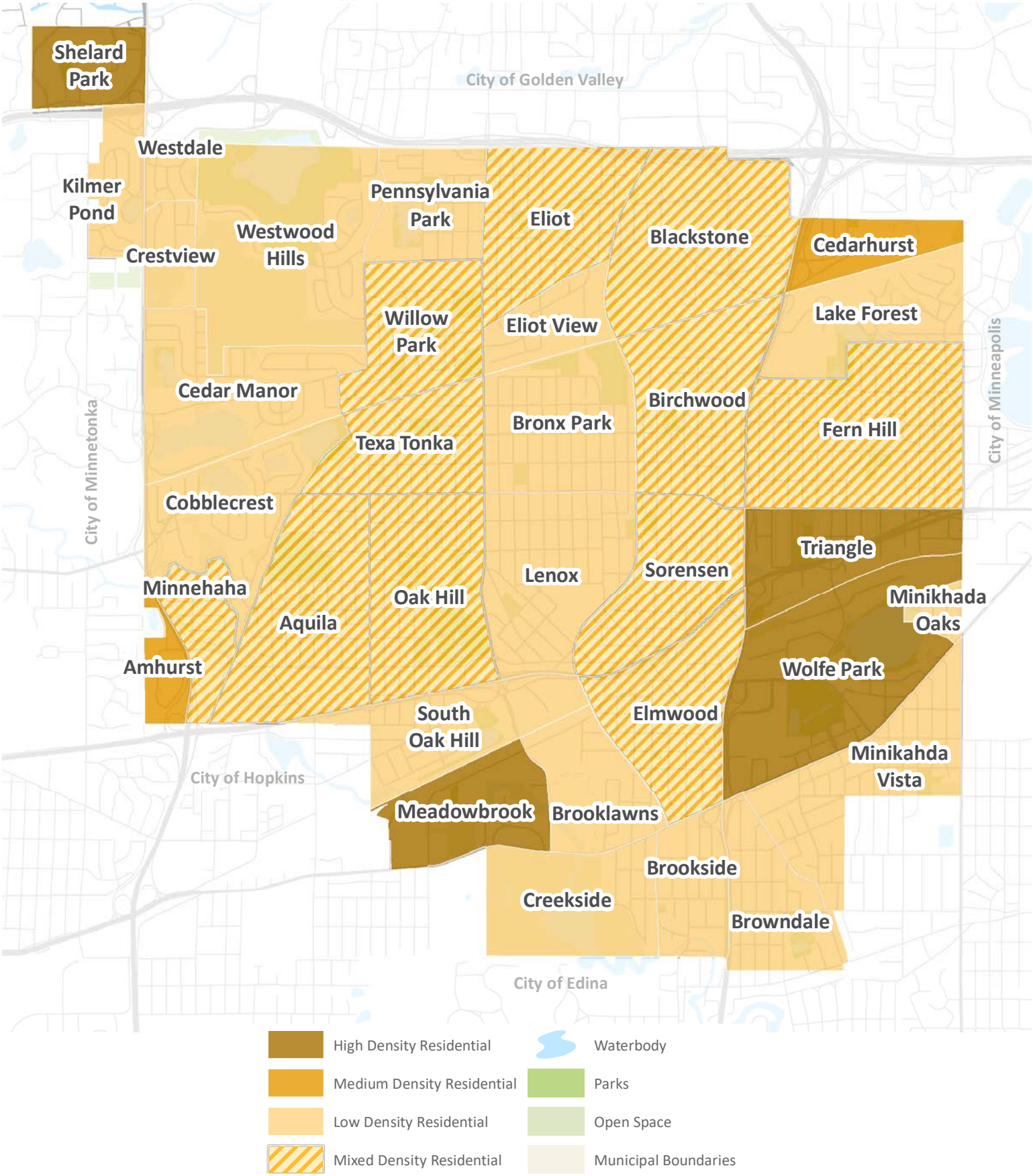


Figure 5-4. Residential Neighborhood Type



Districts

Districts are the community's most identifiable and interconnected mixed-use areas. They are large scale and contain multiple community destinations. They have a broad mix of uses, including retail, services, entertainment, workplaces, residential, and signature public spaces. The city's identified districts range from the highly planned Shelard Park and Park Commons, to the large privately developed West End, and the evolving Historic Walker Lake district.

Park Commons

Park Commons encompasses a large area generally bounded by Excelsior Boulevard (south), Highway 100 (west), 36th Street (north), and Monterey Boulevard (east). Over the past two decades, a majority of the redevelopment of the Park Commons area has occurred to create St. Louis Park's "town center." This redevelopment was guided by the Park Commons Concept Plan and the subsequent Park Commons East Redevelopment Concept Plan, as well as the 2030 Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

Park Commons has been redeveloped with a broad mix of uses, higher densities, and urban design features that create the "town center." Mixed-use development is along Excelsior Boulevard as well as the Town Green (Grand Way) and connects Excelsior Boulevard to Wolfe Park. High-density residential is located within the "town center," both above and adjacent to commercial uses. Park Commons includes:

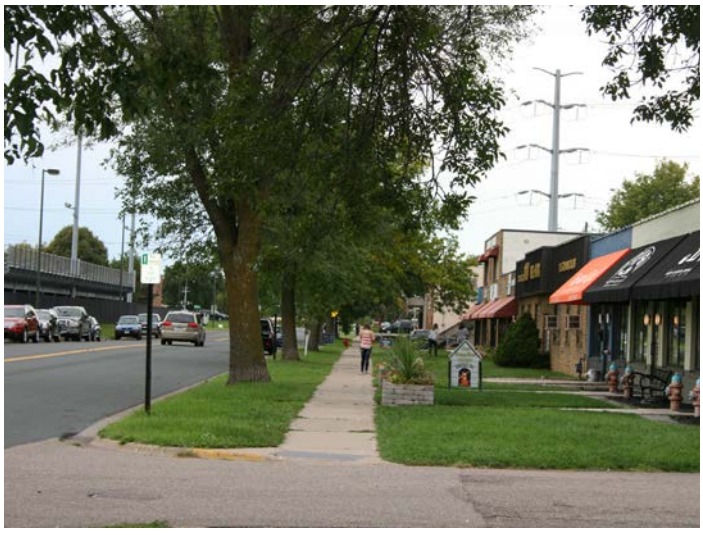
- Excelsior & Grand's commercial storefronts line Excelsior Boulevard and Grand Way. In 2017, this commercial area expanded to the west along Excelsior Boulevard with a 28,000 sq. ft. grocery store as part of the new 4800 Excelsior mixed use building.
- Popular community recreation destinations are located in Park Commons- Wolfe Park, the Rec Center, aquatic park, and the ROC (Recreation Outdoor Center).
- Park Nicollet Clinic is a large and growing medical campus that is also the city's largest employer. This medical facility consists of multiple large buildings and parking areas, including large surface parking lots. Circulation in this area of Park Commons is challenging due to an incomplete public street network, the large scale of the surface parking lots, limited pedestrian/bike facilities, and lack of landscaping.
- Miracle Mile today remains a 154,000 square foot retail strip mall along Excelsior Boulevard that has continued to adapt its mix of stores and physical character and is still prospering today. The retail center provides a variety of retail sales and service businesses.
- Park Village today provides restaurants and a variety of other small retail businesses, and is adjacent to a Target store and Byerly's grocery store. In 2018, the movie theater building was converted from a theater and retail businesses to medical office uses.

Historic Walker Lake

Bounded by Louisiana Avenue to the west, Highway 7 to the south, Wooddale Avenue to the east, and Library Lane/St. Louis Park High School on the north, the Historic Walker Lake District is the location of the original "Village Center" of historic St. Louis Park.

Although the remnants of St. Louis Park's original commercial village center are visible in the Historic Walker Lake District near the intersection of Lake and Walker Streets, St. Louis Park no longer has its original commercial center. Since many of the buildings are old and changes in the use of tenant spaces continues, a planning study of the area is underway to identify potential improvements and revitalization opportunities.

In the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, the Walker Street and Lake Street area was defined as a Commercial Corridor and a potential redevelopment area. In the past two years, the city has begun to view this area as a district that encompasses a broad mix of compatible uses (businesses, schools, community center, library, recreation, and residential). The area has recently been branded as Historic Walker Lake.



The West End

The West End district is located southwest of the Highway 100 and I-394 interchange, and bounded by Cedar Lake Road to the south and Zarthan Avenue to the west. The West End is one of the Twin Cities' latest major mixed–use developments integrating retail, restaurants, entertainment, hotel, office and residential uses. The West End district contains The Shops at West End shopping center and Park Place Plaza "big-box" retail. This district is also a major employment center for the community, with several large office buildings.

Shelard Park

Shelard Park is located in the northwestern corner of the city, at the northwest corner of the Highway 169 and I-394 interchange and contains a mixture of commercial, office, and entertainment uses. The Interchange Park development is primarily high-rise office space and high-density residential, and it is complemented by a retail complex to the north, in the City of Plymouth. This district is also a major employment center for the community.

LRT Corridor Station Areas

The planned regional light rail line, SWLRT, will be located in the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority's (HCRRA) right-of-way corridor that is located south of and largely parallel to Highway 7 as it travels through St. Louis Park. Three station areas are planned for the city:

- Beltline Boulevard Station
- Wooddale Avenue Station
- Louisiana Avenue Station

Beltline Boulevard Station Area

Currently, the Beltline Boulevard Station Area is primarily an industrial area with some office, commercial, and residential uses.

Wooddale Avenue Station Area

The area of the future Wooddale Avenue Station is defined by a number of important transportation corridors: Highway 7, Wooddale Avenue, 36th Street, and the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail. Also within the area are multi-family developments on the south side of Highway 7, and mixed-use development along 36th Street.

Louisiana Avenue Station Area

The location of the future LRT station at Louisiana Avenue will connect the region to many of the employment opportunities in the area. In addition to the number of existing industries and businesses within the area, the station is within walking distance of the largest employer in the city, Methodist Hospital/Park Nicollet Clinic.

Commercial Centers

Commercial Centers are defined as commercial developments that are large in scale, intended for a regional market, and auto-oriented in design. There are three Commercial Centers within St. Louis Park:

- Park Place Plaza at West End
- Parks Commons West (Target, Lunds/Byerly's/Park Village)
- Knollwood

These three Commercial Centers were developed during three different time periods and continue to provide desirable retail and restaurants for local and regional customers.

Knollwood

The Knollwood area today consists of The Shoppes of Knollwood, the Knollwood Village strip center, Knollwood SuperTarget, and a variety of smaller stores, restaurants, and service businesses. The success of other nearby regional shopping centers, such as Ridgedale, has diminished Knollwood's importance as a regional shopping center. The changing mix of new tenants has caused Knollwood to evolve from a regional into a community commercial center that draws customers from a smaller area. From 2014-2017, the property was converted from an indoor mall to an outdoor mall. The renovation included parking lot and pedestrian circulation improvements, new lighting, additional landscaping, and improved storm water management.

Commercial Corridors

St. Louis Park contains a significant commercial corridor along Excelsior Boulevard, a major community roadway. In general, this corridor contains a mix of commercial development types, including older traditional commercial buildings, typically street-oriented and smaller, mixed with auto-oriented development, typically buildings set back from the street with parking in front. As this commercial corridor aged, it has experienced deterioration, scattered reinvestment and redevelopment, and loss of a cohesive function and feel. In general, this corridor predominately accommodates automobile traffic but is transitioning to better accommodates other travel modes of walking, biking, and transit. In the future, reuse and redevelopment of this corridor should continue to transition toward mixed use and transit-oriented development.

Neighborhood Commercial Nodes

St. Louis Park contains a number of neighborhood commercial nodes at key street intersections along major community roadways, including the following:

- Texas and Minnetonka (Texa-Tonka)
- Minnetonka & Louisiana
- Minnetonka & Dakota
- Minnetonka & Lake
- Minnetonka & Ottawa
- Minnetonka & France
- Louisiana & Cedar Lake Road

These neighborhood commercial nodes are primarily located in the central portion of the community along Minnetonka Boulevard, which is the city's major east-west community street, Louisiana Avenue, which is the city's major north-south street, and on Lake Street.

These neighborhood commercial nodes are typically surrounded by residential neighborhoods on all sides. Along Minnetonka Boulevard, neighborhood commercial nodes are well-spaced every 1/4 to 1/2 mile. Although most of these nodes include three or four quadrants of these intersections, they are all relatively small in size. Texa-Tonka is the largest as it stretches west along Texas Avenue, while the Minnetonka & Dakota node is the smallest.

Employment Areas

Office

Major office centers are within West End District and Shelard Park District. Other parcels in office use are scattered throughout the city, particularly along commercial corridors on Excelsior Boulevard and Highway 7. Highway commercial and office uses are located along the Wayzata Boulevard/I-394 corridor. The principal medical office area is the Park Nicollet Health Services complex on Excelsior Boulevard, but Park Nicollet has recently completed major expansions of its facilities at its hospital campus in the Excelsior Boulevard/ Louisiana Avenue area and in the Belt Line Industrial Park area.

Industrial

Existing industrial land uses are primarily clustered in six (6) industrial areas within the community, including the following:

- Oxford / Louisiana Industrial Park
- Gorham / Walker Industrial Park (NE of Highway 7 & Louisiana Avenue)
- Belt Line Industrial Park / Nordic Ware
- Westside Center / Cedar Lake Road area (west side of Highway 100)
- Edgewood Industrial Park (Edgewood Avenue south of Cedar Lake Road)
- Smith Industrial Park (27th Street west of Louisiana Avenue)

Existing industrial land uses in St. Louis Park may be classified as general industrial or light industrial. General Industrial uses cover a broad spectrum of manufacturing, warehousing, and general business operations. General industrial uses are considered to be intensive land uses and they typically generate noise, odor, vibrations, and traffic that often conflicts with less intensive land uses such as parks or residential. The Oxford/Louisiana industrial area is an example of a general industrial area.

Light industrial or industrial park areas contain a restricted range of uses and tend to be smaller districts which create a minimum of nuisances. The standards for light industrial require larger setbacks and more landscaping resulting in a more pleasant appearance. The best example of this type of use in St. Louis Park is the Belt Line Industrial Park adjacent to Belt Line Boulevard and CSAH 25. Typical uses include manufacturing of electrical components and computer hardware, precision instruments, and similar high value items. Another area with an industrial park character is Smith Industrial Park

Where We Are Headed

This section establishes the city's comprehensive plan land use designations, which are fully defined below. The 2040 Future Land Use Plan Map, Figure 5-5, which is the city's official land use plan map, uses these land use designations to guide all land within the city's boundaries. These designations guide current and future land use planning and development through the year 2040. They are intended to use sound planning principles to shape the character, type and density of future development. Any new development, redevelopment, change in land use, or change in zoning is required to be consistent with the land use designation for each parcel.

Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designations

There are 13 land use designations that guide the city's 2040 Future Land Use Plan map. The designations are described below and generally reflect a continuing movement towards greater mixing of uses.

RL - Low Density Residential

The Low Density Residential designation is intended for residential neighborhoods primarily consisting of single-family homes. It allows single-family detached housing and limited semi-detached housing, such as duplexes and accessory housing units. This designation allows net residential densities from three (3) to ten (10) units per acre.

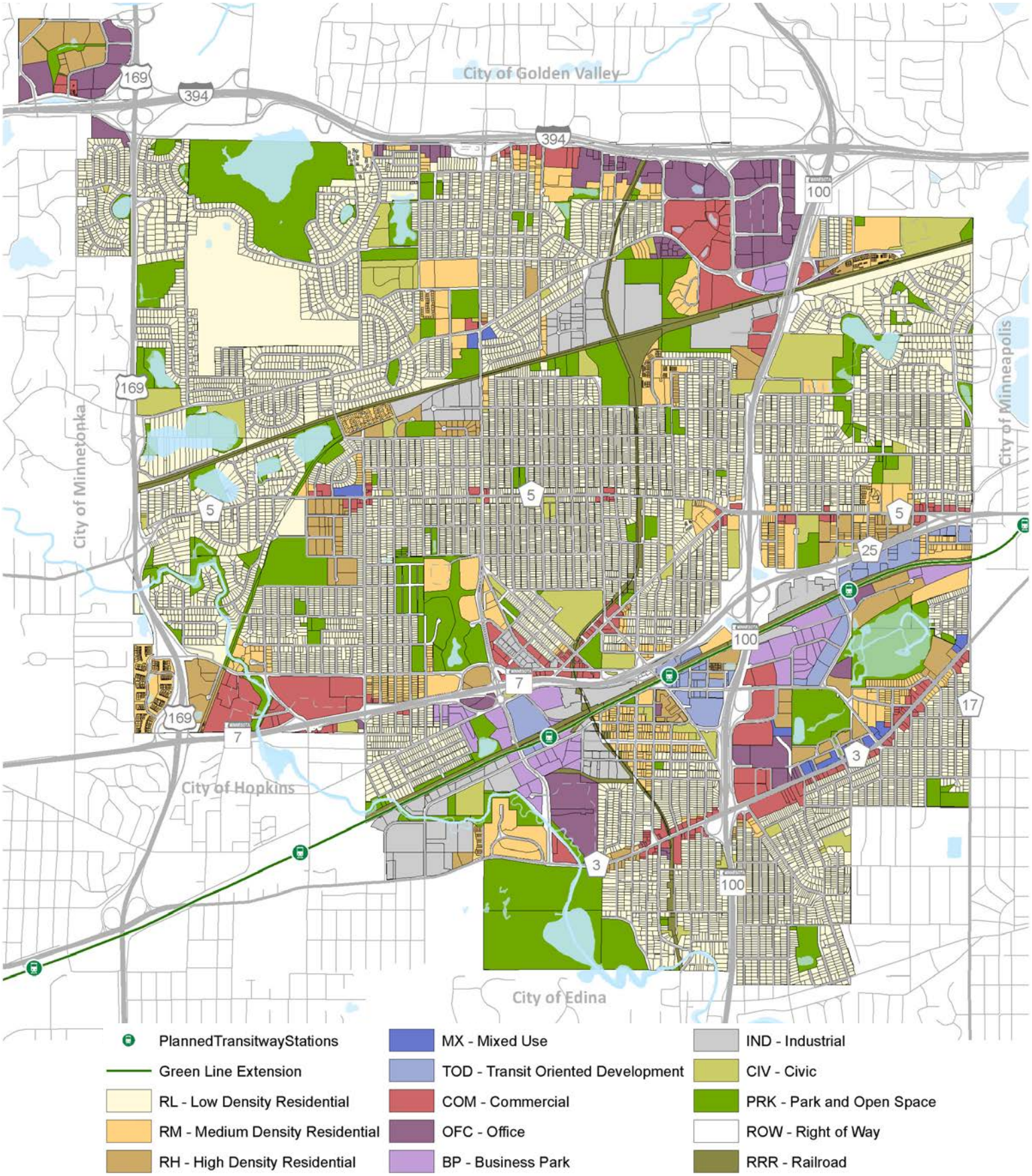
RM - Medium Density Residential

The Medium Density Residential designation is intended for residential areas adjacent to commercial centers, corridors, and nodes. It allows net residential densities from six (6) to 30 units per acre. This designation allows a variety of housing types that are compatible in scale to single-family homes, including single-family detached, duplexes, townhomes, and small two- or three-story apartment buildings.

RH - High Density Residential

The High Density Residential land use designation is intended for higher density, compact urban residential areas with convenient access to major transportation corridors, open spaces, and commercial centers. This designation allows for a residential density range of 30 to 75 units per acre. The appropriate building height will vary by development and depend upon the characteristics of the development and its surroundings.

Figure 5-5. 2040 Future Land Use Plan



MIXED USE DESIGNATIONS & LIVABLE COMMUNITY PRINCIPLES

The Land Use Designations that allow a mix of residential and non-residential uses can achieve high residential densities by addressing the city's Livable Community Principles and other goals of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. These principles include: structured parking, affordable housing, sustainable site and building design elements, and high quality attractive indoor/outdoor recreation and amenity areas.

Applicable Land Use Designations include:

- RH - High Density Residential
- COM - Commercial
- MX - Mixed-Use
- TOD - Transit Oriented Development
- OFC - Office

Three- to four-story buildings will be appropriate in some areas, while six- to eight-story buildings and even taller high-rises will be acceptable in others. In addition to residential development, a limited amount of supportive retail and service, 10% typically, is also appropriate.

COM - Commercial

The Commercial land use designation is intended to accommodate a wide range and scale of commercial uses, such as retail, service, entertainment, and office. Commercial uses can range from small neighborhood convenience nodes, to community retail areas along major roadways, to large shopping centers, to auto-related commercial uses along freeways. A limited amount of residential uses, 10% typically, are also appropriate as part of a mixed-use commercial development. Residential uses should be on upper floors with a net residential density range of 20 to 50 units per acre allowed.

MX – Mixed-Use

In the Mixed Use land use designation, a mixing of uses is required for every development parcel, including commercial. Uses allowed are commercial, office, residential, civic, and parks/open space. The goal of this designation is to create pedestrian-scale mixed-use areas, typically with buildings having a portion of retail, service or other commercial uses on the ground floor and residential or office uses on upper floors. Mixed use buildings typically have approximately 75 to 85 percent of the building for residential use and 15 to 25 percent for commercial, office, and other similar uses. Taller buildings may be appropriate in some areas and net residential densities between 20 and 75 units per acre are allowed. The MX designation is intended to facilitate a mixed-use town center atmosphere in Park Commons as well as other key community and neighborhood commercial centers, corridors, and nodes.

TOD – Transit Oriented Development

In the Transit Oriented Development land use designation, a mix of uses are allowed, including commercial, office, residential, civic, and parks/open space. The mix of uses must be oriented toward the transitway stations along the planned SWLRT line. The goal of this designation is to create pedestrian-scale developments within a ten-minute walk of a transitway station. The focus of the designation is on block sizes, lot sizes, and building forms that create a pedestrian-rich environment, rather than a specific mix of uses. It is expected that residential uses will make up approximately 75 to 85 percent of uses; the remaining 15 to 25 percent will likely be commercial, office, and other similar uses. The net residential density range allowed is 50 to 125 units per acre.

OFC – Office

The Office land use designation is primarily intended for employment centers of fairly intensive office and mixed use development with high floor area ratios (FARs) and building heights. Business, professional, administrative, scientific, technical, medical, research and development services are typical uses appropriate for the Office land use designation. The Office designation also allows other limited uses such as hotels, parking ramps, residential, day care, retail and restaurants when part of a larger development. A limited amount of residential uses, 10% typically, fitting the form and scale of a large office employment center are also appropriate as part of a mixed-use office development. Residential uses should be on upper floors with residential densities from 50 to 125 units per acre allowed.

BP – Business Park

The Business Park land use designation is intended to encourage the creation of significant employment centers that accommodate a diverse mix of office and light industrial uses and jobs. The Business Park designation should be applied to larger sites that can be redeveloped to provide a greater diversity of jobs, higher development densities, higher jobs per acre, higher quality site and building architectural design, and increased tax revenues for the community. Office, office-showroom-warehousing, research and development services, light and high-tech electronic manufacturing and assembly, and medical laboratories are typical uses appropriate for this land use designation. The general intent is to shift away from distribution, warehousing, storage toward a broader mix and smaller scale production and makerspace businesses. A limited amount of retail and service uses may be allowed, 10% typically, as supporting uses for the primary office and light industrial uses of the employment center.

IND – Industrial

The Industrial land use designation covers all industrial uses from manufacturing, assembly, processing, warehousing, storage, laboratory, distribution, and related offices. Industrial areas consist of both lighter industrial uses, which tend to have higher appearance standards and fewer impacts on surrounding properties, and general industrial uses which are typically set off from other uses. Current industrial uses tend to be concentrated around the city's railroads, where industrial uses first developed in the community.

Future industrial uses to be protected should primarily be located in close proximity to either a railroad line or regional roadway system with limited traffic circulation through residential and pedestrian-oriented areas. However, some industrial areas may transition over time to some non-industrial uses that are appropriate to their changing context, such as the future Southwest LRT station areas or increasing incompatibility with surrounding development. Transitional industrial areas may consist of a broader range of light industrial and non-industrial uses and need to ensure compatibility with surrounding non-industrial land uses.

CIV – Civic

The Civic land use designation is intended for public buildings and uses as well as similar private uses, such as schools, government buildings, places of assembly, community centers, libraries and non-profit institutions.

PRK – Park and Open Space

The Park and Open Space land use designation includes all public parks and open space land, as well as public recreational facilities, such as the Recreational Center. It also encompasses lakes and waterways, such as Bass Lake Preserve and Minnehaha Creek. This designation is intended for areas which are reserved for active and passive recreational uses, natural amenities, protected natural areas, and the city's major stormwater retention and drainage areas.

ROW – Public Right-of-Way

The Public Right-of-Way land use designation includes right-of- way for streets, sidewalks, trails and drainageways.

RRR – Railroad

The Railroad land use designation includes right-of-way used for railway and trail purposes. Some of the land is owned by rail companies; some of the land is owned by the Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority and a portion of it is used as a multi-purpose regional trail operated by Three Rivers Park District.

The distribution of 2040 planned future land uses is summarized in Table 5-2.

Table 5-2. 2040 Future Land Use Plan

FUTURE LAND USE	GROSS ACRES	NET ACRES	% NET
RL- Low Density Residential	2,520.67	2,484.21	35.96%
RM- Medium Density Residential	402.12	385.86	5.59%
RH- High Density Residential	214.02	205.38	2.97%
MX- Mixed Use	21.58	21.58	0.31%
TOD- Transit Oriented Development	81.76	81.76	1.18%
COM- Commercial	277.97	277.64	4.02%
OFC- Office	232.31	215.16	3.11%
BP- Business Park	103.81	103.65	1.50%
IND- Industrial	244.41	206.23	2.99%
CIV- Civic	216.29	210.70	3.05%
PRK- Park and Open Space	916.67	557.54	8.07%
ROW- Right of Way	1,517.14	1,508.78	21.84%
RRR- Railroad	159.98	150.81	2.18%
Water/Wetlands	-	499.45	7.23%
Total	6,908.74	6,908.74	100.00%

Source: City of St. Louis Park, HKGi 2018

Future Directions

In general, the 2040 land use plan focuses on guiding the community's future land use patterns toward a greater integration of complementary land uses, higher intensity land uses where appropriate, preservation and enhancement of key community districts, vibrant walkable neighborhood commercial areas, transit-oriented development and public spaces in the SWLRT station areas, and environmental stewardship of the land. In particular, the 2040 land use plan is intended to provide strong guidance for the areas that are anticipated to experience land use changes long-term.

Neighborhoods

The city's 35 individual neighborhoods are the backbone of the community. Although each neighborhood has a unique history, development pattern, character, challenges, and opportunities, all neighborhoods should ideally provide a healthy living environment with convenient access to essential community services, including transportation options, jobs, parks and open space, shopping, services, entertainment, or other amenities.

The 2040 Land Use Plan is intended to guide land use patterns and development types that support healthy, accessible and walkable neighborhoods in St. Louis Park. In particular, the 2040 land use plan promotes expanding the diversity and affordability of housing options in the community's neighborhoods. This future direction can be achieved in a number of ways:

- Allowing semi-detached housing types (e.g. accessory housing units, duplexes) in low density residential areas,
- Guiding more areas for medium density residential (e.g. along LRT and bus routes and near commercial areas, schools and parks/open spaces), and
- Creating more mixed use areas with new housing options.

As redevelopment opportunities emerge and plans are created, the city will promote land uses that support and enhance neighborhoods. Commercial corridors and nodes will be planned to accommodate neighborhood retail and services as well as pedestrian-oriented design to support walkable access from neighborhoods.

New housing types are encouraged in appropriate areas, including mixed use buildings and move-up housing, to create options for residents to remain in or near their neighborhood as their lifestyle and housing needs change. Public facilities and gathering spaces will be addressed in redevelopment plans as strategic and accessible places for neighborhood residents to use. Redevelopment will accommodate needs for sidewalks and trails where appropriate.

Districts

Park Commons

Future redevelopment of the Park Commons area should focus on adding complementary land uses that support the "town center" concept and complete the internal network of streets and pathways that create a cohesive and connected downtown neighborhood. Future redevelopment and infill development should fill in the Excelsior Boulevard "gap" between the Excelsior & Grand storefronts to the east and the Park Village commercial businesses to the west while balancing Park Nicollet's needs for its medical campus entrance.

The 2040 land use plan guides the Park Commons West area (west and southwest of Wolfe Park), which has future redevelopment opportunities, for commercial and office uses primarily with high density residential along the west side of Wolfe Park. Redevelopment or infill development with buildings located close to Excelsior Boulevard is preferred.

Improving connections between the residential and mixed use areas of Excelsior & Grand and the commercial and medical office areas to the west should be accommodated as part of redevelopment planning for the interior of Park Commons West. An update to the Park Commons West Concept Plan is planned to address current and anticipated market trends, update the land use guidance (e.g. potential for mixed use), consider development design standards, and revisit opportunities for completing the internal street, pedestrian and bicycle networks.

Historic Walker Lake

Based on community input for the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, wholesale redevelopment is not envisioned in the Historic Walker Lake district. The potential for land use changes in the Historic Walker-Lake district was discussed during the 2040 Plan Update process. It was determined that a small area plan would be beneficial for Historic Walker Lake prior to making any changes to the Future Land Use Plan map. Some considerations for this district include:

- Potential rezoning from C-2 (General Commercial) to C-1 (Neighborhood Commercial)
- Rezoning from I-G (General Industrial) to light industrial, or a form-based zoning district.

As identified in an activation plan for the district, key revitalization initiatives include:

- Rehabilitation of streets
- Reconstruction of alleys
- Parking improvements
- Adding bikeways
- Installing wayfinding
- Implementing placemaking

The city also intends to explore design guidelines and a district parking strategy.

The West End

The West End district will complete redevelopment of its northeast corner with a mix of office, residential, hotel, and a major parking structure. Future redevelopment opportunities could occur in the southern portion of the district between Gamble Drive and Cedar Lake Road.

Shelard Park

As Shelard Park is the city's oldest mixed-use district, it will continue to face opportunities for reinvestment and redevelopment over the next 20 years. Redevelopment sites exist on the I-394 frontage where commercial buildings have been removed. In addition, there is also infill redevelopment potential on the Hwy 169 frontage northeast of the signature office tower. Mixed use redevelopment is anticipated on these sites.

LRT Corridor Station Areas

The major regional investment in light rail transit infrastructure (SWLRT) will have impacts on development and redevelopment in St. Louis Park. To optimize this regional investment, many planning efforts beyond the Comprehensive Plan have been conducted.

Small area framework plans have been completed for the each of the three Southwest LRT (SWLRT) station areas planned in St. Louis Park, including:

- The Elmwood Area Land Use Transit and Transportation Study (2003)
- Beltline Area Framework & Design Guidelines (2012)
- Louisiana Station Area Framework & Design Guidelines (2015)

In 2014, the Transitional Station Area Action Plans (TSAAPs) process were completed for each of the 17 stations of the SWLRT line in collaboration with Hennepin County, the other SWLRT cities, and the Metropolitan Council. The TSAAPs are intended to promote opening day readiness by bridging the gap between current conditions and future needs through identifying and prioritizing infrastructure improvements that enhance existing businesses, support mixed-income housing opportunities, and encourage transit-oriented development (TOD). Additionally, the TSAAPs will support short-term development and facilitate long-term, phased TOD.

TOD in the station areas will encompass higher densities of population and activity; a pedestrian- and bike-friendly designed environment; a mixed-use land use pattern; an interconnected street network; and development of affordable housing for people likely to use transit. As a critical component of supporting an effective transit system, the city is planning for higher densities of residential and employment development in the three station areas.

For residential development, the city's TOD land use designation is targeting net residential density range allowed is 50 to 125 units per acre. For employment development, the Metro Council's 2040 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) recommends that cities target an appropriate "level of total activity" in station areas that will support effective transit services.

The 2040 TPP defines this level of total activity as follows: "Activity can include residential units or residents, jobs, students, and retail and entertainment space that contribute to an overall level of activity. A guideline for minimum activity around a station would be 7,000 total residents, jobs, or students. In station areas with significant barriers or undevelopable land, this total can be adjusted proportionally." Based on this guidance, with a TOD station area defined generally as 500 acres (1/2 mile radius from the transit station), targeted job density would be 14 jobs per acre.

Beltline Boulevard Station Area

As a transit-oriented district, this station area offers significant redevelopment potential. The 2040 land use plan reguides much of the land adjacent to Beltline Boulevard (west side) and adjacent to CSAH 25 (south side) to the new Transit Oriented Development land use designation, which is anticipated to be a mix of commercial and residential. Both of these areas will have convenient multi-modal connections to the future transit station via these major roadways. In the future, the southwest quadrant is envisioned as primarily an employment center and the southeast quadrant as primarily residential.

The Beltline Area Framework & Design Guidelines (2012), provides a long-term guide for shaping future changes in the Beltline Station Area. The plan identifies preferred land uses, building patterns, and connectivity/access patterns for the future station area. It also includes design guidelines for future public systems and spaces, including the future transit station, streets, walk/bike network, open space/parks/plazas, public parking, signage, stormwater management, and utilities.

For future private development, design guidelines address site development, buildings, off-street parking, service/delivery/storage areas, lighting, and signage. Some of the most significant recommendations include:

- Redevelopment to include mixed use near the future transit station and along Beltline Boulevard
- Business Park redevelopment that increases the number of employees working in the station area
- Preferred building heights across the five character districts
- Potential roadway network improvements
- Bike/walk network improvements
- Enhancing the public open space, park, and plaza network

Wooddale Avenue Station Area

The Wooddale Avenue Station Area is envisioned as a transit-oriented development (TOD) neighborhood, particularly south of the future transit line. The 2040 land use plan reguides much of the land in the core of the station area to the new Transit Oriented Development land use designation. The remaining land is primarily guided for medium and high density residential. The southeast quadrant has the most potential for land use change and transit-oriented development both north and south of West 36th Street. The city should update the existing Elmwood Area Plan (2003) to address this area in particular. The northern portion is more challenging for transit access and redevelopment opportunities due to the close proximity of Highway 7 and Wooddale Avenue interchange.

Louisiana Avenue Station Area

The Louisiana Avenue Station Area is envisioned for development intensification as an employment center that capitalizes on its convenient transit access and proximity to Park Nicollet Methodist Hospital, a major employer and regional destination. Building upon its current mix of industrial, medical, and commercial land uses, this area is guided for a broader mix of land uses, particularly the development of business park uses with higher jobs per acre nearest to the transit station. Business Park land uses enable higher jobs potential due to higher FARs, multi-story buildings, and less square footage per employee.

The Louisiana Station Area Framework & Design Guidelines (2015) provides long-term guidance for the community, property owners, and developers seeking to enhance or redevelop properties in the station area and to help define future public infrastructure investments. The framework plan includes access/circulation plans (street network, bike/pedestrian network, unique transit station to hospital connection), land use/development plan, park/open space plan, and an illustrative master plan.

A robust set of design guidelines address future public systems and spaces, including the future transit station, streets, walk/bike network, open space/parks, transit plaza, public parking, wayfinding signage, and stormwater management. For future private development, design guidelines address site development, buildings, off-street parking, service/delivery/storage areas, lighting, and signage. Some of the recommendations include:

- An expanded and connected street network
- An expanded sidewalk and multi-use path network, including a unique transit station-to-hospital pedestrian connection
- Expansion of an office medical district
- Some redevelopment of industrial uses combined with industrial reinvestment
- Potential street level commercial near the future transit station and along Louisiana Avenue
- Significant enhancements to the area's park and open space network, including access to the Minnehaha Creek corridor

Commercial Centers

Commercial centers are the city's largest scale commercial areas and were generally designed as auto-oriented shopping areas. The 2040 land use plan guides these areas for reinvestment and infill development. The intent is to better connect the commercial centers internally and externally, including walking/biking facilities, improve site functionality (traffic, parking, stormwater management), and enhance visual character. These large areas offer significant opportunities for subdividing sites into smaller blocks and lots, diversifying the mix of uses, and improving the existing development character to be more pedestrian, bike, and transit-friendly.

Commercial Corridors

Commercial corridors and nodes can have significant potential for enhancing neighborhoods as desirable walkable destinations, important public gathering places, transportation nodes, and significantly contributing to a neighborhood's sense of identity. Reinvestment and redevelopment along the south side of the Excelsior Boulevard corridor will be guided by the Design Guidelines for the South Side of Excelsior Boulevard. It may be appropriate to apply these design guidelines to address redevelopment pressures on the north side of Excelsior Boulevard in the future.

Neighborhood Commercial Nodes

Neighborhood commercial areas may offer attractive opportunities for adding new housing options, such as residential in mixed use buildings. In general, reinvestment or redevelopment in commercial corridors and neighborhood commercial nodes is challenged by limited space for business expansions, parking, and stormwater management.

When any of these commercial areas are being considered for reinvestment, reuse or redevelopment, the city works with adjacent neighborhoods to evaluate how well the commercial area meets the area needs.

Employment Areas

Concentrated industrial, office and business park land uses represent major employment areas for the city. As existing industrial areas continue to face significant economic and technological changes along with potential redevelopment and employment growth opportunities, the city is considering how to manage its decreasing inventory of industrial land wisely. The 2040 land use plan guides land for industrial uses in six (6) strategic employment areas:

- Oxford/Louisiana Industrial Park
- Gorham/Walker Industrial Park
- Belt Line Industrial Park / Nordic Ware
- Westside Center / Cedar Lake Road area (west side of Highway 100)
- Edgewood Industrial Park
- Smith Industrial Park (27th Street west of Louisiana Avenue)

Both the Oxford/Louisiana and Belt Line industrial parks are located within SWLRT station areas, which are intended to continue as employment centers that leverage the benefits of transit access in the long-term.

The city's industrial areas contain a substantial number of older and obsolete buildings compared to contemporary industrial standards. The current industrial market demands more efficient building types that provide ample parking, high clear heights for maximum stacking of product inventory, deep truck courts for semi-trailer loading, and aesthetically pleasing building exteriors and sites. As these industrial areas are considered for redevelopment, they will be considered for reguiding to the Business Park land use designation, which is intended to allow a broader range of uses, including office, office-showroom-warehousing, research and development services, light and high-tech electronic manufacturing and assembly, and medical laboratories. The 2040 land use plan guides substantial areas in the Oxford/ Louisiana and Belt Line industrial parks for Business Park uses while also retaining a portion of these areas for industrial uses.

Phasing of Growth and Redevelopment

Through the Comprehensive Planning process and the development of future land uses through 2040, the city is ensuring that forecasted growth for the community can be accommodated.

Table 5-3. St. Louis Park Forecasts

	2010	2017 (EST)	2020	2030	2040
Population	45,250	48,920	49,600	52,350	54,520
Households	21,743	23,241	23,600	25,220	26,230
Employment	40,485	41,438	43,400	45,300	46,850

Source: Metropolitan Council, 2018

As seen in Table 5-3, the city is expected to grow by 5,600 people, 2,989 households, and 5,412 jobs between 2017-2040. Land use analysis of St. Louis Park and identified areas of potential redevelopment, as seen in Figure 5-6, highlight where this growth is anticipated to occur. Table 5-4 shows the breakdown of anticipated redevelopment acres, by decade they are likely to develop, by future land use designation.

Table 5-4. Anticipated Net Acres of Redevelopment by Decade

FUTURE LAND USE	2018-2020	2021-2030	2031-2040	TOTAL
RL- Low Density Residential	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
RM- Medium Density Residential	1.31	8.79	18.79	28.90
RH- High Density Residential	3.01	0.00	0.00	3.01
MX- Mixed Use	4.02	5.19	0.00	9.21
TOD- Transit Oriented Development	13.20	37.52	14.02	64.74
COM- Commercial	0.00	6.79	0.00	6.79
OFC- Office	15.02	3.27	14.06	32.35
BP- Business Park	0.00	8.60	47.06	55.66
IND- Industrial	0.00	16.05	11.87	27.92
CIV- Civic	0.00	2.69	0.00	2.69
PRK- Park and Open Space	0.00	2.25	0.25	2.50
Total	36.57	91.14	106.05	233.76

Source: City of St. Louis Park, HKGi 2018

Figure 5-6. Priority Redevelopment Areas

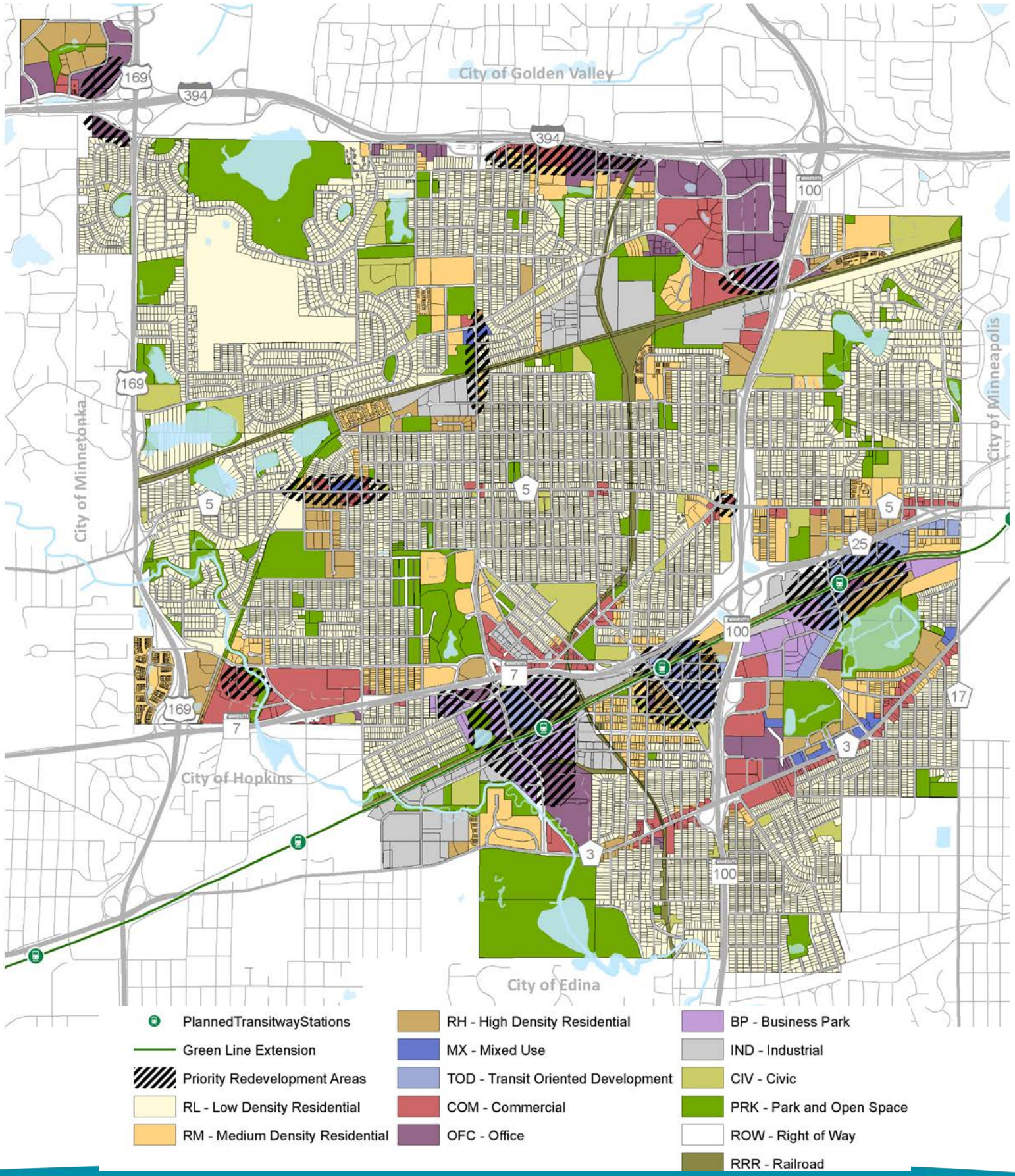


Table 5-5. Housing Units Added by Decade

FUTURE LAND USE	NET ACRES	UNITS/ACRE		% RES	2018-2020		2021-2030		2031-2040		TOTAL	
		MIN	MAX		MIN	MAX	MIN	MAX	MIN	MAX	MIN	MAX
RL- Low Density Residential	0.0	3	10	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
RM- Medium Density Residential	28.9	6	30	100%	8	39	53	264	113	564	173	867
RH- High Density Residential	3.0	30	75	100%	90	226	-	-	-	-	90	226
MX- Mixed Use	9.2	20	75	75%	60	226	78	292	-	-	138	518
TOD- Transit Oriented Development	64.7	50	125	75%	495	1,237	1,407	3,518	526	1,314	2,428	6,070
COM- Commercial	6.8	20	75	10%	-	-	14	51	-	-	14	51
OFC- Office	32.3	50	125	10%	75	188	16	41	70	176	162	404
Total	145.0				729	1,917	1,568	4,165	709	2,054	3,005	8,136
			Minimum Units/Acre		**38.87 u/a**		**37.47 u/a**		**23.08 u/a**		**32.92 u/a**	

Source: City of St. Louis Park, HKGi 2018

Table 5-6. Employment Added by Decade

FUTURE LAND USE	NET ACRES	FAR		JOBS / SF	% EMP	2018-2020		2021-2030		2031-2040		TOTAL	
		MIN	MAX			MIN	MAX	MIN	MAX	MIN	MAX	MIN	MAX
MX- Mixed Use	9.2	0.5	1.0	750	25%	29	58	38	75	-	-	67	134
TOD- Transit Oriented Development	64.7	0.5	1.0	750	25%	96	192	272	545	102	204	470	940
COM- Commercial	6.8	0.3	0.6	750	90%	-	-	106	213	-	-	106	213
OFC- Office	32.3	0.6	1.0	500	90%	707	1,178	154	256	662	1,103	1,522	2,536
BP- Business Park	55.7	0.5	0.8	750	100%	-	-	250	400	1,367	2,187	1,616	2,586
IND- Industrial	27.9	0.3	0.4	1,500	100%	-	-	140	186	103	138	243	324
CIV- Civic	2.7	0.4	0.6	1,250	100%	-	-	38	56	-	-	38	56
Total	199.4					832	1,428	997	1,731	2,234	3,631	4,062	6,790

Source: City of St. Louis Park, HKGi 2018

From the phasing of net acres of different land uses, the city also analyzed the potential phasing of housing units to be developed through 2040, as seen in Table 5-5. A similar analysis of land uses resulting in employment can be found in Table 5-6.

The city's future land use designations and anticipated redevelopment areas are able to accommodate anticipated growth in population, households, and employment. The anticipated growth exceed the Urban Center designation minimum density of 20.0 units/acre for each decade from 2017 to 2040.

Land Use Goals and Strategies

Livable Communities Goals

1. Provide attractive public streets, spaces and facilities that contribute to creating connections, a strong sense of community, and opportunities for community interaction.

Strategies

A. Establish unique and cohesive street character for major community streets, emphasizing safe and comfortable pedestrian and bike connections, landscaping, lighting, and seating areas for the use and enjoyment of the public.

B. Create well-defined community gateways at appropriate points where major streets cross the city's municipal boundary, using location appropriate signage, public art, public plazas, and architecturally significant buildings.

C. Incorporate "complete streets" design principles into future improvements of the community's streets to implement planned multi-modal transportation networks and to help achieve the city's goals to reduce vehicle emissions and provide a more equitable system of transportation options.

D. Provide pedestrian and bicycle pathways that connect key departure points and destinations throughout the city and require installation of identified connections during the redevelopment process.

E. Promote high quality design of public and private open spaces that will benefit anticipated users with proper consideration given to use, design, maintenance, appearance, location, and accessibility of the space.

F. Encourage placement of artwork and amenities throughout the city to help increase civic prominence and a unique sense of place where appropriate.

G. Continue to use appropriate outdoor lighting for illumination of streets, parking lots, and other public and private areas.

H. Incorporate "living streets" design principles into future improvements of the community's streets in order to enhance the corridors' appearance and environment.

I. Continue to reduce the level of obtrusive signage within the city by promoting a balance between aesthetics, safety, and communication needs.

J. Work with internal and external partners to ensure that roadway and pedestrian facilities, including bridges, located in the city are functional and aesthetically attractive.

K. Continue to achieve high quality design standards for the exterior appearance of public structures.

L. Establish a timetable and implementation strategies to bury utilities. Continue to require the undergrounding of utilities in all new developments and redevelopment projects.

2. Promote building and site design that creates a connected, human scale, multi-modal, and safe environment for people who live and work here.

Strategies

A. Encourage quality design in new construction such as building orientation, scale, massing, and pedestrian access.

B. Encourage new buildings to orient to walkable streets with appropriate building height to street width ratios.

C. Revisit the city's architectural control ordinance ensuring that it provides clear direction to developers and enhances the visual quality and livability of the city.

D. Require parking lots to be separated from sidewalks and roadway facilities with appropriate landscaping, street walls or berms, and curbs.

E. Continue to enforce parking lot standards that address surfacing, light standards, tree canopy, and heat island reduction.

F. Incorporate Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and practices into building and site design to maximize visibility and eyes on the street.

Residential Land Use Goals

1. **Create a mix of residential land uses and housing types to increase housing choices, including affordable housing, and increase the viability of neighborhood services through redevelopment or infill development.**

Strategies

A. Engage the community to determine how to allow a broader range of housing types and densities within and adjacent to existing low density residential neighborhoods that are complementary and compatible with the existing neighborhood character.

B. Promote and support the development of medium and high density residential land uses near commercial centers and nodes.

C. Ensure that new and redeveloped medium and high density residential land uses are located within walking distance of transit and commercial services.

D. Engage the community to explore how to increase the mix of housing types near transit corridors, parks and commercial nodes/corridors.

2. **Preserve and enhance the livability and unique character of each neighborhood's residential areas.**

Strategies

A. Promote maintenance and reinvestment of existing residential land uses that have experienced deferred maintenance, deteriorating property values, high vacancy rates, or reuse opportunities.

B. Require the creation of appropriate and effective buffer or transition areas between different land use types.

Commercial & Office Land Use Goals

1. **Preserve and enhance community commercial centers that offer desirable and complementary commercial retail and services for the community's residents, workers, and visitors.**

Strategies

A. Minimize the adverse impacts associated with large community commercial centers using design, performance standards, site planning techniques, minimizing surface parking, buffering, and traffic management.

B. Ensure that community commercial centers contribute to an aesthetically positive identity for the community.

C. Integrate community travel routes within commercial centers in order to improve overall multi-modal safety, access and circulation around and through the centers.

D. Encourage infill development and aesthetic improvements to commercial surface parking lots in order to enhance adjacent public streets and sidewalks and more efficiently utilize commercial land.

E. Promote the inclusion of office employment uses within or adjacent to large commercial developments to strengthen the functionality and vitality of community commercial centers.

2. **Create commercial corridors that are functional, vibrant, environmentally sustainable, and present an aesthetically positive identity for the community.**

Strategies

A. Minimize the adverse impacts associated with commercial corridor development using design, performance standards, site planning techniques, and buffering.

B. Enhance commercial corridors' compatibility with nearby residential areas.

3. **Preserve, revitalize and foster neighborhood commercial nodes that provide essential neighborhood commercial services, unique neighborhood identity, and neighborhood gathering opportunities.**

Strategies

A. Encourage infill and redevelopment in neighborhood commercial nodes that is neighborhood scale in building size, architecture, and orientation to the street.

B. Implement convenient pedestrian access to and within the neighborhood commercial nodes from adjacent neighborhoods and transit stops.

C. Re-guide or rezone targeted commercial nodes in order to require a mix of commercial and employment or residential uses when they redevelop.

D. Consider rezoning certain commercial areas or small commercial sites that abut residential properties from General Commercial to Neighborhood Commercial to reduce the potential size and intensity of future buildings and commercial uses.

E. Re-guide under-performing commercial nodes to medium or high density residential to encourage redevelopment.

F. Prepare small area plans for commercial nodes and corridors where the appropriate future land uses are unclear, where significant changes are anticipated, and where additional guidance is needed.

4. **Preserve and enhance office/medical centers to retain and grow the community's employment opportunities, tax base, and convenient access to desirable services.**

Strategies

A. Support expansion of existing medical centers and supportive uses.

B. Support new and expanded office development.

C. Re-guide or rezone targeted commercial corridors from general commercial to office in order to promote redevelopment.

D. Integrate community travel routes within office and medical centers in order to improve overall multi-modal safety, access and circulation around and through the centers.

Mixed-Use Goals

1. **Continue to enhance the Park Commons area as St. Louis Park's "town center."**

Strategies

A. Promote and support the redevelopment of the remaining designated redevelopment sites in the Park Commons area with mixed-use buildings to strengthen the area's function as the "town center."

B. Ensure that future redevelopment provides similar building forms and densities that will complement the character of the "town center."

C. Require that future redevelopment is designed with buildings that are oriented to the public streets and spaces that are the heart of the "town center."

D. Encourage integrating community travel routes within the area in order to improve overall multi-modal safety, access and circulation around and through the area.

E. Engage the community to update the Park Commons West Master Plan and implementation strategies.

2. **Pursue redevelopment of future light rail transit station areas as transit-oriented, high density, well-connected, mixed-use centers.**

Strategies

A. Promote and support the Wooddale Station Area as a transit-oriented mixed-use neighborhood.

B. Promote and support the Beltline Station Area and Louisiana Station Area as primarily transit-oriented, mixed-use employment centers.

C. Require transit-oriented development on properties near future light rail transit stations consistent with station area framework plans.

D. Consider adopting form-based codes or similar zoning amendments to help implement station area framework plans.

3. **Expand the development of mixed-use districts within St. Louis Park to create a more livable and connected community.**

Strategies

A. Encourage and support mixed-use infill and redevelopment when compatible with existing or surrounding planned land uses.

B. Expand the distribution of mixed-use redevelopment in neighborhood commercial nodes and along commercial corridors to the broader community.

C. Promote and support reinvestment in the Historic Walker Lake area as a mixed commercial/industrial district that is compatible with its unique character and scale.

D. Complete a small area plan for the Historic Walker Lake area.

E. Promote and support mixed-use redevelopment in The West End to strengthen its role as a unique and dynamic place to live, work, shop, and play in the metropolitan area.

Industrial & Business Park Land Use Goals

1. **Protect and enhance the viability of the city's designated industrial and employment areas through reinvestment in long-term industrial areas, and adaptive reuse and eventual redevelopment in transitional industrial areas.**

Strategies

A. Protect planned industrial areas from encroachment by non-industrial and incompatible uses.

B. Encourage and support the appropriate evolution and expansion of individual industrial businesses.

C. Support new industrial land uses that are able to minimize negative environmental impacts and nuisances to surrounding land uses.

D. Promote and support the transition and eventual redevelopment of physically and economically obsolete or underutilized industrial properties.

E. Consider creating a Transitional Industrial zoning district and rezoning suitable redevelopment properties to Transitional Industrial.

F. Enhance industrial areas' compatibility with nearby residential neighborhoods.

G. Prepare small area plans for both reinvestment industrial areas and transitional industrial areas where significant changes are anticipated.

2. **Promote the development of business park land uses in designated employment areas as a way to expand the city's employment base and opportunities, increase the city's tax base, and meet the changing market and technological needs of the business sector.**

Strategies

A. Promote business park developments that utilize more efficient land use and building designs than traditional industrial development, such as multi-story buildings, multi-tenant buildings, and structured parking.

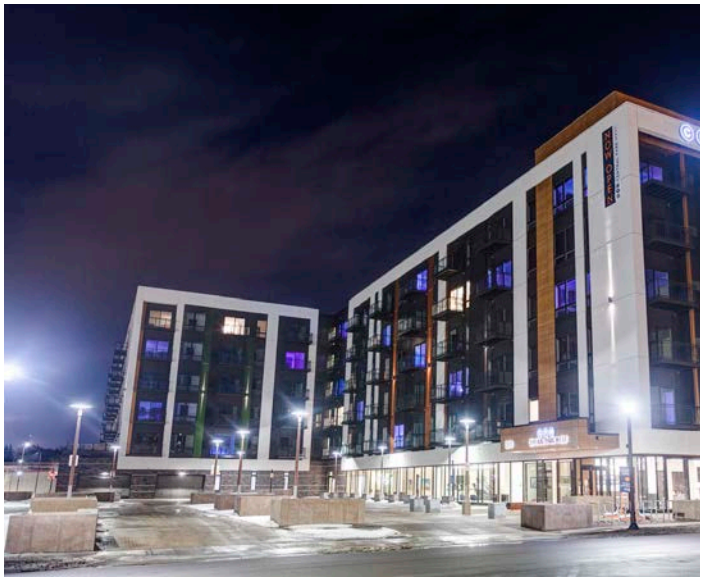
B. Encourage and support new business park developments that are designed as employment centers that are integrated into the community with strong connections to adjacent public streets and spaces, natural features, transit, and other community amenities.

C. Require that new business park developments provide efficient and attractive parking designs, appropriate landscaping, and high quality building architecture.

D. Allow limited commercial and service uses that provide valuable services to, and extend hours of activity within, employment centers without eroding the employment focus of these areas, sites and buildings.

Public Land Use Goals

1. **Ensure access to public land, parks, open space and facilities by the entire community, including children, adults, the elderly, those in multi-family housing, people of color, and those with mobility challenges.**
2. **Maintain accessibility to community facilities and public places consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).**
3. **Consider increasing natural environment areas on public land.**



Economic Development and Redevelopment

St. Louis Park is engaged in maintaining and growing its economy in ways that further enhance the community's economic, natural, and social vitality as a part of sustaining St. Louis Park's high quality of life.

As a first-ring suburban community, St. Louis Park is continually reinventing itself through innovative revitalization, expansion, and redevelopment projects that bring new businesses, housing and livable community options. The city also has highly ranked schools and up-to-date recreation amenities and facilities. The strength and stability of its businesses, institutions, neighborhoods and service organizations has made St. Louis Park an economically vibrant city with a AAA bond rating.

The purpose of the Economic Development and Redevelopment section is to provide guidance for long-term economic revitalization, expansion, and redevelopment efforts in St. Louis Park. This section describes the city's economic goals, strategies, key indicators, tools, initiatives and priority redevelopment areas.

Traditionally, economic development has been viewed as the process of creating jobs and increasing the tax base in order to broaden the community's tax base. The city views economic development and redevelopment more holistically by encouraging economic growth, diversification, and revitalization that enhances the natural and built environment and advances the overall health and vitality of the community. This approach entails creating and maintaining a community that is equally hospitable to businesses and residents.

Economically successful communities find innovative ways to properly balance the needs and desires of both businesses and residents. In general, the city pursues economic development and redevelopment not only to expand the city's tax base and create family-supportive jobs but also to fulfill the city's vision, clean up and protect the environment, promote economic diversification and vitality through small business development, and encourage the highest and best land uses incorporating Livable Communities, Transit Oriented Development, and Sustainability planning principles. The city looks to facilitate projects that will result in making the community healthier, more economically vibrant and environmentally sustainable.

Economic development however does not occur within a vacuum and is not merely the purview of the city. Rather it requires a concerted, collaborative effort involving business, education, government, nonprofit organizations, and neighborhoods to ensure that the city's economic future remains healthy and vibrant.

Where We Have Been

Economic Development Authority (EDA)

In 1970, the city established a Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA). In 1988, the city formed a separate Economic Development Authority (EDA) to foster local economic growth and prosperity and a separate Housing Authority. The EDA has the powers and duties given to it under Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 469, Economic Development, which includes the authority to hire personnel and expend funds for economic development and redevelopment purposes, to acquire land and buildings for development and redevelopment, and to request the city to levy taxes for the support of those activities.

The EDA is committed to working with the business community to create opportunities for new and existing companies to thrive in the city. Given its various powers and financial resources, the EDA utilizes flexible business assistance and development programs within a strategic framework as a means to effectively encourage economic expansion, diversification, revitalization, and redevelopment that is complementary to the community. In this capacity the EDA reviews and considers redevelopment proposals that request financing assistance for specified costs. The EDA consists of seven members. EDA membership is the same as the City Council although the officers may vary.

The EDA and city staff handle business assistance activities, tax increment financing requests, redevelopment project assistance, public/private financial packages, real estate transactions, brownfield assistance, commercial rehabilitation/small business resources/help, green building, grant writing, and other related activities that promote economic development and redevelopment in the city.

The city's Economic Development Strategic Plan encourages the city to build upon its strengths and opportunities, mitigate its weaknesses and future threats, and ultimately, create a nurturing environment for economic development, diversification, and redevelopment in the future.

Redevelopment Districts History

Economic development is both strategic and transactional. The EDA implements its strategic goals through individual initiatives. In the 1970s and 1980s the city identified three economically distressed areas in need of transition and established its first Redevelopment Districts. The Oak Park Village Redevelopment District (along Louisiana north of Hwy 7) was established in 1973 to replace a polluting industrial use with townhouse, apartment, and commercial uses overlaid on a network of parks and open spaces. The Excelsior Boulevard Redevelopment District, which ultimately evolved into the Park Commons area, was originally established in 1977 to intensify existing development in order to create a community focal point in this area of the city. Some early successful redevelopment projects included Byerly's, Target, and the Parkwood Shores Apartments.

The Highway 7 Redevelopment District, which included most of the corridor along the south side of the highway and the commercial area between France Ave and Joppa Ave, was established in 1985 to eliminate physical blight, improve the corridor's image/ appearance, improve the corridor's transportation functions, undertake environmentally-sound redevelopment, improve economic viability, and enhance the commercial area at the east end.

In the 1990s, the EDA also established two additional Redevelopment Districts. The Victoria Ponds Redevelopment District (north of Texas Ave & 28th St) in the Texa Tonka neighborhood assisted in the environmental clean up and redevelopment of a former asphalt plant and a segment of an abandoned rail line into residential townhouses and a regional trail corridor. The following year the Park Center Housing District was established to facilitate the development of the Parkwood Shores assisted living housing project. In 1996, the EDA expanded its overall Redevelopment Project Area (the designated area in which the city may undertake various types of redevelopment and reinvestment initiatives) to include a large portion of the city.

Beginning in 1994, the city conducted a grassroots, long-term strategic planning process called Vision St. Louis Park. One of the recommendations from this community-wide visioning process was to create a "town center" in the Excelsior Boulevard Redevelopment District, including support for the principles of the Livable Communities Act adopted by the Minnesota Legislature in 1995. In 1996, the Park Commons Concept Plan was adopted which ultimately resulted in the successful Excelsior & Grand mixed-use redevelopment project, as well as major improvements to Wolfe Park.

Where We Are Today

Employment Key Indicators

St. Louis Park is a major contributor to the economic vibrancy of the western Twin Cities submarket. The city plays a leadership role in economic development to provide its residents with high quality options for living, working, healthcare, shopping, and recreating within the community. An effective economic development program ensures a growing, well-balanced tax base that eases the tax burden on all property owners. Providing residents with quality employment options locally helps bolster the economic vitality of the community as well as reduces transportation costs and carbon emissions. Pairing employers with the community's highly educated talent pool facilities gains in innovation and productivity leading to further growth and expansion. This synergism further enhances the attractiveness of the community for both businesses and residents.

As a fully developed city, economic development efforts have primarily involved revitalizing key business centers, both commercial and industrial as well as redeveloping undervalued, underutilized, blighted, and/or contaminated properties. Equally important has been the city's emphasis on helping local businesses grow and expand their enterprises. The city has also focused on recruiting new businesses and industries that are complementary to the community's existing employment base.

Employment Trends

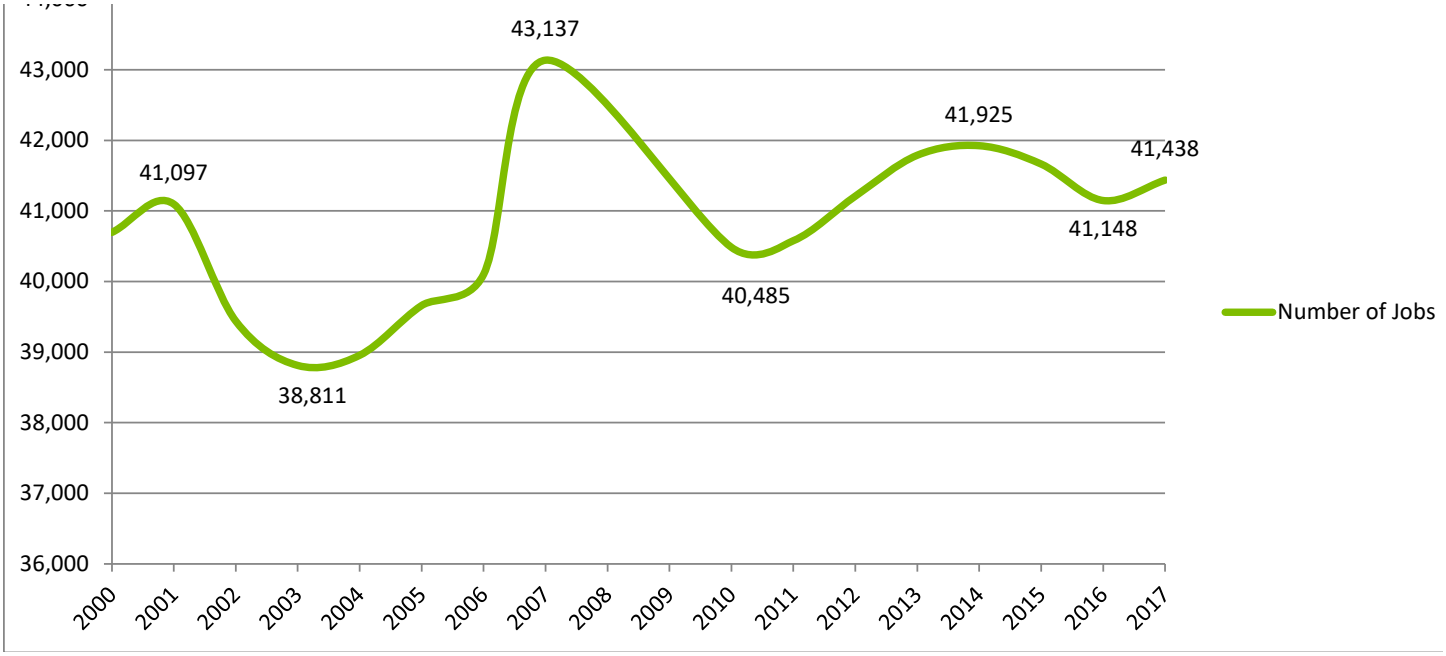
The Metropolitan Council monitors annual employment numbers by city. Table 5-7 shows employment in St. Louis Park for 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010-2017. After healthy employment growth in both the 1980s and 1990s, there was a small decline in jobs during the 2000-2010 time period. Figure 5-7 shows employment fluctuation during the 2000s.

Table 5-7. Employment Trends 1980-2017

YEAR	NUMBER OF JOBS	CHANGE
1980	31,978	3,748
1990	36,791	4,813
2000	40,696	3,905
2010	40,485	(211)
2011	40,579	94
2012	41,210	631
2013	41,790	580
2014	41,925	135
2015	41,665	(260)
2016	41,148	(517)
2017	41,438	290

Source: Metropolitan Council

Figure 5-7. Employment Trends



Jobs-to-Households Ratio

St. Louis Park has a history of maintaining a healthy balance between businesses and residents. A key indicator of this balance is the jobs-to-households ratio shown in Table 5-8. The city's overall job-to- household ratio for 2016 was 1.76 or just under 2 jobs for every household. This is above the regional average ratio of 1.5.

Table 5-8. Jobs-to-Households Ratio 1980-2016

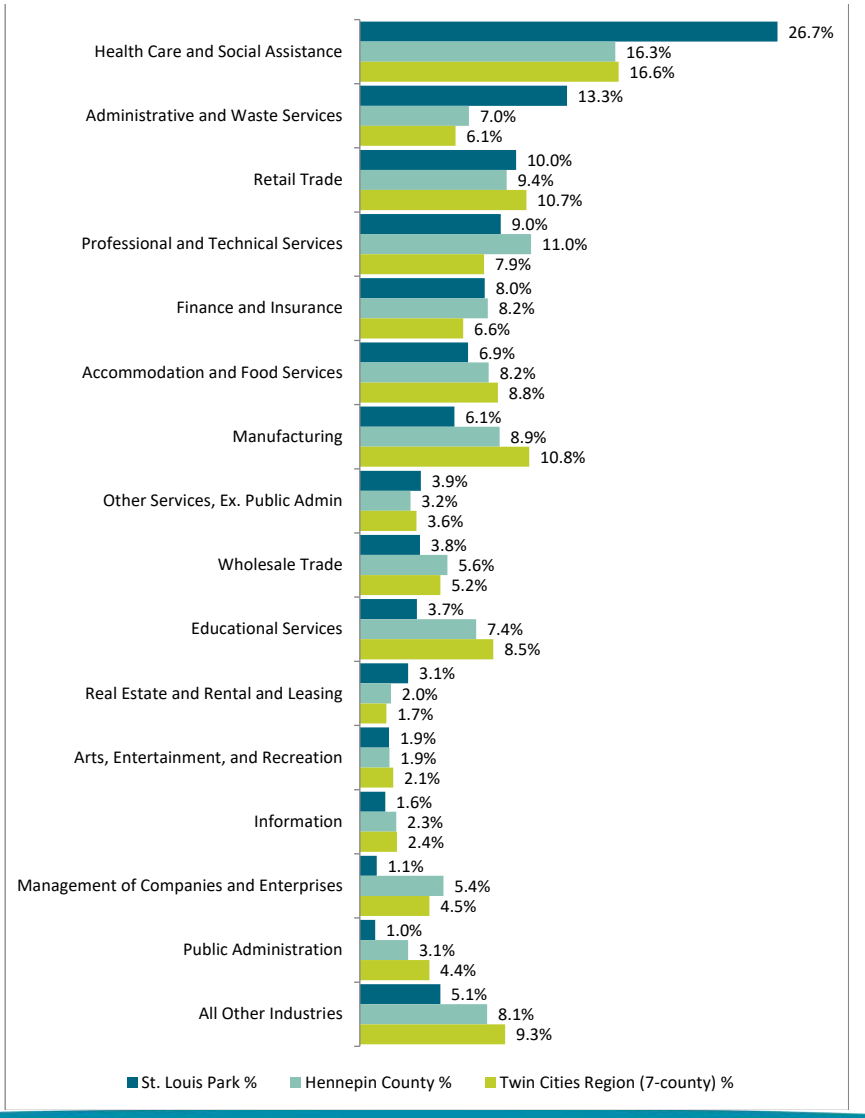
YEAR	# OF JOBS	# OF HOUSEHOLDS	JOBS-TO-HOUSEHOLDS RATIO
1980	31,978	17,669	1.81
1990	36,791	19,925	1.85
2000	40,696	20,773	1.96
2010	40,485	21,743	1.86
2016	41,148	23,432	1.76

Source: Metropolitan Council

Employment by Industry Sector

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) maintains quarterly and annual records of employment and wages by industry. Employment includes those workers whose employers contribute to the State unemployment insurance fund which, in effect, is the bulk of the persons who work in St. Louis Park, with the primary exception of self-employed workers. Figure 5-8 shows the distribution of St. Louis Park's 2017 employment by major job category, as well as a comparison with Hennepin County and the State of Minnesota.

Figure 5-8. Employment by Industry, 2016



The largest employment sector in St. Louis Park is Health Care and Social Assistance at 26.7%. Park Nicollet and Health Partners' sizable presences in St. Louis Park has resulted in the attraction of a variety of medical-related businesses which seek close proximity to these employers. Other significant employment sectors in the community are Administrative and Waste Services at 13.3% and Retail Trade at 10.0%. Other sizable employment sectors include Professional and Technical Services, and Finance and Insurance.

St. Louis Park's major employers and the number of employees for each employer in 2017 are shown in Table 5-9.

Park Nicollet Health Services is by far the community's largest employer, providing 11% of all of the jobs in the city. The next largest private sector employers, Wells Fargo and Japs-Olson Company, provide a combined 4.5% of all jobs. It should be noted as well that the second highest employer in 2017, Wells Fargo Home Mortgages, was not located in the city in 2008, a testament to the city's ability to attract high-quality employment.

Table 5-9. Major Employers in St. Louis Park, 2017

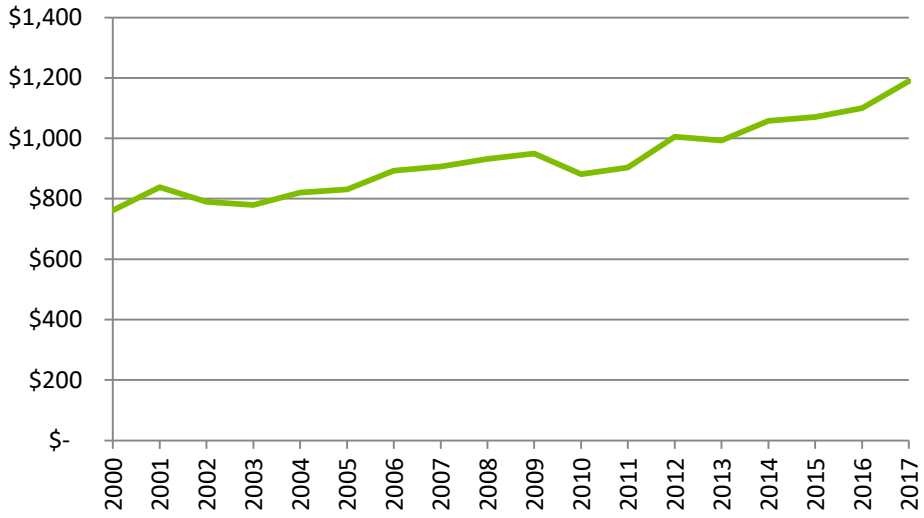
NAME OF COMPANY	PRODUCTS/SERVICES	# OF EMPLOYEES
Park Nicollet Health Services	Health Services	6,708
Wells Fargo Home Mortgage	Financial Services	1,450
St. Louis Park Public Schools	Public Elementary & Secondary School	1,100 TOTAL (including seasonal/temp)
Japs-Olson Co.	Other Comm. Printing	645
Sholom Home SLP	Senior Care Services	497
MoneyGram International	Financial Transaction Processing	442
HealthPartners	Health Services	400
Center for Diagnostic Imaging (formerly MN Medical Scanning Corp./Consultants)	Medical Laboratories	400
Lunds & Byerly's (Formerly Byerly's foods)	Grocery	300
St. Louis Park, City of	Executive Offices	440 TOTAL (including seasonal/temp)
Northland Aluminum Products (NordicWare)	Household Cooking Appliance Mfg.	235 FT & 150 TEMP
Sabes Jewish Community	Individual And Family Services	313 TOTAL (including seasonal/temp)
AAA Minneapolis	Travel Arrangement Reservation Services	205
Target (SLP)	Retail Store	195
Adolfson & Peterson	Commercial & Institutional Construction	192
Target (Knollwood)	Retail Store	177

Source: City of St. Louis Park

Wages

Figure 5-9 illustrates the average weekly wages of the city's population. Since 2000, wages have climbed steadily; according to the American Community Survey, the city's median household income in 2016 was $68,451.

Figure 5-9. Average Weekly Wages Per Earner 2000-2017



EDA Economic Development Assistance

As part of the EDA's mission to preserve and enhance the community's built environment, plan for growth, and advance the physical and human development of the city, the EDA provides the following assistance to businesses considering locating, expanding or redeveloping within the community:

- Business retention and expansion assistance
- Business recruitment
- Business locating/relocating
- Small business startup, expansion, development services, and financial assistance
- Site and building selection
- Property redevelopment
- Sustainable ("Green") development assistance
- Public/private financial assistance
- Tax increment financing assistance and administration
- Grant preparation and management – brownfield remediation, Transit Oriented Development, and livable communities
- Demographic/community research
- Community promotion
- Diversification/racial equity

In addition, the EDA supports the St. Louis Park Business Council, an affiliate of the TwinWest Chamber of Commerce and Greater MSP, in an effort to partner with the broader local business community so as to increase business retention and job growth, improve the region's workforce, and provide business a voice in public policy.

The EDA will utilize financing tools to alleviate extraordinary expenses that place proposed projects at a competitive disadvantage. The intent is to "level the playing field" with other locales where such expenses may not be present; not to provide an advantage for one business over another. Financing mechanisms available to the city/EDA include:

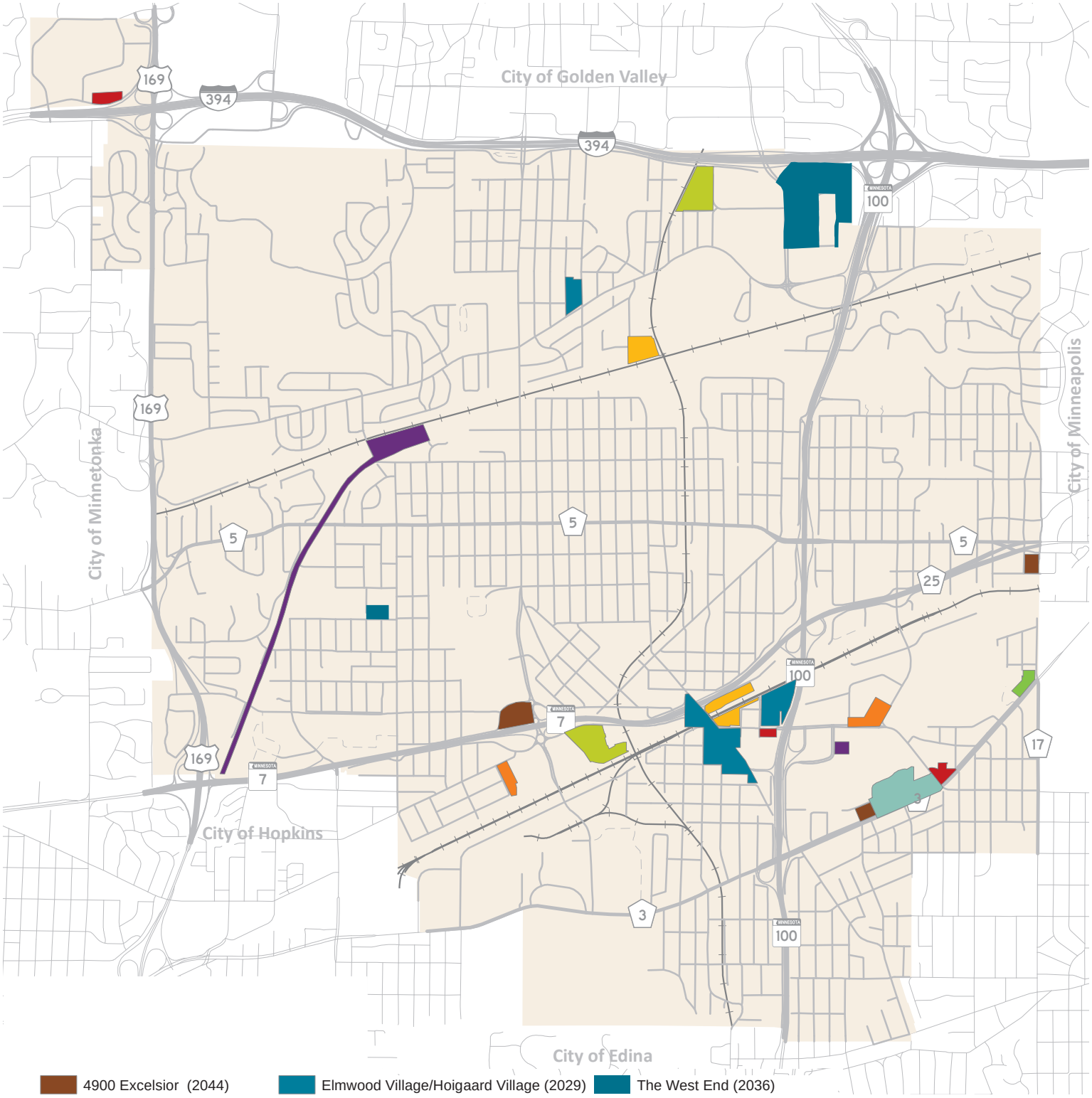
- Tax increment financing
- Tax abatement
- Business loans
- Redevelopment assistance

The EDA also partners with other government agencies and organizations which provide loans and (in limited cases) grants for specified development purposes. Of these, one of the most commonly utilized economic development tools is tax increment financing.

Tax Increment Financing

St. Louis Park has considerable experience creating and administering TIF Districts. The city has established TIF Districts and Hazardous Substance Subdistricts to facilitate various phases of economic development projects. Over the past 20 years, the city has continued to establish additional districts. In 2018 the city has one inactive (Victoria Ponds) and twenty active TIF districts, and one HSTI District (Hwy 7 Corporate Center). The city's Redevelopment Project Area was updated in 2015 to include the entire city limits. Figure 5-10 indicates the locations of the city's various TIF Districts. Districts are continuously created and de-certified as needed or required.

Figure 5-10. Redevelopment and Tax Increment Financing Districts



- 4900 Excelsior (2044)
- Aquila Commons (2032)
- Bridgewater Bank (2045)
- Edgewood (2025)
- Eliot Park (2041)
- Ellipse on Excelsior (2036)
- Elmwood Apartments (2045)
- Elmwood Village/Hoigaard Village (2029)
- Hardcoat (2022)
- Highway 7 CC & HSTI (2032)
- Mill City (2026)
- Park Center (2023)
- Park Commons (2027)
- Shoreham (2043)
- The West End (2036)
- Victoria Ponds (2023)
- Wayzata Blvd (2045)
- Wolfe Lake Commercial (2031)
- Wooddale Station (2045)
- Zarthan & 16th Street (2026)
- City Boundary

St. Louis Park MINNESOTA

Small Business Resources

In an effort to help entrepreneurs and small business owners successfully start, grow, and expand their enterprises the city provides a variety of small business resources. These resources include:

Small Business Liaison

The city's small business liaison offers small business owners a single point of contact for various small business assistance information. The Small Business Liaison is the point person for referring businesses to the wide variety of small business resources and programs offered locally and by various metro agencies and organizations. The Small Business Liaison also helps businesses search for appropriate available properties within St. Louis Park, helps determine the permit, licensing and zoning requirements pertinent to their particular projects, provides guidance on city permit and approval processes, as well as responds to questions and concerns as they arise.

Open to Business Program

The city provides small business advising services through its Open to Business program. Through this program the city offers one-on-one technical assistance to existing local businesses, aspiring entrepreneurs, and parties interested in opening a business in St. Louis Park. The assistance is free and confidential and is provided through a partnership with the Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers (MCCD). Business owners and managers receive counseling with a business advisor from the MCCD staff who provides help with planning and organizing business ideas, financial management, marketing, regulatory compliance, and assistance with leases or property purchases. Business advisors help develop business and marketing plans, identify both strategic and financial challenges and opportunities, and tailor solutions. They also help connect entrepreneurs to potential financing options and resources as well as training programs, community services, and industry contacts. MCCD also offers a small business loan program. Advising sessions occur at city Hall one time a month or by appointment. The service is free to those who live or work in St. Louis Park.

Revolving Loan Fund

The St. Louis Park Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) provides local businesses with gap financing in conjunction with commercial lending to enable local businesses to grow and expand their companies within St. Louis Park. For-profit new and existing businesses located in St. Louis Park can apply for RLF financing. Women, minority and veteran-owned businesses are encouraged to apply. Preference will be given to projects that retain existing jobs and/or create new jobs.

PACE-Property Assessed Clean Energy Program

St. Louis Park offers alternative financing for energy efficient and renewable energy upgrades to buildings through its PACE program. PACE is available through a partnership with the St. Paul Port Authority (SPPA). It provides funding for energy efficiency and renewable energy upgrades to buildings, from smart energy efficiency upgrades to roof-top solar power systems, including:

- Energy efficiency improvements: Lighting, mechanical systems, window upgrades, temperature controls, HVAC equipment, new elevators, new insulation, etc.
- Renewable energy systems: Solar water heat, photovoltaics, wind, geothermal electric, geothermal heat pumps, geothermal direct-use
- Electric vehicle charging systems: New and upgraded circuits and related equipment to enable vehicle charging
- To be eligible you must own or manage a commercial, industrial and multi-family residential property located in St. Louis Park.

Web Listing of Available Small Business Resources

On its web site the city provides a section outlining the various small business resources available in St Louis Park and the metro area as well as available properties. Information can be found on starting or expanding a business, financing options, obtaining city approvals, as well as a robust list of links to other agencies and organizations that offer assistance.

Community Development Partnerships

The city utilizes partnerships with other government agencies and non-profits such as the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), Metropolitan Council, Hennepin County and others to offer economic development incentives and programs. Partnerships often expand opportunities for economic development and may increase a project's eligibility for certain grant programs. The city also actively collaborates with the TwinWest Chamber of Commerce through its St. Louis Park Business Council as well as St. Louis Park Public Schools.

Where We Are Headed

Leveraging City's Locational Advantage

Within a metropolitan region, proximity and convenience translates into time savings, business operation efficiencies and higher productivity. As a first ring suburb of Minneapolis, St. Louis Park is well-located within the Twin Cities marketplace and is desirable for convenient commuting and efficient shipping. St. Louis Park has immediate and convenient access to four major highways, two regional trails, bus services, and light rail transit coming within the decade. Businesses, employees and residents are only minutes from downtown Minneapolis, professional sporting events, world renowned theaters and museums, abundant shopping and restaurants as well as colleges, universities, parks, lakes and trails. St. Louis Park will continue to leverage its central locational advantage to retain and attract businesses and residents.

Employment Growth

Given its central location within the Twin Cities metropolitan region, the city expects to see significant growth in commercial and industrial investment continuing in the coming years, resulting in healthy employment growth. Based upon future employment projections prepared by the Metropolitan Council, the number of jobs in the community will grow substantially over the next 22 years.

Table 5-10 shows employment growth of 5% (2010-2020), 4% (2020-2030), and 3% (2030-2040) with cumulative growth of 16% (2010-2040). Considering the city had 41,438 jobs in 2017, the Metropolitan Council projection means a 13% increase in employment over the next 22 years. Considering St. Louis Park is fully developed, these new jobs will be accommodated through expansion and/or intensification of existing facilities and redevelopment.

Roughly half of these jobs could be accommodated in The West End area (near I-394 and Highway 100) when it is fully developed, due to addition of at least 701,420 square feet of office and 350,000 square feet of retail.

Table 5-10. Employment Projections 2000-2040

YEAR	# OF JOBS	CHANGE	CHANGE %
2000	40,696	3,905	-
2010	40,485	(211)	(0.52%)
2017	41,438	953	2.35%
2020	43,400	1,962	4.73%
2030	45,300	1,900	4.38%
2040	46,850	1,550	3.42%

Source: Metropolitan Council

The city is expected to see modest residential growth over the next twenty years (13% growth in number of households) thus necessitating the need for business growth and redevelopment in order to maintain a balanced tax base between residential and non-residential land uses. Business growth and redevelopment is anticipated to occur within St. Louis Park along its major roadways and within areas designated as employment areas.

Due to anticipated changes in demographics, the city is likely to see increased demand for healthcare related services. This demand will result in increased needs for medical office space and jobs in the community.

Redevelopment Assistance Objectives

St. Louis Park's EDA has a variety of financial tools at its disposal to facilitate economic development, redevelopment, and business growth and expansion. The EDA considers applications for financing on a case-by-case basis. The EDA will evaluate the merit of providing financial assistance for private redevelopment projects to the extent they achieve the following public purposes:

Implement Vision St. Louis Park Goals

The project will help fulfill the strategic directions outlined in Vision St. Louis Park of being a connected and engaged community, a leader in environmental stewardship, of providing a well-maintained and diverse housing stock, as well as promoting and integrating arts, culture and community aesthetics where appropriate.

Enhance Livability

The principles of Livable Communities are incorporated into the project; additionally, the project brings many of those same livability qualities to surrounding neighborhoods. Livable developments use high quality urban and architectural design to create pedestrian oriented environments that provide opportunities for positive face-to-face interaction. Design is used to integrate land uses, housing styles and socioeconomic groups. The project is accessible to parks, services, shopping and jobs. The project preserves mature trees, preserves or creates open space and, when possible, makes use of creeks, ponds or other natural amenities to enhance attractiveness and provide recreational opportunities. The project also incorporates public art.

Enhance Neighborhoods

The project will have a positive impact on surrounding neighborhoods. It will preserve and/or enhance parks and open space, locally unique physical elements, and anchoring institutions (i.e. schools, houses of worship, civic centers, etc.). Projects will preserve or strengthen the mixture of activities for residents to use and enjoy (shopping, working, schooling, playing and worshipping).

Provide Highest and Best Land Use

The project results in more efficient land use through greater density and higher quality buildings, thus increasing the property's market value. Redevelopment proposals will be evaluated as to whether they result in the highest and best land usage.

Increase Tax Base

The project will increase the property's tax yield by at least 2:1. Additional priority is given to projects sited in areas experiencing declining property values, high vacancy or underutilization.

Retain and Create Jobs

The project retains local employment and/or increases the number and quality of jobs (e.g. stable employment with attractive wages and benefits).

Increase Affordable Housing

The project meets or exceeds the requirements for workforce housing as set forth in the City's Inclusionary Housing Policy.

Improve Infrastructure

The project contributes to needed infrastructure improvements to the water/sewer, streets and telecommunications systems.

Protect and Remediate the Environment

The project will remediate existing environment contamination and will not create new contamination.

Sustain the Environment

The project incorporates sustainable "green" building design resulting in energy efficiencies, enhanced stormwater management, reduced water usage, decreases the capital and operating costs of local government as required by the City's Green Building Policy.

Increase Transit Usage

The project will enhance mobility and increase the ability for residents to safely access local amenities and services. Transit Oriented Development (TOD) projects preserve or enhance the "walkability" of neighborhoods and reduce the need for automobile trips by providing interconnected walking, bicycling and public transit opportunities.

Enhances or Reuses Existing Quality Buildings

The project improves buildings or reuses existing structures which preserves the structural and architectural integrity in St. Louis Park, and where appropriate, replace buildings that are inadequate for current business or residential needs or are functionally obsolete.

Eliminates Blighted, Outmoded or Problem Properties

The project is proposed for a building or site that is not well maintained or is no longer safe and/or functionally viable.

Improve Ownership/Management Status

The project is proposed for an area that has experienced significant turnover in ownership, management and/or tenancy.

Remove Nonconforming Land Uses

The project brings appropriate land use changes to an area where non-conforming land uses exist.

Meet Market Demand

The project is consistent with current market demand and/or is proposed for an area where developer interest is significant.

Meet Development Potential

The project substantially increases the property's total market value

Relate to Adjacent Development

The project, by its proximity, can be tied into and enhanced by other recently completed projects.

Act as a Catalyst

By both quality and proximity, the projects will serve as a catalyst for additional redevelopment, private reinvestment or remodeling in nearby neighborhoods so as to lead to their economic stabilization and revitalization.

Priority Redevelopment Areas

Looking into the future, the city has proactively identified areas within the community that are anticipated to face significant long-term pressures to change and will likely need some public attention in order to capture future redevelopment opportunities (Figure 5-11). The priority redevelopment areas, which are identified below, are those that are expected to redevelop within the 2040 planning horizon.

They are dominated by three types of areas: future transit station areas for the planned SWLRT line, neighborhood commercial nodes, and community commercial centers/corridors. In addition, the Wayzata Blvd./I-394 and Cedar Lake Road/Hwy. 100 areas have struggled to attract significant reinvestment as they have aged and the existing mix of land uses and development types in these areas have become mismatched with major changes in the transportation system and regional economy, e.g. older highway commercial along Wayzata Blvd. predating the conversion of Hwy. 12 to I-394 and older industrial at the Cedar Lake Road/Hwy. 100 interchange.

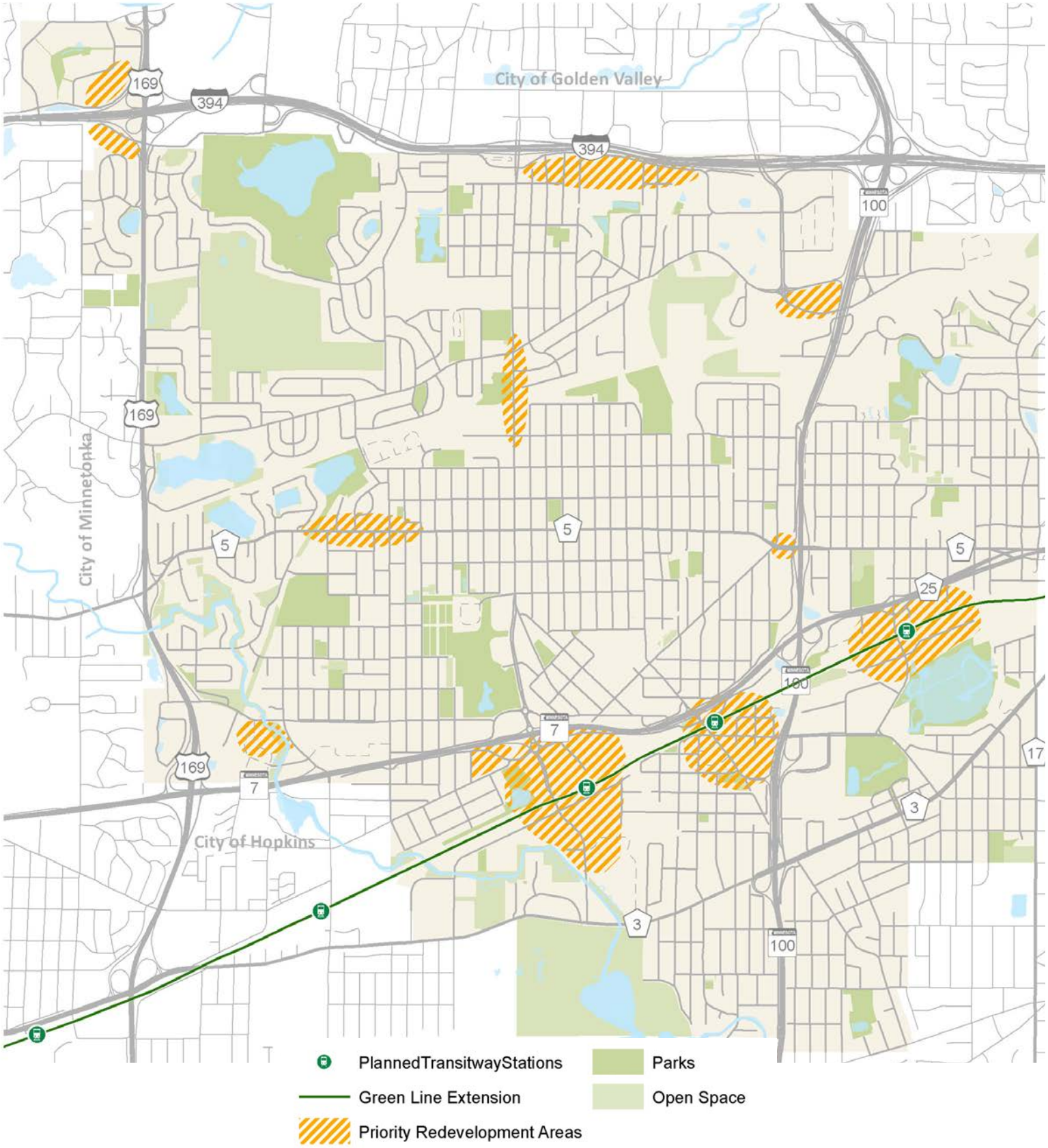
Redeveloping Areas

As part of the city's focus on creating a more livable community, specific redevelopment areas are guided for mixed-use development. The 2040 Land Use Plan map currently designates the following areas as Mixed Use or Transit Oriented Development areas: Park Commons (Excelsior Boulevard & Grand Way), Excelsior Boulevard & France Avenue, Texa-Tonka, Louisiana/Cedar Lake Road, Belt Line station area, and Wooddale station area.

REDEVELOPING AREAS

- LRT Station Areas
  - Beltline
  - Wooddale
  - Louisiana
- Neighborhood Commercial Nodes
  - Texa-Tonka
  - Louisiana & Cedar Lake Road
- Areas adjacent to The West End
  - Wayzata Blvd
  - Cedar Lake Road & Hwy 100
- Shelard Park Area
- Knollwood
- Minnetonka Boulevard / Highway 100 Interchange

Figure 5-11. Priority Redevelopment Areas



The intent of the Mixed Use land use designation and the city's Livable Communities design principles is to create compact, pedestrian-scale mixed-use buildings, typically with retail, service or other commercial uses on the ground floor and residential or office uses on subsequent floors. Mixed-use is intended to accommodate mixed-income housing, a mix of housing types on the same block, and higher density development. In addition, Shelard Park in the northwest corner of the city and the West End development at I-394 and 100 are both examples of mixing uses in an area.

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Station Areas

The SWLRT line planned for the existing rail corridor that runs through southern St. Louis Park has transit stations in three locations: Belt Line Boulevard, Wooddale Avenue, and Louisiana Avenue. Implementation of light rail presents long term opportunities for new land uses, particularly within one half-mile of the transit stations, that will both support the light rail line and benefit from proximity to light rail transit.

Beltline Boulevard Transitway Station Area

The SWLRT station area at Belt Line Boulevard lies within the Wolfe Park and Triangle neighborhoods. In the past this station area's land uses consisted of primarily industrial land uses, with some high density residential and commercial uses as part of the mix. Beginning with the 2030 Land Use Plan and continuing with the 2040 Land Use Plan, uses in this area are guided toward more intense uses for future redevelopment. In order to promote a transit-oriented, mixed use neighborhood, most of the station area is guided for the TOD, Business Park, and High Density Residential land use categories.

Wooddale Avenue Transitway Station Area

The SWLRT station area at Wooddale Avenue lies primarily in the Elmwood neighborhood. This station area has contained a mix of land uses, including industrial, commercial, and residential, but has been experiencing significant redevelopment. In the long-term this station area is guided toward becoming a TOD neighborhood containing mixed-use, high density residential, and office.

Louisiana Avenue Transitway Station Area

The SWLRT station area at Louisiana Avenue lies within three neighborhoods – Brooklawns, Meadowbrook, and South Oak Hill. This station area's land uses have been primarily industrial, commercial and office/medical, but beginning with the 2030 Land Use Plan and continuing with the 2040 Land Use Plan, land uses in this area are being guided from low intensity industrial land to more intense business park uses, which will create a higher density employment center near the transit station. As a business park and office center, it is anticipated that this station area will be a mix of reinvested in industrial and redevelopment to office, particularly medical.

Commercial Study Areas

Several commercial areas in the city have underdeveloped properties that are potential candidates for re-purposing. These include the following:

- Knollwood
- Park Commons West
- Texa-Tonka
- Louisiana & Cedar Lake Road
- Highway Interchange Study Areas
  - Highway 100 & Cedar Lake Road
  - Highway 100 & Minnetonka Boulevard
  - I-394 & Highway 169 (Shelard Park)

The city intends to look more closely at these areas in terms of the location, market, design and regulatory frameworks to determine if changes in positioning or land use codes could help them to thrive economically for the long term.

Existing and New Small Businesses

As the city continues to grow, revitalize and redevelop aging commercial areas, existing small businesses are often located in these potential reinvestment sites. Small businesses often face pressures to relocate (temporary or permanent), increasing rents, and/or becoming a tenant in a new mixed use development. During the community engagement process for the 2040 Plan Update, residents voiced their desire for retaining and attracting small and local businesses in the community, preferably in locations convenient to their neighborhoods. Small and local businesses contribute to making St. Louis Park unique and its desirable quality of life. The city values the important role that small and local businesses play in the economic and social vitality of the community. In order to retain and attract small businesses in the future, the city is committed to exploring additional methods for providing supportive programs and redevelopment best practices.

Sustainable "Green" Development

The city has long valued its natural resources and, consequently, has a considerable history of environmental initiatives. One of the key recommendations identified in the St. Louis Park Vision 3.0 is "St. Louis Park will continue to lead in environmental stewardship". To that end, the city will actively encourage the development of high performance ("green") buildings and use of sustainable site design. Sustainable Development is defined as:

Development that maintains or enhances economic opportunity and community wellbeing while protecting and restoring the natural environment upon which people depend. Sustainable Development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

High performance buildings incorporate numerous strategies that result in improved energy efficiencies and performance as well as improved employee health and productivity. The city's Green Building Policy is being used to expand the number of new and renovated buildings that are constructed to achieve green building standards. In addition the city's Climate Action Plan will be used to achieve reduction of energy consumption in existing buildings and promote the use of renewable energy sources. Sustainable site design promotes natural settings and results in environmentally friendly storm water management and reduced water usage.

Economic Development Goals and Strategies

1. Promote economic development and redevelopment activities that enhance the livability and vitality of the community.

Strategies

A. Maintain and promote economic development financing policies and programs to assist with redevelopment and revitalization of the city's commercial, office, and industrial areas.

B. Promote sustainable building projects consistent with the city's Green Building Policy energy savings and water conservation targets, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards, State of Minnesota B3 Guidelines, or comparable green certification applicable for each project's particular development type.

C. Encourage efficient, compact redevelopment that results in the highest and best land uses so as to minimize energy and infrastructure costs.

D. Encourage economic development and redevelopment that incorporate Livable Communities planning principles as established in the Land Use section of the 2040 Plan.

E. Promote the development of new market rate and affordable housing which will provide residents with additional housing options, assist in retaining and attracting talent for area employers, and further support local commercial businesses.

F. Encourage redevelopment that incorporates efforts to achieve the goals of the Climate Action Plan, such as renewable energy resources, on-site and community solar, purchase of renewable energy credits through electric utility programs, and other such efforts that reduce energy usage.

2. Foster the expansion, redevelopment and revitalization of the city's commercial, industrial and business park areas through environmentally sustainable projects.

Strategies

A. Balance available land resources and future growth demands to ensure that the city has an adequate amount of land guided for commercial, office, and industrial uses to maintain a healthy tax base, offer adequate high-quality employment opportunities, and provide desirable goods and services.

B. Encourage and support expansion, redevelopment and revitalization that contribute to a diverse and healthy mix of desirable commercial, office and industrial development types.

C. Maintain and expand public infrastructure systems (e.g. streets, Fiber, and utilities) that provide adequate connections and capacities to meet the future needs of the city's business areas.

D. Undertake redevelopment planning studies to explore options and establish plans for redevelopment and revitalization of identified redevelopment study areas.

E. Collaborate with property owners and developers in SWLRT station areas to intensify or redevelop business areas consistent with Transit Oriented Development best practices and the city's LRT station area plans.

F. Collaborate with property owners to provide new services, amenities and land uses that strengthen their business area or creatively reuse underutilized business areas.

3. Retain and foster the growth of St. Louis Park's existing high-quality businesses.

Strategies

A. Promote strong relationships between existing businesses, government, and neighborhoods to promote a healthy and compatible working and living environment.

B. Support the expansion of existing high-quality businesses that have an environmentally sound track record, provide desirable goods and services, and offer quality jobs (e.g. stable employment and/or attractive wages and benefits).

C. Provide public financing policies and programs that help existing businesses with stay or expand in St. Louis Park (e.g. tax increment financing, private activity bonds, revolving loan fund).

D. Collaborate with agencies that provide education, skill training and job placement to ensure that St. Louis Park provides a sound base of qualified employees for its employers.

4. Assist the startup, growth, diversification, and expansion of the city's small businesses.

Strategies

A. Continue to link small businesses with resources and organizations that provide information and financial assistance needed for the retention and growth of small and locally-owned businesses.

B. Enhance opportunities for partnerships between public and private entities that promote economic vitality of small businesses.

C. Continue to assist small businesses in identifying appropriate locations within the city.

D. Promote small businesses with an emphasis on women, minority and veteran owners to diversify and further strengthen the economic fabric of the city.

E. Research, develop and implement innovative and creative programs in which to assist entrepreneurs and small businesses to expand and/or locate in St. Louis Park (i.e., affordable rent programs, grants, loans, incentive programs, etc.).

5. Recruit new businesses that are compatible with and complementary to St. Louis Park's existing businesses.

Strategies

A. Promote St. Louis Park's strategic benefits as a prospective business location including: its first ring location in the Twin Cities metro area, convenient transportation access including easy highway access and the future SWLRT line, a high-quality workforce, and numerous community amenities.

B. Focus the city's business attraction efforts on industry sectors with a track record of environmental sensitivity and provision of quality jobs (i.e. stable employment and attractive wages and benefits). Such industries include: headquarters and business services, financial services and insurance, health and life sciences; advanced manufacturing and technology.

C. Encourage and support the assembly of smaller obsolete business sites into larger sites that can accommodate the development of new buildings to fit contemporary business needs and standards and will attract new businesses to St. Louis Park.

Housing Plan

The overall goal for housing in St. Louis Park is to: "Promote and facilitate a balanced and enduring housing stock that offers a continuum of diverse life-cycle housing choices suitable for households of all income levels including affordable, senior, supportive and mixed income housing disbursed throughout the City."

This goal for housing in the community has evolved over time. It reflects three cycles of Vision St. Louis Park, the City's Strategic Plan, the 2003-2005 Housing Summit, and the 2014 City Council Retreat. During the City's 2016-2017 visioning process, "Developing Creative Housing Solutions" was identified as one of five specific vision areas for the community. Strategic priorities were developed from this visioning process and the city adopted the following housing strategic priority:

St. Louis Park is committed to providing a broad range of housing and neighborhood-oriented development.

- Providing more diverse and creative housing choices to meet the needs of current and future residents while preserving existing affordable housing.

Opportunities:

- St. Louis Park is a desirable place to live, and will continue to see population growth in the future.
- The Southwest Light Rail Project will create additional development interest in our community and offers opportunities for achieving many of our housing goals.
- Regional affordable housing efforts provide momentum for support of the city's initiatives and policies.

Challenges:

- Housing disparities exist among different groups of people, both in the city and the region. In order for St. Louis Park to be a leader in racial equity and inclusion, the city must examine all housing decisions and policies through a racial equity lens.
- St. Louis Park is a desirable place to live, which is one of the factors driving the increasing cost of housing in the City.
- St. Louis Park is a fully developed city with little greenfield development opportunity. Scarcity of land makes development difficult and expensive, difficult to assemble sites, and land is relatively expensive.
- Affordable housing is a regional issue that will not be solved by St. Louis Park alone.
- The current political climate has resulted in a lack of priority for affordable housing at state and federal levels.
- Much of the single-family housing stock in St. Louis Park is comprised of smaller one-story and 1.5-story homes on smaller lots. Today's home buyers, especially those buyers with children, are looking for larger homes and modern amenities that are not offered in many areas of the city.
- While the rental housing market is strong, the majority of rental housing stock in the city is over 40 years older and lacks contemporary amenities current renters may expect.
- St. Louis Park's senior population will continue to grow, especially in the age group 75 to 84. High homeownership rates among seniors indicate there could be a shortage of senior housing options, or simply that many seniors prefer to live in their home and age in place. Demand for alternative housing products will rise as the overall population ages, as will demand for home health care services and retrofitting existing homes. There is also an increase for seniors residing with relatives.

Where We Have Been

History of Housing Development

The progression of housing built in St. Louis Park occurred in concentric rings followed by the east to west expansion of Minneapolis into the western suburbs. Some of the earliest houses were constructed by Monitor Works, a manufacturer of grain seeders, for factory workers. A few of these houses still exist today in the Elmwood neighborhood. The oldest single- family homes were built before 1900 near Wooddale Avenue and State Highway 7. It is estimated that over 900 units in the city are more than seventy eighty-five years old (built before 1930).

During the 1920s, St. Louis Park experienced significant growth in the number of housing units. This growth was arrested when the U.S. was thrown into the Great Depression in the 1930s. During the period between 1937 and 1942, growth resumed at a rapid rate to meet the pent-up demand created during the depression. This growth was interrupted again by the U.S. involvement in World War II.

By 1947, growth had resumed once more and by 1950, St. Louis Park was the fastest growing community in the state with 1,068 housing units added in that year alone. From 1940 to 1950, growth averaged the equivalent of 6.9 persons moving into St. Louis Park every day! After the war, returning veterans, easy home financing through the G.I. Bill, and "assembly line" type construction methods spurred the flurry of home construction in St. Louis Park where previous land speculation had already created thousands of building lots. The growth of single-family houses remained strong through the mid- 1950s. The construction of duplexes in St. Louis Park generally parallels the timeline of single-family home construction.

A wide variety of housing stock was constructed ranging from cottages and factory-built housing to large contemporary units with Queen Anne, prairie, English Tudor, Cape Cod, colonial, and rambler designs in between. Nonetheless, the most common house type in St. Louis Park is the Cape Cod or small rambler built during the housing explosion which occurred after 1939.

Very few single-family homes have been built since the boom time of the 1950s and 1960s. Most new housing during the past 30 years has been apartments, condominiums and townhouses, both rental and owner-occupied.

ST. LOUIS PARK 1990 TO 2015:

25 YEAR TIMELINE OF MAJOR ACTIVITIES, INITIATIVES, IMPACTS IN CITY

- 1993- Established Meadowbrook Collaborative
- 1993- Shelter Plus Care rent assistance. Annual Home Remodeling Fair
- 1999- Purchase and Rehabilitation of Louisiana Court by Project for Pride in Living
- 2000- Implemented the Home Renewal Program purchasing dilapidated homes for demolition and new construction
- 2001-2012- Resolution Adopting Housing Improvement Area Policy (HIAs) 2001, 7 HIAs completed to date
- 2002- Citywide Inspection Program – conducted every 4 years
- 2003- Project Based 40 units of Housing Choice Vouchers at two supportive housing developments and at Excelsior and Grand
- 2005- St. Louis Park Rental Coalition (SPARC)
- 2005- Architectural Advice Program
- 2005- Remodeling Advisor Program
- 2003 to 2006- Conducted Housing Summit
- 2006- Adopted City Housing Goals
- 2006- Excess Land Program
- 2006 – ongoing- West Hennepin Affordable Housing Land Trust purchased, rehabbed and sold to 16 homes to low income homeowners
- 2006- Annual Home Remodeling Tour
- 2005- Created Move-Up in the Park Loan Program to assist homeowners with home expansions
- 2007- Blackstone Targeted Neighborhood Program
- 2007- Dial-a-ride
- 2008- Live Where You Work Homeownership Program

In 1949, Donovan Construction Co. received approval for Meadowbrook Manor, a development consisting of 540 townhouse- and apartment-style units in 49. Constructed in the early 1950s, this was the largest multi- family housing project in the Midwest for its time. With the exception of the Meadowbrook Manor townhouse-style rental units, the construction of additional new townhouses ramped up in the 1970s with the largest number of townhouses being built during the 1970s and 1980s.

The condominium market was strong in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s in St. Louis Park when many buildings were constructed and a number of existing apartment buildings were converted to condominiums. The condominium market was relatively soft during the late 1980s and early 1990s, but the real estate market was strong in the last half of the 1990s increasing the number of condominiums?. A number of buildings which were originally designed as rental units converted to owner-occupied condominium units during this time period.

The City experienced a building boom for apartments in the 1960s when many of the community's smaller apartment buildings were constructed. Apartment construction continued through the 1980s, with the newer construction being larger buildings. The 1990s saw two new apartment buildings constructed, but marked the advent of a new era, with Park Commons planning and the Excelsior and Grand development. This redevelopment changed the community, garnered regional and national attention, and attracted more redevelopment to the community. In the 2000s there was much more interest in developing new housing along major corridors, resulting in the Hoigaard Village development, Ellipse on Excelsior, Verge on 36th Street, Tower Light on 36th Street and Wooddale Avenue, and Sienna Apartments at the former Eliot School site. Since 2010, apartment building has continued with the Shoreham, Parkway on 25, 4800 Excelsior, Central Park West and others.

- 2009- Home Energy Squad Enhanced Energy Audits
- 2009- GreenStep Cities Demonstration Project
- 2010- Purchased & demolished blighted home for Habitat new construction
- March 2012- Bi-Annual Realtors Forum
- June 2013- Maxfield Research Comprehensive City Housing Analysis
- August 2014- Amended City Housing Goals
- November 2014- Construction Management Program – neighborhood notification for major expansions and new builds
- June 2015- Adopted Inclusionary Affordable Housing Policy
- 2015- Partnered with Hennepin County to administer the Stable Home rent assistance program
- 2017 – Implemented Kids in the Park shallow rent subsidy program
- 2018 – Adopted Tenant Protection Ordinance
- Ongoing- Provide Federally Funded Rental Housing Assistance to over 500 households annually

Housing Crisis, Great Recession, and Recovery

Between 2000 and 2007, the metro area, including St. Louis Park, experienced rapid home sale appreciation during the real estate boom. However, after the housing market plateaued from late 2005 to early 2007, St. Louis Park and area communities started to experience sliding housing values as the housing market bubble burst.

St. Louis Park home value declined between 2007 and 2012 but were much lower in percentage declines than the Twin Cities Metro Area (-15.4% compared to-25.4%). Overall, the central cities and inner-ring suburban areas did not experience the decline of sale values compared to the ex-urban and 3rd/4th ring suburban communities. (Explain why condo market slowed – state law)

Since 2012, home sale values across the Twin Cities and surrounding communities have rebounded, with most communities experiencing a strong increase in home sale values.

After adjusting for the downturn in the housing market, St. Louis Park housing values showed appreciation of 82.8% between 2000 and 2017; nearly a third greater than that of the Metro Area (+62.0%).

Significant new luxury apartment development has taken place in St. Louis Park over the last decade. Over 1,500 units within multifamily developments have been built since 2010, another 182 units are currently under construction, and over 900 units are in the planning phases. St. Louis Park has been one of the most active apartment submarkets in the Twin Cities.

Housing Summit

The City's housing goals, strategies, and initiatives were developed during the 2003-2005 Housing Summit process and were originally adopted by the City Council in March 2005. As a means to educate, revisit, and consider any necessary changes to the City's housing policies, strategies, and goals, the Summit included a series of meetings between the City Council, Planning Commission, Housing Authority Board, School Board, County Commissioner, and a business representative.

Housing Authority

The City of St. Louis Park Housing & Redevelopment Authority (HRA) was formed in 1970 by the City Council as an independent governmental entity. In 1988 the HRA became the Housing Authority (HA) when the City Council approved moving redevelopment powers to an Economic Development Authority (EDA). The Housing Authority is governed by a Board of Commissioners that are appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council. Commissioners serve five-year terms, with one Commissioner representing assisted housing program participants.

The Housing Authority's Mission is to develop, integrate, and operate housing and housing assistance policies and programs to ensure the availability of safe, affordable, and desirable housing options that meet the diverse, lifecycle housing needs of all of the residents of St. Louis Park.

Over the past four decades, the St. Louis Park Housing Authority has successfully developed and administered housing programs to provide affordable rental options for the residents of the city. The Housing Authority has purchased and rehabilitated homes and an apartment building, Hamilton House, as well as constructed new home, as part of its program to provide low-rent housing options in the community. The Housing Authority administers affordable/subsidized housing voucher programs, project-based affordable housing programs and a number of other programs aimed at affordable housing.

Where We Are Today

While St. Louis Park is a fully developed inner ring suburb, the city has continued to grow. Since 1980 the city's population has grown approximately 10%, adding approximately 4,500 people to the community. With this growth comes increased demand for housing and a corresponding increase in housing prices and rents. As a result, housing units that were once affordable no longer are, and less housing options are available for low-income residents in the city and the metro area.

Despite these changes, St. Louis Park continues to be a highly desirable and relatively affordable community. The city is committed to preserving and enhancing its existing housing stock, expanding its housing options with new housing, and maintaining housing affordability.

Current Housing Needs

The city's current housing needs are driven by the following key demographic factors:

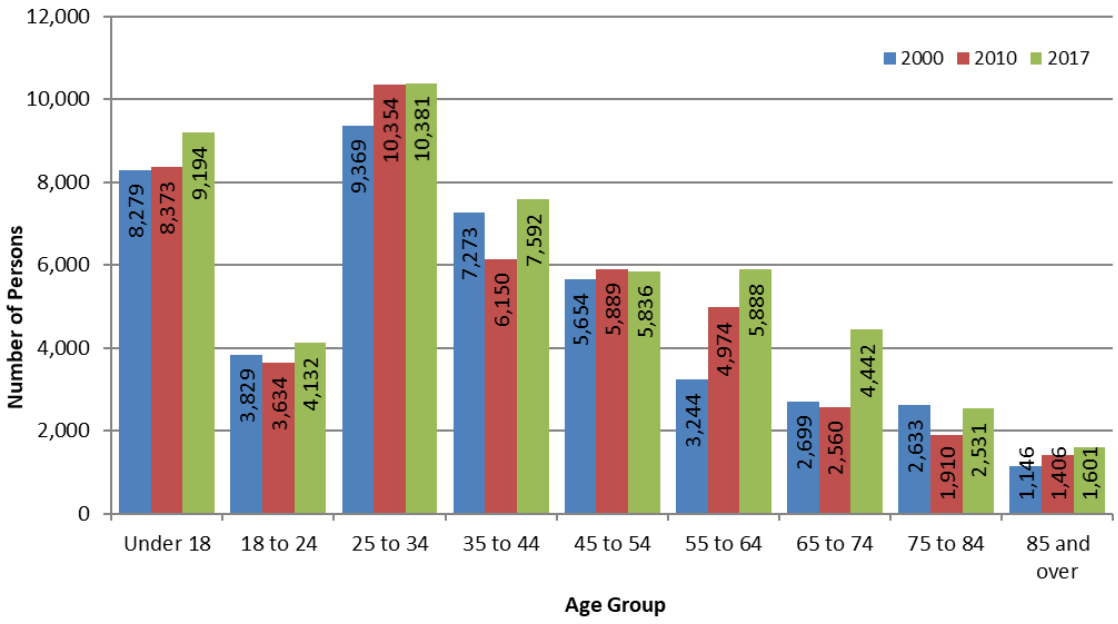
- Age distribution of residents
- Household composition types
- Household sizes
- Household incomes

Age Distribution of Residents

The age distribution of a city's residents affects the demand for different types of housing. Housing needs and desires change as people age and enter different lifecycle stages. The 25 to 34 age cohort continues to be the city's largest cohort, comprising 21.7% of the population in 2017. This age cohort comprised a significantly higher proportion in St. Louis Park than in Hennepin County (15.3%) and the metro area (14.4%). This age group tends to live in, and increase demand for, rental units and starter homes. Between 2000 and 2017, the largest growth occurred in the 55- 64 and 65-74 age groups. The third largest growth was in the 25 - 34 age group. From 2000- 2010, the 35- 44 age group experienced a significant decline, but it has rebounded since 2010, as seen in Figure 5-12.

Mirroring trends observed across the nation, the aging baby boom generation is substantially impacting the composition of St. Louis Park's population. Baby boomers accounted for an estimated 11.7% of the city's population. Born between 1946 and 1964, in 2017 these individuals comprise mainly the 55 to 64 and 65 to 74 age groups. These age groups are projected to have the greatest percent growth from 2017 to 2022, increasing by 16.0% (+612) and 22.7% (+469), respectively, as the baby boomers age into their senior years.

Figure 5-12. Population Age Distribution for 2000, 2010, 2017



Source: Comprehensive Housing Market Study Update, Maxfield Research & Consulting

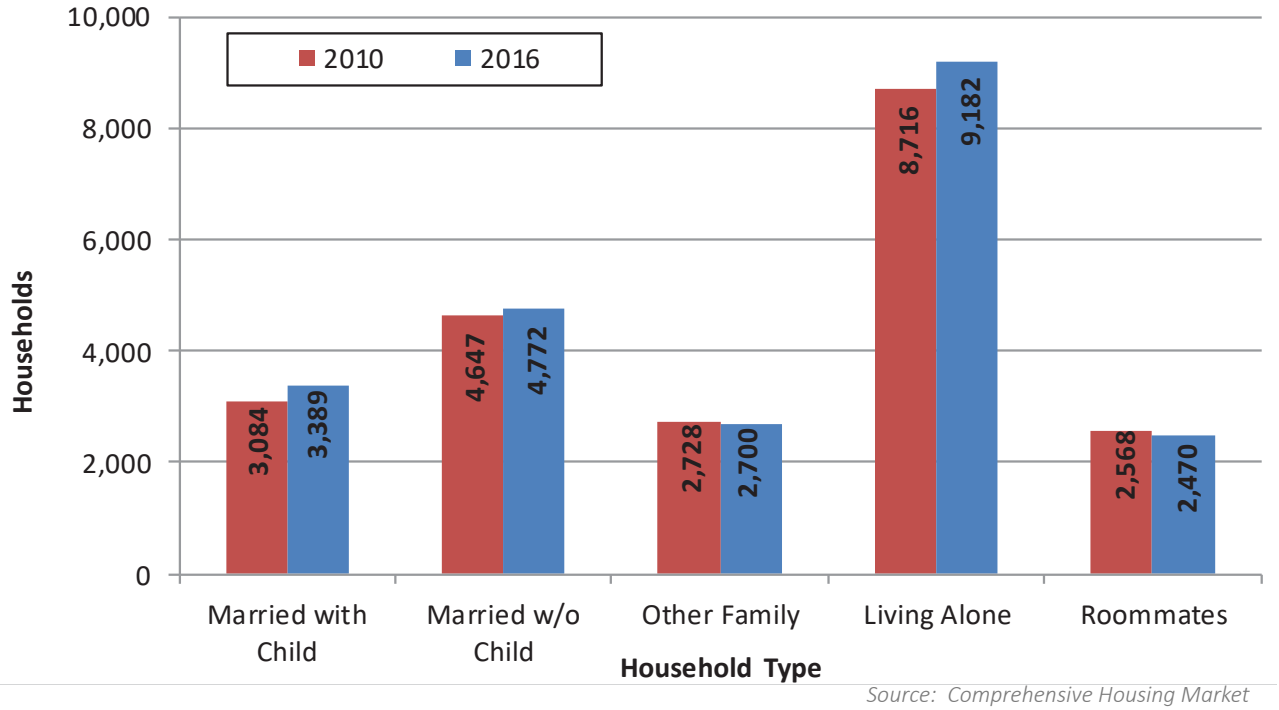
The social changes occurring along with the aging of the baby boom generation, such as higher divorce rates, higher levels of education, and lower birth rates has led to a greater variety of lifestyles than existed in the past – not just among the baby boomers, but also among their parents and children. Current seniors and middle-aged persons tend to do more traveling and participate in more activities than previous generations They increasingly prefer maintenance-free housing that enables them to spend more time outside the home. The increased variety of lifestyles has fueled demand for a variety of alternative housing products beyond single-family homes.

Household Composition Types

The chart below shows the amount of each household type in the city today, which is useful in determining likely types and quantities of housing needed or desired by residents. Key findings are:

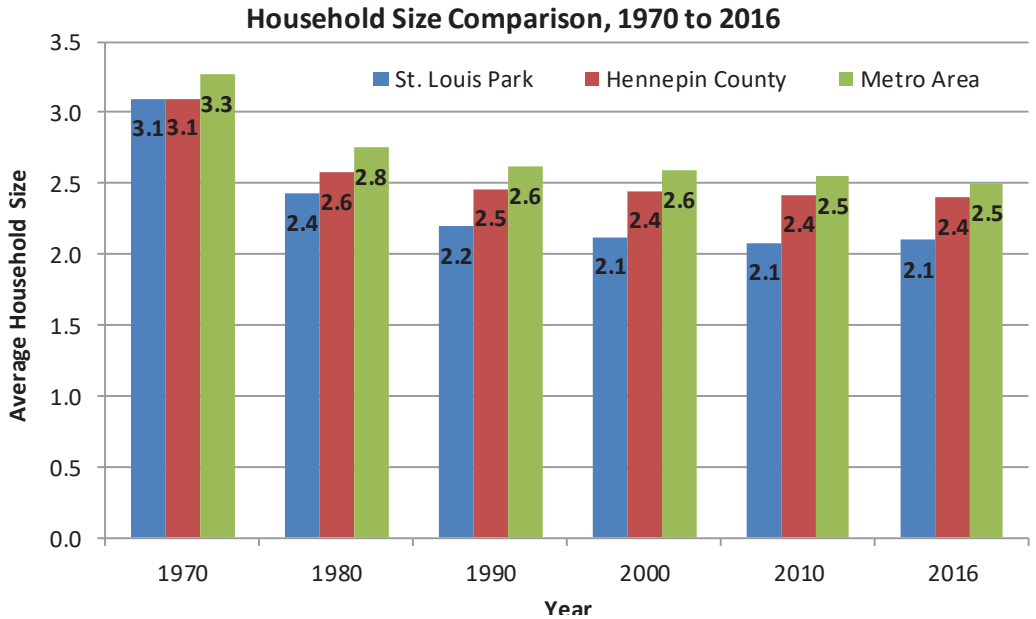
- Persons living alone comprised the largest portion (40.8%) of all households and grew 5.3% from 2010 to 2016, which is significantly more than in Hennepin County (33.0%) and the metro area (28.8%). The second largest household type was Married w/o Child.
- From 2010 to 2016, households with families that are Married with Child experienced the largest increase as a percentage (+9.9%). The city experienced an increase in all types of households except non-family roommate households (-3.8%) and other family households (-1.0%) . "Other family" includes single parents and unmarried couples with children.
- St. Louis Park has a lower portion of Married with Children households (15.1%) compared to 18.9% in Hennepin County and 21.5% in the metro area.
- This data indicates an increase in seniors in the community or millennials moving to the area. As seniors age and face declining health and mobility, they typically move out of their homes in pursuit of housing with services. However, due to the lost home equity after the Great Recession, seniors' decisions to move out of their homes and into age-restricted housing has been slower, especially they do not need care services. Millennials are more likely to live alone for a variety of factors, including delayed marriage, lower home purchasing rates, and preferences for living in urban settings often with smaller housing units.

Figure 5-13. Household Types Distribution, 2010 and 2016



Source: Comprehensive Housing Market Study Update, Maxfield Research & Consulting

Figure 5-14. Average Household Size since 1970 for St. Louis Park, Hennepin County, Metro



Source: Comprehensive Housing Market Study Update, Maxfield Research & Consulting

Household Sizes

Today, 74% of the city's households are one or two-person households. The average renter household consists of 1.87 persons while the average owner household contained 2.24 persons. Persons living alone accounted for the highest household type percentage (40.8%), which is significantly larger than in Hennepin County (33.0%) and the metro area (28.8%).

Household size influences the size of housing that residents demand. As households in St. Louis Park continue to be relatively small, the city will need to ensure that its housing distribution aligns with its residents needs and preferences.

The following chart illustrates declining household sizes in St. Louis Park compared to Hennepin County and the Metro over the last 40 years. Household size is one of the major factors influencing the type of housing that is in high demand in a community. If trends in the city continue, smaller housing units will become more and more appealing for our residents.

Household Incomes

Non-Senior Households

Median household incomes are highest for the 45 to 54 age group at $80,571. Households in this age group are in their peak earning years and have a high homeownership rate (68.4%). With the median resale price of homes in St. Louis Park being $265,000 through 2017, the household income required would be about $75,714 to $88,333 based on the standard of 3.0 to 3.5 times the median income (and assuming these households do not have a high level of debt).

In 2017, 5.1% of the non-senior (under age 65) households had incomes under $15,000 (958 households), which would make them eligible for subsidized rental housing. Another 5.9% of non-senior households had incomes between $15,000 and $25,000 (1,092 households), which would also qualify for subsidized housing. Some of these households may also be able to afford naturally occurring affordable housing or older market rate rentals.

Senior Households

The oldest householders are likely to have lower incomes. The 2017 median income for households age 65 to 74 and 75+ are $61,978, and $39,334, respectively. In St. Louis Park, 6.2% of households age 65 to 74 had incomes below $15,000, along with 10.9% of households ages 75 and over.

Some key findings:

- Many of these low-income senior households rely solely on social security benefits, while others have assets that can supplement their income. Typically, younger seniors have higher incomes due to the fact they are still able to work or are married with two pensions or higher social security benefits.
- Generally, senior households with incomes greater than $35,000 can afford market rate senior housing. Based on a 40% allocation of income for housing, this translates to monthly rents of at least $1,000. An estimated 2,815 senior households had incomes above $30,000 in 2017.
- Seniors who are able and willing to pay 80% or more of their income for assisted living housing would need an annual income of $39,000 to afford monthly rents of $2,600, which is approximately the monthly rent for assisted living projects in St. Louis Park. An estimated 1,085 older senior (age 75+) households, which are the primary market for assisted living housing, had incomes greater than $36,000 in 2017.
- Lower median household incomes, along with demand for home health care services and retrofitting of existing homes, will lead some seniors to seek out different housing than what they lived in earlier in life.

Current Housing Stock

Analysis of the city's current housing stock is based on the following factors:

- Mix of housing types
- Age of housing
- Home ownership/rental mix
- Housing values/costs

Mix of Housing Types

Table 5-11 quantifies the city's current (2017) housing stock in terms of housing types. The city's housing stock is a mix of single-family detached (47%), apartments (37%), townhomes/condos (14%), along with duplex and cooperative housing units.

Residential Construction Trends 2000 to Present

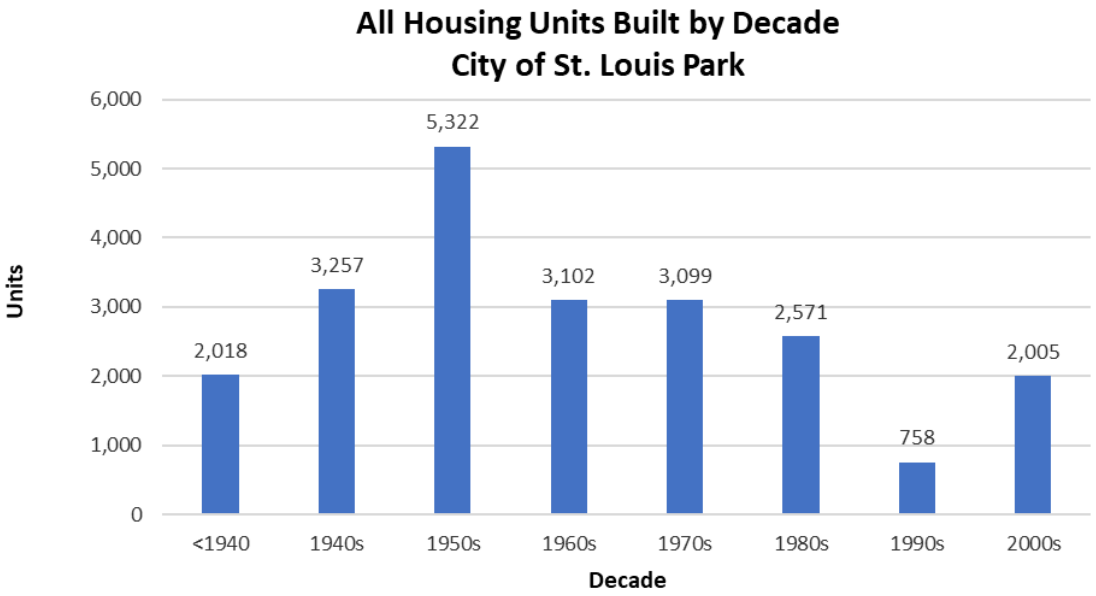
- The city issued permits for 2,533 new residential units from 2000 through 2017, which equated to 140 units annually since 2000.
- Residential construction averaged about 141 units per year. Beginning in 2007, building permits declined rapidly. From 2007 through 2011, the City averaged only 9 units per year.
- A building boom of multifamily apartments began in 2012 with permits for 391 units, the greatest number of new multifamily housing units since 2006. Since 2012, an average of 222 multifamily units have been added each year.
- On average, about eight new single-family homes have been added annually since 2000. Nearly all these units are tear downs or infill locations.
- Over 94.7% of the units (2,398) built since 2000 have been multifamily units with the remaining 135 being single-family units. Many of the units are in new multifamily rental developments.

Table 5-11. St. Louis Park Housing Types, December 2017

HOUSING TYPE	HOUSING UNITS		NET UNITS ADDED IN 2017	OWNER OCCUPIED (NO RENTAL LICENSE)		RENTAL LICENSES		LARGE SINGLE FAMILY HOMES	
Single Family Detached	11,613	47%	5	10,774		839		2,288	
Duplex	430	2%	0	262		168			
Condos & Townhomes	3,561	14%	0	2,760		801			
Apartments	9,167	37%	431			9,167			
Co-ops	114	<1%	0	114					
Totals	24,885		436	13,910	56%	10,975	44%	2,288	20% of SF Homes

Source: 2017 Annual Housing Activity Report

Figure 5-15. Number of Housing Units Built by Decade Since 1930



Source: Comprehensive Housing Market Study Update, Maxfield Research & Consulting

Age of Housing

Homes built in the 1950s comprised 24% of the city's entire housing stock. As a comparison, the greatest percentage of homes in Hennepin County were built before 1940 (19%). Over 60% of the city's rental housing was constructed prior to 1980. Rental units are on average 20 years newer than owner-occupied units. The median year built for owner-occupied housing was 1954 compared to 1975 for rental units.

The age of the city's housing stock can influence housing demand due to potential mismatches between current consumer preferences and outdated designs of older housing stock. Residents also spend more on maintaining and renovating older housing stock, which results in increased housing costs.

Home Ownership/Rental Mix

Housing tenure – whether one owns or rents their home – can have a wide range of impacts on the livability of a community. The city values and promotes both types of housing tenure as part of having a range of housing options for residents.

Owner-occupied (homestead) residential properties now comprise 52% of the housing market with rental (non-homestead) at 48%.

Home Ownership/Rental by Housing Type

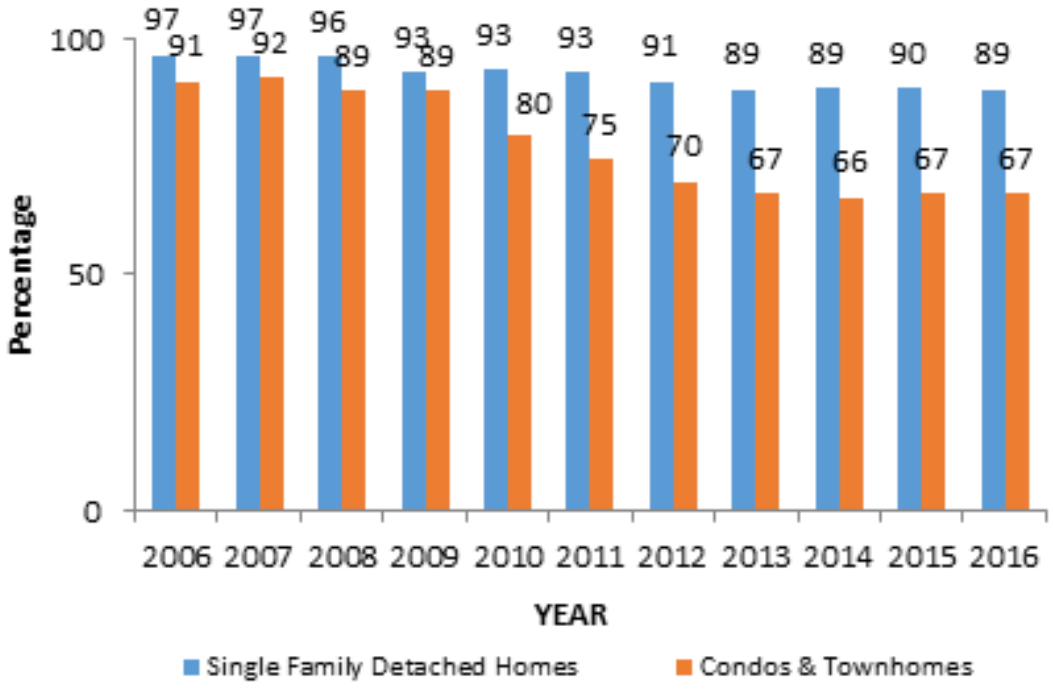
Figure 5-16 shows the percentage of owner-occupied housing units vs. rental for single-family detached homes and condos/townhomes over time. The percentage of single-family detached homes that are owner-occupied has decreased from 97% to 89% from 2006 to 2015. The percentage of condos/townhomes that are owner-occupied has also decreased, from 91% to 67% from 2006 to 2015.

Condominium Developments

There are 41 condominium developments with a total of 2,756 units in St. Louis Park. Condominiums comprise about 22% of the total owner-occupied housing stock in St. Louis Park. These units tend to be older, as over 50% of the units were construction in the 1970s and 1980s.

- A total of 14 condominium projects were developed between 2000 and 2007, accounting for 35.6% of St. Louis Park's total inventory. These projects also have the highest market values.
- Condominium construction has been slow since the housing market downturn last decade; in part due to the recession and because of the state law construction defect statute. However, the construction defect law was recently modified which could result in more condominium construction in the future.
- Most of condominium units in St. Louis Park are owner-occupied. However, 32% of the units are non-homesteaded, most of which are likely rental.
- Most 2018 resales are of comparable value to the Hennepin County taxable market values. Condominium values suffered the greatest loss of appreciation during the economic downturn and are slowly stabilizing. Due to declining lender-mediated (foreclosed and short sale properties) sales in this sector, condominium pricing should continue to increase.
- Over one-third of condominium projects were converted from a previous use. Most were former older rental properties converted last decade during the housing expansion from 2000 to 2006.

Figure 5-16. Percentage of Owner Occupied Housing Units Since 2006



Source: 2017 Annual Housing Activity Report

Vacant Lots/New For-Sale Construction

As a fully developed city, there are very limited opportunities for new subdivisions or for-sale multifamily developments in St. Louis Park. Few areas in the community can accommodate residential development. Land acquisition costs are high. New single-family homes are desired but are typically in the form of individual infill or redevelopment lots. Lack of availability of developable land also results in homes with less square footage.

Home Ownership/Rental by Age of Householder

As people age and progress through their lives, housing needs change. Typically, the proportion of renter households decreases as people become older and begin having children. For seniors, rental housing often becomes a more viable option than homeownership, reducing the responsibility of maintenance and a financial commitment.

In 2016, 95.3% of households in the 18- 24 age group rented their housing, compared to 65.5% in the 25- 34 age group. Households in the 65- 74 age group were overwhelmingly homeowners, resulting in a 79.2% homeownership rate.

Home Ownership/Rental by Household Income

Household tenure information is helpful to determine household affordability for owner-occupied or renter-occupied housing options. HUD defines affordable housing as not exceeding 30% of the household's income. It is important to note that the higher the income, the lower percentage a household typically allocates to housing. Many lower income households, as well as many young and senior households, spend more than 30% of their income, while middle-aged households in their prime earning years typically allocate 20% to 25% of their income. This allocation greatly impacts a household's financial and housing security.

- Typically, as income increases, so does the rate of homeownership. For example, in St. Louis Park, the homeownership rate increases from 21.6% of households with incomes below $15,000 to over 76.4% of households with incomes above $100,000.
- A portion of renter households are referred to as lifestyle renters, or those who are financially able to own but choose to rent, and have household incomes above $50,000 (almost 50%of St. Louis Park's renters in 2016). Households with incomes below $15,000 typically need a deep subsidy for rental housing (almost 14% of St. Louis Park renters in 2016).

Home Ownership/Rental by Household Size

In 2016, the average city's renter household consisted of 1.87 persons compared to the average owner household of 2.24 persons.

An estimated 78.8% of renter households in the city in 2016 had either one or two people. The one-person households and two-person households that are couples primarily seek one-bedroom units. Two-person households that consist of a parent and child or roommates primarily seek two-bedroom units. Larger households seek units with multiple bedrooms.

Housing Values/Costs

Owner-Occupied Housing Units

St. Louis Park median home values peaked in 2017 at $265,000, posting an 8% year-over-year increase. Home prices have increased annually since the low of $185,000 in 2011. Housing costs in the city are relatively affordable compared to the previous decade given the continued low mortgage interest environment.

Figure 5-17 below presents data on housing values summarized by nine price ranges and Figure 5-18 illustrates the locations of homes whose value is either above or below $238,500.

Housing value refers to the estimated price point that the property would sell at if the property were for sale. For single-family and townhome properties, value includes both the land and the building. For condominiums, value refers only to the housing unit.

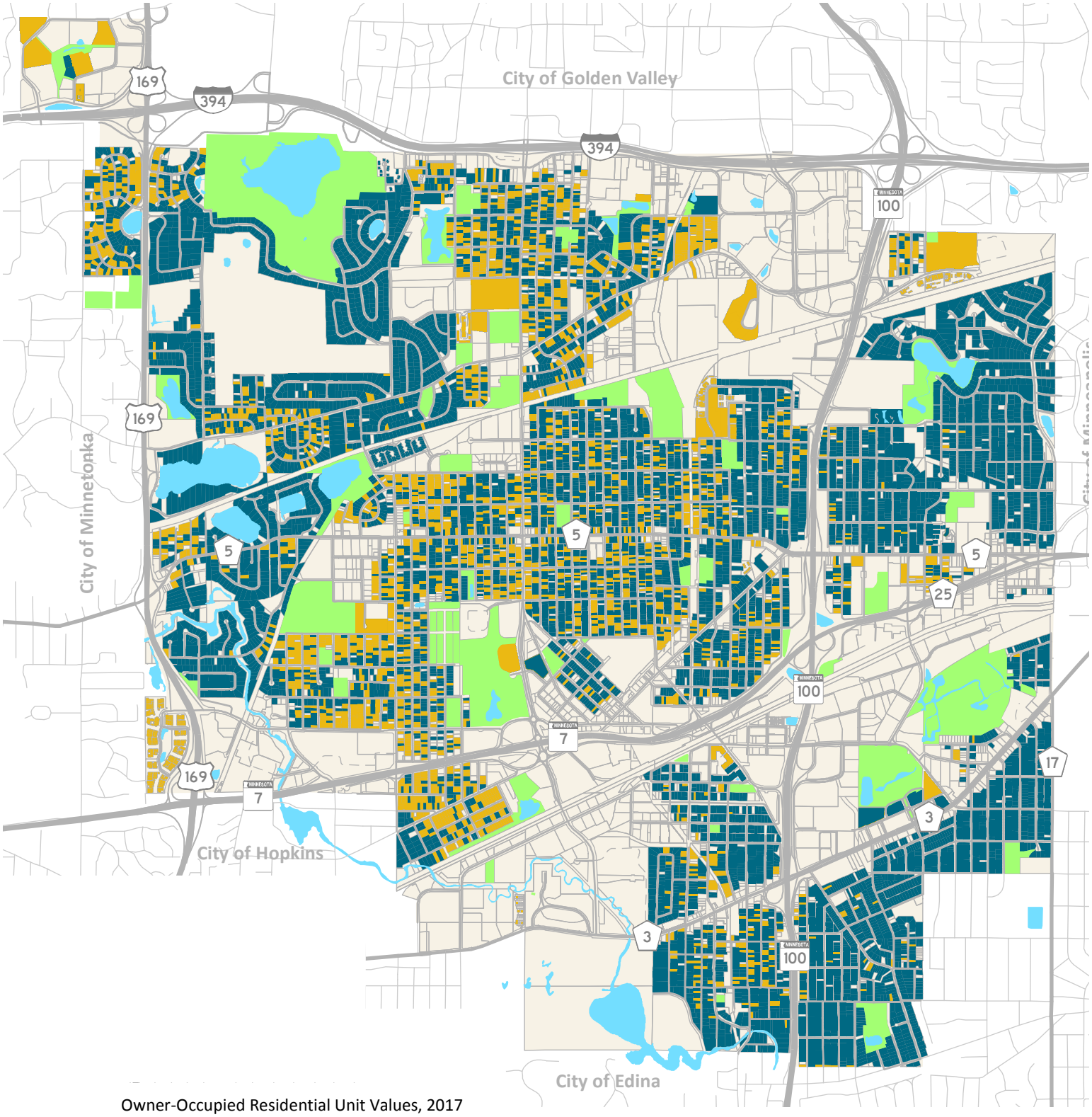
- The biggest category of owner-occupied housing stock in the city is estimated to be valued between $200,000 and $249,999 (22.7%).
- The median owner-occupied home in the city is $236,900 or $1,100 higher than Hennepin County's median home value ($235,266) and $9,290 higher than the metro area ($227,610).
- An estimated 28.4% of the city's owner-occupied housing stock is valued above $300,000, which is less than Hennepin County's at 33.9%.

Figure 5-17. Owner-Occupied Housing Units by Value in St. Louis Park

	ST. LOUIS PARK		HENNEPIN CO.		METRO AREA	
Home Value	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.
Less than $50,000	255	2.0	7,795	2.5	28,187	3.6
$50,000-$99,999	546	4.3	13,456	4.4	35,074	4.5
$100,000-$149,999	953	7.5	35,860	11.7	98,890	12.6
$150,000-$199,999	2,451	19.4	60,156	19.6	160,325	20.4
$200,000-$249,999	2,865	22.7	50,728	16.5	135,355	17.2
$250,000-$299,999	1,981	15.7	35,196	11.5	96,165	12.2
$300,000-$399,999	1,913	15.1	44,988	14.6	113,816	14.5
$400,000-$499,999	834	6.6	22,574	7.3	52,689	6.7
Greater than $500,000	836	6.6	36,513	11.9	66,742	8.5
Total	**12,634**	**100.0**	**307,266**	**100.0**	**787,243**	**100.0**
Median Home Value	$236,900		$235,800		$227,610	

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau - American Community Survey; Maxfield Research & Consulting, LLC

Figure 5-18. Value of Owner-Occupied Units



Owner-Occupied Residential Unit Values, 2017

Property Value (Count)

- Above $238,500 (9,113)
- Below $238,500 (4,962)

Source: City of St. Louis Park Assessing Office

St. Louis Park MINNESOTA

Rental Housing

Outside the central cities, St. Louis Park has been one of the leading communities for apartment development during the apartment boom. Most of these units have been market-rate apartments targeting middle-market to upper-middle market households. The following rental housing needs are based on a 2017 housing study for rental properties conducted by Maxfield Research & Consulting.

Figure 5-19 presents information on the monthly housing costs for renters called contract rent (also known as asking rent). Contract rent is the monthly rent agreed to regardless of any utilities, furnishings, fees, or services that may be included in the lease.

- The median contract rent in St. Louis Park in 2017 was $966. Based on a 30% allocation of income to housing, a household in St. Louis Park would need an income of about $38,640 to afford this average monthly rent.
- An estimated 30.6% of St. Louis Park renters have monthly rents ranging from $750 to $999, 28.5% had monthly rents ranging from $1,000 to $1,500, and 17.6% had monthly rents greater than $1,500.
- Housing units without payment of rent ("no cash rent") make up only 0.7% of St. Louis Park renters. Typically, units may be owned by a relative or friend whom allows occupancy without charging rent. Other sources may include caretakers or ministers who may occupy a residence without charge.
- Rents in St. Louis Park are 11.9% (+$131) higher than the metro area, but lower than the surrounding communities of Golden Valley and Edina.
- Even with the new market rate properties completed recently, St. Louis Park's rental housing stock is older as the median year built for all units is 1967.
- More than one half of all the market rate units in St. Louis Park are one-bedroom units.

Figure 5-19. Quantity of Renter-Occupied Units by Contract Rent in St. Louis Park

RENTER-OCCUPIED UNITS BY CONTRACT RENT
ST. LOUIS PARK ANALYSIS AREA
2016

	ST. LOUIS PARK		HENNEPIN CO.		METRO AREA	
Contract Rent	**No.**	**Pct.**	**No.**	**Pct.**	**Pct.**	**Pct.**
No Cash Rent	71	0.7	1,474	0.8	2,288	0.6
			0			
Cash Rent	9,631	99.3	182,386	99.2	360,667	99.4
$0 to $249	*402*	*4.1*	11,275	*6.1*	*19,997*	*5.5*
$250-$499	*196*	*2.0*	10,785	*5.9*	*22,469*	*6.2*
$500-$749	*1,591*	*16.4*	34,543	*18.8*	*70,617*	*19.5*
$750-$999	*2,969*	*30.6*	52,804	*28.7*	*110,146*	*30.3*
$1,000-$1,500	*2,763*	*28.5*	51,853	*28.2*	*101,620*	*28.0*
$1,500+	*1,710*	*17.6*	21,126	*11.5*	*35,818*	*9.9*
Total	**9,702**	**100.0**	**183,860**	**100.0**	**362,955**	**100.0**
Median Contract Rent	$966		$904		$771	

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau - American Community Survey; Maxfield Research & Consulting, LLC

Source: Comprehensive Housing Market Study Update, Maxfield Research & Consulting

Affordable Housing

Low vacancy rates hold across almost all housing submarkets, but especially for affordable units. A variety of factors, from the low vacancy rate in market rate housing to lack of support for housing programs at the state and federal levels, suggest that the current demand for affordable housing will only increase in the near future.

Housing Cost Burden

The cost of housing is typically the most significant expense in a household's budget. A residence is considered "affordable" when 30% or less of the household's gross income is spent on housing. If housing costs more than 30% of a household's gross income, it is experiencing a "housing cost burden". Table 5-13 shows the Metropolitan Council's estimates of the number of St. Louis Park households experiencing a housing cost burden.

Table 5-12. Rental Housing Affordability Upper Limits in St. Louis Park

# OF BEDROOMS	RENT AT 30%	RENT AT 50%	RENT AT 60%	RENT AT 80%
Efficiency	$495	$826	$991	$1,321
1 bedroom	$531	$885	$1,062	$1,416
2 bedroom	$636	$1,061	$1,273	$1,697
3 bedroom	$735	$1,226	$1,471	$1,961
4 bedroom	$820	$1,367	$1,640	$2,187

Source: Metropolitan Council

Table 5-13. Cost Burdened Households in 2015

	NUMBER OF COST BURDENED HOUSEHOLDS	% OF TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS
Income at or Below 30% of AMI	1,793	8.02%
Income 31% to 50% of AMI	1,599	7.15%
Income 51% to 80% of AMI	973	4.35%
Subtotal at or Below 80% AMI	4,365	19.51%
Total Households- All Income Levels	22,367	

Source: Metropolitan Council, Local Planning Handbook 2016

Almost 20 percent of St. Louis Park households have incomes below 80 percent AMI and are experiencing a housing cost burden. This shows a need for increased availability of housing that is affordable, especially to those with incomes in the very low- (below 30% AMI), low- (31% to 50% AMI), and moderate- (51% to 80% AMI) ranges.

Rent Burdened Households

The percent of St. Louis Park households that are housing cost burdened has increased slightly since the 1990s, after peaking during the housing crisis in 2006-2010. Renter households continuously experience greater housing cost burden than owner households. Higher-income households that are cost-burdened may have the option of moving to lower priced housing, but lower-income households often do not. This, combined with the fact that renter households tend to have smaller incomes than owner households, leads to renter households being especially vulnerable to housing instability due to financial distress.

Current Affordable Housing Stock

While a majority of the city's housing stock meets Metro Council affordability criteria, this percentage has decreased in recent years. Due to the age and condition of the city's rental housing stock, the majority of units have monthly rents that are affordable to households earning 50% to 60% of Hennepin County's AMI. According to the 2017 Maxfield housing study, of the 8,600 market rate units inventoried, 41% of the units are affordable to householders at 50% AMI. Together with 22% of the units affordable at 60% AMI, 64% of the market rate rental housing inventory is affordable at 50% to 60% AMI, which is down from 71% estimated in the 2013 housing study. If this decrease in affordability continues, the city will face increasing challenges in providing affordable housing to city residents.

As seen in Table 5-14, the city has a limited number of housing units that are considered affordable to very low income households (those households with 30% or less of the Area Median Income [AMI]). Very low income householders have the most difficult time finding units that are affordable, as they often require public subsidies to reach an affordable threshold. There are a fair number of homes considered in the affordable range for low income households (31% to 50% AMI) and even more units available to moderate income households (51% to 80% AMI).

Table 5-14. Affordability of Units to Different Income Levels

	UNITS AFFORDABLE TO HOUSEHOLDS	% OF TOTAL HOUSING UNITS
Income at or Below 30% of AMI	1,297	5.37%
Income 31% to 50% of AMI	3,391	14.03%
Income 51% to 80% of AMI	10,929	45.23%
Total Housing Units-All Income Levels	24,165	

Source: Metropolitan Council, Local Planning Handbook 2016

Publicly Subsidized Housing

Sometimes the cost of housing is so out of reach for individuals or families that the only way to make a unit affordable is through public subsidy. Table 5-15 shows the number of publicly subsidized units currently in St. Louis Park.

Table 5-15. Publicly Subsidized Units

ALL PUBLICLY SUBSIDIZED UNITS	PUBLICLY SUBSIDIZED SENIOR UNITS	PUBLICLY SUBSIDIZED UNITS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES	PUBLICLY SUBSIDIZED UNITS: ALL OTHERS
779	196	6	577

Source: Metropolitan Council, Local Planning Handbook 2016

Senior Housing Market

There are eight senior housing developments located in St. Louis Park with 14 different senior service levels and a total of 957 units. An additional housing project, The Elmwood, is set for construction in Spring 2018 and will add 53 market rate and 17 affordable active adult apartments. There were 18 vacancies identified within the housing developments posting an overall vacancy rate 1.9%. Generally, healthy senior housing vacancy rates range from 5% to 7% depending on service level. Together with the aging of the baby boomer population; demand will be strong for senior housing for the next decade and beyond..

Affordable/Subsidized Senior Housing Projects

Subsidized senior housing offers affordable rents to qualified lower income seniors and handicapped/disabled persons. Typically, rents are tied to residents' incomes and based on 30% of adjusted gross income (AGI), or a rent that is below the fair market rent. For those households meeting the age and income qualifications, subsidized senior housing is usually the most affordable rental option available. HUD funded multi-family or public housing projects offer income based rents and can serve senior households at the lowest incomes. As our population becomes older, affordable senior housing projects will only grow in their necessity and demand.

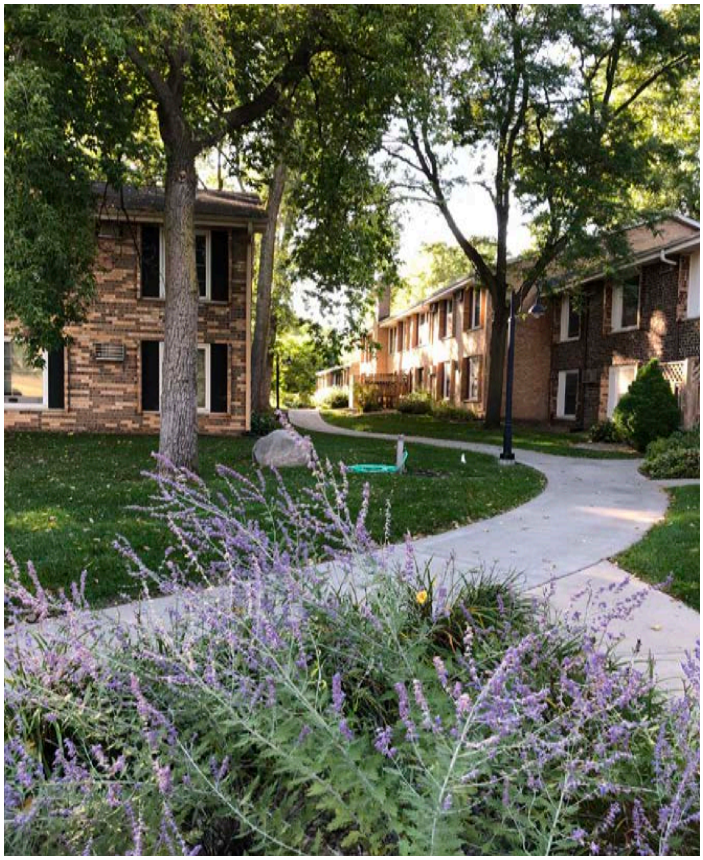
Housing Preservation and Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH)

Although affordable housing is often associated with an income-restricted property, there are other opportunities to live in affordable housing units. Housing units that were not developed or designated with income guidelines (i.e. assisted) yet are more affordable than other units in a community are considered "naturally-occurring" or "unsubsidized affordable" units. This housing supply is available through the private market, versus assisted housing programs which is supplied through various governmental agencies. Property values and monthly rents on these units are lower than other housing units based on a combination of factors, such as: age of the structure, location, condition, size, functionally obsolete, or school district. These homes are typically smaller in size and have fewer amenities. They may also have some deferred maintenance.

According to the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, the privately unsubsidized housing stock supplies three times as many low-cost affordable units than assisted projects nationwide. Unlike assisted rental developments, most unsubsidized affordable units are scattered across small properties (one to four-unit structures) or in older multifamily structures. Some of these older developments are vulnerable to redevelopment due to their age, modest rents, and deferred maintenance.

About 64% of the market rate rental housing stock in St. Louis Park is affordable at 50% to 60% of area median incomes. According to the Harvard's Joint Center for Housing Studies (JCHS) unsubsidized rentals account for more than 75% of the affordable housing stock in the United States. It is estimated that over one-third of the naturally occurring affordable housing stock is composed of smaller multifamily buildings from 5 to 49 units. Within the Twin Cities Metro Area, it is estimated that about 60% of the rental stock is unsubsidized rentals affordable to households at or below 50% AMI.

Because the unsubsidized housing market is unregulated, there is a risk that some affordable market rate units could see rents increase rapidly and/or be redeveloped.



Where We Are Headed

Developing Creative Housing Solutions

The city's vision for "Developing Creative Housing Solutions" will enable St. Louis Park to meet future demand for housing, including affordable housing, due to the metro area's growing and changing demographics. The housing vacancy rate will more than likely stay below market equilibrium for the foreseeable future, which will cause higher housing prices and rents. Additionally, housing costs are likely to continue increasing at a faster rate than income, resulting in more housing cost burdened households.

In simple economic terms, the demand for housing is anticipated to remain greater than the supply in St. Louis Park.

Future Housing Demand

Demand for For-Sale Housing

As an inner-ring suburb, St. Louis Park is fully developed and has a very limited supply of vacant land available for future development of housing. Due to the age, price, and square footages of the existing single-family homes, they will continue to appeal to first-time and move-up households. This existing housing stock will drive demand for remodeling services or tear down and replacement of homes. Demand for remodeled or new single-family homes will be strong across most neighborhoods.

Some existing St. Louis Park homeowners who want to upgrade their housing may be unable to find what they are looking for in the city's older housing stock. As a result some households may choose to relocate to another city in the metro area. Another factor will be the generally higher costs for larger homes in St. Louis Park compared to other communities located further out from the central cities. There continues to be demand for larger, well-located, higher-amenity homes from both the existing household base and those who desire to relocate to St. Louis Park. The addition of larger single-family homes will be especially attractive to families who desire to stay in St. Louis Park but have outgrown their current home. Many families desire a minimum of three to four bedrooms, two baths, two-car garages and at least 2,500 square feet.

Because of the high land costs in St. Louis Park and current construction costs, it will be nearly impossible to build new entry-level single-family homes; hence new household construction will be for buyers seeking a larger home and more amenities.

A growing number of households will desire alternative housing types such as townhouses, detached townhomes, and twin homes. Typically, the target market for for-sale multi-family housing is empty-nesters and retirees seeking to downsize from their single-family homes. In addition, professionals, particularly singles and couples without children, also will seek townhomes if they prefer not to have the maintenance responsibilities of a single-family home. In many housing markets, younger households also find purchasing multi-family units to be generally more affordable than purchasing new single-family homes. This is particularly true in St. Louis Park where many of the older townhome and condominium developments offer more affordably priced homes. As housing affordability continues to be an issue throughout the metro area, alternatives to single-family detached homes will become increasingly attractive to more households.

Demand for Rental Housing

Several factors will influence the demand for rental housing in St. Louis Park:

- The 65 and older age group is typically not a target market for new general occupancy rental housing, although as baby boomers age this may change.
- Younger households tend to be highly mobile but more restricted in the amount of rent they can pay. Consequently, the city's population will have a significant proportion of renters that corresponds with a higher housing turnover rate. This is also due to the city's location in a metro area and its close proximity to Minneapolis. These households are one of the drivers for the rental housing demand.
- About a quarter of the total demand for new rental units in St. Louis Park are predicted to come from people currently living outside of the city.
- The vacancy rates for all types of rental housing is below market equilibrium (2.5% vacancy rate for stabilized properties) indicating continued pent-up demand for rental housing.
- Due to the age and positioning of the city's existing rental housing supply, a significant portion of units are priced at or below guidelines for affordable housing. This helps satisfy demand from some households that income-qualify for financially assisted housing.
- Renters are also seeking newer rental properties with additional and updated amenities that are not offered in older developments. As a result, there are also numerous new market rate apartment buildings with vacancies near or below market equilibrium.

Market Rate Rental

St. Louis Park will continue to be a preferred destination for new market rate rental housing development, however the apartment market is expected to cool as new apartment construction begins to slow down in the metro area. Despite new construction in the city, particularly along the Southwest LRT corridor, the market will eventually soften given the magnitude of new construction and high rents.

St. Louis Park can accommodate a variety of development types; from higher density mid-rise apartment buildings to lower density townhome rentals. Because the land supply is limited in St. Louis Park, most new construction will likely be higher density multi-family housing.

Affordable Housing: Vision 3.0 Viewpoints

Affordable housing means different things to different residents in the community. Although the term "affordable housing" was mentioned often throughout the city's visioning process, its meaning is different depending on one's perspective:

- Seniors – or those nearing retirement – worry that they won't be able to pay the city's property taxes on a fixed income and therefore may not be able to afford to stay in St. Louis Park. They could sell their homes, but perceive a lack of affordable housing suited for seniors in St. Louis Park.
- Residents who moved into small bungalows in St. Louis Park are ready to move into larger homes, but don't feel they can afford a larger house in St. Louis Park.
- The working poor – especially those who have their children in St. Louis Park schools and don't want to disrupt their education – are getting priced out of once-affordable housing.
- Longtime residents express concern that their children – who have grown up and moved away to other cities and now want to come back to St. Louis Park – can't afford starter homes in St. Louis Park.

Although there is consensus that more affordable housing is needed, there is also vocal opposition by some residents to multi-story "high density" development. Many residents also expressed concern about tear downs and "McMansions". Overall, residents want to preserve the character of St. Louis Park's traditional single-family homes and ensure that housing continues to be affordable for many people.

Future Housing Needs

Racial Equity

St. Louis Park, like many cities in the United States, has a legacy of housing discrimination that still negatively impacts community members of color. As part of the city's desire to provide racially equitable housing options and programs that meet the needs and desires of all residents, the city will work to identify and address all residents' needs for access to safe and affordable housing.

City's Climate Action Plan

In addition to increasing the St. Louis Park's housing supply and range of options, the city is continuously working to improve the quality and sustainability of its housing stock. One of the goals of the recently adopted Climate Action Plan is to reduce energy consumption in residential buildings by 35% by 2030. Strategies to support this goal include:

- Energy code enforcement for all new and renovated residential buildings;
- Stretch energy code for new construction.
- Building retrofits and weatherization for existing single-family households;
- Appliance, equipment, and fixture efficiency promotion;
- Encouraging household behavior change for more sustainable living.

The city's housing strategies related to home improvement and remodeling, as well as new housing construction, will all be crucial in achieving the Climate Action Plan's goals.

Life-Cycle Housing

In addition to planning for more affordable units, St. Louis Park continues to explore opportunities to diversify its housing stock. Often termed "life-cycle" housing, the intent is to provide housing options for all cycles or phases in a person's life. The spectrum of life-cycle housing typically includes:

- Rental housing for young adults without the interest or financial capacity for home ownership;
- Smaller homes for first-time home buyers;
- Opportunities that allow growing families to expand their home or move to a larger home;
- Maintenance-free housing for empty nesters;
- Housing with supportive services for the elderly.

Housing needs typically expressed in St. Louis Park include expansion of existing housing units and new housing choices for empty-nesters and seniors. The creation of these additional options will enable families to remain in the community. With limited vacant land available to build new housing, one of the city's goals is to support the creation of larger homes through the expansion of existing homes or housing redevelopment on substandard properties and brownfields.

Senior Housing

In the future , rather than seniors living in age-restricted communities, they will demand a broader range of housing options, including staying in their current homes. The aging of the baby boom population will increase demand for senior housing over the next decades.

As the baby boom generation has aged, they have tended to recreate the desired housing options. This trend is expected to affect the senior housing market as well as the baby boomers become seniors. New types of development will be needed to support the active and healthy lifestyles of the baby boomers. It is important for communities to explore and support the diversification of housing choices to meet seniors' varying needs, whether it is housing style (townhome versus high rise apartment), ownership preference (owner- versus renter-occupied, including senior cooperative ownership housing) or lifestyle needs (amenities, services available or not available).

In addition, senior housing should be located near transit services and in walking distance of parks & recreation, shopping and services that cater to their needs to help support seniors' independence. Finally, the city must ensure that there are adequate affordable housing options available to seniors.

Demand exists for nearly all types of senior housing product types in St. Louis Park. The development of additional senior housing serves a two-fold purpose in meeting the city's housing needs: older adult and senior residents can relocate to new age-restricted housing that better fits their needs and desires, and existing homes and rental units that were occupied by seniors become available to other new households. Hence, development of additional senior housing does not mean the housing needs of younger households are ignored; rather creating more senior housing has a ripple effect of creating more housing for other residents.

Home Ownership

Home ownership offers many financial, emotional, and community benefits. The city will continue to support home ownership for its residents. As the demand for alternative owner-occupied housing grows, St. Louis Park will explore policies and programs to meet this evolving housing need.

Rental Housing

Although the city is a developed community, St. Louis Park is expected to grow over the next two decades. Bordered and intersected by major transportation corridors and located just minutes from downtown Minneapolis, the community will continue to be a desirable place to live. Rental housing will be an important way the city meets the housing needs of its residents. St. Louis Park continues to encourage new rental housing and preserve our existing rental housing stock. The city will also continue to implement the Tenant Protection Ordinance and pursue other appropriate NOAH preservation policies.

Preservation and Rehabilitation

The city is committed to ensuring all housing is safe and well maintained. These goals are especially important in a city like St. Louis Park that has little room for greenfield housing development. Several city programs which are listed in the Housing Programs in St. Louis Park section are currently in place to assist with preservation and rehabilitation projects. Continued efforts to develop and implement new programs that address current needs will be a high priority for the city in the next 5-10 years. One example is the development of Home Improvement Areas (HIAs), a loan program which makes it possible for condo and townhome associations to borrow money at affordable rates from the city for major improvements and upgrades. Another example is the city's green remodeling program, which encourages green design and environmentally friendly rehabilitation.

St. Louis Park and the Regional Housing Market

Since St. Louis Park is not an isolated community, the city's housing stock influences the demographic composition of the community rather than the other way around. For example, the large number of smaller "starter" homes attracts single persons and young families to St. Louis Park. This results in a different demographic mix in terms of household size and age than other communities. If St. Louis Park wants to enable residents to remain in the community throughout their entire lives, it needs to offer a diverse range of housing options as well.

Affordable Housing

The issue of affordable housing is not unique to St. Louis Park. City Councils in Minneapolis, St. Paul, and other first and second-ring suburbs are studying the issue and the working together to devise strategies. For its part, St. Louis Park is gaining affordable units in some of the new development projects and working with other communities on a regional approach. The affordable housing crisis cannot be solved by one community, but rather municipalities, private developers, non-profits, and all levels of government working together.

The small supply of vacant land for housing development will limit the opportunities for St. Louis Park to create additional affordable housing. Most of the affordable housing that will be created is likely to be created through private redevelopment. These future housing units must provide adequate opportunities to develop affordable housing that would meet the community's share of the region's future projected affordable housing needs.

One-bedroom units target singles and couples, whereas two and three-bedroom units target families. Some retired seniors would also be attracted to an affordable concept. The city will explore a variety of multifamily affordable concepts that would target residents at 50% to 60% AMI.

Demand is strong for both stand-alone tax credit projects and for mixed-income market rate developments that have a proportion of units at 50% to 60% AMI. Similar to market rate general-occupancy rental housing, new affordable development will likely occur in multifamily development with higher densities.

Because of the lack of funding sources for subsidized housing it will be exceptionally challenging to develop future deep subsidy projects. City policies that promote and incentivize affordable housing will be increasingly invaluable in meeting our community's affordable housing needs.

Table 5-16. Affordable Housing Need Allocation for St. Louis Park

HOUSEHOLD INCOME LEVEL	UNIT NEED
At or below 30% AMI	229
31 – 50% AMI	132
51 – 80% AMI	78
Total Units	439

Source: Metropolitan Council, 2015

St. Louis Parks' Affordable Housing Allocation

The Metropolitan Council determines the regional need for very low-, low- and moderate- income housing for every community in the metro area. St. Louis Park's share of the region's affordable housing need is 439 new units to be developable from 2021-2030. Of these new units, the need is for 229 affordable to households earning at or below 30% AMI, 132 affordable to households earning 31% to 50% of AMI, and 78 affordable to households earning 51% to 80% of AMI.

The way that communities accomplish this affordable housing allocation is by designating adequate vacant land or redevelopable land at minimum densities (units/acre) that are high enough for affordable housing to be an option. The idea being that the more units per acre allowed on a site, the less it costs per unit to build, making per unit cost more affordable. That higher density then makes the development an option for both affordable housing and market-rate developers. The affordable housing allocation does not mean that all of the units built within these land uses will be affordable. Rather, through future land use guidance, the city needs to ensure that the opportunity for affordable housing exists by having adequate vacant or redeveloped land guided for higher densities to meet the stated share.

Increasing density alone will not address affordability issues in housing. It is important to remember that these numbers are new affordable units. Like many communities in the Twin Cities metro area, St. Louis Park is at risk of losing existing affordable units, both subsidized and naturally occurring, from ownership transfers, redevelopment, or demolition of obsolete buildings. The city has many programs and initiatives not only to facilitate the building of new affordable units, but also to help with maintenance and upkeep of existing affordable housing within St. Louis Park

Table 5-17. Residential Future Land Use Designations & Affordable Allocation

FUTURE LAND USE	MIN. UNITS/ ACRE	QUALIFY?
RL- Low Density Residential	3	No
RM – Medium Density Residential	6	No
RH – High Density Residential	30	YES
MX – Mixed Use	20	YES- % RESIDENTIAL APPLIED
TOD – Transit Oriented Development	50	YES- % RESIDENTIAL APPLIED
COM – Commercial	20	YES- % RESIDENTIAL APPLIED
OFC – Office	50	YES- % RESIDENTIAL APPLIED

Source: St. Louis Park, 2018

According to the Metropolitan Council, any residential future land use designation that has a minimum density of eight units per acre or more can count towards affordable housing allocation calculations for all income level needs. Table 5-17 features all residential future land use designations for St, Louis Park and their minimum units per acre.

Vacant or redevelopable land designated as High Density Residential, Mixed-Use , Transit Oriented Development, Commercial, or Office, that is phased to be redeveloped between 2021-2030 may count toward affordable housing allocation calculations.

As seen in Table 5-18, the net developable or redevelopable acres of each applicable land use have been multiplied by the minimum units per acre to determine the minimum number of units that could be developed on this available land; for many of these designation only a proportion of their developable lands is expected to become residential, so those percentages apply to the unit count for this calculation.

Between 2021 and 2030, areas of St. Louis Park that are expected to develop at high densities should yield a minimum of 1,513 units, which meets the City's allocation of affordable housing need in the region for that decade.

Table 5-18. St. Louis Park Development Potential for Affordable Allocation 2021-2030

FUTURE LAND USE	ACRES (NET) 2021-2030	MINIMUM UNITS PER ACRE	% RES.	UNITS
RH – High Density Residential	0.00	30	100%	0
MX – Mixed Use	5.19	20	75%	77
TOD – Transit Oriented Development	37.52	50	75%	1,407
COM – Commercial	6.79	20	10%	13
OFC – Office	3.27	50	10%	16
Total				1,513

Source: St. Louis Park, 2018

Areas of Future Housing Growth

As discussed earlier, the city's future housing growth will come from redevelopment activities. As part of the city's land use, economic development, and redevelopment planning, the city identifies potential and planned redevelopment sites. Some of these sites are or will be guided for redevelopment with new housing. In general, future housing growth is currently planned for the following redevelopment areas:

- Elmwood neighborhood within the Wooddale Transit Station Area
- Beltline Transit Station Area
- Louisiana Transit Station Area
- Shelard Park neighborhood
- Texa-Tonka neighborhood commercial node
- Louisiana/Cedar Lake Road neighborhood commercial node
- Wayzata Boulevard corridor (I-394 frontage road), east of Louisiana Avenue
- Excelsior Boulevard corridor

The majority of these future housing developments will be in the form of high density, medium density, or mixed-use housing types and located convenient to community amenities such as public transit, retail/service businesses, parks, etc.

Since growth in housing units also has implications on transportation infrastructure, areas where housing growth is likely to occur have been identified by city staff. See the map on Figure 5-3. Place Types Framework on page 5-120.

Southwest Light Rail Transit METRO Green Line Extension (SWLRT)

The Southwest Light Rail Transit METRO Green Line Extension (SWLRT) project, which is now planned to open in 2023, will extend the METRO Green Line (Central Corridor LRT) approximately 14.5 miles and run southwest from downtown Minneapolis through St. Louis Park, Hopkins, Minnetonka, and Eden Prairie. The LRT will run along the Cedar Lake Trail in St. Louis Park and have stations at Louisiana Avenue, Wooddale Avenue, and Beltline Boulevard. The Southwest LRT project will drive even greater demand for housing in St. Louis Park, and represents an excellent opportunity for the city to meet its housing goals.

The Louisiana Avenue Station, which will include park-and-ride lots, will be located just north of the Park Nicollet Methodist Hospital and the Era on Excelsior apartments. The Wooddale Station will be located near a variety of residential options, including Via (PLACE), the Tower Light senior apartments, the Village in The Park condominiums, and the Hoigaard Village apartments. The Beltline Boulevard Station will contain a mix of uses and have nearby park-and-ride lots. The Edge of Uptown and Park Towers apartments and Sholom Menorah Plaza will all be within 0.5 miles of the station. Proximity to the SWLRT will give St. Louis Park housing developments an added draw for potential residents. The city seeks to maintain flexibility near the transit stations to promote higher-density redevelopment.

Table 5-19. Projected Phased Residential Development Potential by Station Area

STATION NAME	SHORT TERM (3-5)	MID TERM (6-10)	LONG TERM (10+)	TOTAL
Beltline	240	440	420	1100
Wooddale	120	240	240	600
Louisiana	0	340	460	800
Total around stations	***360***	***1020***	***1120***	***2500***

Source: Comprehensive Housing Market Study Update, Maxfield Research & Consulting

Housing Programs and Tools in St. Louis Park

Housing Authority Programs and Tools

The Housing Authority (HA) administers programs that ensure availability of affordable, safe, and desirable housing options in the city. In 2018, the HA provided services for approximately 500 eligible, low-income households through its housing programs. The HA also oversees administration of home improvement loans to assist homeowners with renovations, facilitates redevelopment of blighted or vacant properties, and partners with developers to meet affordable housing needs.

Public Housing

The HA owns 37 scattered site single-family units (3 to 5 bedrooms) acquired and constructed between 1974 and 1996, and Hamilton House, a low-rise apartment building with 108 one-bedroom units and 2 two-bedroom caretaker units built in 1975. Although the apartment building is designated for general occupancy, priority is given to elderly and disabled residents. The single-family scattered units house families with children. The HA also holds the HUD Annual Contributions Contract (ACC) and maintains a waiting list for 12 two-bedroom public housing apartment units located at Louisiana Court.

Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV)

The HA is allocated 268 HUD Housing Choice Vouchers. This rental assistance program provides rent subsidies for low-income individuals and families in privately owned, existing market rate housing units. The rent subsidy is paid directly to the owner of the rental property by the HA with funds provided by HUD. The HA offers both tenant-based and project-based vouchers. Out of the HA's allocation of vouchers, 41 of them are designated for use in three privately owned developments (Excelsior & Grand, Vail Place, and Wayside) and are referred to as project-based vouchers.

Stable HOME Rental Assistance Program

The Stable HOME program provides rent assistance to low-income singles and families who were homeless or would otherwise be at risk of homelessness. Rent assistance is limited to three years. During the three years, participants must establish good rental histories and relationships. They must also work to improve their earnings enough to where they do not need rental assistance. The program is administered by the HA, but participants are free to choose a rental unit anywhere in Hennepin County except Minneapolis. Participants are referred to the program by Hennepin County. This program is funded with federal HOME funds allocated to Hennepin County. Single participants are also participants in the county's Employment Pays program and families are also in the Stable Families Initiative program. Within suburban Hennepin County, 41 families were served by this program in 2017.

Kids in the Park Shallow Rent Subsidy Program

This program provides rental assistance to households with school-age children for up to four years. Participants receive a flat monthly rental assistance that decreases annually over the four-year period. Eligible households must have children attending St. Louis Park schools (or St. Louis Park schools are in their assigned attendance area), have an income at or below 50% AMI, one parent/guardian that works a minimum of 28 hours/week, live in rental housing in St. Louis Park, and comply with their lease. Families with disabled and elderly heads of household do not need to comply with the work requirement. The program was developed in partnership with STEP and the St. Louis Park School District.

Continuum of Care

The Continuum of Care Program (CoC) is designed to link rental assistance with supportive services for hard-to-reach homeless persons with disabilities (primarily those who are seriously mentally ill or have chronic problems with alcohol, drugs or both) and their families. Grants are provided to be used for permanent housing which must be matched with supportive services that are equal in value to the amount of rental assistance and appropriate to the needs of the population to be served. St. Louis Park is the grant recipient and we partner with two sponsor organizations that administer supportive housing programs.

Independent Living Supportive Services

Resident Opportunities for Self Sufficiency (ROSS)

This program is a federally funded public housing program for elderly and persons with disabilities. The HA administers this program to provide and coordinate supportive services to assist elderly and disabled residents at Hamilton House to continue to live independently.

Family Self Sufficiency (FSS)

This program is a federally funded family self-sufficiency program that operates in conjunction with the HUD Housing Choice Voucher program and the HA's public housing program, designed to enable families to improve their employment status through training and educational opportunities.

City of St. Louis Park Programs and Tools

The City of St. Louis Park, in addition to the HA, has a number of programs addressing housing in the city, which include the following:

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

St. Louis Park receives an annual allocation of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds which are HUD funds distributed through Hennepin County. The city currently allocates and plans to continue to allocate the funds to projects that preserve existing housing and increase affordable ownership opportunities.

Neighborhood Revitalization Grants

Grants are made by the city to organized neighborhoods for activities and projects to build community and neighborhood cohesion.

St. Louis Park Rental Coalition (SPARC)

SPARC's mission is to provide a community-wide forum that promotes effective management practices and quality rental housing in St. Louis Park. This valuable networking opportunity is intended for rental housing owners, managers and city staff.

Housing Improvement Area (HIA)

This housing finance tool assists with preservation of the city's existing townhome and condominium housing stock. An HIA is a defined area within the city where housing improvements are made and the cost of the improvements are paid in whole or in part from fees imposed on the properties within the area. The neighborhood housing association borrows low interest money from the city, improvements are completed and unit owners repay the loan through fees imposed on their properties and collected with property tax payments. To date, seven HIAs have been established and over twelve million dollars of improvements has been made to 1,100 units.

Affordable Homeownership Tools

Habitat for Humanity Partnership Program

In partnership with Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity, the city facilitates the purchase of homes in need of substantial rehabilitation and transfers ownership to Habitat for Humanity for the development of owner-occupied housing for low- and very low-income households.

Live Where you Work Homeownership Program

This program began in spring 2009 with the goal of promoting home ownership within the city among employees of St. Louis Park businesses. The city provides a deferred loan of $2,500 to an eligible employee and an additional $1,000 is provided to employees purchasing vacant lender-owned foreclosed properties. Employers are invited to contribute a matching or lesser amount to the city's contribution. The deferred loan will be forgiven after three years if the employee continues to work for the employer and meets other qualification requirements. The city contracts with the Center for Energy and Environment (CEE) for loan administration. In 2016 Citizens Independent Bank met with city staff and now offer qualified borrowers $500 off the origination fee.

WHAHLT – West Hennepin Affordable Housing Land Trust (Homes within Reach)

- Creates and preserves affordable homeownership opportunities for working households in western suburbs of Hennepin County.
- Community land trust practice takes the cost of land out of real estate transaction, making the home more affordable. Families can more easily purchase the home where they live/work, retain for generations, and over burden their incomes in becoming homeowners. Expands home ownership, sustains community resources, supports residential stability, preserves affordable housing and supports stronger local workforce.
- Purchases properties, rehabilitates and then sells the home to qualified low- to moderate-income households. Buyers pay for cost of home only and lease the land for 99 years. City funds are leveraged with CDBG, Hennepin County Affordable Housing Incentive Fund (AHIF), HOME Partnership, Metropolitan Council, Minnesota Housing and other funds.
- Since 2006, 16 homes have been purchased and sold to low- to moderate-income families and an additional home has been purchased and is currently being rehabbed.

Move Up in the Park Housing Tools

A group of loan programs and educational/building assistance programs designed to encourage and help residents to expand existing homes.

Move-up Transformation Loans

Encourages residents with incomes at or below 120% of median area income to expand their homes. The program provides deferred loans for 25% of the applicant's home expansion project cost, with a maximum loan of $25,000. The revolving loan pool will continue to fund future expansions.

Architectural Design Service

Architectural consultation for residents to assist with brainstorming remodeling possibilities and to raise the awareness of design possibilities for expansions. Residents select an approved architect from a pool developed in conjunction with the MN Chapter of the AIA. All homeowners considering renovations are eligible for this service regardless of income; however to ensure committed participants, residents make a $25 copay.

Home Improvement Loan Programs

Deferred Loan

Working with Hennepin County, the city funds loans up to a maximum of $20,000 to pay for basic safety and/or maintenance improvements. The funds are available to very low income homeowners and are deferred until the home is sold or forgiven after 15 years.

Emergency Repair Program

The city funds grants up to $4,000 to low income homeowners to address immediate emergency repairs such as furnace replacement, roof repair, etc.

Energy-Related Rehabilitation Loans

Public and private grants and loans for energy-related improvements including furnaces, insulation, windows, etc.

Remodeling Advisor

Provides technical help before and during the construction process. All homeowners are eligible for this service regardless of income. Resident surveys indicated that homeowners valued the service and would recommend it to others. The city contracts with CEE for this free service.

Home Energy Squad Visits

Comprehensive residential energy program designed to help residents save money and energy and stay comfortable in their homes. The program is administered by CEE. The city pays $50 per resident visit which is leveraged with funds from Xcel Energy, Center Point Energy and CEE. The cost per resident is $50 per enhanced visit.

Consultant evaluates energy saving opportunities and installs energy-efficiency materials. Also performs diagnostic tests, insulation inspection, safety checks. The enhanced visits qualify residents for CEE low interest financing and utility rebates.

Discount Loan Program

Discounts the interest rate on the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MN Housing) home improvement loans based on household income.

Home Remodeling Tour

Designed to meet the goal to remodel and expand single family owner occupied homes. The self-guided tour of six homes provides a showcase of a variety of home remodeling projects to residents.

Home Remodeling Fair

Annual four-city event to disseminate information and educate residents about remodeling. Cosponsored by St. Louis Park, Hopkins, Minnetonka, and Golden Valley. Residents can attend seminars, talk with vendors and city staff about permitting, zoning, loans, and environmental issues. Vendor registration fees cover the costs of the fair.

Green Remodeling Program

Programs that “piggy- back” on existing housing program to encourage green remodeling through technical advice and rebates. This energy improvement loan has no income restrictions and there is no cost to the city.

Home Maintenance Programs

Certificate of Property Maintenance Permitting and Inspections

The Point of Sale program issues a Certificate of Property Maintenance for all buildings to ensure property maintenance code compliance anytime a residential or commercial building is sold or title is transferred.

Rental Licensing and Inspections

This program includes annual licensing of all non-owner occupied properties. An inspection occurs once every two years to ensure compliance with the Property Maintenance Code and, when required, by tenants experiencing problems with their rental properties. The city plans on continuing the rental licensing program to ensure quality rental properties within the community. A component of the program coordinated with the Police Department is the Crime Free/Drug Free requirement for training, leases and behavior compliance.

Property Condition Evaluation

Every four years, St. Louis Park systematically evaluates residential and commercial property conditions throughout the city to verify exterior building maintenance. The program has been integrated with the rehab program on a city-wide scale and during other years has concentrated on smaller localized neighborhoods and commercial areas.

Construction Management Plan

The city recognizes that many households are looking for larger homes. As a result, significant additions and/or tearing down of existing homes and rebuilding larger homes is becoming more common. Because St. Louis Park is a fully built community, these major additions and construction of new homes impacts the surrounding neighbors. Major additions (second story additions, additions over 500 square feet), demolitions and new construction need to comply with a Construction Management Plan (CMP).

Real Estate Forum

Every two years the city hosts a St. Louis Park Realtor Forum with the Minneapolis Area Association of Realtors (MAAR). Realtors receive continuing education credits and learn what makes St. Louis Park a desirable place to live. The wide ranging topics include such areas as development, livability, public safety, market analysis, the school district, and buying and selling homes in St. Louis Park.

City Housing Policies & Ordinances

Inclusionary Housing Policy

In June of 2015, the City Council adopted an Inclusionary Housing Policy that requires the inclusion of affordable housing units for lower income households in new market rate multi-unit residential developments receiving financial assistance from the city. The goal of the Inclusionary Housing Policy is to increase the supply of affordable housing and to promote economic and social integration. This policy focuses on market rate developments where affordable housing would not otherwise occur. In 2018, the City Council amended the policy to raise the percentage of required affordable units.

Development has continued at a robust level in the city since the adoption of the Inclusionary Housing Policy. The city is balancing all impacts of the policy with the city's expanding need for affordable housing as they consider modifications to the policy in the future.

Table 5-20. Review of Inclusionary Housing Policy to Date

DEVELOPMENT	TOTAL UNITS	AFFORDABLE UNITS	AFFORDABILITY LEVEL
Required per Policy			
Shoreham	148	30	50% AMI
4800 Excelsior	164	18	60% AMI
Elmwood (PUD approved)	85	17	60% AMI
PLACE (PUD Approved)	299	200	60%/80% AMI
Voluntary			
Central Park West	363	6	60% AMI
Liv. Comm. Required			
Arlington Row (PUD approved)	61	6	80% AMI
Total Units	**1,120**	**282**	

Source: St. Louis Park Community Development

Key Components of the Adopted Policy

The policy allows the income and affordability requirements to be fulfilled in the following ways:

- On-site development of units within the proposed market rate ownership or rental residential development; or development of income and rent restricted rental units at another site approved by the city.
- Affordability Level:
  - Rental: 20% of units at 60% of area median income (AMI), or 10% of units at 50% AMI
  - Ownership: 15% of units at 80% AMI
- Length of Affordability Requirement: Minimum of 25 years.
- Bedroom Mix of Affordable Units: The bedroom unit type of the affordable units will be reflective of the development's market rate units and will be distributed throughout the development.
- Building Size: The policy is applicable to buildings that have 10 or more units.
- Tenant Eligibility: Affordable rental dwelling units shall be rented only to income eligible families during the period of affordability. An income eligible family may remain in the rental inclusionary dwelling unit for additional rental periods as long as the income of the family does not exceed one-hundred twenty percent (120%) of the applicable AMI.

» Developments covered by the policy must not discriminate against tenants who would pay their rent with government provided Housing Choice Vouchers or other local rent subsidies.

Tenant Protection Ordinance

NOAH Preservation Workgroup

In September 2017, the City Council directed staff to convene a workgroup with representatives from MN Multi-Housing Association, the St. Louis Park rental industry and representatives from agencies advocating for NOAH preservation strategies. The purpose of the workgroup was to review and discuss the preservation strategies being considered by the City Council and identify middle ground. The workgroup met three times and generated several NOAH preservation strategies, including the Tenant Protection Ordinance.

Key Components of the Adopted Ordinance

This ordinance requires a three month period following the ownership transfer of a NOAH multi-family residential property in which the new owner would be required to pay relocation benefits to tenants if the new owner increases the rent, rescreens existing residents or implements non-renewals without cause and the tenant chooses to move during this period. NOAH properties would be defined as buildings where at least 18% of the units have rents affordable to households with incomes at or below 60% AMI. Eighteen percent mirrors the percent of affordable housing required at 60% AMI per the city's Inclusionary Housing Policy.

This ordinance does not prohibit a new owner from taking the actions listed above; however, the owner would be required to pay resident relocation benefits if they do take any of those actions during the tenant protection period. The ordinance allows for a three month period of time for residents to work with housing support resources and seek alternative housing if they are facing unaffordable rent increases, new screening criteria requirements that would be problematic for them, or a thirty day non-renewal without cause notice to vacate. The ordinance also requires the new owner of an affordable housing building to provide notice of the ordinance protections to tenants of affordable housing units within 30 days of the sale of an affordable housing building.

Future Housing Tools

St. Louis Park will continuously evaluate and refine our existing housing tools to ensure they meet the housing needs of our residents. The city is currently exploring these housing tools to maintain the livability of our community.

Housing Trust Fund:

The city established a local Housing Trust Fund in October 2018. Housing trust funds are distinct funds established by city, county or state governments that receive ongoing dedicated sources of public funding to support the preservation and production of affordable housing. Housing trust funds can also be a repository for private donations.

Legacy Transfer:

This idea was generated as an outcome of the NOAH preservation workgroup's discussion on the Advance Notice of Sale ordinance. The workgroup acknowledged that the majority of owners appreciate and care about their residents and that there are owners that would be interested in creating a "legacy" by preserving their property as affordable housing. The workgroup discussed the creation of a program that could be marketed to owners to make them aware of the financial advantages of transferring their NOAH property to a non-profit preservation buyer. All participants agreed that this could be a collaborative effort between Minnesota Multi-Housing Association (MMH), preservation buyers and local communities. Several members of the workgroup including representatives from MMH, Greater MN Housing Fund and Common Bond have volunteered to explore this idea further.

Rehabilitation Funding in Exchange for Rent Restricted Units/4D Tax Classification:

The NOAH preservation workgroup members endorsed this strategy in theory but felt the terms and requirements of the program will determine if the program will appeal to rental owners. This program may attract mid- and small property owners with less access to capital. The Urban Land Institute (ULI), Family Housing Fund (FHF) and MN Housing have established a workgroup to explore establishing a pilot for a rental rehab program targeted at small and mid-size properties modeled after a current program funded and administered by MN Housing for greater MN. The workgroup also noted that eligibility for the 4D tax classification as a result of participation might incent more owners to use the program. The workgroup discussed the feasibility of lowering the 4D tax rate which would make the requirement to establish rent-restricted units more financially manageable. The workgroup also discussed exploring how the 4D tax benefit could be used as an incentive to leverage commitments from property owners to accept Housing Choice Voucher participants. For example, an owner agrees to rent up to 20% of their units could qualify for the 4D tax classification.

Housing Goals and Strategies

1. **The City of St. Louis Park will promote and facilitate a balanced and enduring housing stock that offers a continuum of diverse life-cycle housing choices suitable for households of all income levels including, but not limited to affordable, senior, multi-generational, supportive and mixed-income housing, disbursed throughout the city.**

Strategies

A. Create a broad range of housing types to provide more diverse and creative housing choices to meet the needs of current and future residents.

B. Review existing policies, programs and regulations to remove barriers to innovative and creative housing options.

C. Ensure new housing policies promote fair and equitable housing choices.

D. Use data and research to guide and evaluate housing priorities, policies, and programs.

E. Use infill and redevelopment opportunities to assist in meeting housing goals.

F. Create policies, tools and strategies to promote the goals of the city's Climate Action Plan, encouraging energy efficiency and reducing energy consumption in residential properties.

G. Create senior housing opportunities: both market rate and affordable, homeownership and rental, and active and supportive.

2. **Single Family Homes: The city is committed to creating, preserving, and improving the city's single-family housing stock.**

Strategies

A. Promote the creation of family-sized, owner-occupied, single-family homes that meet the needs and desires of current and future residents through the expansion of existing homes and through construction of new homes.

B. Proactively address substandard housing properties through code enforcement and public or private redevelopment activities such as acquisition, demolition and housing replacement.

C. Promote high-quality architectural design standards of homes through the use of good design practices which are complementary and compatible with the neighborhood, utilizing quality materials and superior construction.

D. Allow for Accessory Housing Units (AHUs) in all low density residential areas.

E. Allow for two-family dwelling units (twin homes and duplexes) on appropriately-sized lots in low density residential areas.

3. Multi-Family: The city is committed to promoting quality multi-family developments, both rental and owner occupied, in appropriate locations, including near transit centers, retail and employment centers and in commercial mixed use districts.

Strategies

A. Promote the preservation and maintenance of existing multi-family housing stock.

B. Promote high-quality architectural design in the construction of new multi-family developments.

C. Be proactive in analyzing and guiding redevelopment opportunities for multi-family developments.

D. Increase densities and housing options on high-frequency transit routes and near rail stations.

4. Residential Rental Housing: The city is committed to creating, preserving and improving the city's rental housing stock.

Strategies

A. Ensure rental housing is well-maintained and safe through policies and programs for property owners including building inspections, education and rehabilitation resources.

B. Promote the inclusion of family-sized units (2 and 3 bedroom) in newly constructed multi- family developments.

C. Minimize the involuntary displacement of people of color, indigenous people and vulnerable populations, such as low-income households, the elderly and people with disabilities from their communities as neighborhoods grow and change.

5. Home Ownership: The city is committed to promoting home ownership, including affordable homeownership options and exploring traditional and non-traditional owner-occupied housing options such as: row houses, courtyard housing, high-rises, live-work units, three-story homes, co-housing, Land Trust, Habitat sponsored homes, and multi-generational housing.

Strategies

A. Promote and facilitate a balanced and sustainable housing stock to meet diverse needs for today and in the future.

B. Continue promoting first-time home buyer, homeownership counseling, down payment, and other assistance programs.

C. Expand homeownership opportunities and improve access to homeownership, especially for low-income residents, people with disabilities, and people of color.

D. Explore strategies and tools to prevent loss of affordable homeownership opportunities, especially near light rail transit station areas.

6. Affordable Housing: The city is committed to promoting affordable housing options for low- and moderate-income households.

Strategies

A. Ensure affordable housing is disbursed throughout the city and not concentrated in any one area.

B. Continue to support the preservation of naturally-occurring affordable housing.

C. Promote the inclusion of affordable housing in new developments, including those located near the Southwest Light Rail Transit Corridor and other transit nodes, retail and employment centers and commercial mixed-use districts.

D. Pursue policies, tools and programs to ensure long-term housing affordability for households at or below 30, 50, 60 and 80% of AMI.

E. Pursue innovative strategies to maximize the creation and preservation of affordable housing:

- Continue the implementation of the Inclusionary Housing Policy.
- Support shallow rent subsidy programs to promote the ability of rental households to secure and maintain stable housing (such as Kids in the Park).
- Develop additional strategies to ensure long-term housing affordability, such as the city's Tenant Protection Ordinance, non-discrimination of rental subsidy, reductions in fees, incentives, and others.
- Continue and strengthen partnerships with local nonprofits who are addressing housing needs and challenges in St. Louis Park, including St. Louis Park Emergency Program, Community Action Program- Hennepin County, Project for Pride in Living and others.
    - Partnership support may include funding to carry out the tasks of the Housing Authority or city to preserve housing & avoid displacement of citizens.
- Continue acceptance and support of transitional and supportive housing programs for specialized groups and affordable housing providers.
- Promote safe, stable and affordable housing opportunities and strategies for homeless youth, singles, and families. Continue to support households at risk of homelessness through programs such as the Stable HOME program and STEP Emergency Program.
- Continue to engage in regional dialog and collaboration to expand and maximize affordable housing resources and tools at the local, regional, state and federal levels.

F. Continue successful administration of the Housing Authority's core federally funded rental assistance programs, including maximizing program utilization, ensuring sound fiscal policies, securing renewal funding through the submission of competitive grant applications, and maintaining and improving the Public Housing properties.

7. Preservation, Safety and Sustainability: The city is committed to ensuring all housing is safe and well maintained.

Strategies

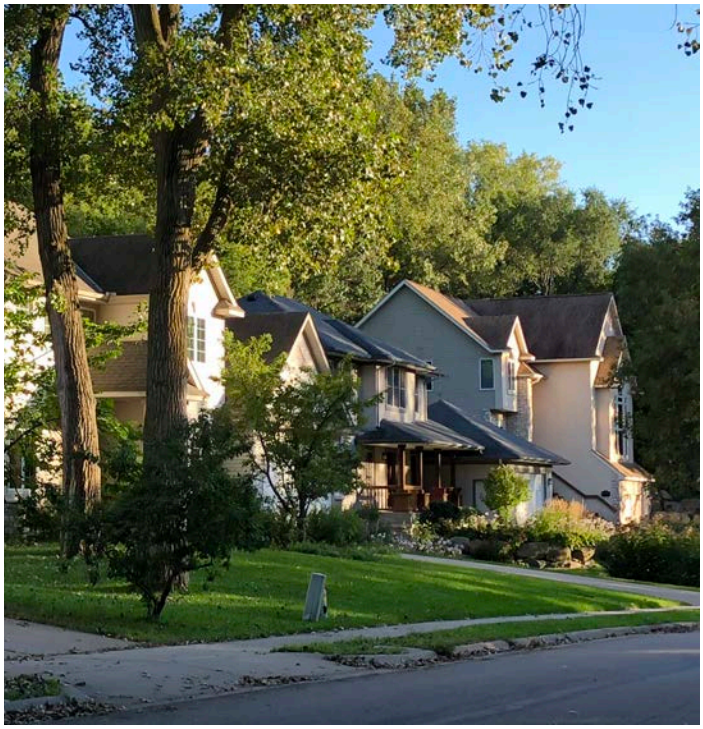
A. Strengthen the city's single- and multi-family home maintenance and rehabilitation programs.

B. Preserve and enhance housing quality and design through code enforcement and the promotion of housing improvement programs related to home rehabilitation, design and housing safety.

C. Encourage the use of green building practices, energy-efficient products, and sustainable methods in both single-family and multi-family housing construction.

D. Proactively address health hazards in housing and advance design that supports physical and mental health.

E. Strengthen neighborhoods and neighborhood amenities to encourage residents to stay and reinvest in St. Louis Park.



Housing Tools By Need

Table 5-21. Housing Tools/Implementation by Housing Need

PROGRAM/TOOL	HOUSING NEED ADDRESSED?									DESCRIPTION* *FOR CIRCUMSTANCES & SEQUENCE OF USE, SEE WRITE-UPS ON PAGE 5-179 THROUGH PAGE 5-184	AFFORDABILITY LEVEL?			
	RACIAL EQUITY	HOUSING & THE CLIMATE ACTION PLAN	LIFE-CYCLE HOUSING	SENIOR HOUSING	AFFORDABLE HOUSING	HOME OWNERSHIP	RENTAL HOUSING	PRESERVATION & REHAB	DEMAND FOR HOUSING		30% AMI AND BELOW	31% - 50% AMI	51% - 80% AMI	ALL INCOME LEVELS
Existing Housing Authority Programs														
Public Housing				X	X		X		X	HA owns and manages 157 PH units	X	X	X	
Housing Choice Voucher Program					X		X		X	HA administers 268 HUD allocated HCVs	X	X		
Rental Assistance Programs														
Stable HOME Rental Assistance Program					X		X		X	Available to households who are homeless or at risk of homelessness; assistance available for up to three years	X	X		
Kids in the Park Rent Assistance Program					X		X		X	Interest rate write down of state rehab program	X	X	X	
Continuum of Care (CoC)					X		X		X	Income based rent assistance program for homeless disabled households				
Independent Living Supportive Services														
Resident Opportunities for Self Sufficiency (ROSS)				X	X					Support and referral services to promote successful independent living	X	X	X	
Family Self Sufficiency (FSS)					X					Promotes family economic self sufficiency for Public Housing and HCV participants	X	X	X	
Existing City Housing Tools														
Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program			X		X			X	X	Annual allocation of funds to support varies affordable housing initiatives	X	X	X	
St. Louis Area Rental Coalition (SPARC)			X				X			Community wide forum for rental property owners/managers that promotes effective management practices				X
HIA- Housing Improvement Areas					X			X		Provides loan to housing associations to address deferred maintenance and rehab needs				Home value restrictions
Excess Land/land banking					X		X		X	City sold excess land lots for single family housing construction; city assembled land to facilitate development of affordable housing				

PROGRAM/TOOL	HOUSING NEED ADDRESSED?									DESCRIPTION* *FOR CIRCUMSTANCES & SEQUENCE OF USE, SEE WRITE-UPS ON PAGE 5-179 THROUGH PAGE 5-184	AFFORDABILITY LEVEL?			
	RACIAL EQUITY	HOUSING & THE CLIMATE ACTION PLAN	LIFE-CYCLE HOUSING	SENIOR HOUSING	AFFORDABLE HOUSING	HOME OWNERSHIP	RENTAL HOUSING	PRESERVATION & REHAB	DEMAND FOR HOUSING		30% AMI AND BELOW	31% - 50% AMI	51% - 80% AMI	ALL INCOME LEVELS
Existing City Housing Tools (Cont.)														
Affordable Homeownership Programs														
Habitat for Humanity Partnership Program					X	X			X	City facilitates purchase of homes in need of major repair and transfers ownership to organization	X	X	X	
Live Where You Work Homeownership Program					X	X			X	Available to moderate income households				120% AMI and below
West Hennepin Affordable Housing Land Trust					X	X			X	Assists low- and moderate-income households afford homeownership, by purchasing just the home, with the Land Trust owning the underlying property		X	X	
Affordable Housing Incentive Fund			X		X	X	X		X	City incentives provided as leverage for housing developers and agencies creating affordable home ownership opportunities who are seeking AHIF funds	X	X	X	
Move Up in the Park Housing Programs														
Move-Up Transformation Loans			X					X		Loan to assist with significant home expansion, deferred until sale or forgiven after 30 years				120% AMI and below
Architectural Design Service			X					X		$25 co-pay for 2 hour consultation				X
Home Improvement Loan Programs														
Low Income Deferred Loan Program			X		X			X		Loan for rehab deferred until sale of home or forgiven after 15 years	X			
Emergency Repair Program			X		X			X		Grant program of up to $4000	X	X		
Energy-Related Rehabilitation Loans		X						X		Through CEE program				
Remodeling Advisor			X					X		Technical advisors meets homeowners to discuss rehab projects- no cost to homeowners				X
Home Energy Squad Visits		X						X		Energy consultants evaluate home for energy saving opportunities- $50 cost to owner				X

PROGRAM/TOOL	HOUSING NEED ADDRESSED?									DESCRIPTION* *FOR CIRCUMSTANCES & SEQUENCE OF USE, SEE WRITE-UPS ON PAGE 5-179 THROUGH PAGE 5-184	AFFORDABILITY LEVEL?			
	RACIAL EQUITY	HOUSING & THE CLIMATE ACTION PLAN	LIFE-CYCLE HOUSING	SENIOR HOUSING	AFFORDABLE HOUSING	HOME OWNERSHIP	RENTAL HOUSING	PRESERVATION & REHAB	DEMAND FOR HOUSING		30% AMI AND BELOW	31% - 50% AMI	51% - 80% AMI	ALL INCOME LEVELS
Discount Loan Program			X					X		Interest rate write down of state rehab loan program		X	X	
Home Remodeling Fair and Tour								X	X	Annual remodeling fair with 3 other adjacent communities				X
Green Remodeling Program		X						X		City matches 50% of utility rebates for energy efficient furnaces, water heaters, etc.				X
Existing City Housing Tools (Cont.)														
Home Maintenance Programs														
Certificate of Property Maintenance Permitting and Inspections								X		Prior to sale of property, city inspects property to protect housing stock- avoid unsafe conditions or deterioration				X
Rental Licensing and Inspections							X	X		All rental properties inspected every two years				X
Energy Efficient Matching Rebate		X						X		City matches 50% of the utility rebate for energy related improvements				X
Property Condition Evaluation								X		Drive-by inspections completed of all SF homes every 4 years to identify exterior code violations				X
Construction Management Plan Program										Ensures neighbors are notified of single family significant rehab and demo rebuild projects				
Realtor Forum			X			X			X	Held every two years to educate realtors on city of SLP				X
Maxfield Research Market Study									X	Comprehensive Housing analysis completed every five years				
Policies/Ordinances														
Inclusionary Housing Policy	X				X	X	X		X	Policy requiring affordable units included in new development		X	X	
Tenant Protection Ordinance	X				X		X	X	X	Provides 3 month protection period for residents of NOAH buildings that transfer ownership	X	X	X	60% AMI and below

PROGRAM/TOOL	HOUSING NEED ADDRESSED?									DESCRIPTION* *FOR CIRCUMSTANCES & SEQUENCE OF USE, SEE WRITE-UPS ON PAGE 5-179 THROUGH PAGE 5-184	AFFORDABILITY LEVEL?			
	RACIAL EQUITY	HOUSING & THE CLIMATE ACTION PLAN	LIFE-CYCLE HOUSING	SENIOR HOUSING	AFFORDABLE HOUSING	HOME OWNERSHIP	RENTAL HOUSING	PRESERVATION & REHAB	DEMAND FOR HOUSING		30% AMI AND BELOW	31% - 50% AMI	51% - 80% AMI	ALL INCOME LEVELS
Future City Housing Tools														
Planned Housing Tools														
Affordable Housing Trust Fund									X	Ordinance approved November 2018				Up to 120% AMI
Legacy Transfer					X				X	Program to promote the sale of NOAH properties to preservation buyers				
4D Tax Classification Incentive Program					X		X		X	Local 4D program provides funding incentives and reduced tax rate in exchange for rent restricted units		X		
Multi-Family Rental Rehab					X		X		X	Rehab funding provided in exchange for rent restricted units		X		
Additional Tools for Consideration														
Housing Bond Issuance					X		X		X	City has issued Housing Reserve Bonds and Private Activity Bonds and will consider utilizing in the future for multi-family projects that provide units affordable to households with 50% AMI or less		X		
Tax Increment Financing			X	X	X	X	X			A majority of new residential rental housing developments receive TIF Funding and are required to include affordable housing units in the development. The city will continue to use this as a significant funding tool for housing development.		X		
Tax Abatement										While this is a recognized tool, the city does not plan on utilizing at this time				
Consolidated RFP to Minnesota Housing										While this is a recognized tool, the city does not plan on utilizing at this time				
Use of LCDA or LCA LCDA-TOD funds for housing					X		X	X	X	City has received and supported LCDA fund applications for multiple housing developments and will consider utilizing in the future especially for projects in TOD areas that provide units affordable to households with 80% AMI or less	X	X	X	
Use of HOME or HOPE funding for housing							X		X	Administer rental assistance program in partnership with Hennepin County / funded with HOME Fund				

PROGRAM/TOOL	HOUSING NEED ADDRESSED?									DESCRIPTION* *FOR CIRCUMSTANCES & SEQUENCE OF USE, SEE WRITE-UPS ON PAGE 5-179 THROUGH PAGE 5-184	AFFORDABILITY LEVEL?			
	RACIAL EQUITY	HOUSING & THE CLIMATE ACTION PLAN	LIFE-CYCLE HOUSING	SENIOR HOUSING	AFFORDABLE HOUSING	HOME OWNERSHIP	RENTAL HOUSING	PRESERVATION & REHAB	DEMAND FOR HOUSING		30% AMI AND BELOW	31% - 50% AMI	51% - 80% AMI	ALL INCOME LEVELS
Future City Housing Tools (Cont.)														
Site Assembly					X		X		X	This city would use this tool to assemble properties near future SWLRT investments or at Mixed Use nodes for projects that promoted affordable housing			X	
Partnership with Land Bank Twin Cities										The city would consider utilizing this tool if the opportunity arose				
Fair Housing Policy										St. Louis Park will adopt a Fair Housing Policy in 2019				
Preservation of expiring low-income housing tax credit properties					X		X		X	City has engaged in effort to prevent opt-out of project based units in St. Louis Park development & would engage developers in efforts to retain tax credits				
First time homebuyer down payment assistance										A new first time homeownership program was approved for implementation to begin in 2019				

Public Art

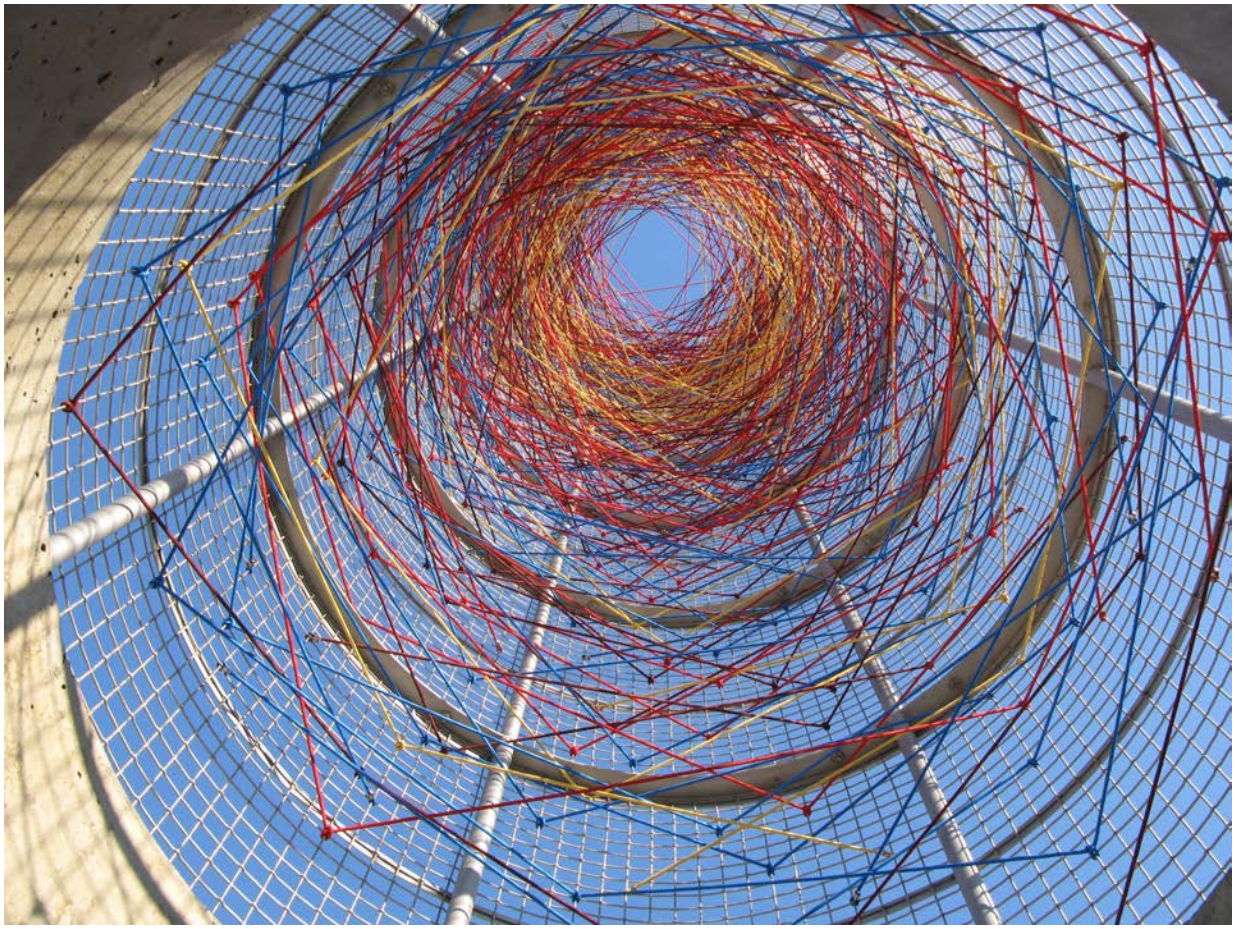
St. Louis Park has embraced public art in the community and taken a number of steps to proactively integrate it into the community fabric. Art has been incorporated though placing art in new developments and public infrastructure improvements; giving grants through the annual Arts and Culture Grant Program; placing art in city buildings; and through creating a utility box wrap program.

Most notably, the city partners with St. Louis Park Friends of the Arts (FotA), a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting, promoting, and enhancing the arts in St. Louis Park. FotA's work is to "connect people and organizations around the arts, share arts-related information and resources, and coordinate community arts programs." FotA partners with arts-based community groups, hosts a wide range of arts-related events, and offers a range of resources for local artists.

FotA strives to:

- Ensure access to the arts for everyone and promote strong community support of the arts by strengthening existing programs and creating new arts opportunities.
- Serve as a liaison between community organizations, schools, parks and recreation and community education.
- Be a resource for community members, artists and existing programs.
- Provide multicultural and multi-generational arts opportunities.

For the future, the city and FotA are working together to create a Strategic Roadmap for advancing arts and culture in the community. This will include determining where efforts should be focused, how to express its importance to being a vital community, and building cross-sector support as arts and culture affects all elements and aspects of a community. The intent is that arts and culture can be a key contributor to economic and community development when approached strategically and included as a tool and part of the solution to our community's challenges.



Historic Resources

Where We Have Been

In August, 1886, 31 people signed a petition asking the Hennepin County Commissioners to incorporate the Village of St. Louis Park. The city derived its name from the Minneapolis and St. Louis Railroad. The word "Park" was added to eliminate any confusion with St. Louis, Missouri. The community was linked to the railroad because the community leaders believed the railroad would help transform the village into a center of trade and industry.

A considerable amount of industry did develop, but the predominant development in the city was residential use. The extension of the street car lines made it convenient for St. Louis Park residents to reach the large number of jobs created in a booming Minneapolis in the early 1900s. The street car may also be indirectly responsible for the lack of a "downtown" ever being fully developed in St. Louis Park. Travel to Minneapolis for shopping opportunities was also convenient by street car.

By 1940, the population of the Park had grown to 7,737 people. By 1955, the population had exploded to more than 40,000 people.

In 1954, the citizens of St. Louis Park proposed organizing as a charter city, which was accomplished in January, 1955. Since that time, the community has fully matured. Most of the vacant parcels have been developed and the city has begun to redevelop. As the city redevelops, it is important to take stock of past development and preserve the significant buildings in the physical and social development of the city.

Where We Are Today

St. Louis Park Historical Society

St. Louis Park is fortunate to have a Historical Society, founded in 1971, that is independently funded and managed by a Board of Directors. The Society's website states: "The mission of the Society is the collection, preservation and dissemination of knowledge about the history of St. Louis Park, Minnesota." One noted achievement of the founder, Marie Hartmann, was the saving of the historic Milwaukee Road Depot from demolition.

The objectives of the Historical Society are (summarized) as follows**:**

1. To locate and collect any material which may help to establish or illustrate the history of the City of St. Louis Park.
2. To disseminate historical information to any interested persons, groups, and institutions and to arouse interest in the history of the City of St. Louis Park.
3. To make this material available for study and research by individuals and scholars.
4. To accomplish these goals through the establishment of clearly defined collection, preservation, and dissemination policies and procedures.
5. To provide that all programs, functions and events of the Society, including membership, shall be made available to anyone regardless of race, color, age, national origin, marital status, disability, religious or political affiliation, gender, or sexual orientation.
6. And that this organization shall have the power to own property, apply for and receive grants, accept bequests, and establish and maintain an endowment fund for carrying out the above stated purposes.

The Historical Society hosts a wide variety of historical information and photographs, and is an invaluable asset for the community and for those wanting to understand its history. It has done extensive research documenting development, civic decisions, notable people and events in the city's history. The Society also organizes periodic presentations and publishes a newsletter to share interesting stories about the history of the city. The organization's goal is to find a more permanent home to better display artifacts, provide space to expand the collection to allow for more interactions with the public, and ensure the preservation and dissemination of knowledge in perpetuity.

Historic Structures

The City of St. Louis Park currently has two structures on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The two structures are the NordicWare tower near the intersection of Hwy. 7 and Hwy. 100 and the restored Railroad Depot located in Jorvig Park next to the railroad tracks in the historic railroad corridor. These two structures demonstrate the city's industrial and railroad history. The Depot is technically owned by the city, which provides maintenance and upkeep to preserve the building. The building is managed by the Historical Society to educate people and serve as a storage area for city artifacts.

Lilac Park in the southeast corner of the intersection of TH100 and Highway 7 and its beehive structures date to the 1930s when TH100, originally called Lilac Way, was developed by the Works Progress Administration to provide immediate employment to thousands of construction and landscaping laborers during the depression. It was the state's first "beltway" which completely surrounded the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area.

Special attention was given to roadside parks and plantings. The landscape plan, designed by landscape architect Arthur R. Nichols, gave Lilac Way its distinctive quality, and remains largely intact. The plan included a significant number of lilacs and elm trees as well as native limestone park structures, including the "beehives" for picnicking and enjoyment within wayside rest areas.

Lilac Park was one of five parks originally built along the highway. Most of these parks along with the stone structures have been destroyed by highway construction. In an effort to save and restore some remaining historic stone structures the "beehive" and other stone structures were moved to a new location in Lilac Park in 2008. The beehive, hand-made stone picnic tables and a fire circle, all built in 1939, were restored and are now located in the park, which is dedicated to the rest stops and their history.

Where We Are Headed

Historic Resources Goals & Strategies

1. Inventory the city's historic assets.

Strategies

A. Create a plan to inventory key historic or architecturally significant buildings and features including: churches and synagogues, schools, residences of prominent citizens, distinctive residences by prominent architects or builders, distinctive commercial buildings, notable parks and public works elements and features.

B. Conduct historical research and documentation on significant buildings and sites as they are being modified or demolished to keep as detailed of a historical record as possible.

2. Utilize opportunities to educate students and other residents about the historical assets of the city.

Strategies

A. Educate the community on the importance of preservation, in general, and also about the individual designated buildings and districts. Work with the school district to develop classroom curriculum about St. Louis Park history.

B. Utilize available historical photographs, maps and artifacts to focus attention upon the city's history and historical assets.

Plan By Neighborhood

Vision For Neighborhoods

St. Louis Park's Plan by Neighborhood is guided by the city's vision of creating and maintaining a very "livable community" built upon strong neighborhoods. The ideal neighborhood has a center, public gathering places, green spaces, identifiable edges, and a walkable environment. Although each neighborhood has a unique history, development pattern, character, challenges, and opportunities, all neighborhoods should ideally provide a healthy living environment with convenient access to essential community services, including transportation options, jobs, parks and open space, shopping, services, entertainment, and other urban amenities.

Strong neighborhoods are the backbone of St. Louis Park being a healthy community. As the community and neighborhoods face inevitable change over time, the city values the preservation and enhancement of each neighborhood's unique sense of identity based on its location, natural features, history, development character and residents. Ideally, strong neighborhoods also provide connectedness and support for a wide range of individuals and families, a source of friendship and neighbors you can rely upon if the need arises.

To support its Livable Community Vision, St. Louis Park has established ten Livable Community Principles consisting of the following:

- Walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods
- Life-cycle housing choices
- Higher density, mixed-use development
- Human scale development
- Transit-oriented development
- Multi-modal streets and pathways
- Preserved and enhanced natural environment
- Attractive and convenient public gathering places
- Public art, heritage, and culture
- Unique community and neighborhood identity

Most of these Livable Community Principles explicitly address the desired character of the community's neighborhoods and the major role strong neighborhoods play in creating a livable community.

Where We Have Been

Although St. Louis Park's early urban development in the late 19th century began by progressing outward from the original village center, at the intersection of the Minneapolis & St. Louis Railroad (now CP Rail) and Wooddale Avenue, this concentric growth pattern was overtaken by outward expansion from Minneapolis. A secondary influence was the two streetcar lines that extended outward from Minneapolis in the early 20th century: St. Louis Park Line along West Lake Street/ Minnetonka Boulevard and the Como-Harriet Line along the south edge of the city. The city's oldest neighborhoods with traditional street grids are located in these areas – south, east and central- with more suburban neighborhood development patterns occurring in the western and northern areas of the community. Homes in the older and more traditional neighborhoods have an average year built in the 1930s and 1940s with the oldest homes built in the 1920s and earlier. The newer and more suburban neighborhoods contain homes primarily built in the 1950s and after. Approximately 60% of the city's housing stock was constructed in a short time period following WWII, from the late 1940s through the 1950s, primarily as starter homes for GI Bill families.

Neighborhood planning began in St. Louis Park in the mid-1980s with the establishment of the Neighborhood Watch/Block Captain Program in 1983. In 1990, the city council formed the Neighborhood Revitalization Task Force to address the need for and the benefits of developing a neighborhood revitalization program. Based on the Task Force's recommendation to pursue such a program, the city council appointed the Neighborhood Revitalization Committee and directed this group to implement a neighborhood revitalization program. In 1992, the city established a Neighborhood Revitalization Commission (NRC). The purposes of the NRC were to:

- Create and maintain a sense of community
- Improve the appearance of neighborhoods
- Increase the feeling of security
- Identify and satisfy social needs
- Work toward achieving a high quality of life in St. Louis Park

In 1991, the Neighborhood Revitalization Committee identified neighborhoods defining neighborhood boundaries primarily by rail corridors, major streets, natural features and/or municipal borders. The exceptions are the smallest neighborhoods which are mainly isolated residential subdivisions, including Minikahda Oaks, Amhurst, Minnehaha, Westdale, Crestview, Kilmer and Shelard Park. The final neighborhood boundaries were drawn after residents were surveyed about their perceptions of their neighborhoods. This city-wide survey also was used to determine what St. Louis Park residents liked and did not like about their neighborhoods. The City of St. Louis Park has defined 35 neighborhoods that encompass the entire land area of the city. These neighborhoods are diverse in land area and population, ranging from 30 to 2,000 acres in area and from 100 to 3,000 residents. Figure 5-20 shows a map of the 35 neighborhoods.

In 1996, the city established the pilot Neighborhood Revitalization Grant Program that provides funding specifically for neighborhood improvement activities and projects.

In 1998, a full-time staff position was created to focus on the coordination of neighborhood programs, organizations and activities.

The Plan by Neighborhood has been a chapter of the city's Comprehensive Plan since 2000. In 2009-2011, the Plan by Neighborhood chapter was significantly updated and reformatted to add more maps and future neighborhood priorities and opportunities, as well as make the neighborhood plans easier to use.

Neighborhood Planning Areas

As part of the updating process for the 2030 Plan by Neighborhood chapter in 2011, seven (7) Neighborhood Planning Areas (NPAs) were established to more efficiently facilitate neighborhood input and identify common neighborhood issues and opportunities. The seven (7) NPAs cluster the 35 neighborhoods into larger geographic areas separated by the community's most significant "edges", which are major roadways (MN Hwy 100, MN Hwy 7, and Louisiana Avenue) and the rail corridors. Based on the success of using the seven (7) NPAs to attract neighborhood input for the Plan by Neighborhood update project, the city has continued to use the NPAs as a more effective and efficient means of seeking neighborhood input. Figure 5-21 shows a map of the seven (7) NPAs, which are:

- NORTHEAST : Blackstone, Cedarhurst, Eliot, Eliot View
- NORTHWEST: Cedar Manor, Crestview, Kilmer, Pennsylvania Park, Shelard Park, Westdale, Westwood Hills, Willow Park)
- WEST CENTRAL: Amhurst, Aquila, Cobblecrest, Minnehaha, Oak Hill, Texa Tonka
- CENTRAL: Birchwood, Bronx Park, Lenox, Sorenson
- EAST CENTRAL: (Fern Hill, Lake Forest, Triangle)
- SOUTHEAST: (Browndale, Minikahda Oaks, Minikahda Vista, Wolfe Park)
- SOUTHWEST: (Brooklawns, Brookside, Creekside, Elmwood, Meadowbrook, South Oak Hill)

Figure 5-20. St. Louis Park Neighborhoods

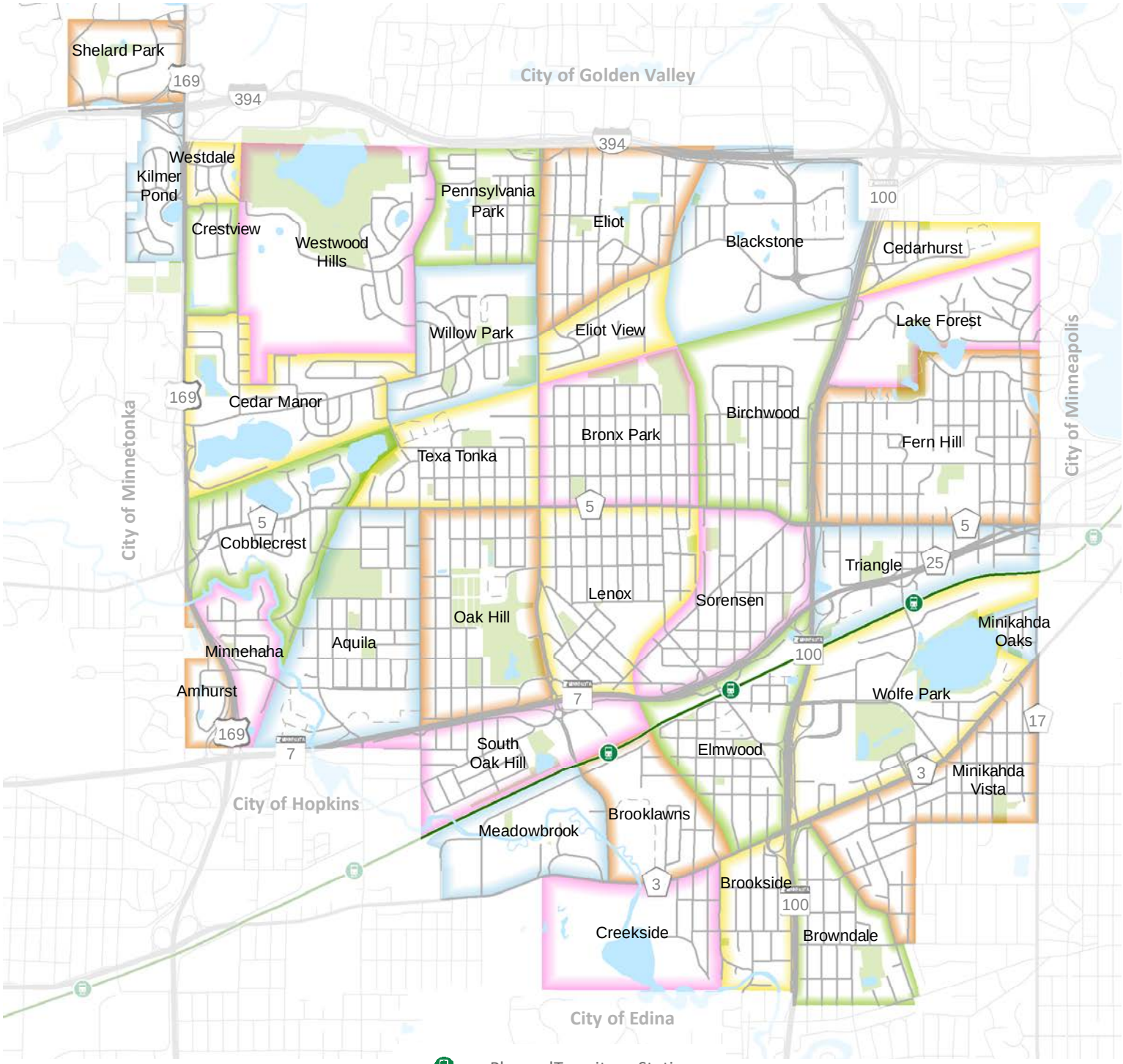


Figure 5-21. Neighborhood Planning Areas

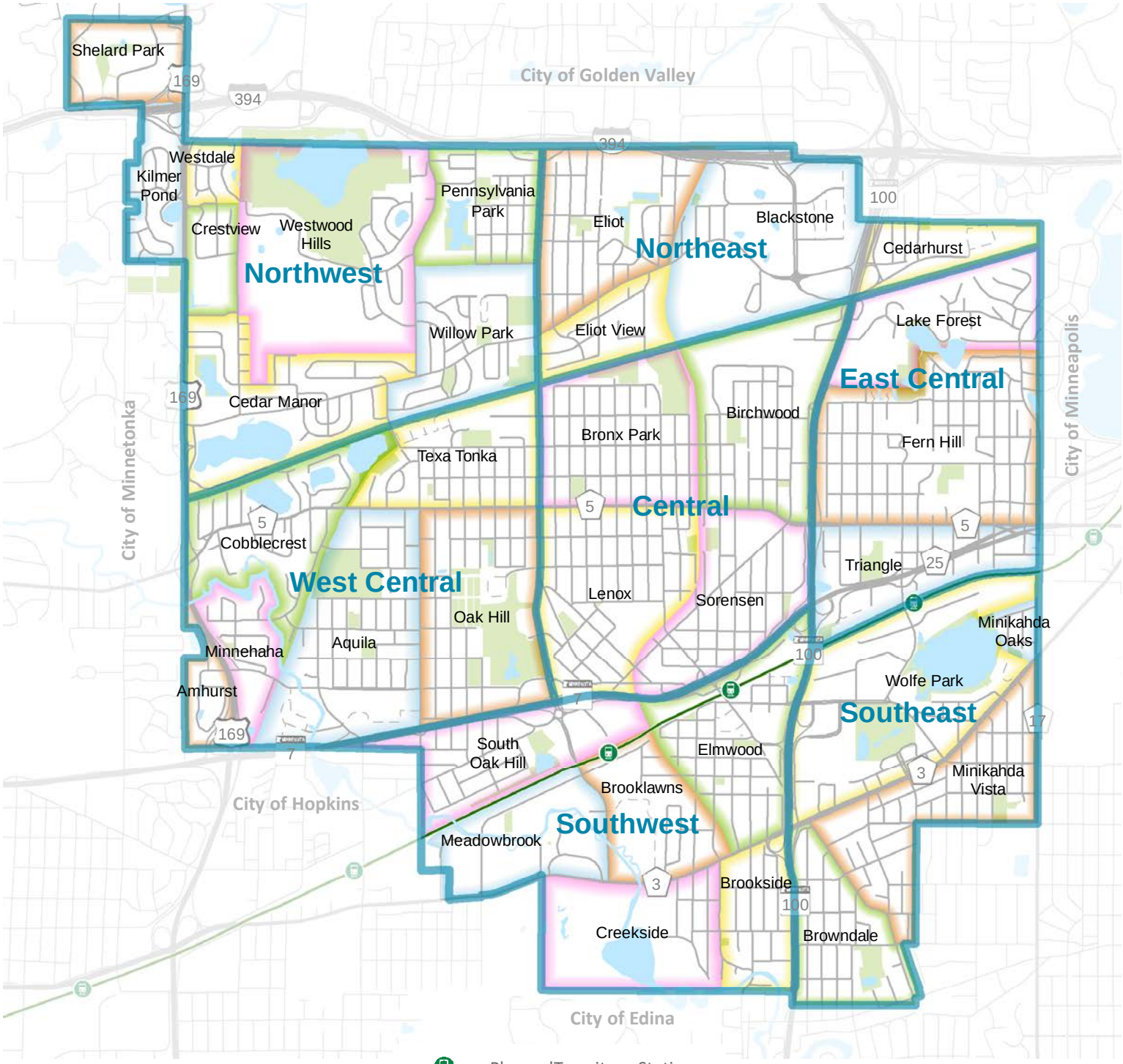
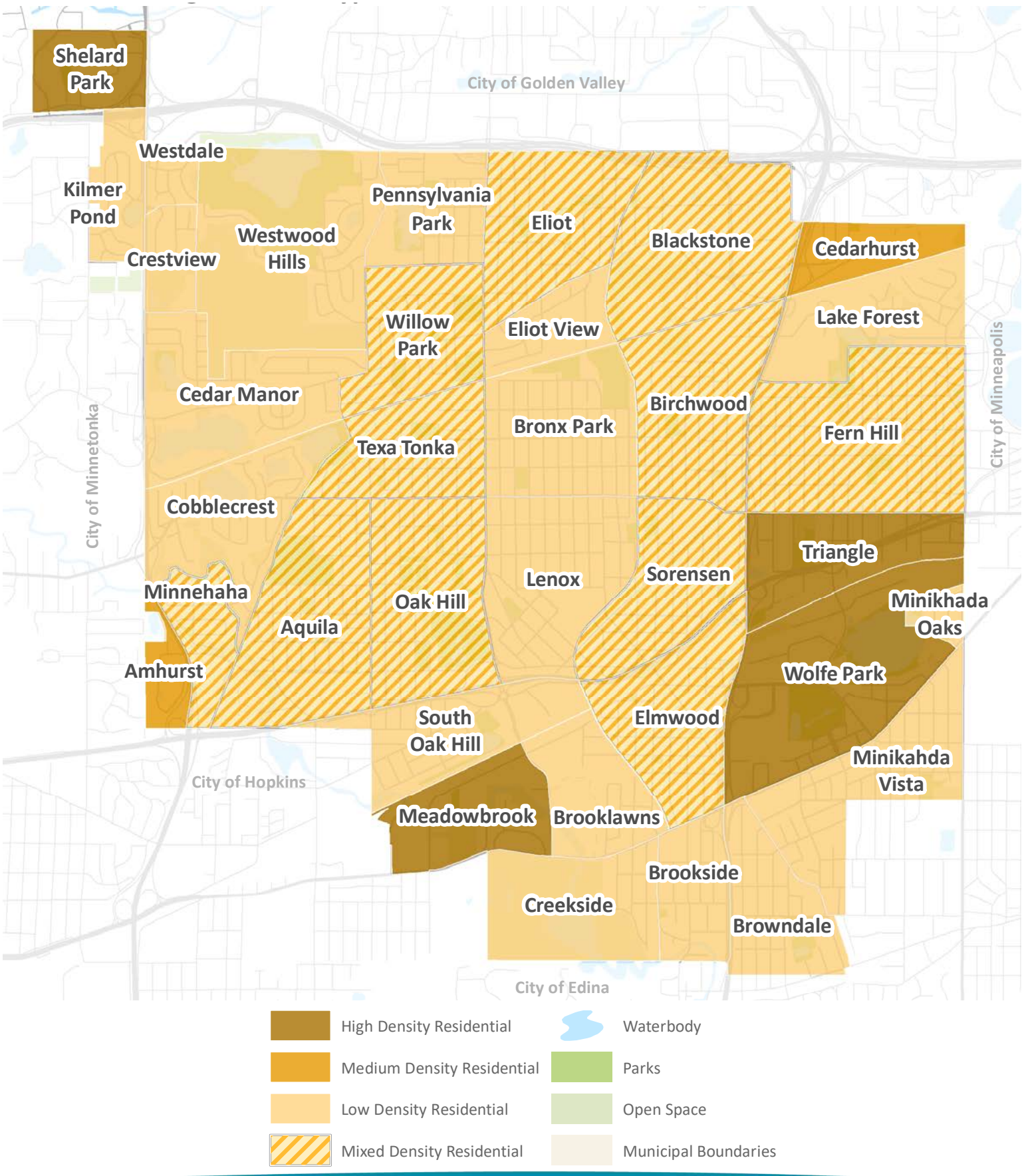


Figure 5-22. Residential Neighborhood Type



Where We Are Today

Neighborhood Housing Options

Overall, St. Louis Park's mix of residential land uses and housing types is distributed around the community. Some neighborhoods contain a balanced mix of housing options within them, while others contain predominately one type of housing, either single-family detached houses, medium density housing, or high density housing. Figure 5-22 shows a map of the 35 neighborhoods categorized by their mix/type of housing options. About a third of the community's neighborhoods (11 neighborhoods) contain a broad mix of housing options. About half of the neighborhoods (18 neighborhoods) contain predominately low density residential land uses as measured by percentage of housing units that are single-family detached houses. Just two (2) neighborhoods contain predominately medium density residential land uses. Four (4) neighborhoods contain predominately high density residential land uses.

Neighborhood Commercial Areas

St. Louis Park has three existing commercial centers:

- Knollwood
- Park Commons West
- Park Place Plaza at West End

St. Louis Park contains commercial corridors along two of its major community roadways, consisting of the following:

- Excelsior Boulevard

St. Louis Park contains a number of neighborhood commercial nodes at key street intersections within the community, including the following:

- Texas and Minnetonka (Texa-Tonka)
- Minnetonka & Louisiana
- Minnetonka & Dakota
- Minnetonka & Lake
- Minnetonka & Ottawa
- Minnetonka & France
- Louisiana & Cedar Lake Road

Existing and emerging mixed-use areas in the community include:

- Park Commons
- Historic Walker Lake
- The West End
- Shelard Park
- Belt Line Station Area
- Wooddale Station Area
- Louisiana Station Area

Neighborhood Parks

There are 30 neighborhood parks, with most of the community's 35 neighborhoods having their own neighborhood park. Those neighborhoods without their own neighborhood park have a neighborhood or community park located near them. The city does not have any current plans to acquire additional land for park purposes. Among the amenities found in neighborhood parks are play structures, athletic fields, community gardens, ponds, athletic courts, lakes, trails, sun/picnic shelters, park buildings, limited vehicle parking, sliding hills, and winter skating areas. In addition to neighborhood parks, St. Louis Park has community parks (8), community playfields (5), passive open spaces (20), historical parks (3), regional trails (2), and two golf courses (one public, one private).

Neighborhood Programs

The city's Neighborhood Watch/Block Captain Program continues to be a voluntary crime prevention program aimed at reducing the likelihood of becoming a crime victim. It works by teaching simple, yet proven crime prevention techniques and building relationships among neighbors and between the neighborhood and the Police Department. There are approximately 275 Block Captains throughout the city today.

Twenty-four (24) of St. Louis Park's 35 neighborhoods are represented by an organized neighborhood association. These groups can rally residents together to solve a neighborhood problem, work with the city on a special issue, and offer opportunities for neighbors to get to know one another. They also hold neighborhood get-togethers/ events and park clean-ups. Many neighborhoods publish newsletters informing residents of upcoming events and neighborhood news, and/or have their own social media sites.

The city has a full-time Community Liaison position focused on the coordination of neighborhood programs, organizations and activities.

The Neighborhood Revitalization Grant Program offers funding to organized neighborhoods for activities or neighborhood improvement projects that are targeted to enhance or build community within neighborhoods. For example, these grants can be used for community building activities, communications such as mailing newsletters, and service projects. This grant program had $40,000 available in 2018 with a $2,100 maximum per neighborhood and $800 per event.

The Annual Neighborhood Leader's Forum gets neighborhood leaders together to learn from each other, receive updates from city departments and receive the neighborhood revitalization grant application packet.

Where We Are Headed

Livability: Neighborhood Housing Options

St. Louis Park's population is projected to grow and diversify over the next twenty years. While St. Louis Park will experience demographic changes in line with national, regional and metro trends, the city's existing housing stock also influences the community's future demographic composition. For example, the community's large number of smaller starter homes attracts more single persons, younger families, and smaller households to the community. If St. Louis Park wants to enable residents to remain in the community and their neighborhood, throughout their lives, the community needs to offer a sufficiently diverse range of housing options.

Many neighborhoods will benefit from opportunities to diversify their housing options through redevelopment and rehabilitation, especially larger homes for families, senior housing, affordable housing, and non-traditional owner-occupied housing. Each neighborhood plan identifies whether or not the neighborhood has significant redevelopment potential that could add new housing options in the neighborhood.

Vitality: Neighborhood Commercial Areas

The 2040 Comprehensive Plan identifies the city's intent to strengthen the community's existing neighborhood commercial corridors and nodes. Significant changes have occurred in the community's transportation patterns, development patterns, commercial competition and consumers' buying habits that present major challenges for many of the commercial corridors and nodes. This study would identify and evaluate these challenges as well as market viability and revitalization opportunities.

In general, reinvestment or redevelopment in many neighborhood commercial areas is challenged by inadequate space for business expansions, parking, and storm water management. Neighborhood commercial corridors and nodes may offer attractive opportunities for adding new housing options, such as residential in mixed-use buildings. These neighborhood centers also can have significant potential for enhancing neighborhoods as important public gathering places, transportation nodes, and significantly contributing to a neighborhood's sense of identity.

Health: Active Living Neighborhoods

The city is committed to improving the community's network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities to enhance all neighborhoods as places that enable more active lifestyles and convenient connections to desirable neighborhood amenities. Each neighborhood plan identifies the pedestrian, bicycle and transit improvement priorities specifically related to that neighborhood.

Since streets represent the major portion of a neighborhood's public realm and pedestrian/bicycle facilities, improvements to make streets more pedestrian and bike-friendly are critical. Some of the most significant challenges to improving neighborhood pedestrian and bicycle networks involve crossings at rail lines, state highways and county highways, therefore, the community and the neighborhoods will often need to partner with these other entities to truly make the desired improvements.

Neighborhood Improvement Priorities

(These are from 2011 and will be updated)

Based on the neighborhood input received, the following improvements emerged as neighborhood priorities:

- Increasing neighborhood walkability by expanding both the network of sidewalks and trails
- Improving traffic calming measures to create safer and more livable neighborhood streets
- Reducing nuisances, particularly noise and light impacts from streets, rail lines, industrial areas, and larger commercial areas
- Enhancing public natural areas and open spaces within and adjacent to neighborhoods
- Expanding the network of bike routes
- Expanding and improving neighborhood commercial nodes as walkable neighborhood destinations
- Retaining and attracting small businesses to neighborhood commercial nodes
- Improving the compatibility between adjacent industrial areas and residential areas
- Mitigating the nuisances created by freight rail lines adjacent to residential areas
- Improving access from the neighborhoods to the North Cedar Lake Regional Trail, particularly adjacent neighborhoods north of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad tracks.
- Neighborhood Identity and Gathering Places

As a fully developed community, St. Louis Park neighborhoods will experience change and improvement primarily through reinvestment in existing development, public improvements, and site redevelopment. All of these investments represent opportunities to improve the neighborhood's identity or character and create more and/or improved neighborhood gathering places. Public gathering places can consist of both publicly-owned (e.g. parks, plazas, sidewalks, trails, civic facilities, schools, libraries) and privately-owned (e.g. religious facilities, cafes, coffee shops, entertainment venues) spaces. Future parks, streets, trails and other public facility projects should incorporate opportunities to enhance neighborhood identity and gathering places.

In particular, a neighborhood's unique parks and open spaces provide valuable opportunities for strengthening neighborhood identity and gathering places. Likewise, redevelopment and major property reinvestment projects have the potential to enhance neighborhoods. For instance, new private development could incorporate a public plaza, public art, benches, wider sidewalks, transit amenities, neighborhood-related architecture or unique signage.

35 Individual Neighborhood Plans

The 35 individual neighborhood plans are located in the appendix of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

Each neighborhood plan consists of the following components:

- History and Character
- Neighborhood Features List and Map
- Neighborhood Features
- Neighborhood Statistics
- Recent Plans and Studies
- 2040 Future Land Use Plan Map, Changes, and Distribution

For each Neighborhood Planning Area (NPA), the following are identified:

- Relevant 2040 Citywide Future Directions
- Improvement Priorities and Opportunities Specific to Each NPA

Chapter 6
Mobility: Getting Around Town

Vision for the Mobility System

Vision 3.0 included a recommendation on mobility to "Develop Future-focused Transit and Mobility." A Strategic Priority was developed from the recommendation which states, "St. Louis Park is committed to providing a variety of options for people to make their way around the city comfortably, safely and reliably" and includes the following:

- Continuing to expand the network of sidewalks, trails and bike facilities.
- Researching and implementing multiple and affordable mobility solutions for all.

» Fostering smart growth and transit-oriented housing development.
» Increasing pedestrian safety through crosswalk improvements and increased park and trail lighting.
» Expanding the number of north-south and east-west transit options.

The city's mobility system is made up of sidewalks, trails, and streets, which are there to provide safe and convenient travel for all. The right of way within the city is an important component of the mobility system and must be used efficiently to provide the multimodal infrastructure needed to provide for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit service and motor vehicles.

Each mobility option is tied to the other: pedestrian facilities are often connected to bicycle facilities; transit stations and stops are connected to pedestrian/bicycle routes; and all mobility options often use the street right-of-way. The city's goal is to provide a multimodal mobility system with many options – walking, bikes, transit, car- and ride-sharing that are readily available to everyone throughout the community. A mobility system that offers a variety of choices creates a vibrant, safe and efficient system for all people and all modes.

For the future, the city is focused on advancing community mobility by prioritizing walking first, followed by bicycling and transit use, and then motor vehicle use. Using this hierarchy when planning for transportation improvements will put the city in a good position for future mobility and continued growth.

Transforming how people move within the city will be one of the biggest challenges for St. Louis Park. Increasing walking and biking to destinations will have the biggest impact on reducing vehicle miles traveled. However, there will still be people who need and want to drive. The city is focused on providing the infrastructure needed to meet its commitment to climate action; this will be accomplished by implementing a number of improvements to help reduce carbon emissions and thus the impact on the environment, including but not limited to:

» Constructing additional pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to reduce vehicle use
» Providing electric vehicle charging stations at public and private facilities to facilitate use of this alternative
» Constructing roundabouts to minimize vehicle idling

Mobility System Goals and Strategies

1. Plan, design, build, and operate the city's mobility system in a way that prioritizes walking first, followed by bicycling and transit use, and then motor vehicle use

Strategies

A. Incorporate an approach that is based on surrounding land use context when planning and designing transportation projects.

B. Continue to explore and evaluate flexible and innovative designs and seek guidance from established best practices, to achieve desired outcomes.

C. Use the Capital Improvement Program as a tool to improve the pedestrian, bicycle, and transit networks.

D. Design mobility infrastructure to support land use goals for compact, accessible, walkable neighborhoods.

E. Promote and support adaptation of the mobility network to take advantage of improved technologies and mobility modes.

F. Encourage compact, dense development and connected multimodal infrastructure to facilitate "car-lite" living.

G. Prioritize bicycle and pedestrian mobility projects with connectivity between residential neighborhoods, schools, employment, businesses, and bus and SWLRT transit.

2. Ensure the quality and function of the transportation system contributes to the equitable outcomes for all people.

Strategies

A. Prioritize mobility needs of underserved populations.

B. Promote public awareness of the range of travel choices and the beneficial impacts travel choices have on household finances, personal quality of life, society, and the environment.

C. Improve pedestrian, bicycle, and transit way-finding.

3. Eliminate fatalities and serious injuries that are a result of crashes on city streets

Strategies

A. Prioritize safety investments in line with the modal hierarchy; established in the for pedestrians first, bicyclists and transit riders second, and for people driving in vehicles third.

B. Protect pedestrians and bicyclists through design decisions that strive to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries.

C. Use enforcement, design decisions, and operational norms to reflect an acute awareness for protecting all users of the mobility systems.

D. Create a crash analysis plan and prioritize network improvements that will help to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries at intersections and on city streets that have proven to be unsafe.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility

Where We Have Been

Trails, sidewalks and bikeways make important connections within the city and to neighboring cities' systems. These trails, sidewalks and bikeways connect residents to key community destinations. City trails are predominantly within parks and open spaces while regional trails traverse the entire community. Some local trails run along streets, however many do not have continuous bicycle connections. Often trails connect with sidewalks to help form the citywide pedestrian network.

In 1999, St. Louis Park created the Trails and Sidewalks Master Plan, which identified existing and potential activity nodes, transit stops, regional links, and natural resource destinations. It also identified physical impediments and hazards, and set priorities for building and improving crossings, sidewalks, trails and bikeways. From that effort, a number of improvements were made to the system.

Almost a decade later, in 2008, the St. Louis Park City Council adopted the Active Living: Sidewalk and Trails Plan. This plan established a vision for the city's future pedestrian and bicycle networks. This plan built upon the recommendations of the Vision St. Louis Park Action Teams and the 1999 Sidewalks and Trails Plan. The planning process included a thorough public review and analysis process that included an eight-member citizen advisory committee, a community workshop, a community open house, and input from the Planning Commission and Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission. The plan identified places in the community where pedestrian and bicycle access is most important to its citizens. The process revealed gaps in St. Louis Park's pedestrian and bicycle networks, and made recommendations for areas where the City should concentrate its efforts.

The Connect the Park capital improvement plan grew out of the Active Living, Sidewalks & Trails Plan emphasizing the need for community sidewalks every 1/4 mile and bikeways every 1/2 mile as well as way-finding and "user-friendly" amenities. This ten-year initiative will add 32 miles of bikeways, 10 miles of sidewalk, 3 miles of trails, and 2 bridges throughout the community. The city council approved Connect the Park plan in 2013, and implementation began in 2015.

The city is also fortunate to host the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail and the North Cedar Lake Regional Trail. These trails connect St. Louis Park to the entire metro area network of regional trails. The two regional trails are operated by Three Rivers Parks District. These off-street bicycle and pedestrian paths were converted from unused rail rights-of-way. The North Cedar Lake Regional Trail lies to the north, while the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail lies to the south, paralleling TH 7 and the planned SWLRT right-of-way.

Many improvements have been made to the pedestrian and bicycle network during the past 10 years that have drastically improved safety and access throughout the city:

- The "Active Living, Sidewalks & Trails Plan" was created in 2008 to document current and proposed routes and programming.
- The "Connect the Park" capital Improvement plan calls for approximately 23 million dollars of investment between 2013 and 2023. Over 14 miles (14.2) of bikeways have been constructed, nearly 8.6 miles of sidewalk have been installed, and 2.15 miles of trails have been built.
- St. Louis Park was designated as a Bronze Level Bicycle Friendly Community in 2016 from the League of American Bicyclists.

Where We Are Today - Pedestrian Mobility

While not every resident uses a car, bicycle, or bus to access destinations, nearly every resident does utilize pedestrian infrastructure – even if only using a sidewalk to move from a parked car to a home or business. A high-quality pedestrian network provides essential connections for those who might otherwise not be able to access destinations, including children, older adults, low-income individuals, and people with disabilities; these people rely on the pedestrian infrastructure to gain access to their destinations.

The city's pedestrian network can improve the health and quality of life of residents by encouraging walking as an enjoyable mode choice. Greater rates of walking are associated with a reduced risk of obesity, diabetes, and other diseases, improved air quality, greater public safety, and even improved mental health and feeling of well-being and relaxation.

Effective pedestrian networks can boost economic development efforts, and encourage and support more sustainable modes of development that are less reliant upon the car.

Existing Pedestrian Facilities

Sidewalk Network

Residents benefit from access to sidewalks for access local schools, workplaces, and entertainment. Certain activity centers such as "The Shops at West End" and "Excelsior & Grand" have high-quality sidewalks networks to facilitate walking to and throughout the area. See Figure 6-1 for existing sidewalks and gaps identified to date.

Pedestrian safety and comfort are impacted not just by the presence or absence of sidewalks, but also by how close the sidewalk is to the street. Providing a buffer, through a narrow strip of land, between the sidewalk and the street increases safety and comfort for the pedestrian. The importance of an adequate buffer zone is amplified along streets with high-traffic volumes, high speeds, and/or constrained rights-of-way. Street trees can be planted in the buffer to provide shade and enhance the pedestrian experience.

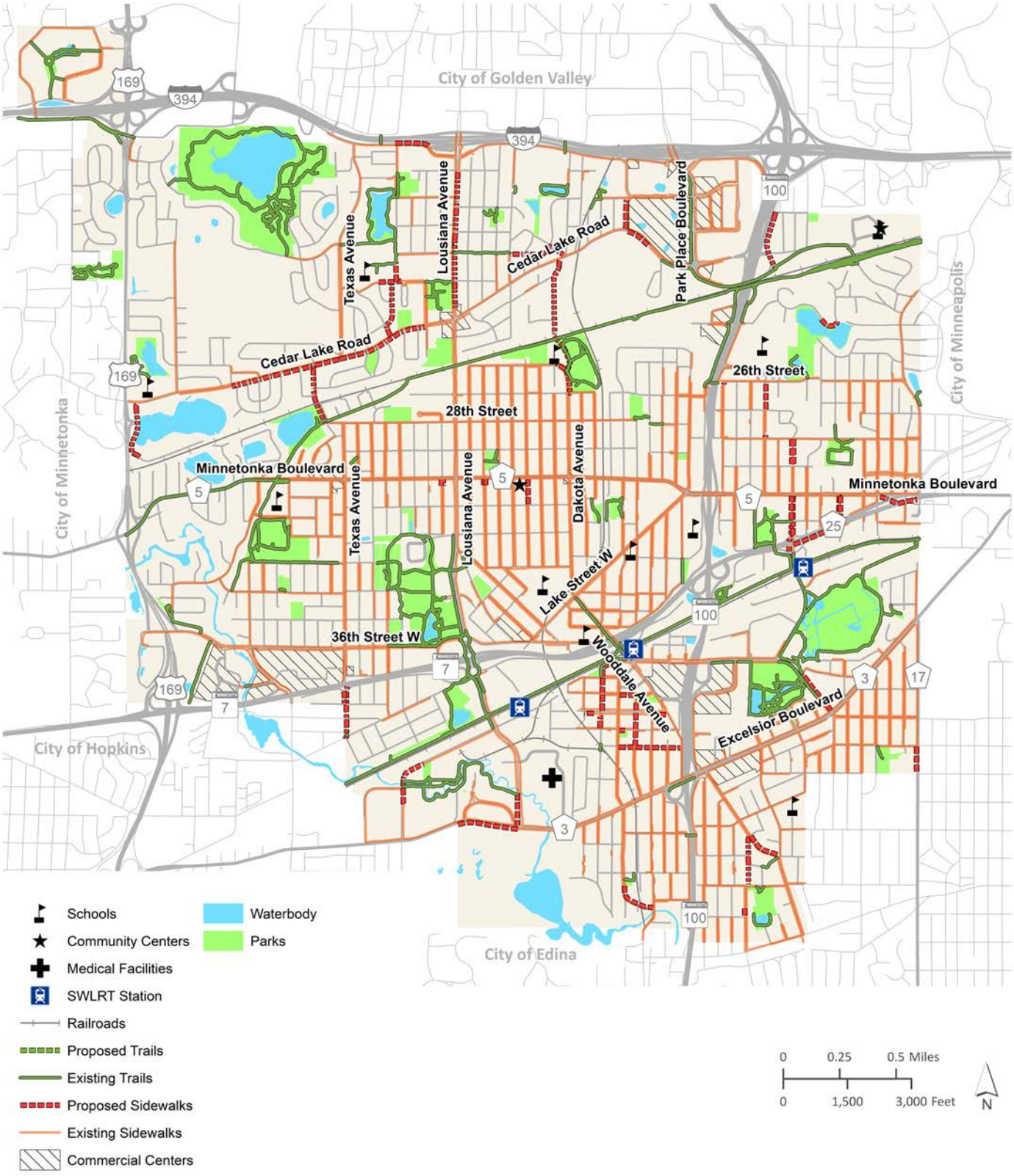
Bicycles are allowed on the sidewalks in the city but are usually only used by less confident bikers or on high speed/volume roadways.

Trail Network

Trails are popular for walking because people are separated from cars along the route and at intersections. Two regional trails are in St. Louis Park: the North Cedar Lake Regional Trail and the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail. The Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail is located in the same corridor as the planned Southwest Light Rail (SWLRT) and the Bass Lake Spur railroad lines. These trails are valuable pieces of the city's mobility system and are heavily used by pedestrians and bicyclists as they connect across the community. These trails also offer direct access to the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes trail system, downtown Minneapolis to the east and Hopkins, Minnetonka and Eden Prairie to the west.

Currently, the street crossings of the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail are a combination of at-grade and grade-separated crossings. There are plans to separate the trail at Beltline Boulevard and Wooddale Avenue with the SWLRT project.

Figure 6-1. Existing Sidewalk Network in St. Louis Park



Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by Toole Design Group, 2018

Street Network

A continuous grid street network is ideal for pedestrian use because it maximizes the number of destinations available within a short walking distance, and allows pedestrians to take varied routes.

Many areas of the city are generally characterized by a tight grid street network. This grid pattern allows pedestrians to access destinations using straightforward routes absent other barriers such as highways and railroads. In the city's more outlying areas to the northeast, and northwest the street network has a looping pattern that often makes it more difficult for pedestrians to access nearby destinations. Some defined cut-through paths have been created; however, the suburban street network in the northern neighborhoods can lengthen pedestrian trips decreasing the efficiency of walking to destinations.

Land Use Environment

Land use and development patterns dramatically influence the pedestrian environment. Active storefronts lining streets, narrower roadways, wider sidewalks, and more boulevard trees contribute to the comfort for pedestrians quick, safe, and enjoyably walk to access goods, services, and entertainment.

The city has made great strides in both retrofitting older developments and being proactive about land use designs in new developments to improve community livability. Improved designs have buildings built close to the street, parking lots placed further away from street, new sidewalk connections, narrower streets, and wider sidewalks to create a more walkable, bikeable land use environment.

Pedestrian Network Challenges

The pedestrian network in St. Louis Park has significantly improved over the last decade, however barriers to walking still remain. The primary barriers are the highways and railroads.

Highways

St. Louis Park contains many separated highways that allow for high vehicular mobility and effective access to the metro region, but also are barriers to connecting neighborhoods – specifically breaking up the pedestrian network. The most prominent examples of vehicular routes that impede pedestrian movement are listed and described below:

TH 7/CSAH 25

This large and (partially) grade-separated highway runs east/west across the southern portion of the city. There are seven crossing points for pedestrians over approximately 3.5 miles.

TH 100

Trunk Highway 100 (TH 100) runs north-south through the eastern portion of the city. Unlike TH 7/ CSAH 25, this route functions as a metropolitan freeway and runs through the entire city. This highway's right-of-way interrupts the city's pedestrian grid, but does have eight ways pedestrians can cross it over 3.3 miles

Railroads

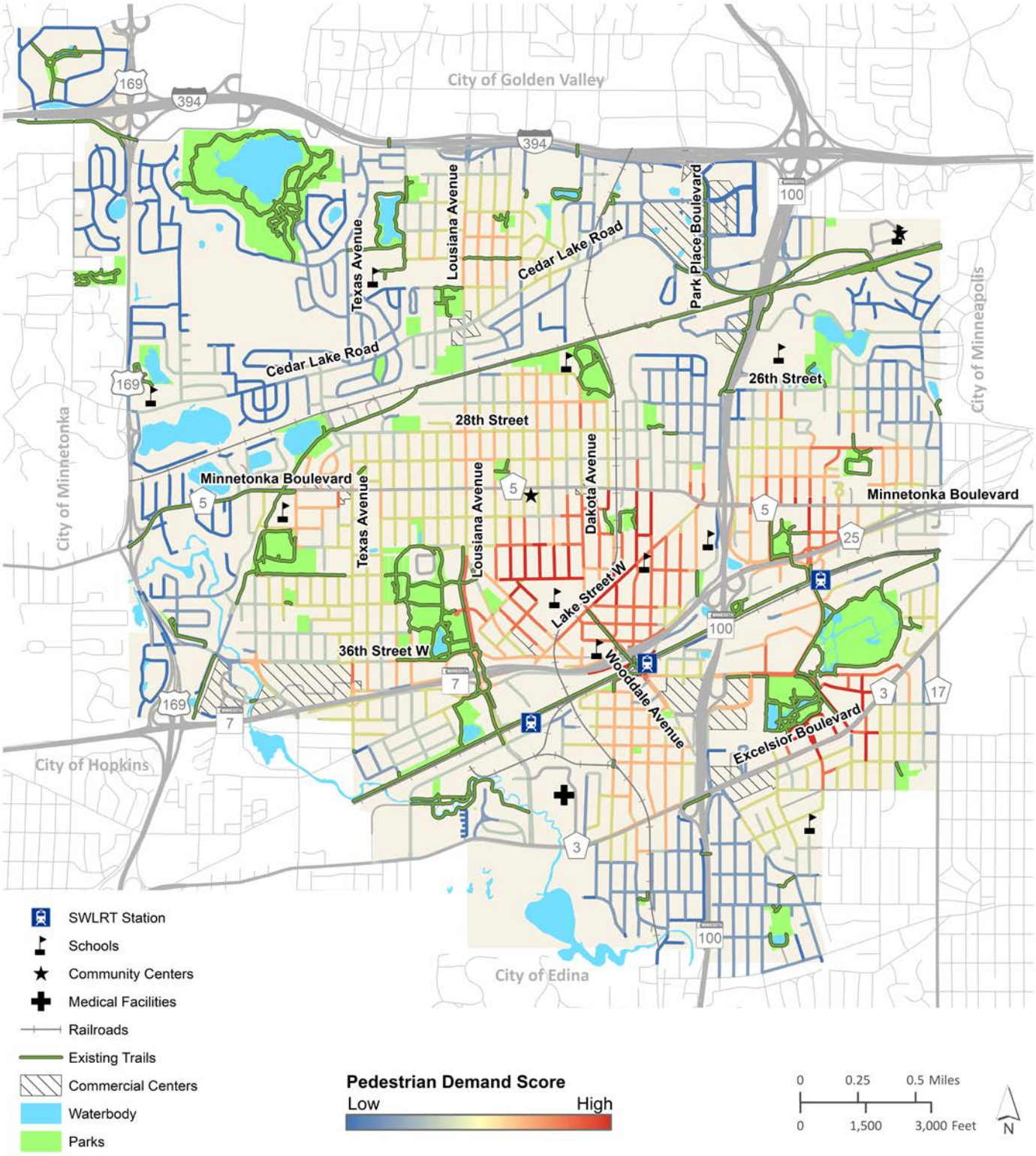
Three rail lines bisect the city and create a barrier for pedestrians, particularly for children, the disabled, and elderly individuals. The historic rail corridors in the city also mean the street network is disconnected.

Pedestrian Improvement Plans

As a result of the Active Living: Sidewalks and Trails Plan, the city created the Connect the Park capital improvement plan to be implemented through 2023 (Figure 6-1). As of 2018, 8.6 miles of sidewalk and 2.1 miles of trails have been installed. Connect the Park aims to improve the walking experience and increase walking in the city.

While designing the Connect the Park sidewalk segments, some additional sidewalk gaps were identified. These gaps were seen as barriers for residents to get from their homes to the new community sidewalks being constructed. To eliminate these gaps, the city has expanded the scope of the Connect the Park to include neighborhood sidewalk connections along adjacent street blocks, infilling missing neighborhood sidewalks to connect to the new community sidewalks.

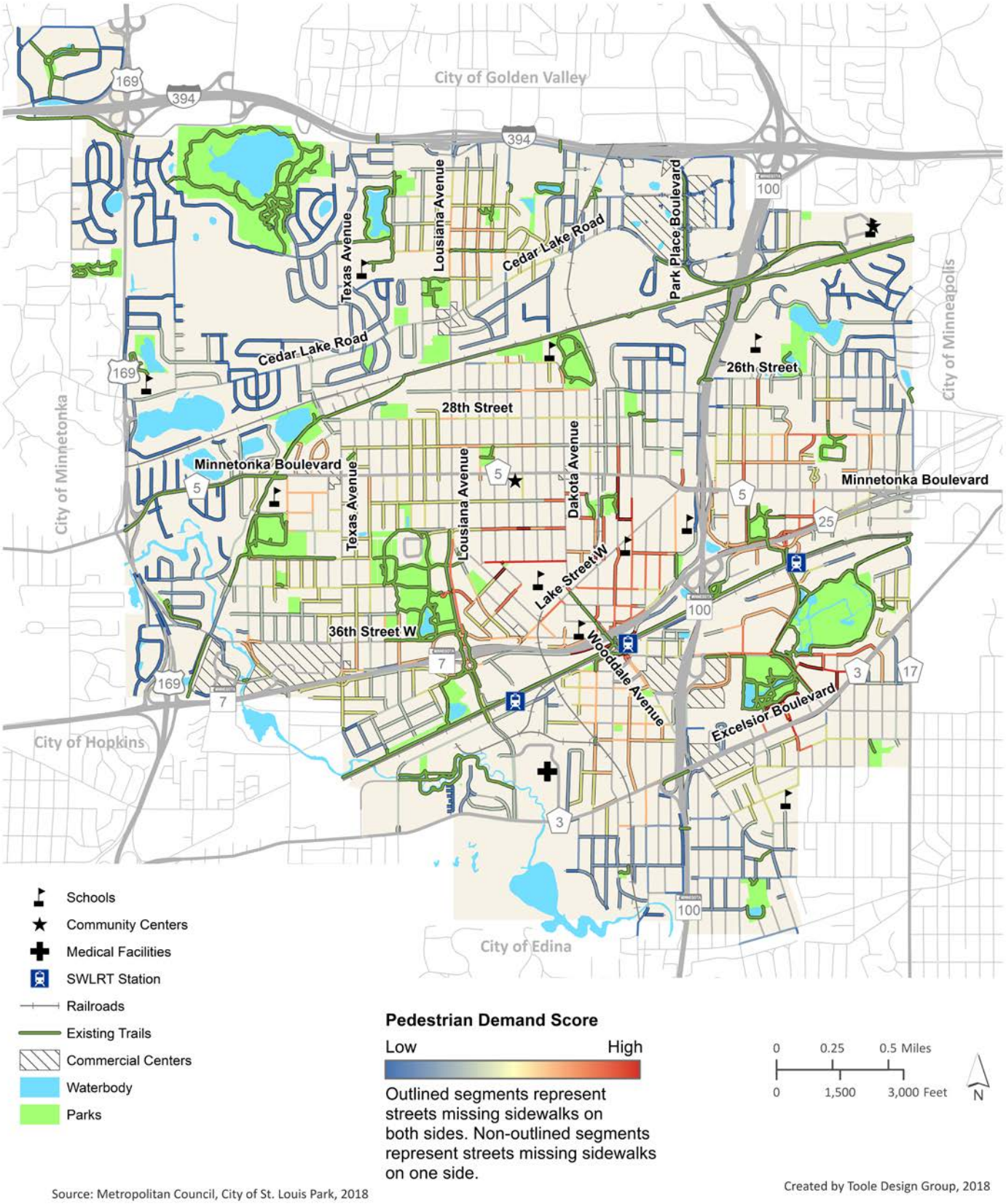
Figure 6-2. Pedestrian Demand Scores by Street Segment



Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by Toole Design Group, 2018

Figure 6-3. Current Pedestrian Network Gaps with Existing Pedestrian Demand



Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by Toole Design Group, 2018

Another current initiative is the draft Living Streets Policy. The intent of this policy is to establish a commitment to building a complete and integrated public right-of-way that has a positive impact on the livability and resiliency of neighborhoods throughout the city. This policy encourages the construction of new sidewalks throughout the city. To achieve this, the city reviews the continuity of existing neighborhood sidewalks adjacent to any street segment being rehabilitated. If there is a gap in the neighborhood sidewalk system adjacent to a street being rehabilitated, the city will propose new sidewalk construction to fill in the gap. Also included in the gap identification are neighborhood sidewalk connections between community sidewalks and high density housing areas.

Where We Are Headed - Planning for Pedestrians

The Active Living Sidewalk and Trails planning process revealed gaps in the pedestrian network. Through the Connect the Park implementation plan, priority was given to close the gaps in the community sidewalk network. By 2023, there will be citywide grid system of community sidewalks spaced approximately every 1/4-mile. However, gaps in the in neighborhood sidewalk network will still remain. For planning purposes, a sidewalk gap is any street where there is not an existing sidewalk for the entire block. To assist with future planning efforts to fill in the gaps in the neighborhood sidewalk network the city will employ a GIS based tool to analyze walking demand.

Walking Demand Analysis

The existing sidewalk map shows which streets have sidewalks and identifies general areas that have high access to local sidewalks and those that do not. Sidewalk access does not tell the whole story, nor should it alone guide future investment decisions. The intent is to focus on planning and constructing sidewalks in areas that will support pedestrian demand. A pedestrian demand model was developed to account for where pedestrians are expected or desire to use sidewalks. Figure 6-2 shows pedestrian demand.

In general pedestrian demand is highest in areas where there are:

- Smaller residential home lots
- Higher density residential
- Commercial nodes
- Mixed use developments
- A tight street grid
- Schools, Parks, and transit.

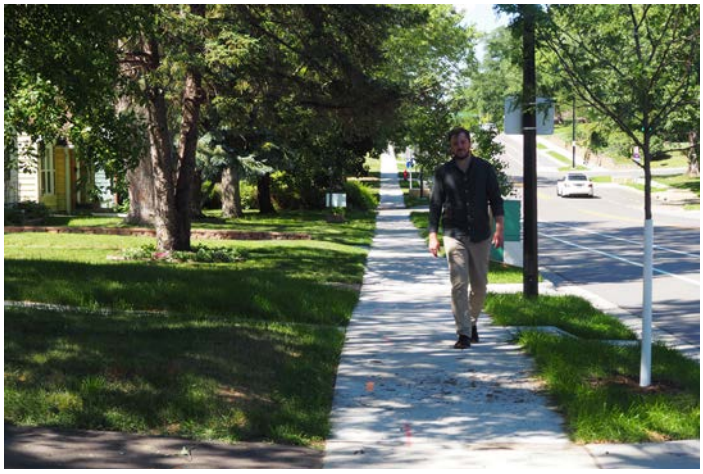
While areas with low demand indicate a lower potential for walking trips, it does not mean the residents in this area lack the desire to make more walking trips.

Figure 6-3 shows the pedestrian demand—broken down by street segment—on segments lacking sidewalks. Street segments with sidewalks are colored grey. The non-grey segments are missing sidewalks on one or both sides of the street. This shows areas of the city where future investments would benefit the greatest number of users.

Reaching Destinations as a Pedestrian

St. Louis Park is focusing on increasing the number of destinations that individuals can reach without a car. The key to this is having a continuous network of sidewalks leading from the places where people live to where they want to go.

The city will soon have LRT access. Residents can use its stations to access south Minneapolis and downtown on one side, and the suburban jobs centers in Hopkins, Minnetonka and Eden Prairie at the other. Efforts are being made to create connections so people can walk from a mile around the stations, making it more convenient and comfortable to walk or bike to the LRT station. More broadly, a focus on denser development near stations will offer an option for individuals to live “car-light,” or car-free.



Pedestrian Mobility Goals and Strategies

1. Provide for the needs of pedestrians by removing barriers.

Strategies

A. Continue to implement initiatives that construct and maintain a continuous network of sidewalks such as Connect the Park.

B. Continue to build infrastructure for pedestrian transportation in conjunction with development projects.

C. Employ traffic management measures where appropriate to enhance safe pedestrian mobility.

D. Install intersection improvements where appropriate to increase pedestrian safety.

E. Continue to work with St. Louis Park schools to identify and promote pedestrian routes to students and parents.

F. Provide safe and accessible routes for individuals in the community, with a special focus on the most vulnerable users such as children, seniors, and people with disabilities.

G. Improve connections to existing regional trails to link local pedestrian networks to the region.

2. Create a pedestrian network that connects people to their destinations.

Strategies

A. Prioritize mobility projects with connectivity between residential neighborhoods, schools, employment, businesses, and bus and SWLRT transit.

B. Continue to identify gaps in the pedestrian network and fill gaps where appropriate.

C. Continue the city's maintenance activities to ensure the safe and comfortable use of the pedestrian infrastructure.

D. Require pedestrian connections in all new subdivisions and on new streets.

E. Improve way-finding to direct pedestrians to local destinations.

F. Create a citywide grid of community sidewalks at distances of approximately a ¼ mile.

3. Create livable space through pedestrian-scale design of the right-of-way and public spaces.

Strategies

A. Establish unique and cohesive street character for city streets, emphasizing safe and comfortable pedestrian connections and other amenities for the use and enjoyment of pedestrians.

B. Enhance the appearance of the city's streets through applying design principles that create an active environment and enhance the corridor's appearance such as Living Streets design principles.

Where We Are Today - Bicycle Mobility

Bicycle infrastructure is broadly utilized in St. Louis Park. A high-quality bicycle network provides essential mobility connections and can improve the health and quality of life of residents by encouraging biking as an enjoyable mode choice. Effective bicycle networks can boost economic development efforts, improve air quality and encourage and support more sustainable modes of development which are less reliant upon the car.

In many ways the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail and the North Cedar Lake Regional Trail are the backbone of the city's biking facilities.

Existing Bicycle Facilities

Bikeways

The term "bikeways" describes routes with certain treatments or dedicated space that call attention to bicycles. These are intended to encourage bicycle travel. Bikeway design can range from a cycle track, buffered bicycle lane, bicycle land and shared use road markings ("sharrow"). Generally, on high volume roads, bikeways that offer bicyclists more separation from the traffic are more comfortable for users. Therefore, a cycle track- a protected bicycle lane that is separated from the road using curb, a green boulevard or any other barrier is the highest level in this hierarchy, followed by buffered bike lanes, bike lanes, and then shared-use markings. This hierarchy is context sensitive, as the characteristics of the street and the expected users influence the bikeway design.

Shared Use Trails

Shared use trails are generally constructed for use of both pedestrians and bicycles. The city has many shared use trails in parks and along the street network. These trails create circulation within a park and provide valuable non-motorized links to the wider community through connections to the street network. There are several parks throughout the city such as Bass Lake Preserve, Oak Hill Park, Aquila Park, and Pennsylvania Park that contain internal trails connecting to the street and bicycle network. Some of these park trails also connect to the North Cedar Lake Regional Trail and the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail.

There are also shared use trails along the street network that connect to sidewalks and parks to enhance the network.

Bicycle Network Challenges

While the bicycle network in the city has significantly improved over the last decade, many challenges to biking remain. Such barriers in the network are subdivided using the following categories: arterial streets, limited north-south bike connections, intersections, regional trail street crossings, railroads, and highways-related barriers. By 2023, the Connect the Park initiative will install 32 miles of bikeways, at ½ mile spacing, connecting all corners of the city, removing many of the barriers.

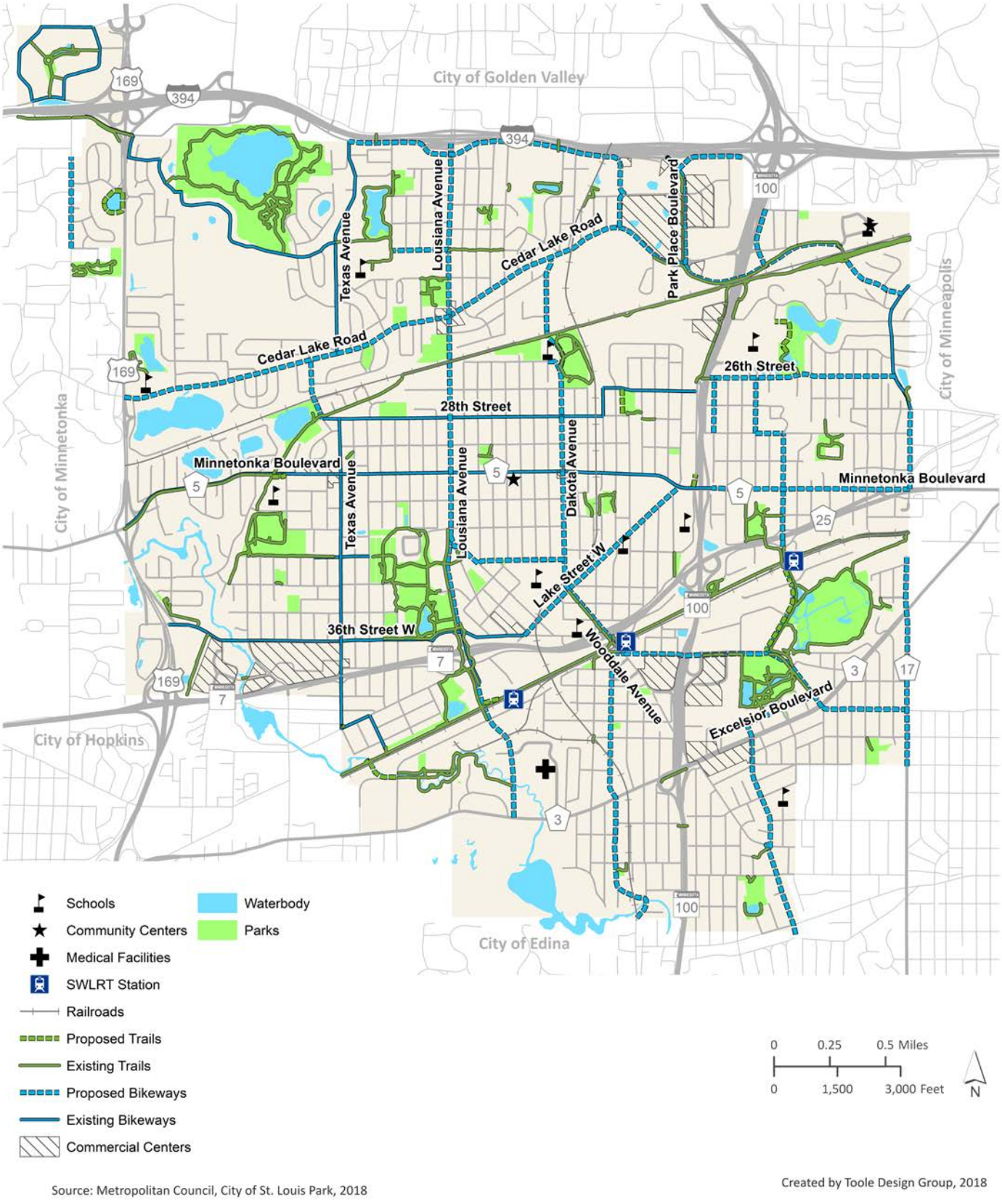
Arterial Streets

Most arterial and connectors in St. Louis Park could be classified as being "high-stress" routes for bicyclists. "High-stress" means cyclists are not as comfortable riding on these routes as they would be on facilities with lower vehicular speeds, less traffic, and greater separation from vehicles. On arterial streets bicycle facilities should be developed with a lens on providing protection for the user. Traffic speeds, lane width, and number of lanes are important factors to consider when building a facility that will encourage longer bicycling trips. Providing adequate infrastructure along these major corridors will remove significant barriers to bicycling in the city, as these streets are important routes cyclists can use to access the regional trails.

Limited North-South Bike Connections

St. Louis Park is fortunate to have the two regional trails that run east-west through the city: the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail and the North Cedar Lake Regional Trail. These provide a "low-stress" connection, meaning a user feels more comfortable on the route. Bicyclists are limited by a lack of bicycle connections on adjacent north-south streets.

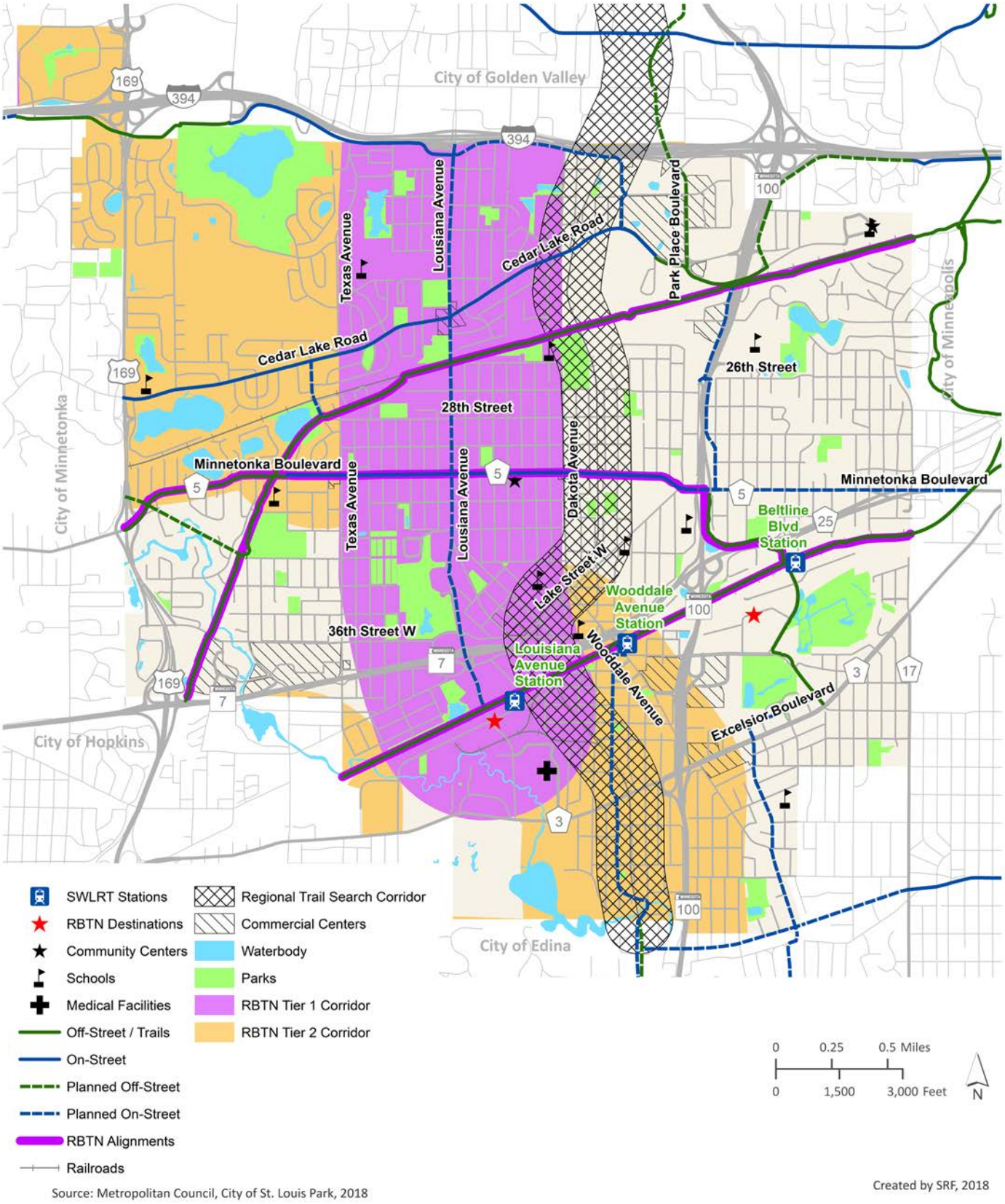
Figure 6-4. Bicycle Infrastructure in St. Louis Park



Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by Toole Design Group, 2018

Figure 6-5. RBTN System



Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by SRF, 2018

The search corridor for a north-south route is shown to be in the area of the MN&S north-south rail line (Figure 6-5). This rail line is in active use and the existing corridor right-of-way is not wide enough to also have a trail. Three Rivers Park District conducted a feasibility study in this corridor and it shows that there is not an easy route adjacent to the rail line. However, the search area remains in the Metropolitan Council's Regional Parks Plan and is desired by the community in the long term. This route could connect the North Cedar Lake Trail and the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail and dramatically improve the bicycle connectivity in the community.

Intersections

The bicycle network passes through many intersections throughout the city. Because most bicycle-related crashes occur at intersections, it is important to maintain aspects of the bikeway through this vulnerable and potentially confusing space. Relatively modest treatments can improve bicyclist's safety. Treatments being installed include brightly painted intersection crossing treatments and dotted lines delineating the bicycle route leading to the intersection.

Regional Trail Street Crossings

The Cedar Lake LRT street crossings at Wooddale Avenue and Beltline Boulevard are currently at-grade, meaning bikers have to cross traffic at street level rather than be above or below the streets. There are plans to separate the regional trail from the streets ("grade-separate") at these locations as a part of the SWLRT construction. At Wooddale Avenue an underpass is planned under the roadway; at Beltline Boulevard, a bridge will go over the street, continue over the rail lines, and move the trail to the south side of the corridor. The city has made some improvements to these at-grade crossings with varying mitigation measures, including turning the trail at the intersections, placing additional stop signs on the trail, adding refuge islands for trail users, and informational videos posted on the city's website and on social media.

Railroads

The bicycle network is not continuous in many places because of freight railroad lines. There are plans to bridge the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail over the CP freight rail corridor at the Beltline SWLRT station with the construction of the light rail line. The city also has plans to construct a trail bridge over the Burlington Northern Santa Fe near Dakota and Edgewood Avenues.

Highways

St. Louis Park contains many separated highways that allow for high vehicular mobility and effective access to the metro region, but also are barriers to connecting neighborhoods – specifically breaking up the bicycle network. The most prominent examples of vehicular routes that impede bicycle movement are listed and described below:

TH 7/CSAH 25

This large and (partially) grade-separated highway runs east/west across the southern portion of the city. There are ten crossing points for bicyclists over approximately 3.5 miles.

TH 100

Trunk Highway 100 (TH 100) runs north-south through the eastern portion of the city. Unlike TH 7/CSAH 25, this route functions as a metropolitan freeway and runs through the entire city. This highway's right-of-way interrupts the city's bicycle grid by funneling east west trips onto nine crossings over 3.3 miles. Only eight of the crossings have approaches that make it possible for users to utilize them without carrying their bicycles.

Bicycling Improvement Plans

As a result of the Active Living: Sidewalks and Trails Plan, the city created the Connect the Park capital improvement plan to be implemented by 2023. This initiative aimed to improve the bicycling experience in St. Louis Park by installing 32 miles of bikeways throughout the city. As of 2018, 14.2 miles of bikeways have been installed in the city. Figure 6-4 shows the specific corridors where improvements have been made and are planned.

Where We Are Headed – Planning for Bicycles

Regional Bicycle Transportation Network

The Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN) was developed by the Metropolitan Council in partnership with cities and counties. It serves as a framework of designated regional corridors and alignments, defining critical bicycle transportation links to help municipalities guide their bikeway planning and development. Key regional destinations, such as metropolitan job centers, regional job centers, sub regional job centers, large high schools, colleges/universities, regional parks, major sports destinations, are identified based on the Regional Bicycle System Study to demonstrate potential key connections. In St. Louis Park the key destinations are identified as TH 7/Louisiana Avenue and TH 100/36th Avenue/Excelsior Boulevard area sub regional job centers.

The two regional trails North Cedar Lake Regional Trail and Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail that traverse St. Louis Park are valuable components of the Twin Cities' bicycling system. They provide connections to the vast network of regional trails throughout the metro area.

The RBTN is subdivided into two tiers for regional planning and investment prioritization:

Tier 1 – Priority Regional Bicycle Transportation Corridors and Alignments. These corridors and alignments have been determined to provide the best transportation connectivity to regional facilities and developed areas. Tier 1 Corridors and Alignments are given the highest priority for transportation funding.

The Tier 1 Corridors and Alignments in St. Louis Park run both east-west and north-south. East-west Tier 1 connections include the North Cedar Lake Regional Trail that runs south of Cedar Lake Road, Minnetonka Boulevard which connects across TH 100, and the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail. A north-south Tier 1 priority corridor runs along Louisiana Ave connecting Olson Memorial Highway south to Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail.

Tier 2- Regional Bicycle Transportation Network Corridors and Alignments. These corridors and alignments are the second highest priority for funding. They provide connections to regional facilities in neighboring cities and serve to connect priority regional bicycle transportation corridors and alignments.

The Tier 2 Corridors and Alignments run through the city in all directions. Tier 2 Alignments in the northern portion of the city along Texas Avenue and Franklin Avenue connects to the North Cedar Lake Regional Trail. A Tier 2 corridor connects Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail down to 66th Street in Edina, which is identified as a Tier 2 Alignment.

Bicycling Connectivity Analysis

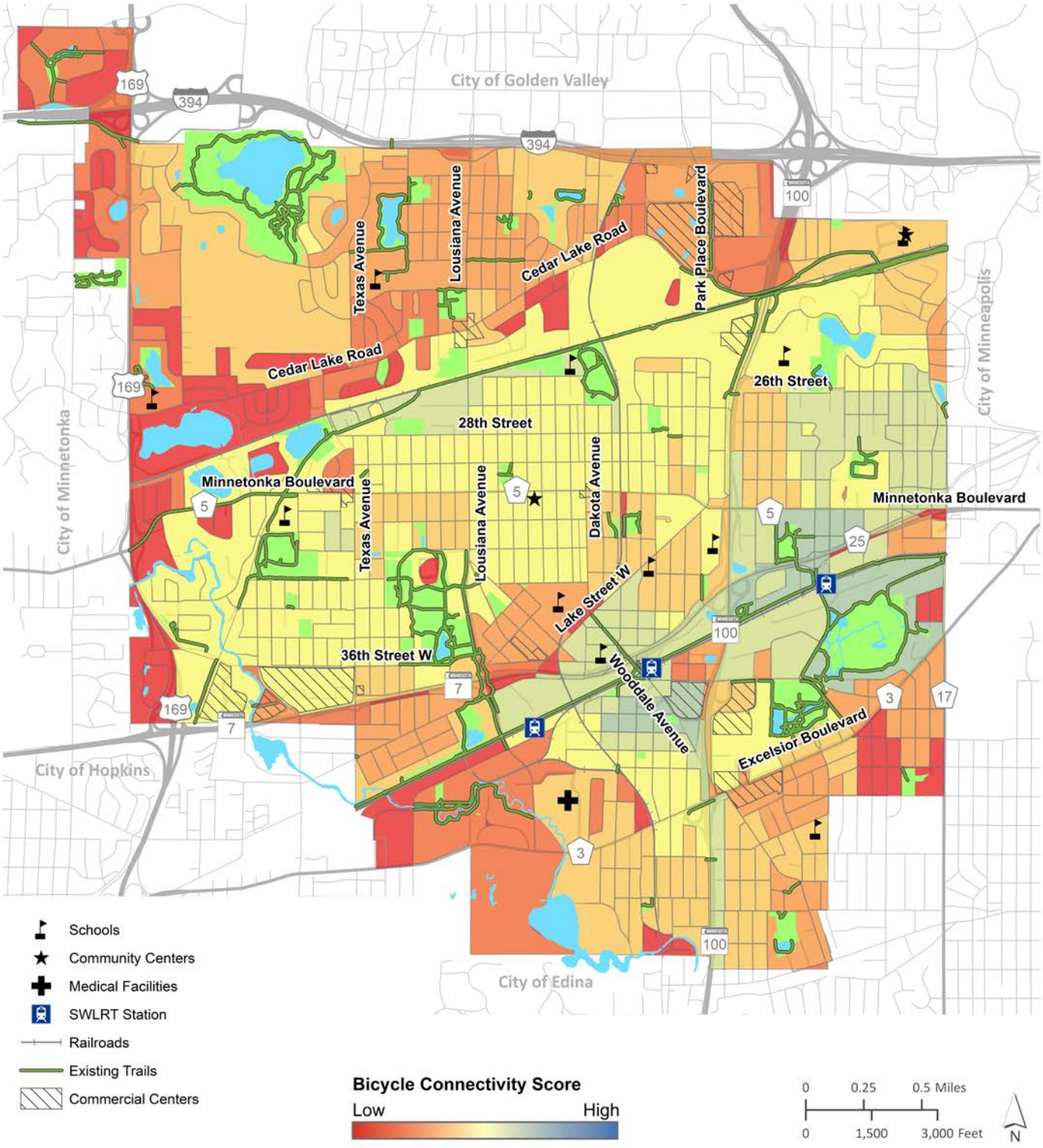
To assist with future planning efforts for the city's bicycle network, a GIS based tool was developed to measure bicycle connectivity.

Figure 6-6 shows where bicycling connectivity scores differ throughout the city. The areas with the highest connectivity scores are located immediately south of TH 7 and the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail and west of TH 100. This area enjoys access to high-quality cycling facilities, close access to commercial destinations to the east and northwest, and a relatively low-stress internal street grid. It is an employment center and is adjacent to the planned stations on the SWLRT. Consequently, trips by bicycle in this area are most competitive with cars when compared to any other area in the city.

Other highly connected neighborhoods in the city are between TH 7 and Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail. The northern part of the city has high bicycle connectivity scores, largely because of the North Cedar Lake Trail, and the connections it provides to parks.

There remain other areas with low overall connectivity scores: the residential areas in the far-northwest part of the city; the commercial areas in the far-northeast part of the city; and the western and southwestern reaches of the city. In these areas, trips by car are dramatically faster than by bicycle, a result of either a poor low-stress bicycling connectivity score, a lack of bicycle trip generators, or a combination of both. For example, in the far-northwestern portion of the city, the traffic stress scores are generally low. However, because of the suburban street grid, the surrounding arterial bicycle routes are difficult to quickly access. A trip by bicycle is less competitive time wise when compared with a car because the access route is less direct. Additionally, in these more outlying areas, there are fewer trip generators.

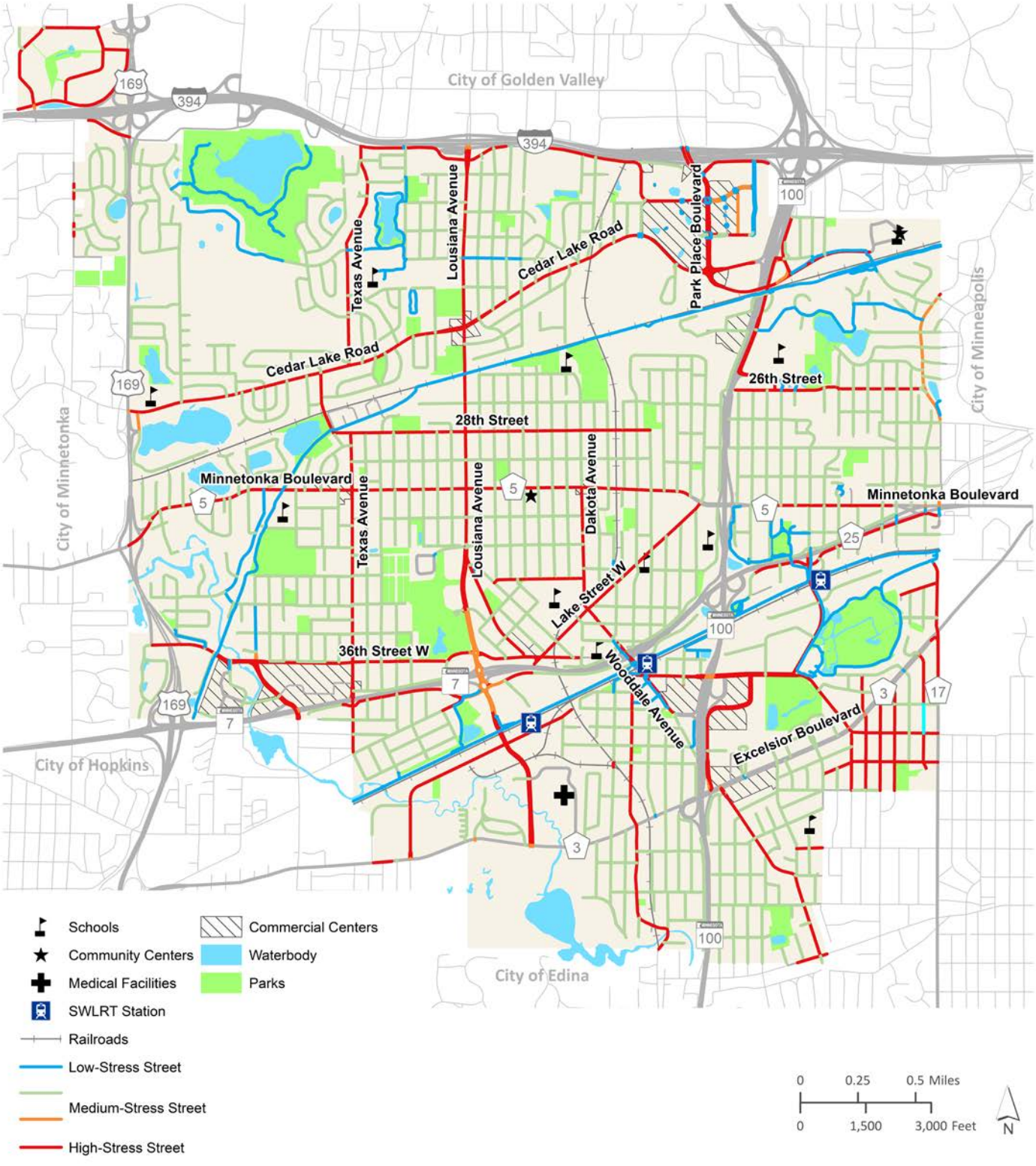
Figure 6-6. Overall Bicycle Connectivity Scores by Census Block



Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by Toole Design Group, 2018

Figure 6-7. Level of Traffic Stress for Bikers along the St. Louis Park Network



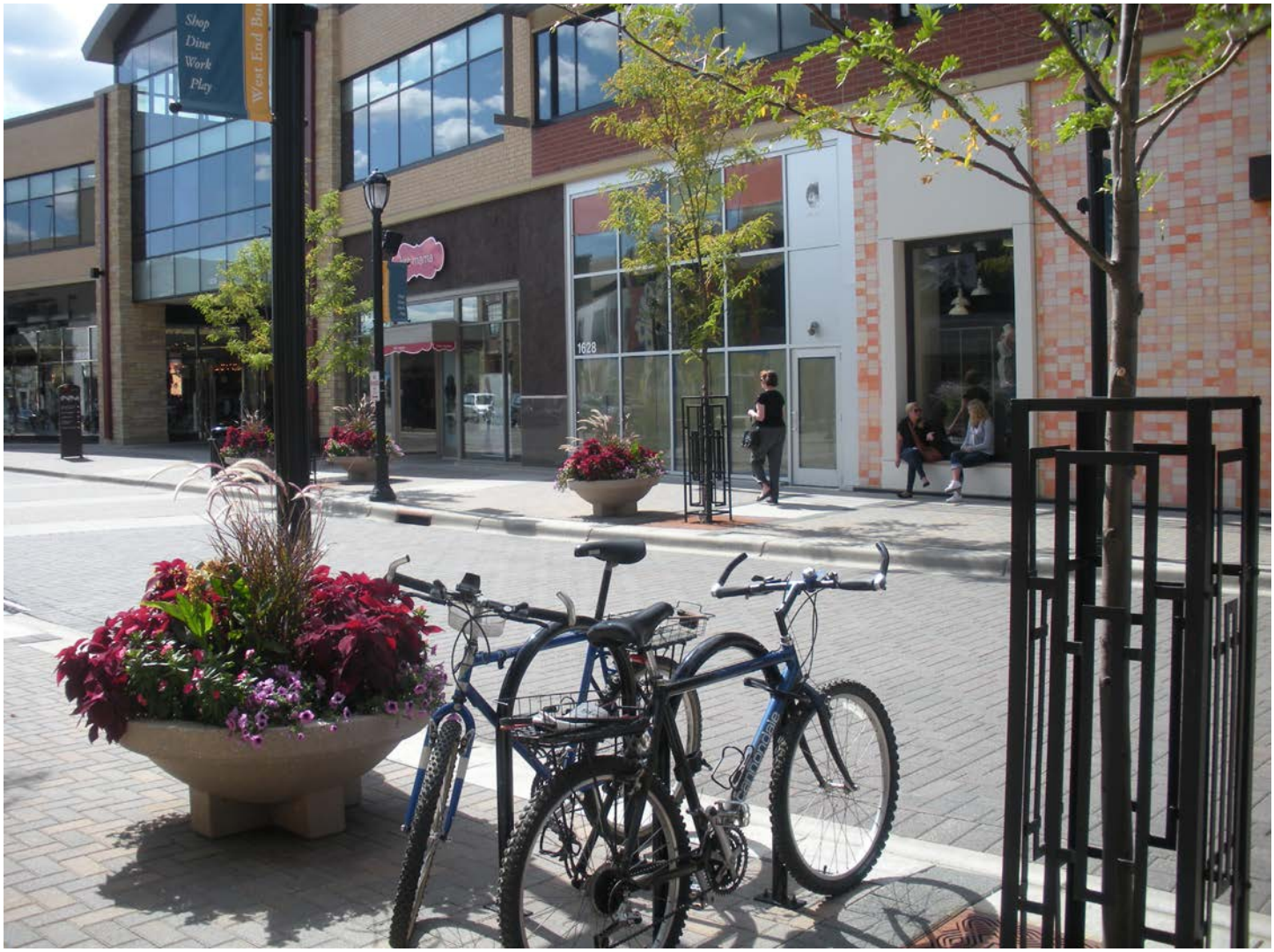
Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by Toole Design Group, 2018

Reaching Destinations as a Bicyclist

St. Louis Park has improved its bicycle network in recent years, with connections to the regional trail system and installing bicycle lanes. Further improvements are being implemented through the Connect the Park program (See Figure 6-4). By 2023, the city will have a comprehensive bicycle system that covers most portions of the city.

Other changes are currently underway or approaching in the next five to ten years: bike share is being discussed. A new type of bike share, dockless bike share, where bicycles can be left and picked up at any location has proved popular in many cities.



Bicycle Mobility Goals and Strategies

1. Provide for the needs of bicyclists, removing barriers to active transportation.

Strategies

A. Continue to implement initiatives that construct and maintain a continuous network of bikeways such as Connect the Park.

B. Implement emerging best practices in bikeway design.

C. Address infrastructure connections for bicycling in conjunction with new development projects.

D. Install intersection improvements where appropriate to increase bicyclists' safety.

2. Ensure that all residents and businesses have access to a well-connected bike network that is easy to navigate and use.

Strategies

A. Install way finding along trails and main bicycle routes to direct bicyclists to destinations.

B. Support the safety of year-round biking by partnering with Three Rivers Park District to facilitate the removal of snow on the regional trails in St. Louis Park.

C. Prioritize bicycling needs of underserved populations.

D. Focus on improving bicycle infrastructure near planned LRT stations.

3. Continue to look for more opportunities to expand the network and encourage more people to use the bicycle system.

Strategies

A. Continue to work with St. Louis Park schools to identify and promote bike routes to students and parents.

B. Consider expanding zoning regulations that promote bicycling, such as the provision of secured storage lockers, and changing and shower facilities.

C. Invest in bike-share systems near planned LRT stations. Such systems are a cost-effective way to expand the reach of the transit amenity into more outlying areas.

Transit Mobility

Where We Have Been

Streetcar

In 1889, the first horse drawn street car in Minneapolis was converted to electric trolley operation, which made possible the dispersal of the middle class away from the urban core of Minneapolis. In 1892 the Minneapolis Land & Investment Company built the Lake Street Trolley, an electric street car line, between the Minneapolis boundary at Lake Street and France Avenue to Lake Street just north of what is now Highway 7. The Lake Street Trolley operated between 1892 and 1938. Early residential development occurred along the Lake Street streetcar line and also along the 44th Street line, just south of St. Louis Park.

The street car had several long range impacts:

- Early residential and commercial development occurred along the tracks, forming permanent land use patterns.
- Easy access to Minneapolis meant that many residents depended upon jobs and shopping in Minneapolis, delaying the development of a strong employment base and negating the need for a strong commercial center or downtown.

The streetcar line was sold in 1905 to Minneapolis St. Paul Suburban Railway, a firm founded by Thomas Lowry. Operation continued until the streetcar line was dismantled in 1938, just one year after the completion of the highway interchange at Highway 7 and Highway 100.

Bus Transit

In the early 1920s, street car ridership began a gradual decline due to the increase in automobiles. Around the time of World War I, independently run bus lines began to pop up. The Minneapolis and St. Paul Suburban Railway Company (also known as Twin City Lines) acquired all the independent bus lines. By the mid 1930s the Village Council contracted with the Minneapolis and St. Paul Suburban Railway for bus service to replace the street car service within the city. Riders found buses appealing because of their more flexible routes and more comfortable rides. In 1973, St. Louis Park became the first Minneapolis suburb to have its own minibus system with nineteen buses traveling between 44th Street and Highway 12. Principal stops included libraries, schools, the recreation center, the St. Louis Park Medical Center (now Park Nicollet), Methodist Hospital, Westwood Shopping Center, Shoppers' City, and the Miracle Mile Shopping Center.

The Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC) was established in 1967 by the state legislature, and acquired the Twin City Lines bus system in 1970. It was moved to the Metropolitan Council in 1994 and is now known as Metro Transit.

In the past 10 years a number of efforts have been completed to increase access and coordination to the bus system through and within St. Louis Park:

- The city collaborated with Metro Transit to expand bus routes to most efficiently serve the greatest number of residents.
- Improvements to accessibility to bus stations have been made through the pedestrian and bicycle network.
- The city has increased efforts to promote transit use and maintain safe transit stops.

Southwest Light Rail

In 1980, the Metropolitan Council began studying light rail transit (LRT) in the metro area, including a Southwest corridor. The Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) had purchased a former rail corridor for LRT and in 1987, the Legislature directed HCRRA to develop a plan for implementing an LRT it. The study considered ridership potential, cost, and public benefit. The Southwest corridor was chosen for further study and preliminary design for an LRT line.

The corridor from downtown Minneapolis to St. Louis Park, Hopkins, Minnetonka, and Eden Prairie was selected by all cities and Hennepin County as the route for the Southwest transitway. It was included in the region's 2030 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) making the project eligible for funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Three SWLRT stations are planned in St. Louis Park at Beltline Boulevard, Wooddale Avenue, and Louisiana Avenue.

St. Louis Park staff and elected officials have actively participated throughout the planning and design of the SWLRT project. The project has further been shaped by meaningful input from St. Louis Park residents. The city has also taken an active role in station area planning for transit-oriented development and improved access in and around the SWLRT stations. The city is contributing to the overall project and is participating in funding a number of access the improvements.

During the design process, there was a proposal to reroute the freight rail from the Bass Lake Spur corridor and Kenilworth corridor to the MN&S corridor. After extensive study, it was found to be physically difficult, excessively expensive, and ultimately deemed impractical; the decision was made to collocate the freight rail, regional trail and SWLRT in the Bass Lake Spur and Kenilworth corridors.

After significant deliberation, city coordination, design, redesign, and public process, St. Louis Park and other corridor cities granted "municipal consent" to the project in 2014, a major milestone required by state law. SWLRT design and engineering was completed in 2017, and the project is expected to start construction in 2019 and open in 2023. The project will be funded by a mixed of federal, county, state and local sources, with federal funds making up approximately 46 percent of the total cost of the project.

Southwest Community Works

In 2010 the Southwest Community Works program was established by Hennepin County to

> *"enhance the public benefits of transit investments 'beyond the rails' that will support economic development, the creation of accessible jobs and housing, more efficient uses of land, and the creation of healthy, safe and walkable neighborhoods served by public transit."*

Community Works teamed with Southwest Corridor cities and other agencies to work together on a number of SWLRT planning issues, including two rounds of station area plans. The first iteration of station area plans was completed in 2009. In 2014, the Southwest Corridor Investment Framework (TSAAP) was created for each station area to outline future infrastructure improvements needed to make the station areas work well. This plan has been used to establish the city's priorities through its annual capital improvements planning process. The Community Works partners also studied a number of other items including economic competitiveness and job growth, housing choices, bike planning, and a number of other critical components along the SWLRT route and broader station areas.

Where We Are Today

Existing Bus Service and Facilities

St. Louis Park is served by local, limited-stop, and express bus service to downtown Minneapolis, shown in Figure 6-8. All regular-route service in St. Louis Park is operated by Metro Transit, a division of the Metropolitan Council and the region's primary provider of transit service. Metro Transit bus service in St. Louis Park operates primarily on four streets in St. Louis Park: Cedar Lake Road, Minnetonka Boulevard, Excelsior Boulevard, and Louisiana Avenue.

In 2017 Metro Transit improved bus service in St. Louis Park on Louisiana Avenue by adding a trip earlier in the morning and later in the afternoon to accommodate workers at Methodist Hospital. Service was also improved on Cedar Lake Road and in the West End, with faster travel times and more service.

Bus Transit Center and Park-and-Ride Lots

As shown below in Table 6-1, there are four park-and-ride lots in St. Louis Park. Apart from the Westwood Lutheran Church Park-and-Ride, all facilities are publicly owned and are within Minnesota Department of Transportation rights-of-way. There are two parking facilities near transit stops that are not maintained by Metro Transit as park-and-ride locations; these are found along Louisiana Avenue at Minnetonka Boulevard and W 27th Street. People may park their vehicles at these areas for free and catch routes 17, 667, and 604. Use of the TH 7 and Texas Avenue Park-and-Ride facilities was very low in 2017. This under-utilization may represent an opportunity to use this land more productively.

Metro Mobility

Metro Mobility is para-transit service that is public transportation for certified riders who are unable to use the regular fixed-route bus due to a disability or health condition. In the Twin Cities region, the Metropolitan Council oversees all Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit services; Metro Mobility, in turn, contracts with ADA paratransit service providers, who provide customers with door-to-door transportation.

Transit Link

Public dial-a-ride service is provided by the Metropolitan Council through Transit Link. Unlike Metro Mobility, Transit Link service is open to the public and operates in lower-density areas where regular-route transit service is not available. It is intended to augment the regular-route network and is only available for trips that cannot be accomplished on regular routes alone. Transit Link trips may connect passengers at major transfer points to complete their trip on the regular-route network.

Table 6-1. Bus Transit Center and Park-and-Ride Lots in St. Louis Park

FACILITY	LOCATION	ROUTES SERVED	SPACES	2017 USAGE/ AVAILABLE*
Louisiana Avenue Transit Center	1300 Louisiana Avenue	9, 604, 643, 645, 652, 663, 672, 705, 756	330 surface spaces	286 / 44
I-394 & Park Place Park-and-Ride	1500 Park Place Boulevard	9, 645	55 surface spaces	65 /-10
Westwood Lutheran Church	9001 Cedar Lake Road	9, 643, 663	40 surface spaces	14 / 26
Hwy 7 & Texas Avenue	3701 Texas Avenue S.	17,667, 668	10 surface spaces	2 / 8

Source: Metro Transit 2017 Annual Regional Park-and-Ride System Report

Table 6-2. St. Louis Park Transit Market Areas

MARKET AREA	PROPENSITY TO USE TRANSIT	SERVICE CHARACTERISTICS	TYPICAL TRANSIT SERVICE	PRESENCE IN ST. LOUIS PARK
II: Traditional street grid with high to moderately high population and employment densities	Approximately half the ridership potential of Market Area I	Frequency: 15-60 min Span: morning to night, seven days a week Access: one mile between routes	Similar network structure to Market Area I with reduced level of service as demand warrants. Limited stop services are appropriate to connect major destinations.	All the city except the area north of Cedar Lake Road and west of Louisiana Avenue
III: Moderate density with a less transitional street grid	Approximately half the ridership potential of Market Area II	Frequency: 30-60 min Span: peak times, occasional weekends Access: varies on development patterns	Primary emphasis is on commuter express bus service. Suburban local routes providing basic coverage. Public dial-a-ride complements fixed route in some cases	The area north of Cedar Lake Road and west of Louisiana Avenue

Source: 2040 Transportation Policy Plan Appendix G: Transit Design Guidelines. Metropolitan Council 2015

Transit Market Areas

The Metropolitan Council defines Transit Market Areas by the demographic and urban design factors that are associated with successful transit service, such as population and employment density, intersection density, and automobile availability. This is a tool that Metro Transit uses to guide transit planning decisions and help ensure that the types and levels of transit service provided match the expected demand in a given area.

As shown in Figure 6-8, the Westwood Hills area, north of Cedar Lake Road and west of Louisiana Avenue, is in Transit Market Area III. The rest of St. Louis Park is in Transit Market Area II. Table 6-2 describes the Transit Market Areas relevant to St. Louis Park.

Reaching Destinations Without a Car (Transit)

The key to creating an environment that allows people to reach their destination without a car using transit is to provide them access to transit with multiple mobility options – such as good pedestrian and bicycle connections. This would reduce the need to get in a car at all. If the pedestrian and bicycle mobility systems linking to the transit stations and bus stops are fully built out, inviting to the user, and well maintained, it becomes a convenient and easy way to get bus routes and the LRT and becomes easier not use a car.

Metro Transit bus service in St. Louis Park operates primarily on Cedar Lake Road, Minnetonka Boulevard, Excelsior Boulevard, and Louisiana Avenue.

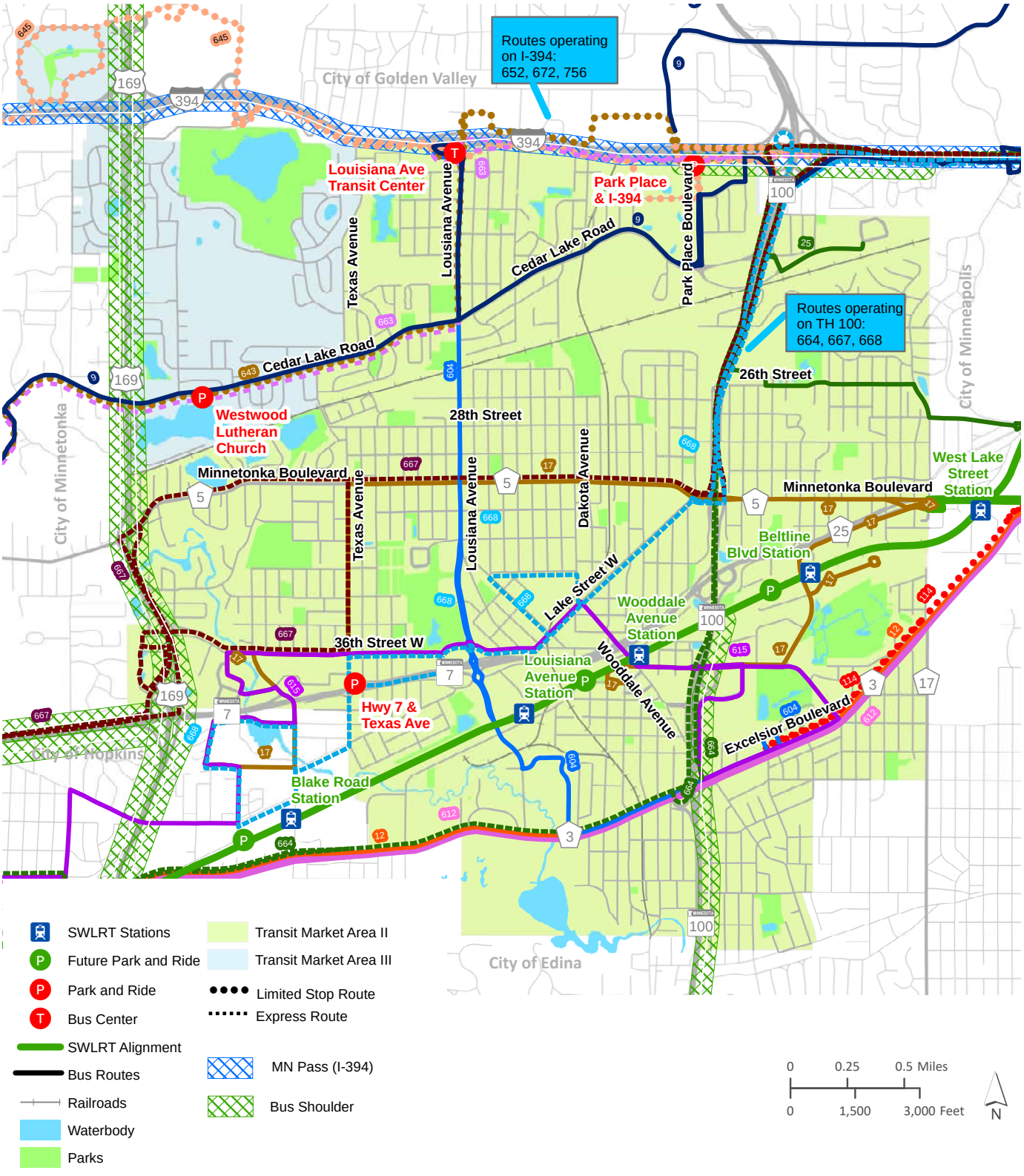
Cedar Lake Road

Land use at the eastern end of Cedar Lake Road is predominantly commercial, office, and industrial, and then transitions into single-family residential use for most the corridor, generating lower demand for transit. There is a sidewalks on the north side of the street; however, to promote walkability for transit users, it is desirable to have sidewalks on both sides of the street While no bicycle facilities exist today in this corridor, Connect the Park calls for implementation of bike facilities along the entire length of Cedar Lake Road by 2023.

Minnetonka Boulevard

The primary land use along the corridor is single-family residential with some medium-density residential and commercial uses clustered at each end, generating moderate demand for transit along the boulevard itself. Land use on neighboring streets is almost entirely single-family residential, and many connecting streets lack sidewalks, which reduces pedestrian connectivity to Minnetonka Boulevard and its corresponding transit service. Parking lots adjacent to the street, frequent curb cuts, and lack of separation between the sidewalk and the street decrease pedestrian comfort. There is an on-street bike lane on Minnetonka Boulevard west of the intersection with West Lake Street.

Figure 6-8. Bus Routes, Facilities, and Market Areas



Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by SRF, 2018

Excelsior Boulevard

Land uses immediately adjacent to Excelsior Boulevard include commercial, mixed use, and medium- to high-density residential uses, contributing to a pedestrian-friendly and transit-supportive environment in some sections. Sidewalks are present along both sides of the street and there is adequate pedestrian infrastructure on neighboring streets, enabling residents of adjacent residential neighborhoods to access transit service on Excelsior Boulevard. The "Excelsior & Grand" development is particularly well-suited to pedestrian activity and transit service. There are no bicycle facilities present or planned along Excelsior Boulevard.

Louisiana Avenue

Land use along the northern part of Louisiana Avenue is predominantly single-family residential, though some areas have small commercial, civic, or medium-density residential uses. In the southern portion of the corridor, there is a mix of medium-density residential, office, and business park uses. Single-family homes generate a small amount of transit demand, while other uses in the corridor generate more demand, particularly around peak business hours. Many adjacent streets lack pedestrian infrastructure, curb cuts, and separation between the sidewalk and the street further detracting from the pedestrian environment.

While there are ample bus stops, they lack seating, shelters, ADA pads, and other amenities that would encourage use and make them more desirable. The city's Connect the Park plan indicates bicycle lanes are planned for implementation along the entirety of Louisiana Avenue, along with completion of a few sidewalk gaps north of Cedar Lake Road and immediately north of Excelsior Boulevard by 2023.

Wayzata Boulevard

Land uses immediately adjacent to Wayzata Boulevard include commercial, mixed use, office, and single family to high density residential uses, contributing to a pedestrian friendly and transit-supportive environment in some sections. Sidewalks are present along at least one side of the street and there is adequate pedestrian infrastructure on neighboring streets, enabling residents of adjacent residential neighborhoods to access transit service on Wayzata Boulevard. The developments around the West End are particularly well-suited to pedestrian activity and transit service. There are no bicycle facilities present, but are planned along Wayzata Boulevard.

36th Street

Land uses immediately adjacent to 36th Street include commercial, mixed use, and single family to medium- to high density residential uses, contributing to a pedestrian friendly and transit-supportive environment in some sections. Sidewalks are present along both sides of the street and there is adequate pedestrian infrastructure on neighboring streets, enabling residents of adjacent residential neighborhoods to access transit service on 36th Street. There are no bicycle facilities present, but are planned along 36th Street.

Bus Network Gaps

The east-west bus network covers St. Louis Park well. With local routes on Cedar Lake Road, Minnetonka Boulevard, and Excelsior Boulevard, it is accessible to much of the city and provides connections to destinations in Hopkins, Minnetonka, and Wayzata, as well as Uptown and downtown Minneapolis. Louisiana Avenue is the only north-south bus connection operating in the city. Service on this route is limited with respect to service frequency; hours of operation were recently expanded. This is the only north-south bus route that operates the full length of the city east of TH 100.

METRO System

The Metropolitan Council owns and operates the METRO system, a network of transitways including light-rail and bus-rapid transit routes that serve the Twin Cities metropolitan area (Figure 6-10). Three METRO lines are currently in operation: the Blue Line, the Red Line, and the Green Line.

The Metropolitan Council 2040 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) includes planned transitways with identified routes and modes of transit; in St. Louis Park it includes SWLRT (Green Line Extension). The TPP also identifies several additional transitways, including highway bus rapid transit (BRT) on TH 169 that would serve St. Louis Park. The TH 169 Mobility Study was recently completed and recommended highway BRT on TH 169 and on TH 55 between Shakopee and downtown Minneapolis.

The TPP also identifies arterial BRT on Lake Street in Minneapolis. While this transitway would be adjacent to St. Louis Park, its terminus would likely be at the bus turnaround/layover at Lake Street and France Avenue, at St. Louis Park's border with Minneapolis. This proximity provides additional transit connection opportunities to city residents.

Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT)

SWLRT (the METRO Green Line Extension, Figure 6-9) will extend the Green Line from Minneapolis into and through St. Louis Park with stations at three locations: Beltline Boulevard, Wooddale Avenue and Louisiana Avenue. It will be located in the Bass Lake Spur rail and Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail corridor that runs south of and roughly parallel to TH 7.

Station Areas

Over the past 10 years the city has completed detailed station area plans, and is working on infrastructure enhancements to local streets, sidewalks, and trails to increase access to and around the station areas. Interest in developing land around the LRT stations is on the rise, and significant efforts are being made between the city and Metro Transit to coordinate and construct public and private infrastructure improvements, including new transit-oriented developments. Station area construction is anticipated to begin in 2019 and passenger service is expected in 2023.

Figure 6-9. Southwest LRT (METRO Green Line Extension)

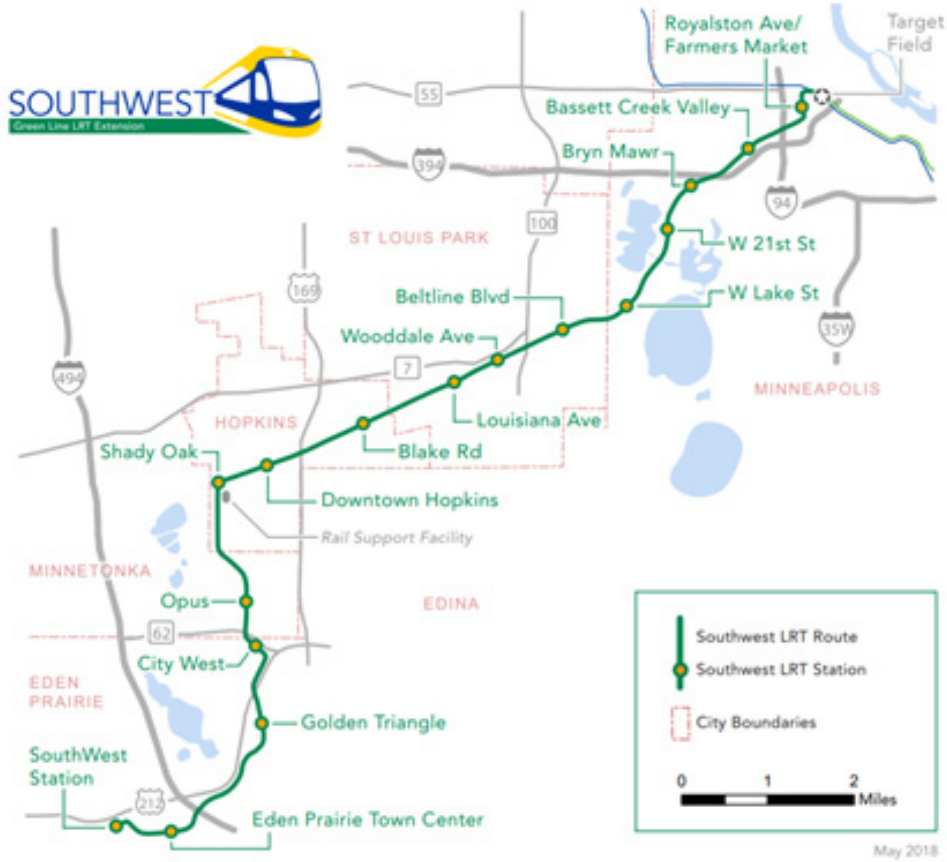
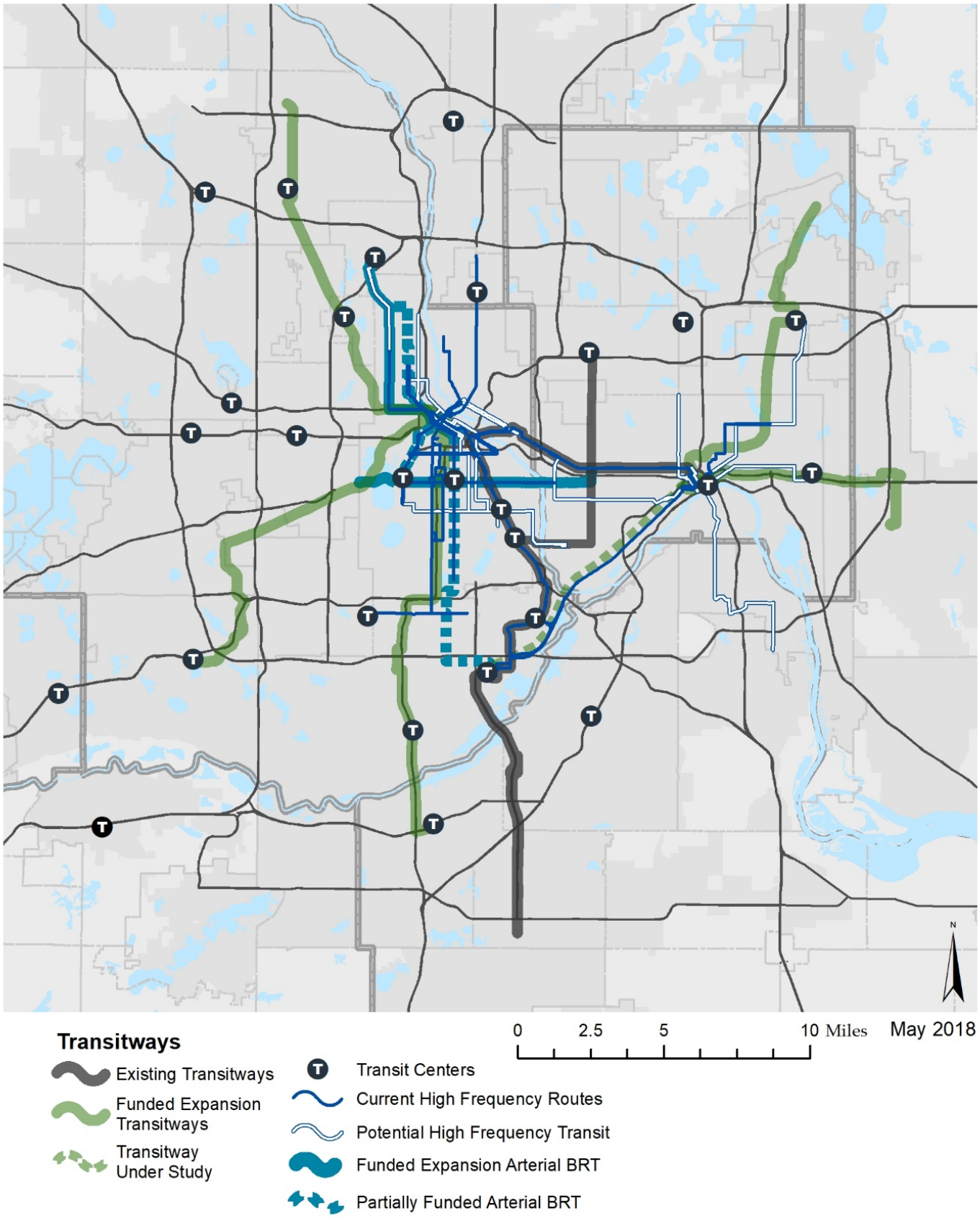


Figure 6-10. Metro Area Existing and Potential High Frequency Routes



Source: Metropolitan Council TPP

Where We Are Headed – Planning for Transit Mobility

Bus Transit

The city continually works with Metro Transit on providing bus transit service to the community, making suggestions and requests as demand changes. With SWLRT, service changes are expected to provide connecting bus service to the light rail line. Additional study and analysis for local bus routes is expected as the light rail line gets closer to opening day.

Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT)

Major streets, sidewalk, trail, and access infrastructure upgrades are planned around the station areas as part of the LRT project including a regional trail bridge near the Beltline Boulevard Station, and a regional trail underpass under Wooddale Avenue.

SWLRT represents a major improvement to transit service in St. Louis Park as it is scheduled to operate 22 hours a day, seven days a week. For most of the day from 6:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., LRT will operate every 10 minutes. Metro Transit anticipates extending bus transit operations to better serve the SWLRT station areas.

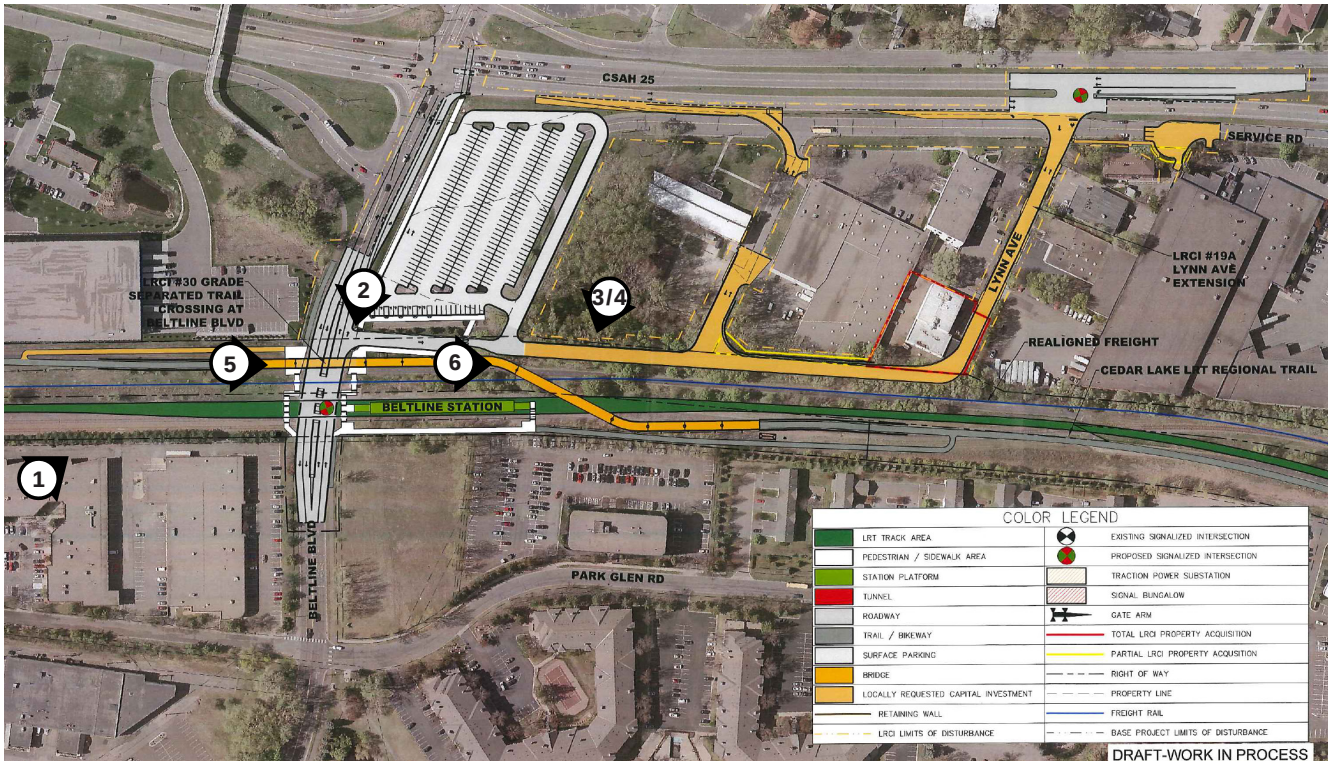
The city will continue to coordinate public and private infrastructure improvements and transit-oriented development in the station areas with the SWLRT project. Planning for bikes, parking and other neighborhood impacts near transit stations will continue during the coming years. The city is proactively planning for additional transit-oriented development around LRT stations, and has identified potential road and pedestrian connections (Figure 6-25) as redevelopment occurs. Shared use facilities including bike share and car share will also be pursued.

Over the coming months and years, it is expected SWLRT final approvals will take place and construction is expected begin in 2019, with opening day in 2023.

Beltline Boulevard Station

The Beltline Boulevard Station is located at the intersection of Beltline Boulevard and CSAH 25, a business, employment and residential area. The station area will include a park-and-ride lot, passenger drop-off areas, and a bus stop. A new trail bridge for the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail will be built over the LRT and freight rail tracks and Beltline Boulevard to provide for safer and more efficient trail crossings and to place the regional trail on the south side of the freight and light rail to connect with the Midtown Greenway and the Kenilworth Corridor trail.

Figure 6-11. Beltline Station SWLRT Plan



Additional street connections and improvements at Lynn Avenue and CSAH 25 will also be constructed as part of the LRT project.

While the plans show a surface park and ride lot on the southeast corner of Beltline Boulevard and CSAH 25, the city has worked with Metro Transit on an agreement to build a parking ramp on a portion of the site and utilize the visible corner for development.

CSAH 25

The city and county are working together on redesigning CSAH 25 to create a more urban roadway. A concept plan is being developed to take advantage of the wide right-of-way and to improve the roadway with more green space and additional sidewalks and trails. Additional engineering and a feasibility study need to be completed.

Wooddale Avenue Station

The Wooddale Avenue Station is located on Wooddale Avenue just south of Hwy 7, with the platform on the east side of Wooddale. An underpass for the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail will be constructed under Wooddale Avenue. To improve circulation, sight lines and bicycle and pedestrian routes in the area, the Wooddale Avenue Bridge has been widened over Hwy 7. Signals will be installed at the Hwy 7 ramps as part of the SWLRT improvements. The station does not include a park and ride lot.

A development has been approved for a high density, mixed-use, mixed-income, transit-oriented development located both north and south of the LRT station, on the east side of Wooddale Avenue. The development includes 200 affordable housing units, and will provide opportunities for residents to live "car-free." A private bike share and car share system will be located at the Wooddale Avenue Station as part of the development.

Figure 6-12. Wooddale Station SWLRT Plan

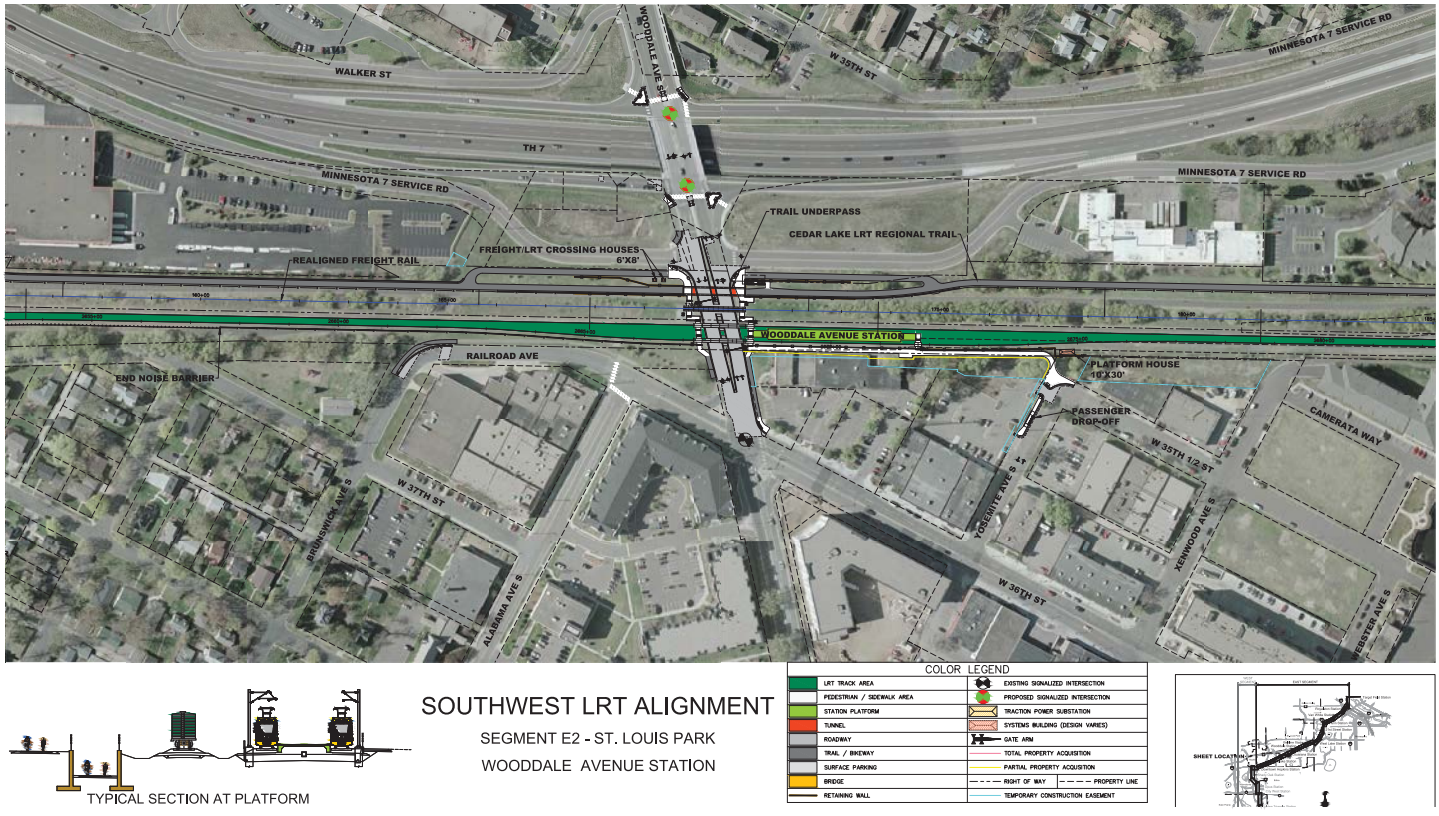
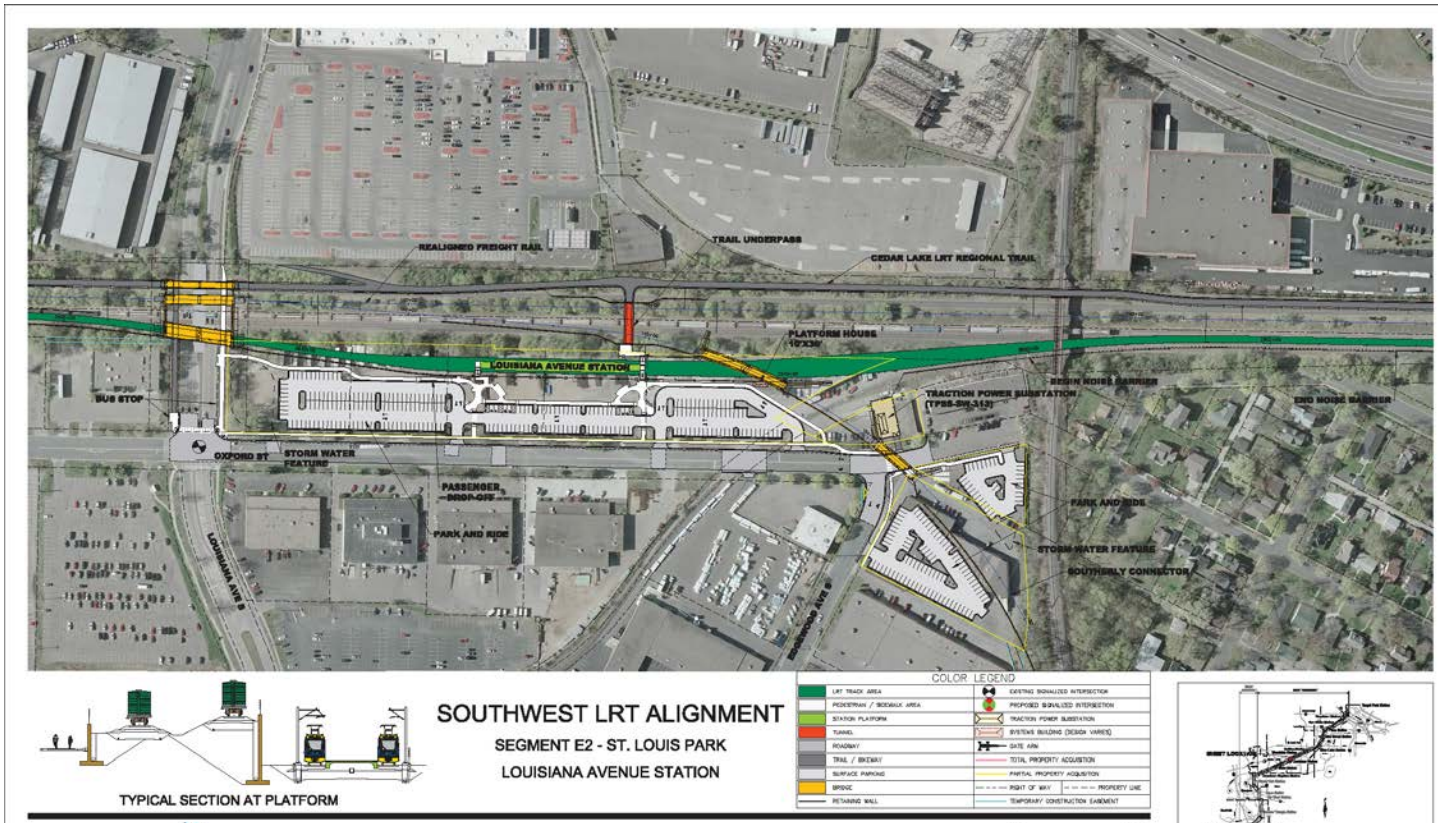


Figure 6-13. Perspective Via Development Plan at 36th Street and Wooddale Avenue

Figure 6-14. Louisiana Station SWLRT Plan



Louisiana Avenue Station

The Louisiana Avenue Station is located northeast of Louisiana Avenue and Oxford Street, just north of Park Nicollet Methodist Hospital, St. Louis Park's largest employer. The station area includes park-and-ride lots along Oxford Street with a passenger drop-off and space for private shuttle services. Bus connections will be available on Louisiana Avenue, and a new elevated freight rail connection to the MNS line will be constructed to east and south of the station. The LRT line will cross Louisiana on a bridge and slopes towards Oxford Street and the station platform.

A new north-south pedestrian tunnel underneath the freight rail will connect the regional trail to the LRT station. The existing freight rail switching movements will be removed as part of SWLRT project, and the southern wye will remain.

Table 6-3. Station Area Plans

STATION	STUDIES
Beltline	» Southwest Transitway Station Area Plans, 2009 » Beltline Area Framework and Design Guidelines, 2012 » Southwest Corridor Investment Framework (Transitional Station Area Action Plans), 2013 » Beltline Circulation Planning, 2013
Wooddale	» Elmwood Area Land Use, Transit and Transportation Study, 2003 » Southwest Transitway Station Area Plans, 2009 » Southwest Corridor Investment Framework (Transitional Station Area Action Plans), 2013
Louisiana	» Southwest Transitway Station Area Plans, 2009 » Southwest Corridor Investment Framework (Transitional Station Area Action Plans), 2013 » Louisiana Station Area Framework + Design Guidelines, 2014

Figure 6-15. Louisiana Trail Underpass

Transit Mobility Goals and Strategies

1. Ensure that the bus transit and SWLRT network to be accessible to residents and businesses, connecting people to important local and region-wide destinations

Strategies

A. Continue to partner in and prioritize the SWLRT to promote its construction and operation as soon as possible.

B. Work with Metro Transit to continually adjust and improve transit service in St. Louis Park.

C. Support transit networks that promote easy access to jobs, services, churches, schools, and grocery stores.

D. Provide comfortable, safe, and accessible transit stops for pedestrians along transit lines that include benches, bike parking, and shelters where feasible.

E. Integrate transit through buses, light rail, bike routes, sidewalks and trails throughout St. Louis Park.

F. Construct a walkable and connected mobility network near the SWLRT station areas, including smaller block sizes and pedestrian and bicycle connections.

G. Support regional transit projects to create a connected metro-wide network, including those that connect to SWLRT such as the Lake Street BRT, the Midtown Greenway Streetcar, and the Blue Line extension.

2. Continuously explore, research, and support ways to expand the transit network and maximize service to the community

Strategies

A. Support transit oriented development so people can live and/or work in transit served areas and not be auto-dependent. Use travel demand management strategies to encourage more transit usage in new developments.

B. Support efforts focused on reducing single-occupancy vehicle trips, using incentives that encourage the use of public transportation such as Metropass and ridesharing opportunities to increase transit use.

Vehicular Mobility

Where We Have Been

One of the first highways to be constructed in St. Louis Park was TH 100, originally constructed as "Lilac Way" in the late 1920s and early 1930s. It was later reconstructed and modeled after the German Autobahn system to function as a beltline highway encircling the metropolitan area. The city is also served by several other regional highways including TH 7 (constructed in the 1930s), TH 169, and I-394. The evolution of the highway system has resulted in the dominance of automobiles and trucks as the favored transportation option for people and goods alike. St. Louis Park's position in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area provides it with excellent access to the regional highway system, historically making St. Louis Park a great central location for businesses and residents to locate.

The city's streets are characterized by a combined grid and curvilinear pattern, laid upon a major pattern of several arterial routes. These arterials radiate in an east/west direction from the city of Minneapolis connecting to western suburbs, with an additional two north/south arterials (TH 100 and TH 169). Louisiana Avenue is another major route that traverses through the majority of the community north-south. Studying various other north/south connections has been a priority for the city.

The local system allows excellent access to the regional street system. The highways that provide automobile connections also create challenges to getting from one side of the city to the other. The same is true for railroads throughout St. Louis Park. This has historically resulted in the following:

- Channeling of all north/south automobile traffic onto a limited number of roads – TH 169, Texas Avenue, Louisiana Avenue, and TH 100.
- Segmentation and isolation of various neighborhoods
- Reduced pedestrian accessibility and difficult pedestrian crossings on various streets and highways.
- Lack of local routes that connect all parts of the community together especially north/south connections.

In the past 10 years a number of roadway improvements have been implemented that improved circulation and congestion through and within St. Louis Park:

- A new bridge was installed on Wooddale Avenue over TH 7 that grade-separated the two roadways, and improved local circulation and congestion.
- TH 100 was expanded with additional capacity, which reduced cut through traffic onto local streets. Bridge improvements were made over TH 100 to help east-west circulation and freight movement.
- The TH 7/Louisiana Avenue intersection was redesigned and is grade-separated interchange. This busy intersection was reconfigured with three round-a-bouts on Louisiana, which has helped improve local circulation and congestion.
- TH 169 was improved south of the city limits, which improved congestion and mobility along this major route during peak periods.

Where We Are Today

Existing Street Facilities

The city has excellent access to the regional transportation street system with routes Interstate 394 (I-394), TH 7, TH 100, and TH 169 and several county roads – Excelsior Boulevard (CR 3), Minnetonka Boulevard (CR 5), France Avenue (CR 17), and CR 25 – in the city. Street mobility addresses jurisdictional alignment, the functional classification system, future traffic volumes, potential congestion issues and the impact that has on mobility, future street system issues and potential enhancements relative to street type.

Jurisdictional Classification

Jurisdiction over the city's street system is shared among three levels of government: Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), Hennepin County, and St. Louis Park. MnDOT maintains the Interstate and Trunk Highway (TH) systems. Hennepin County maintains the County State Aid Highway (CSAH) and County Road (CR) systems, and the remaining local streets are the responsibility of the city including Municipal State Aid (MSA) streets. Some streets are private streets maintained by property owners. Often the municipal boundaries separating St. Louis Park from neighboring cities result in shared responsibility over a road. Coordinating with neighboring cities is essential in maintaining and improving these streets. Figure 6-17 displays the existing street network along with its existing and proposed jurisdictional classification within St. Louis Park.

Occasionally, because of development, changes in traffic patterns, or the construction of new roads, a road's jurisdictional classification should be adjusted to reflect the current role of that facility. The city does not envision any significant jurisdictional transfers within St. Louis Park during the current planning horizon (2018-2040).

Functional Classification

Functional classification defines both the function and the role of a street within the hierarchy of an overall (regional) street system. This system is used to create a network that collects and distributes vehicular traffic from neighborhoods and ultimately to the State or Interstate Highway System. Functional classification works to manage street access, vehicular mobility, and alignment of routes (Figure 6-16). Functional classification also seeks to align destinations and future land use with the street's vehicular purpose.

The existing functional classification of streets in the city is shown in Figure 6-18. Within the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, the Metropolitan Council has established detailed criteria for street functional classifications, which are summarized in Table 6-4.

Figure 6-16. Street Access/Vehicular Mobility Relationship

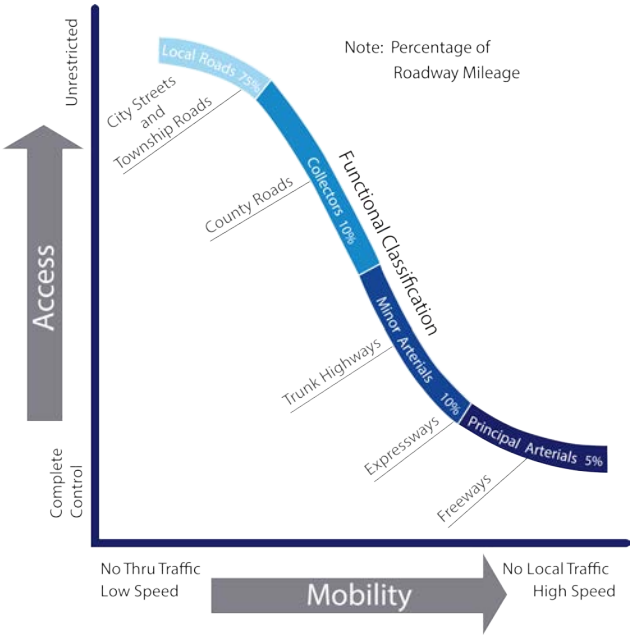


Figure 6-17. Jurisdictional Classification

Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by SRF, 2018

Figure 6-18. Functional Classification

Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by SRF, 2018

Table 6-4. Street Functional Classifications

CRITERIA	PRINCIPAL ARTERIAL	MINOR ARTERIAL	COLLECTOR	LOCAL STREET
Place Connections	Connect regional job concentrations and freight terminals within the urban service area.	Provide supplementary connections between regional job concentrations, local centers, and freight terminals within the urban service area.	Connect neighborhoods and centers within the urban service area.	Connect blocks and land parcels within neighborhoods and within commercial or industrial developments.
Spacing	Urban communities: 2 – 3 miles Suburban communities: Spacing should vary in relation to development density of land uses served, 2 – 6 miles	Regional job concentrations: 1/4 – 3/4 mile Urban communities: 1/2 – 1 mile Suburban communities: 1 – 2 miles	Job concentrations: 1/8 – 1/2 mile Urban Communities: 1/4 – 3/4 mile Suburban Communities: 1/2 – 1 mile	As needed to access land uses
System Connections	To Interstate freeways, other principal arterials, and selected A-minor arterials. Connections between principal arterials should be of a design type that does not require vehicles to stop. Intersections should be limited to 1-2 miles.	To most interstates, principal arterials, other minor arterials, collectors and some local streets	To minor arterials, other collectors, and local streets.	To a few minor arterials. To collectors and other local streets.
Trip-Making Service	Trips greater than 8 miles with at least 5 continuous miles on principal arterials. Express and highway bus rapid transit trips	Medium-to-short tips (2-6 miles depending on development density) at moderate speeds. Longer trips accessing the principal arterial network. Local, limited-stop, and arterial bus rapid transit trips.	Short trips (1-4 miles depending on development density) at low-to-moderate speeds.	Short trips (under 2 miles) at low speeds, including bicycle and pedestrian trips. Longer trips accessing the collector and arterial network.
Mobility vs. Land Access	Emphasis is on mobility for longer trips rather than direct land access. Little or no direct land access within the urbanized area.	Emphasis on mobility for longer trips rather than on direct land access. Direct land access limited to concentrated activity- regional job concentrations, local centers, freight terminals, and neighborhoods.	Equal emphasis on mobility and land access. Direct land access predominantly to development concentrations.	Emphasis on land access, not on mobility. Direct land access predominantly to residential land uses.
System Mileage	5-10%	10-15%	5-15%	60-75%
Percent of Vehicle Miles Traveled	15-35%	15-25%	10-25%	10-25%
Intersections	Grade separated desirable where appropriate. At a minimum, high-capacity controlled at-grade intersections	Traffic signals, roundabouts, and cross-street stops	Four-way stops and some traffic signals	As required
Parking	None	Restricted as necessary	Restricted as necessary	Permitted as necessary

CRITERIA	PRINCIPAL ARTERIAL	MINOR ARTERIAL	COLLECTOR	LOCAL STREET
Large Trucks	No restrictions	Candidates for local truck network, large trucks restricted as necessary	May be candidates for local truck network, large trucks restricted as necessary	Permitted as necessary
Management Tools	Ramp metering, preferential treatment for transit, access control, median barriers, traffic signal progression, staging reconstruction, intersection spacing	Traffic signal progression and spacing, land access management/control, preferential treatment for transit	Number of lanes, traffic signal timing, land access management	Intersection control, cul-de-sacs, diverters
Typical Average Daily Traffic Volumes	15,000-100,000+	5,000-30,000+	1,000-15,000+	Less than 1,000
Posted Speed Limit	40-65 mph	30-45 mph	30-40 mph	Maximum 30 mph
Right-of-Way	100-300 feet	60-150 feet	60-100 feet	50-80 feet
Transit Accommodations	Transit advantages that provide priority access and reliable movement for transit in peak periods where possible and needed	Transit advantages for reliable movement where needed.	Regular-route buses, transit advantages for reliable movement, where needed	Normally used as bus routes only in nonresidential areas
Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations	On facilities that cross or are parallel to the principal arterial, with greater emphasis along transit routes and in activity centers. Crossings should be spaced to allow for adequate crossing opportunities.	On facilities that cross or are parallel to the minor arterial, with greater emphasis along transit routes and in activity centers. Crossings should be spaced to allow for adequate crossing opportunities.	On, along, or crossing the collector with higher emphasis along transit routes and in activity centers. Crossings should be spaced for adequate crossing opportunities.	On, along, or crossing the local road

Principal Arterials

Principal arterials are part of the metropolitan highway system and provide high-speed vehicular mobility between the Twin Cities and important locations outside of the metropolitan area. They are intended to connect the two central cities to each other and with other regional business concentrations in the metropolitan area. These streets, which are typically spaced three- to six-miles apart, are generally constructed as limited access freeways in the urban areas but may be constructed as multiple-lane divided highways.

In St. Louis Park, there are four principal arterials: I-394, TH 7, TH 100, and TH 169. Within St. Louis Park, these facilities are envisioned to continue functioning as principal arterials for the planned future.

Minor Arterials

Minor arterials emphasize vehicular mobility over land access, serving to connect cities with adjacent communities and the metropolitan highway system. Major business concentrations and other important traffic generators are usually located on minor arterial streets. In urbanized areas, ½ to two-mile spacing of minor arterials is considered appropriate, depending upon development density.

A well-planned and adequately designed system of principal and A-minor arterials will allow the city's overall street system to function the way it is intended and will discourage through traffic from using residential streets. Volumes on principal and minor arterial streets are expected to be higher than on collector or local streets. Providing street capacity for these higher volumes will keep volumes on other city streets lower.

"Other arterials" provide a citywide function, serving medium to long distance trips. The city is served by seven A-minor arterials and one "other arterial" (see Figure 6-18).

Collectors

Collectors, as the term implies, collect and distribute vehicular traffic from neighborhoods and commercial areas and provide a critical link between local streets, which are designed for property access, and minor arterials, which are designed for higher vehicular mobility. Collector streets have an equal emphasis on land access and vehicular mobility. The city has the greatest responsibility for the collector streets. Principal and minor arterials tend to be under the jurisdiction of either MnDOT or Hennepin County.

Local Streets

Local streets provide access to adjacent properties and neighborhoods. Local streets are generally low speed and designed for access to the properties along the street. All the streets in the city that are not included under the previous functional classifications above fall under the local street designation.

Proposed Functional Classification System

The functional classification system for streets in the city was reviewed to ensure appropriate network connectivity is maintained and for consistency with the functional classification criteria established by the Metropolitan Council. Based on this review, there is one recommended functional classification change to the minor arterial system (no principal arterial change recommendations). It is recommended that Louisiana Avenue be reclassified as an A-minor arterial – reliever. While this street is already classified as an "other arterial" it more accurately functions as a reliever route for TH 100 and TH 169.

In addition, there are changes proposed/planned to the collector/local functional classifications. The changes are based on the Federal Highway Administration's Functional Classification Manual criteria, Metropolitan Council guidance and several other factors, including: estimated trip length, trip type, connections to activity centers, spacing, continuity, mobility, accessibility, and speed.

Given these criteria, the following streets are recommended for reclassification from local streets to major collectors:

- 16th Street West
- Beltline Boulevard
- Park Center Boulevard
- Wooddale Avenue South

Figure 6-18 also shows the proposed functional classification system along with the existing system.

Street Analysis

Programmed and Planned Street Improvements

Figure 6-19 identifies programmed (and planned) street improvements from the City of St. Louis Park's Capital Improvement Program (CIP), Hennepin County's CIP and MnDOT's Transportation System Plan (TSP). Programmed street improvements (Table 6-5) have advanced through the capital improvement programming process with funds committed to the improvement in a designated year. Planned street projects (Table 6-6) have been formally studied and/or included in a transportation plan, but typically do not yet have funding commitments.

Many of the programmed and planned improvements identified have multimodal mobility components as a part of the overall street improvement (i.e., adjacent sidewalks, on-street trail/bicycle accommodations, intersection pedestrian crossing improvements, signal timing updates, etc.).

Coordination with Other Jurisdictions

The city will continue to coordinate with adjacent jurisdictions (e.g., Minneapolis, Edina, Golden Valley, Minnetonka, Plymouth and Hopkins) as well as Hennepin County and MnDOT when planning future improvements. This on-going coordination will result in financial and time savings through economies of scale; such coordination may reduce construction impacts to residents and businesses.

Congestion on the Regional Highway System

MnDOT defines freeway congestion as traffic flowing at speeds less than or equal to 45 miles per hour (mph). According to MnDOT's 2015 Metropolitan Freeway System Congestion Report, portions of all highways in St. Louis Park are reported to have reoccurring congestion during both peak travel periods. In the morning peak period, all segments of southbound TH 169, as well as segments near the TH 100 and TH 7 interchange, exhibits congestion for two to three hours. Northbound TH 100 also experiences congestion lasting longer than three hours. There is also congestion both eastbound and westbound along I-394 for one to two hours in the a.m. peak period. In the afternoon peak period, TH 169 experiences over three hours of congestion on all segments traversing St. Louis Park.

Congestion on the regional system often negatively affects the local street system within St. Louis Park due to travel diversion. This applies pressure to the local system and causes conflicts with other mobility travel options.

Access Management

Access review is a major aspect of the city's project review process. The review focuses on maintaining the safety and capacity of the city's streets and understanding potential impacts to other modes of travel along these streets, while providing adequate land access.

Access management involves balancing the access and mobility functions of streets. Access refers to providing street access to properties and is needed at both ends of a trip. Mobility is the ability to get from one place to another. Most streets serve both functions to some degree based on their functional classification. The street's functional classification has a direct and corresponding relationship to mobility and access.

Table 6-5. Programmed Street Improvements

ROAD	EXTENTS	PROJECT	TIMEFRAME	JURISDICTION(S)
Wooddale Avenue / TH 7	Bridge	Bridge Improvements	2018	City
TH 7	TH 169 to Louisiana Avenue	Resurfacing Improvement Project	2018	MnDOT
Louisiana Avenue	Louisiana Circle to Excelsior Boulevard	Road/Bridge Reconstruction	2019	City
CSAH 5 (Minnetonka Boulevard)	TH 100 to France Avenue	Reconstruction (capacity)	2023	County
Louisiana Avenue	Oxford Street to Louisiana Circle	Road/Bridge Reconstruction	2024	City

Figure 6-19. Programmed and Planned Street Improvements

Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by SRF, 2018

Table 6-6. Planned Street Improvements

ROAD	EXTENTS	PROJECT	TIMEFRAME	JURISDICTION(S)
CSAH 5 (Minnetonka Boulevard)	TH 169 to Louisiana Avenue	Reconstruction (capacity)	2019	County
CSAH 5 (Minnetonka Boulevard)	Louisiana Avenue to TH 100	Reconstruction (capacity)	2020	County
CSAH 3 (Excelsior Boulevard)	Meadowbrook Road to Louisiana Avenue	Reconstruction	2020	County
CSAH 3 (Excelsior Boulevard)	CSAH 20 to Meadowbrook Road	Reconstruction (capacity)	2021	County

Table 6-7. Planning-Level Street Capacities by Facility Type

FACILITY TYPE	PLANNING LEVEL DAILY CAPACITY RANGES (AADT)	UNDER CAPACITY			APPROACHING CAPACITY		OVER CAPACITY
		LOS A	B	C	D	E	F
		0.2	0.4	0.6	0.85	1.0	>1.0
Two-lane undivided urban	8,000 – 10,000	2,000	4,000	6,000	8,500	10,000	> 10,000
Two-lane divided urban (Three-lane)	14,000 – 17,000	3,400	6,800	10,200	14,450	17,000	> 17,000
Four-lane undivided urban	18,000 – 22,000	4,400	8,800	13,200	18,700	22,000	> 22,000
Four-lane divided urban (Five-lane)	28,000 – 32,000	6,400	12,800	19,200	27,200	32,000	> 32,000
Four-lane freeway	60,000 – 80,000	16,000	32,000	48,000	68,000	80,000	> 80,000
Six-lane freeway	90,000 – 120,000	24,000	48,000	72,000	102,000	120,000	> 120,000

The city will continue to support MnDOT's and Hennepin County's Access Management guidelines on the Principal and Minor Arterial street network in the city through the aforementioned measures.

Living Streets Policy

The city has a draft Living Streets Policy that establishes their commitment to building a complete and integrated public right-of-way that has a positive impact on the livability of neighborhoods throughout the city. The Living Streets Policy is consistent with – and builds on – guidance that St. Louis Park has already established in its Comprehensive Plan, Active Living Sidewalk and Trails Plan, Complete Streets Policy, and many other adopted policies.

The policy is actionable and being implemented while under review by the City Council. It sets the tone for mobility within the community. It is a good example of performance based planning and design with metrics in place to measure success of its implementation (i.e., sidewalks/bikeways/trails installed).

Where We Are Headed – Planning for Vehicle Mobility

2040 Vehicular Travel Demand

The pattern and intensity of vehicular travel is directly related to the distribution and amount of households, population and employment within a community, neighboring communities and the broader region. This section includes an overview of the existing land use patterns in St. Louis Park.

Land use, vehicular travel patterns, transportation mode choice, population and employment change over time may affect the efficiency and adequacy of the street mobility network. This section outlines expected changes in the city's households, population and employment, which is the basis for estimating future vehicular travel demand within the city.

Socioeconomic Data

Existing and estimated population, households, and employment levels are shown in Table 6-8. The Metropolitan Council prepared estimates for the overall regional growth in terms of households, population, and employment for the years 2020, 2030, and 2040, allocating what they felt was an appropriate portion to each municipality.

Transportation Analysis Zones

Using the Land Use Guide Plan and development objectives as guidance, and with the assistance of the Metropolitan Council, the city estimated existing and future population, and number of employment and households for sub-areas of the city called Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZs). This information was required to complete the traffic forecasting procedures used to estimate future traffic volumes. Estimates for populations, households and employment within each TAZ are shown in Table 6-9 and Figure 6-23.

Table 6-8. Summary of St. Louis Park's Projected Socioeconomic Data

YEAR	POPULATION	HOUSEHOLDS	EMPLOYMENT
2010	45,250	21,743	40,485
2020	49,600	23,600	43,400
2030	52,350	25,220	45,300
2040	54,520	26,230	46,850

2040 Traffic Forecasts

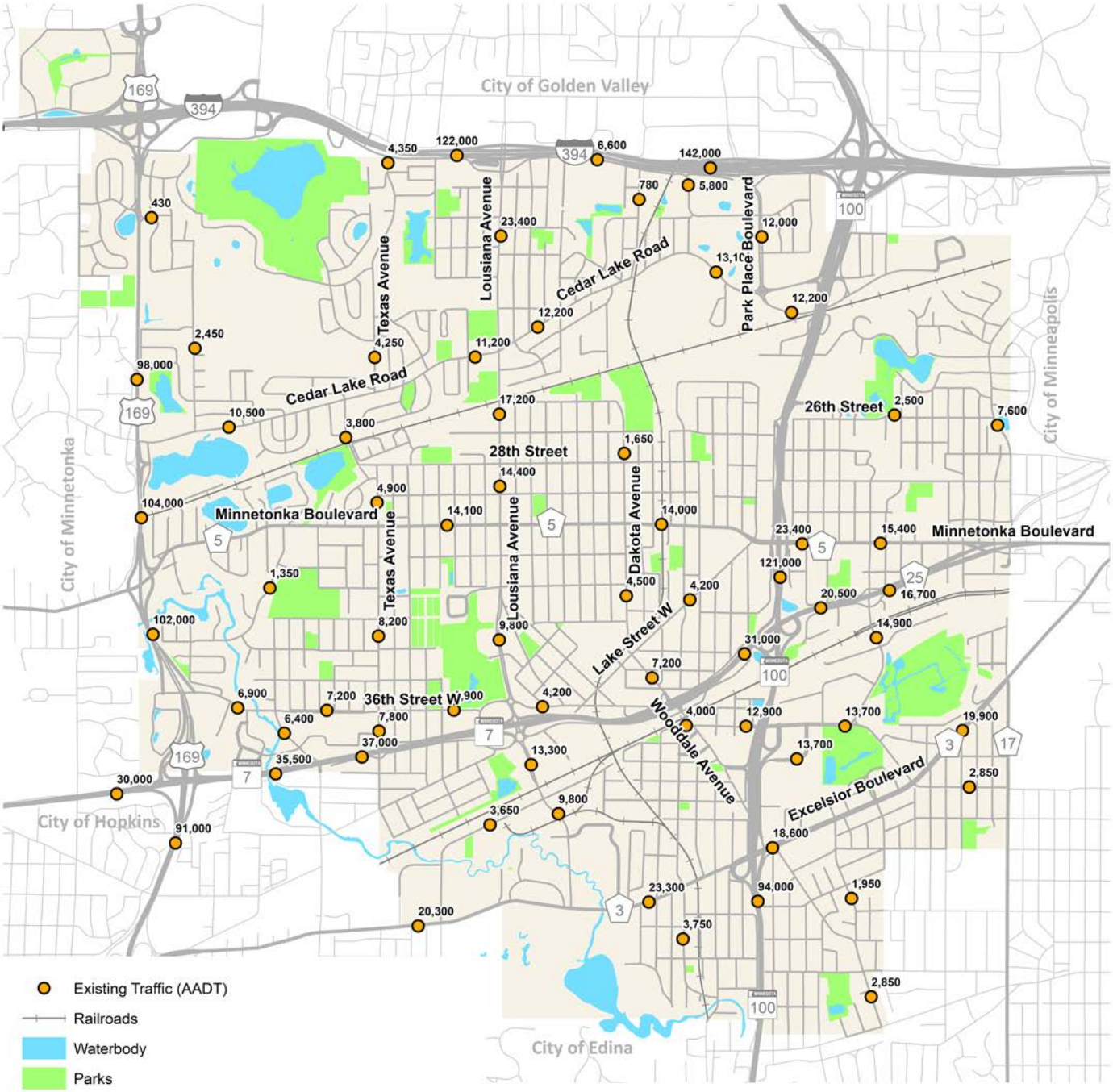
Forecasts for the City of St. Louis Park were prepared based upon the socioeconomic distribution identified for the year 2040. These forecasts are an analytical tool used to determine the "adequacy" of the road system to handle future development and subsequent vehicular traffic. In addition to the programmed street projects identified earlier, the traffic forecast model considers future planned improvements that are in the Metropolitan Council's TPP for regional highways outside the city. The future forecasted average daily vehicular traffic volumes are shown in Figure 6-24.

Safety Considerations

As the mobility system is reviewed and planned, a central concern is safety. This is relevant to safety of all users of the system – pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. MnDOT has identified a short-term safety goal of 300 or fewer fatalities and 850 or fewer serious injuries by 2020, with the long-term vision of zero traffic fatalities (Towards Zero Deaths). St. Louis Park wants to continue with their efforts to further this safety mentality by extending systemic safety planning from city systems, to county systems, to the state level.

To do so, the city envisions a safety plan that seeks to address priority emphasis areas that represent key risk factors or types of crashes contributing to severe crashes. The safety plan development process will include careful review of the City of St. Louis Park's specific crash data, the city's traffic safety best practices, and historical perspectives on mobility system user behavior (including pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicle drivers). The Minnesota Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) and the Metro Region Towards Zero Death (TZD) study identify enforcement areas to focus efforts and behavioral investments: user inattentiveness, unbelted drivers, impaired drivers, and speeding. This is a good place to start in St. Louis Park as well. In addition, the city will consider safe interactions with trains at all crossing locations such as sidewalk, trail, and at-grade roadway crossings.

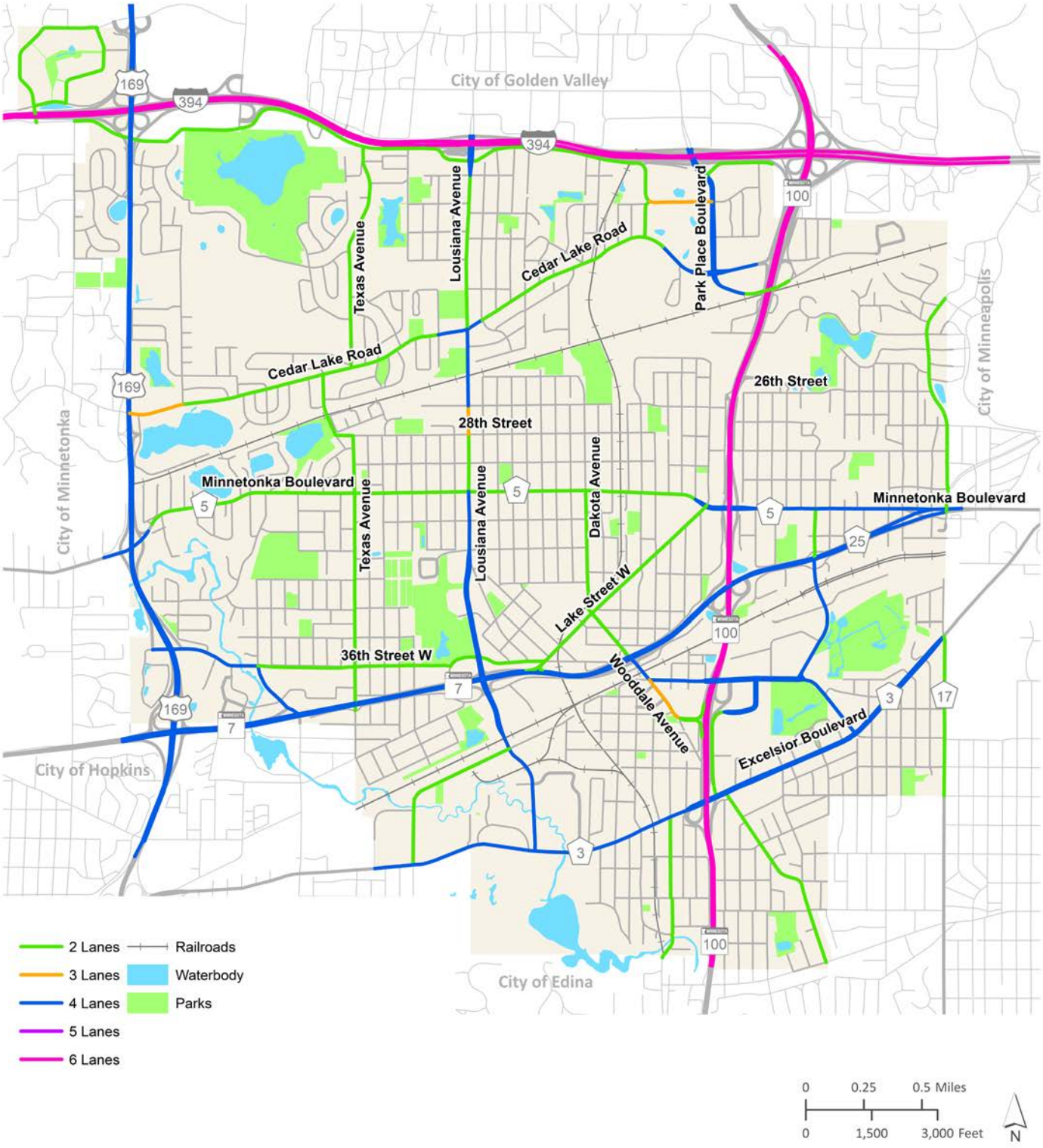
Figure 6-20. Existing Traffic Volumes



Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by SRF, 2018

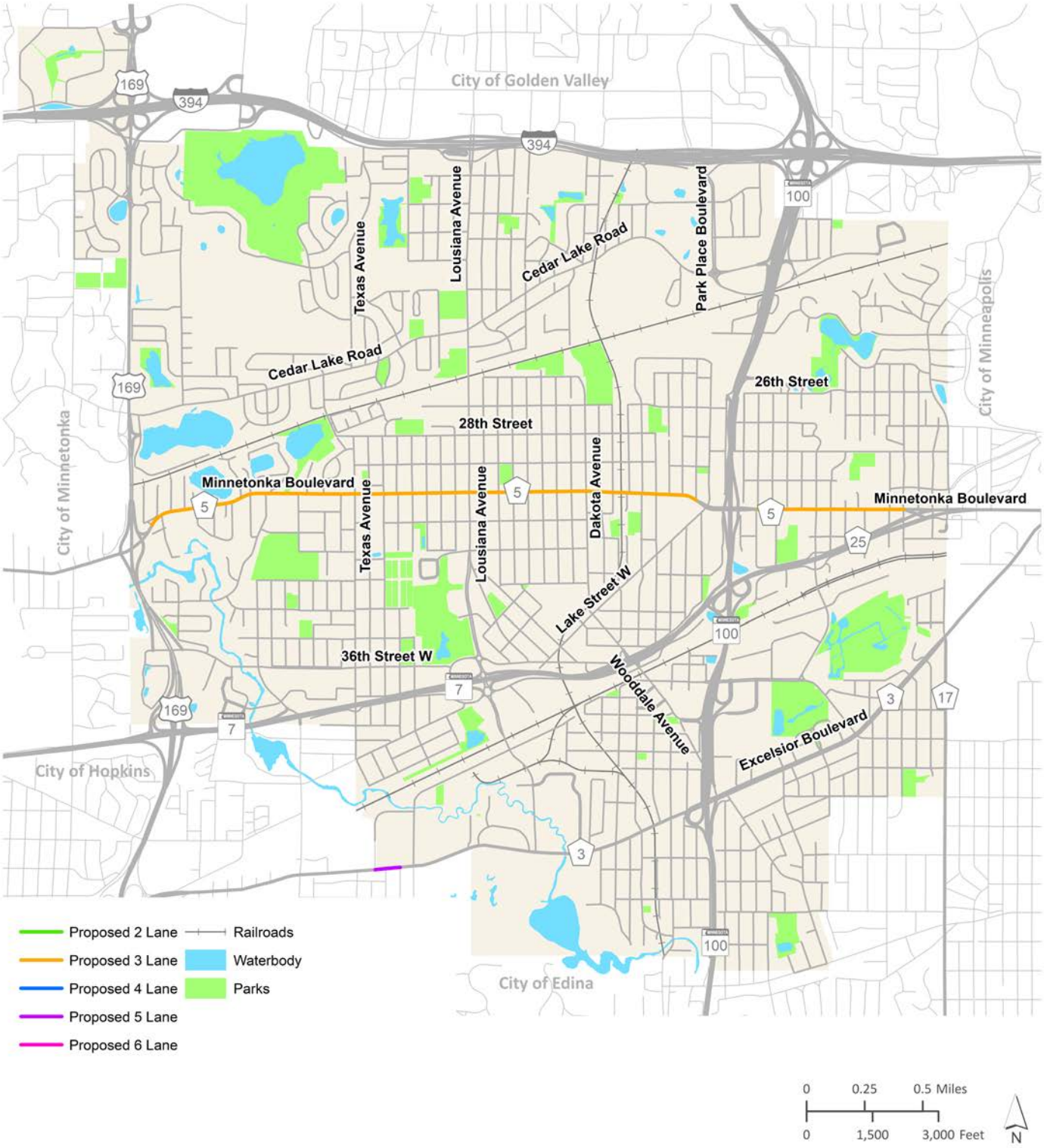
Figure 6-21. Existing Number of Lanes



Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by SRF, 2018

Figure 6-22. Year 2040 Number of Lanes



Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

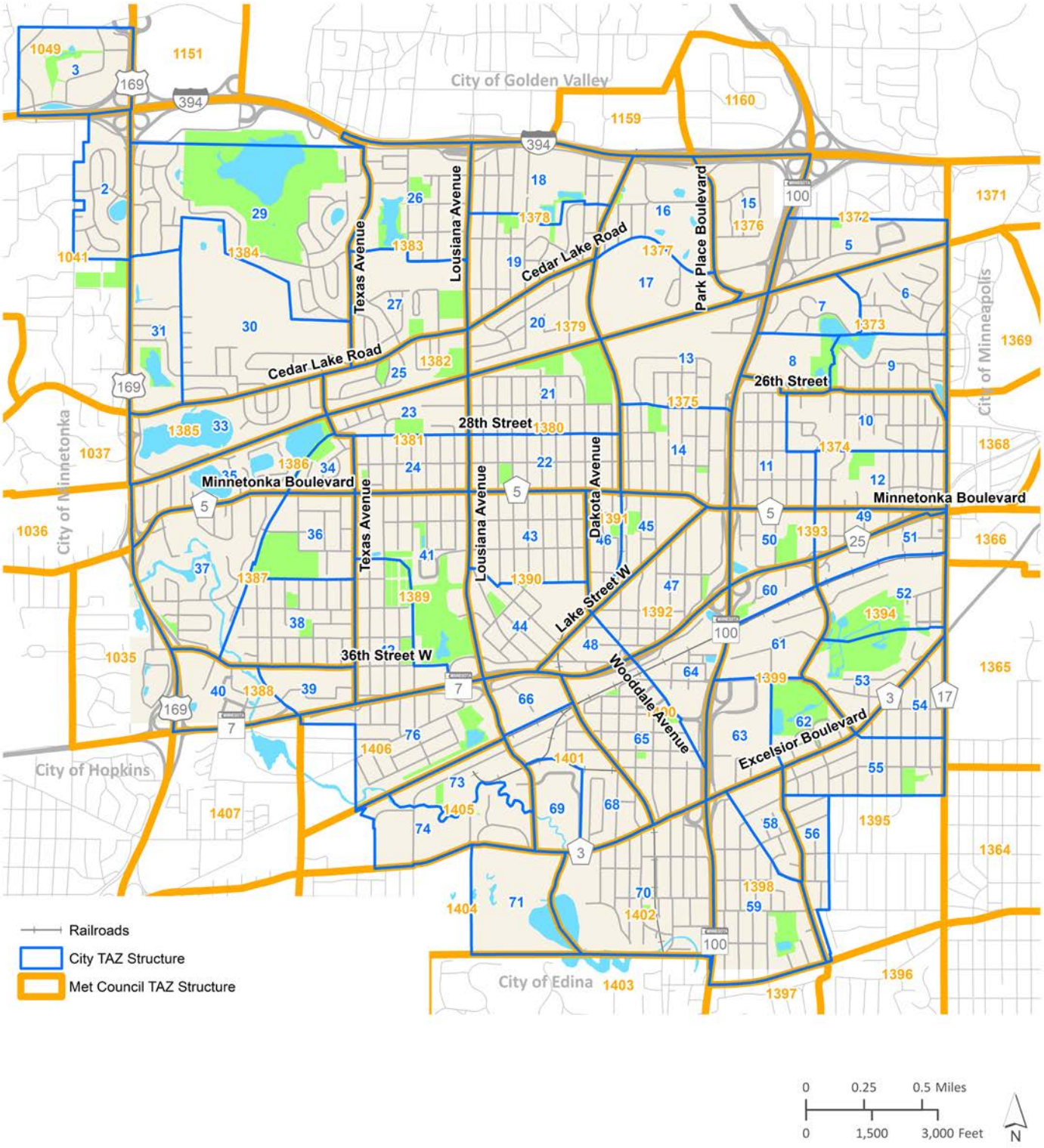
Created by SRF, 2018

Table 6-9. TAZ Estimates

City TAZ	Met Council TAZ	2014					2020					2030					2040				
		Population	Households	Retail Employment	Non-Retail Employment	Total Employment	Population	Households	Retail Employment	Non-Retail Employment	Total Employment	Population	Households	Retail Employment	Non-Retail Employment	Total Employment	Population	Households	Retail Employment	Non-Retail Employment	Total Employment
1	1035	200	104	4	23	27	200	104	4	23	27	198	104	3	19	22	198	104	2	16	18
2	1041	329	144	5	218	223	329	144	9	236	245	326	144	14	232	246	326	144	18	227	245
3	1049	677	382	105	1,295	1,400	677	382	97	1,431	1,528	670	382	69	1,448	1,517	670	382	43	1,458	1,501
5	1372	535	288	8	160	168	637	382	7	177	184	530	288	4	181	185	530	288	2	183	185
6	1373	288	119	4	66	70	317	131	4	79	83	356	147	3	91	94	387	160	2	102	104
7	1373	196	83	4	50	54	210	89	4	60	64	236	100	3	66	69	250	106	2	72	74
8	1373	179	76	4	48	52	193	82	4	56	60	214	91	3	61	64	224	95	2	66	68
9	1373	268	111	4	62	66	295	122	4	75	79	338	140	3	86	89	355	147	2	96	98
10	1374	981	421	7	102	109	981	421	8	110	118	971	421	8	101	106	971	421	9	103	112
11	1374	921	396	7	97	104	921	396	8	104	112	912	396	8	101	109	912	396	9	98	107
12	1374	801	345	6	87	93	801	345	7	93	100	793	345	7	90	97	793	345	8	86	94
13	1375	1,433	642	81	122	203	1,433	642	83	177	260	1,419	642	75	245	320	1,419	642	68	307	375
14	1375	1,167	524	66	103	169	1,167	524	69	147	216	1,155	524	62	201	263	1,155	524	56	251	307
15	1376	249	126	1,274	4,698	5,972	514	260	1,378	5,484	6,862	988	500	1,347	6,005	7,352	1,223	619	1,306	6,467	7,773
16	1377	408	269	609	1,313	1,922	408	269	656	1,497	2,153	404	269	637	1,586	2,223	404	269	617	1,663	2,280
17	1377	389	257	582	1,253	1,835	389	257	626	1,429	2,055	385	257	608	1,514	2,122	385	257	588	1,587	2,175
18	1378	1,139	540	27	658	685	1,158	549	30	718	748	1,190	564	31	713	744	1,211	574	32	705	737
19	1378	1,170	555	28	676	704	1,191	565	31	738	769	1,223	580	31	732	763	1,246	591	32	724	756
20	1379	462	205	56	894	950	464	206	56	916	972	957	464	49	957	1,006	464	206	42	940	982
21	1380	1,303	568	25	55	80	1,303	568	25	64	89	1,290	568	22	68	90	1,290	568	19	72	91
22	1380	982	429	20	47	67	982	429	20	52	72	972	429	17	54	71	972	429	15	56	71
23	1381	722	310	15	366	381	722	310	21	408	429	715	310	28	418	446	715	310	34	425	459
24	1381	859	368	17	433	450	859	368	24	482	506	850	368	32	494	526	850	368	40	504	544
25	1382	513	247	17	44	61	513	247	17	53	70	508	247	15	61	76	508	247	12	69	81
26	1383	1,120	562	20	220	240	1,120	562	21	242	263	1,109	562	19	244	263	1,109	562	18	245	263
27	1383	974	490	18	194	212	974	490	19	213	232	964	490	17	214	231	964	490	16	214	230
29	1384	1,032	406	153	399	552	1,032	406	173	434	607	1,022	406	182	429	611	1,022	406	189	422	611
30	1384	701	278	105	277	382	701	278	119	301	420	694	278	124	296	420	694	278	129	290	419
31	1384	297	122	47	128	175	297	122	52	137	189	294	122	54	132	186	294	122	55	127	182
33	1385	444	180	4	26	30	444	180	4	27	31	440	180	3	23	26	440	180	2	19	21
34	1386	186	83	11	33	44	195	87	10	35	45	206	92	7	32	39	208	93	4	30	34
35	1386	587	248	26	63	89	639	270	24	71	95	710	300	17	75	92	753	318	10	78	88
36	1387	827	364	21	138	159	827	364	20	149	169	819	364	14	143	157	819	364	9	138	147
37	1387	1,629	724	38	255	293	1,629	724	35	276	311	1,613	724	25	270	295	1,613	724	16	264	280
38	1387	1,135	498	28	183	211	1,135	498	26	197	223	1,124	498	18	192	210	1,124	498	11	186	197
39	1388	242	134	316	431	747	246	136	343	471	814	251	139	337	468	805	251	139	330	464	794
40	1388	441	240	578	777	1,355	456	248	627	852	1,479	478	260	617	850	1,467	492	268	605	846	1,451
41	1389	1,760	834	13	81	94	1,760	834	12	85	97	1,742	834	10	78	88	1,760	834	8	71	79
42	1389	1,061	499	9	57	66	1,061	499	9	59	68	1,050	499	7	59	66	1,050	499	6	47	53
43	1390	935	424	13	488	501	935	424	25	560	585	926	424	41	597	638	926	424	56	630	686
44	1390	814	370	12	427	439	814	370	22	489	511	806	370	36	521	557	806	370	49	549	598
45	1391	464	213	39	114	153	464	213	36	132	168	459	213	25	143	168	459	213	14	153	167
46	1391	311	145	28	83	111	311	145	25	94	119	308	145	17	100	117	308	145	10	105	115
47	1392	888	426	43	221	264	888	426	46	251	297	879	426	43	263	306	879	426	41	274	315
48	1392	258	127	16	77	93	258	127	16	85	101	255	127	14	85	99	255	127	13	85	98
49	1393	537	341	17	274	291	559	355	17	293	310	559	355	15	282	297	578	367	13	270	283
50	1393	900	568	26	447	473	933	589	26	480	506	949	599	24	464	488	1,016	641	21	448	469
51	1394	450	262	32	230	262	572	333	33	282	315	690	402	33	330	363	814	474	28	373	401
52	1394	919	529	60	451	511	1,225	655	64	560	624	1,679	898	60	663	723	1,988	1,063	56	756	812
53	1394	840	484	56	414	470	1,138	599	59	513	572	1,512	796	55	606	661	1,851	974	52	691	743
54	1395	466	183	25	76	101	466	183	25	100	125	461	322	21	125	146	461	183	18	149	167
55	1395	831	322	41	121	162	831	322	44	164	208	823	322	36	214	250	823	322	31	260	291
56	1395	403	159	22	68	90	403	159	22	88	110	399	159	19	110	129	399	159	16	130	146
58	1398	423	172	59	82	141	423	172	55	94	149	419	172	41	101	142	419	172	27	108	135
59	1398	1,414	562	187	229	416	1,414	562	176	274	450	1,400	562	130	310	440	1,400	562	87	343	430
60	1399	259	184	201	411	612	266	189	214	494	708	274	195	203	560	763	277	197	193	620	813
61	1399	534	376	414	837	1,251	554	390	442	1,011	1,453	568	400	422	1,154	1,576	587	413	402	1,284	1,686
62	1399	406	286	315	639	954	429	296	335	769	1,104	441	311	320	877	1,197	449	316	304	974	1,278
63	1399	558	393	433	875	1,308	579	408	462	1,055	1,517	612	431	441	1,206	1,647	749	451	415	1,342	1,757
64	1400	761	402	71	249	320	833	440	114	295	409	944	500	171	329	500	1,052	526	223	359	582
65	1400	1,300	682	118	413	531	1,391	730	192	492	684	1,525	800	290	554	844	1,732	866	381	609	990
66	1401	95	45	81	1,398	1,479	95	45	111	1,500	1,611	844	465	68	1,628	1,696	1,014	575	50	1,670	1,720
68	1401	214	94	181	3,274	3,455	234	103	277	3,516	3,793	264	116	399	3,397	3,796	287	126	511	3,267	3,778
69	1401	114	53	96	1,682	1,778	114	53	134	1,805	1,939	113	53	180	1,741	1,921	126	53	221	1,675	1,896
70	1402	1,198	549	87	198	285	1,198	549	77	230	307	1,186	549	48	251	299	1,186	549	22	269	291
71	1404	274	99	6	78	84	274	99	6	81	87	271	99	5	75	80	271	99	4	69	73
73	1405	568	248	51	425	476	568	248	50	482	532	562	248	39	505	544	562	248	30	525	555
74	1405	875	380	77	648	725	875	380	74	735	809	866	380	59	774	833	866	380	45	807	852
76	1406	1,318	571	20	269	289	1,477	640	29	368	397	1,731	750	40	482	522	1,944	842	51	586	637
Total		47,933	22,818	7,190	31327	38517	49,600	23,600	7,894	35,506	43,400	52,350	25,220	7,825	37,475	45,300	54,520	26,230	7,752	39,098	46,850

St. Louis Park MINNESOTA

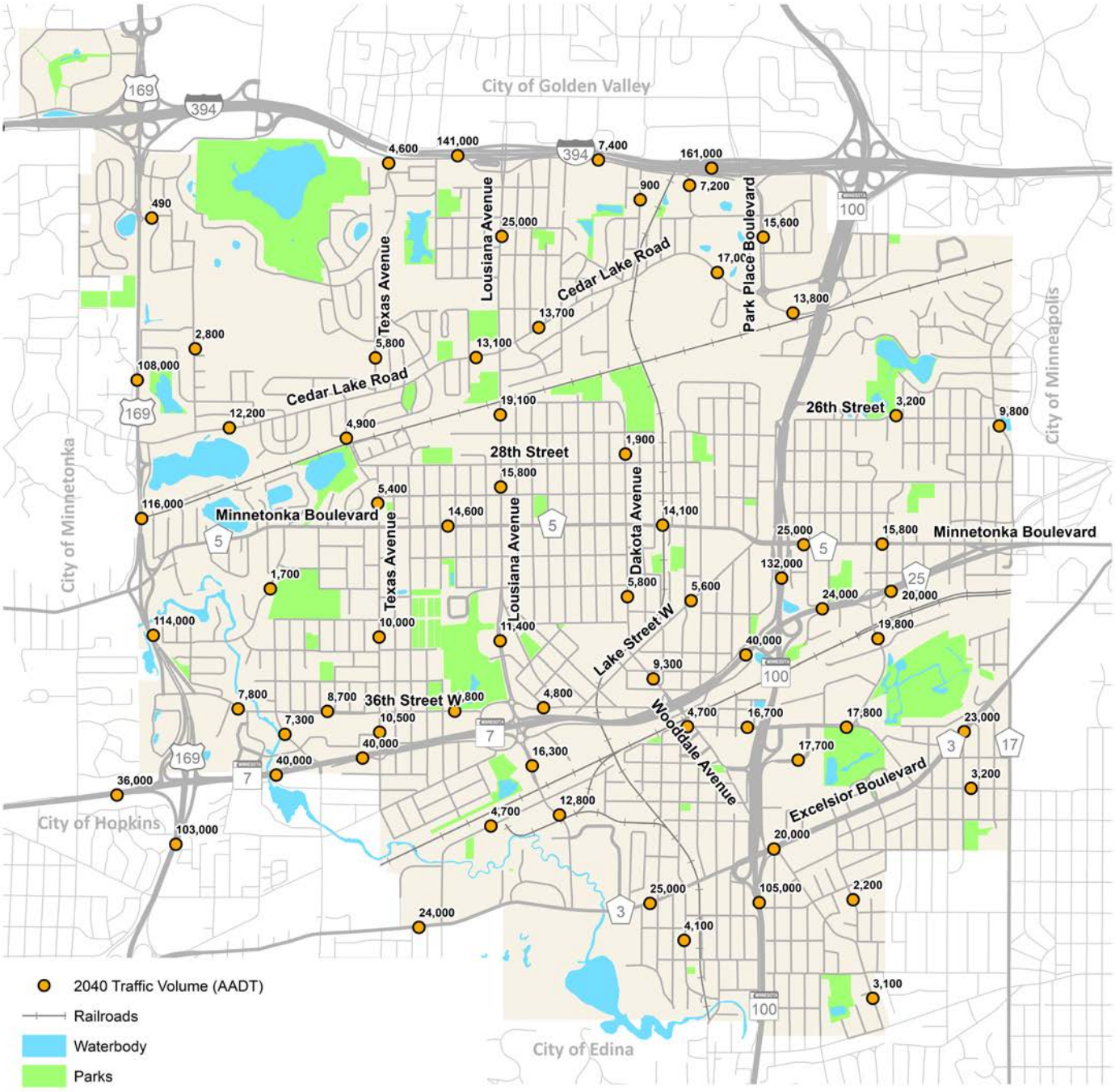
Figure 6-23. Transportation Analysis Zones Map



Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by SRF, 2018

Figure 6-24. Forecast 2040 Traffic Volumes



Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by SRF, 2018

Proposed Street Connections

There are several new street connections that can enhance circulation and connectivity around the LRT station areas and commercial centers. The goal is to integrate community travel routes within station areas and commercial centers in order to improve overall multimodal safety, access and circulation around and through the centers. Many of the potential connections were envisioned as part of the proposed Form-Based District zoning which is currently under review by the city. These new street connections are not currently funded, nor have they been designed. Therefore, their exact location is yet to be determined; the intent is to reserve the possibility of future connections in these areas. In addition to streets, alleyway improvements are also captured with the proposed Form-Based District zoning. Figure 6-25 presents these desired/conceptual connections.

Right-of-Way Preservation

Right-of-Way (ROW) is a valuable public asset that needs to be managed to balance the street's intended function and the public good. The city maintains a set of ROW guidelines organized by number of lanes for the street. The ROW values in this guidance account for space to accommodate sidewalks and trails, plus other multimodal mobility needs of the corridor. When new streets or connections are needed or desired, the city will need to consider ROW preservation strategies to make sure that these streets or multimodal infrastructure improvements can be accommodated. These strategies include:

- Advanced, direct purchase
- Zoning and subdivision dedication
- Official mapping

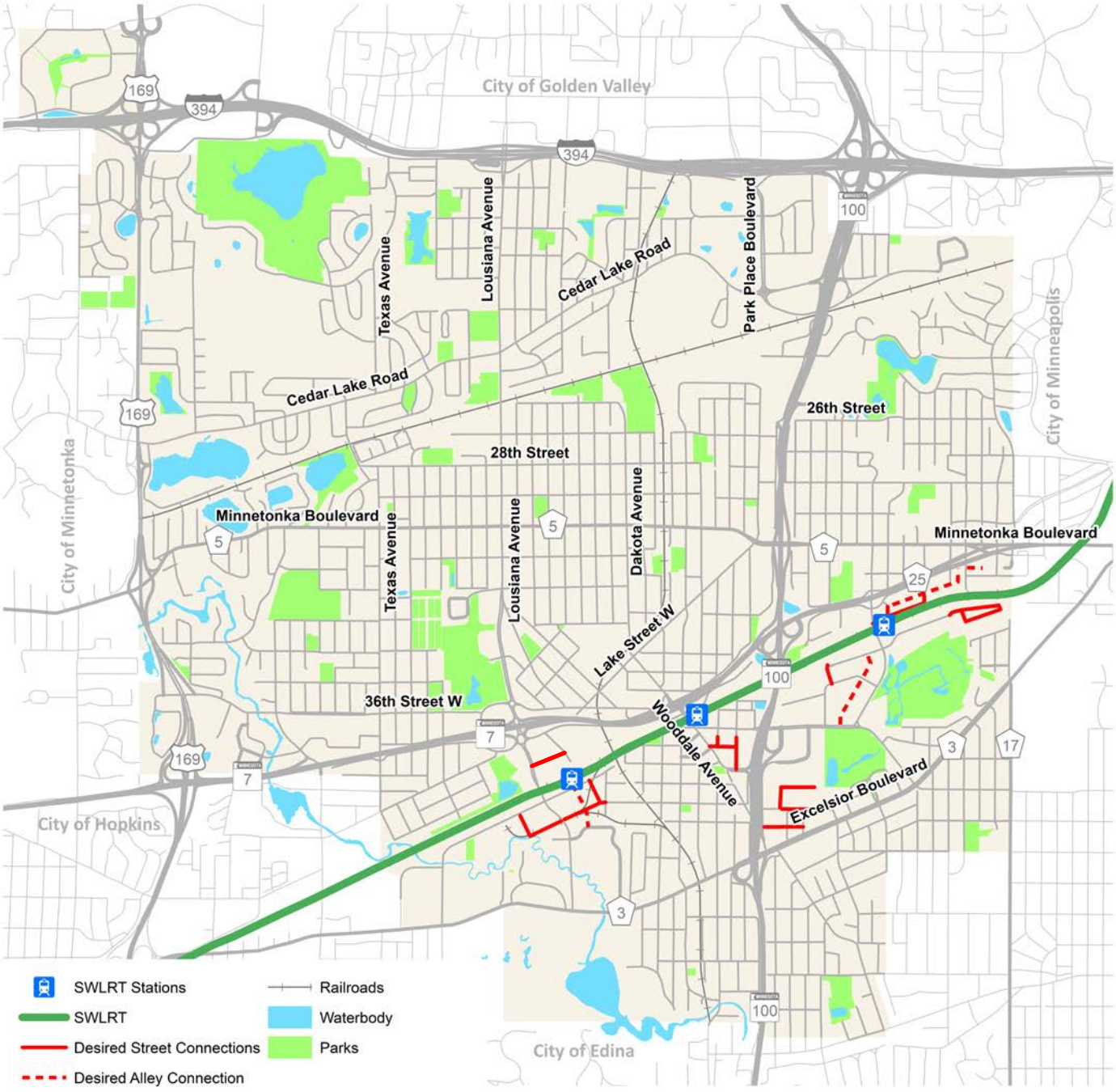
St. Louis Park may need to reconstruct, widen (or reduce) street widths, and construct new street segments to meet future connectivity demands due to its current and anticipated growth. These potential or desirable improvements will require the city to keep the existing ROW they have or acquire additional ROW. The city will coordinate with MnDOT and Hennepin County for ROW acquisition along county or state routes, where applicable.

Land Use Based Street Types

To accommodate growth and travel demands, St. Louis Park will need to make more efficient use of current street space in the future. In short, this means moving more people and encouraging travel by foot and bicycle where possible. Like most cities, St. Louis Park has historically designed and managed streets for personal vehicle circulation and access to parking areas. The proposed street types contained herein are not intended to replace the city's functional classifications, yet rather set priorities for movement of people, not just vehicles, and ensure that pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users are all provided safe and convenient access to and circulation opportunities throughout the city.

The street types can be used to organize and integrate modes within the built mobility right-of-way. While terminology and recommendations vary slightly from other efforts to date within the city, the overall premise is consistent throughout – to enhance streets by re-prioritizing pedestrian, bicyclist, and transit user needs to create a vibrant, safe, and memorable place for all people using all modes. The classifications represent six types that highlight the predominant design characteristics or mobility modes of the street. They are vision statements of what the street type is and is not; there is flexibility in how this is implemented once moved forward in the community.

Figure 6-25. Desired Conceptual Street Connections



Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by SRF, 2018

Multimodal Streets

Multimodal streets are intended to accommodate a variety of modes. In concert with the city's goals, these streets are meant to prioritize the walking environment first, followed by bicycling and transit use, and then motor vehicle use. Generally characterized by no modal priority, multimodal street design will vary by context and can be in either neighborhoods or commercial districts.

Main Streets

Main streets are characterized by (generally) commercial uses, fewer building setbacks, slow traffic, and wide sidewalks. All these treatments ensure that walking is the most important mode in this environment. While Main Streets were the dominant commercial environments through the early years of the 20th Century, suburbanization and the rise of malls lessened their influence. However, they have persisted and in many communities, are seeing a comeback, as people take advantage of their walkable nature. Vegetation is an important component of Main Streets to enhance community aesthetics and pedestrian comfort. Plantings, such as street trees and ornamental flowers and grasses should be in select areas and protected to avoid damage by pedestrians and bicyclists. Intersections should have high-visibility crosswalks that may also incorporate decorative features.

Transit-Priority Streets

Transit-priority streets are streets that prioritize efficient transit operations and have pedestrian- and transit-friendly design elements. The transit-priority street designation is an aspirational one, meant to provide direction for improvements to the overall character of the street as they relate to street infrastructure and development patterns. Street infrastructure improvements should be focused on the sidewalk network and pedestrian realm (lighting, ADA compliance, street trees, etc.). Bicycles should also be considered as part of the overall character of the street.

Pedestrian-Only Streets

Pedestrian-only streets are often curb less and designed as flexible open spaces mainly for pedestrian use. They have design features that cater primarily to people on foot, but also bicycles moving at a walking speed, often for delivery access purposes. Bollards or planters as well as pavement markings and colorings can show where pedestrian-only streets begin and end, as well as how patrons can move about the space freely. It is understood that this street type requires special approval by city staff.

Neighborhood Streets

These serve primarily residential neighborhoods, parks, shops, and schools. They should be inviting to walk and bike as well as for play and leisure. They are streets with low traffic volumes and low speeds. Sidewalks and boulevards should be provided where possible.

Vehicular Streets

Vehicular Streets accommodate higher volumes of vehicles while also having the potential to provide pedestrians or bicyclists infrastructure. These are urban thoroughfares that connect the city to its adjacent communities and beyond, moving automobiles, freight, and commuter traffic through the region. They typically have more through lanes and wider rights-of-way, while also accommodating large volumes of traffic during peak hours. However, they must provide safe intersections for pedestrians and bicyclists, when necessary. This is especially important, as streets with higher volumes of traffic and wider crossings are more difficult to cross for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Figure 6-26 identifies potential street types within St. Louis Park described and discussed above. Note that not all street types discussed here are represented on the figure; however, they are still relevant for future consideration if/when the situation presents itself.

Figure 6-26. Recommended Street Types

Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by SRF, 2018

Planning for the Future

Throughout the city's comprehensive planning effort, the city is considering how to address current mobility needs, while setting the stage for future growth. Items that the city has identified for consideration going forward:

- Travel Demand Management
- Connected and Autonomous Vehicles
- Electric Vehicles

Travel Demand Management

Research has shown that Travel Demand Management (TDM) strategies are a useful technique in helping alleviate parking demands and increased traffic. The following TDM strategies are applied to help reduce the number of single occupancy vehicles traveling and parking in a certain area.

Bicycle Amenities

Actively promoting bicycling as an alternative means of travel to and from a destination can be achieved through the provision of bicycle storage facilities, bicycle parking, and installing bikeways. In addition, developments can provide shower facilities for their patrons/employees/etc. to help encourage use of bicycles for transportation.

Car Sharing Provisions

Car sharing programs provide mobility options to a cross section of residents who would not otherwise have access to a vehicle. These programs encourage the efficient use of a single vehicle among multiple users, while reducing the amount of parking needed. Zoning language can encourage or require new developments to include provisions for car sharing programs.

Shared Mobility

Shared mobility includes bike sharing, car sharing, and ride sourcing services provided by companies such as Uber and Lyft. Predictions indicate that by creating a robust network of shared mobility options, these new modes will help reduce car ownership and increase use of public transit.

Travel Demand Management Plans (TDMP)

A TDMP outlines measures to mitigate parking demand as part of the development process, which can result in innovative solutions that are tailored to the specific needs of the development. These types of plans may require specific strategies for reducing single-occupancy vehicle trips and promoting alternative modes of transportation.

Connected and Autonomous Vehicles

The potential for significant vehicle technology shifts, including connected vehicles (CV) and autonomous vehicles (AV), in the coming decades will influence how the city plans for the future of mobility infrastructure.

Fully autonomous vehicles are still in the advanced testing stages, but partially automated technology and low-speed cars are starting to emerge. Autonomous and connected vehicles will likely require changes to parking requirements, street design, right-of-way needs, development demand, signage and signalization, building siting and design, and access management over the next 40-50 years.

Researchers have concluded that AVs and CVs will reshape future road rights-of-way. Avs are likely to be smaller than existing passenger vehicles, permitting narrower lanes, likely not requiring medians, and will allow travel much closer to one another. By accommodating the same or more vehicular volume in less space, newly available street width can be reapportioned to other mobility network users.[1]

The redevelopment of parking lots has the potential to transform existing commercial centers allowing for buildings to more regularly front streets rather than parking lots. Accommodations for pick-up and drop-off locations and off-site parking reservoirs will need to be considered.

The city must also be prepared to incorporate and accommodate communication between vehicles and infrastructure such as traffic signals (V2I). The city should stay in close coordination with MnDOT and Hennepin County regarding potential for research projects in the coming years regarding this technology.

A very important area for the city to be focused is how AVs will interact with pedestrians and bicyclists. Research suggests that a safer environment will be possible, especially if AVs are programmed to stop and yield to pedestrians and bicyclists.

St. Louis Park should monitor autonomous vehicle technology adoption, as well as other technological innovations that will have an impact on mobility trends and infrastructure, and consider system changes when they make sense for the community.

---

1 APA Minnesota. Planning for the Autonomous Vehicle Revolution. 2016. https://www.planning.org/blog/blogpost/ 9105024/

Electric Vehicles

As electric vehicles (EV) become more affordable, it is predicted they will become almost a third of new-car sales by 2030. [2]

St. Louis Park has developed a Climate Action Plan with its goal set to achieve carbon neutrality by 2040. The city would like to accelerate the adoption of electric vehicles by installing chargers in public parking lots. This will include parking lots associated with city-owned buildings, city parks, and school buildings. The charging stations will be highly visible, educational, and incorporate branding the city develops as part of its climate action efforts. In addition, the city is committed to working with private businesses to offer charging stations for EVs. This could be accomplished through encouragement and city development standards that require EV parking spaces with new developments. The city will also work with electric vehicle partnerships to advance usage (for example, Drive Electric Minnesota) and support electrification of Metro Transit Buses.

Vehicular Mobility Goals and Strategies

1. Provide well-designed and well-maintained city streets that balance the needs users, residents, businesses, and property owners.

Strategies

A. Identify traffic management measures in conjunction with upgrades to the mobility system.

B. Support local street, pedestrian, bicycle and transit connections across freeways

C. Maintain the roadway network in a safe and fiscally responsible manner.

D. Support and participate in the improvements of Hennepin County road segments.

E. Support implementation of Hennepin County's Complete Streets Policy to retrofit County arterial streets within St. Louis Park.

F. Create a safe and attractive street environment through grass boulevards and street tree plantings to buffer pedestrians from the road.

2. Work to ensure roadways efficiently connect residents, employees, and visitors to local and regional destinations.

Strategies

A. Monitor updates to the roadway functional classification system within St. Louis Park to maintain a balanced hierarchy of streets for distributing traffic from neighborhoods to the regional mobility systems.

B. Consider existing gaps in the roadway network when approving development projects and conducting area-wide planning.

C. Prioritize mobility policies that promote accessibility to jobs, services, and amenities via the roadway network; whether it is via walking, biking, transit, or vehicle.

D. Promote and support the use of Travel Demand Management (TDM) strategies to achieve more efficient use of the existing community mobility network and reduce congestion problems.

E. Support options for improving north-south roadway connectivity when feasible.

2 *The Electric-Car Boom Is So Real Even Oil Companies Say It's Coming, Bloomberg, April 2017, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-04-25/electric-car-boom-seen-triggering-peak-oil-demand-in-2030s*

F. Consider increasing capacity on roadways only when necessary to improve connectivity of the roadway network, improve isolated connections to regional roadways, or where other measures are impractical.

G. Coordination with State and County officials to monitor and maintain the more regional components of the street mobility system in a state of good repair and minimizing congestion through strategic capacity improvements.

3. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions generated as a result of the roadway network.

Strategies

A. Consider design strategies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including those that reduce vehicle miles travels, idling, and increase renewable energy use.

B. Continue to implement traffic control devices that manage congestion, reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

C. Expand regulations that provide for electric vehicle charging ports in new developments and public right-of-way.

D. Encourage the use of alternate fuel vehicles.

Improved Technologies and Mobility Modes Goals and Strategies

1. Position St. Louis Park to benefit from upcoming changes to vehicle ownership models while supporting a shared use mobility network.

Strategies

A. Plan for a shared vehicle fleet and its impact on the built form, including vehicles and bike share.

B. Establish parking guidelines and requirements that reflect changing vehicle ownership models, both on-street and off-street.

C. Provide for carpools, vanpools, and shared mobility vehicles in city-owned parking facilities and encourage private parking facility owners to do the same.

D. Evaluate demographics to ensure shared mobility benefits are equitable

E. Utilize available data and resources to support the city's ongoing transportation planning work, focused on equity and access for all.

2. Support the development and deployment of new transportation technologies that positions St. Louis Park to benefit from these advancements.

Strategies

A. Regulate automated vehicles in St. Louis Park while ensuring equitable access to them.

B. Plan for impacts of automated and connected vehicles such as the potential need to regulate parking, design infrastructure with connected capabilities, or make other adjustments to infrastructure design practices and standards.

C. Encourage and support electric vehicles by prioritizing associated public and private infrastructure.

D. Develop policy that addresses the implications of parking, or lack thereof, in a fully automated future, such as the potential for roving empty vehicles.

Rail and Truck Freight

Where We Have Been

In 1873, just four years after the first transcontinental railroad was completed, there were two railroads that passed through what is now St. Louis Park. These two railroads connected flour mills in Minneapolis with millions of acres of grain fields to the west. By 1898, three railroads served St. Louis Park's burgeoning industrial sector. A fourth north-south line was added to connect to the Luce Line in Golden Valley. Three of these four lines are still active; the fourth was purchased, intended for future light rail transit (LRT) use.

St. Louis Park's history is innately linked to the railroad. Early industry relied upon rail spurs to link to the wider regional and national rail network. Railroads also provided primary passenger transportation before the rise of mass automobile ownership. As the highway system developed, trucks became the primary carrier of freight and cars the primary carrier of passengers, diminishing the need for railroad services. The corridors became barriers, restricting access to pedestrians, bicycles and motor vehicles.

In the past 10 years a number of freight improvements have been implemented through/within St. Louis Park:

- Many rail crossings have been upgraded to include gate arms, warning bells and lights, and two were closed to vehicle traffic.
- Substantial investment on the major interstate and highways system has improved truck freight.

Where We Are Today – Rail and Truck Freight

Truck Freight

Truck freight transportation and the movement of commercial and industrial goods plays a key role in the economy and transportation system of St. Louis Park. To ensure that businesses can efficiently transport goods into and out of the city, it is crucial that the local network accommodate these needs.

All industrial areas in the City of St. Louis Park are located with adequate access to the metropolitan highway system (Figure 6-27). The Interstate and Minnesota Trunk Highway systems are all built to ten-ton axle loading standards and are part of either the National Truck Network or the Minnesota Twin Trailer Network, allowing extra capacity and flexibility for commercial trucking. This major highway coverage reduces the impact of truck traffic on local roadways and minimizes the potential for disruption of neighborhoods.

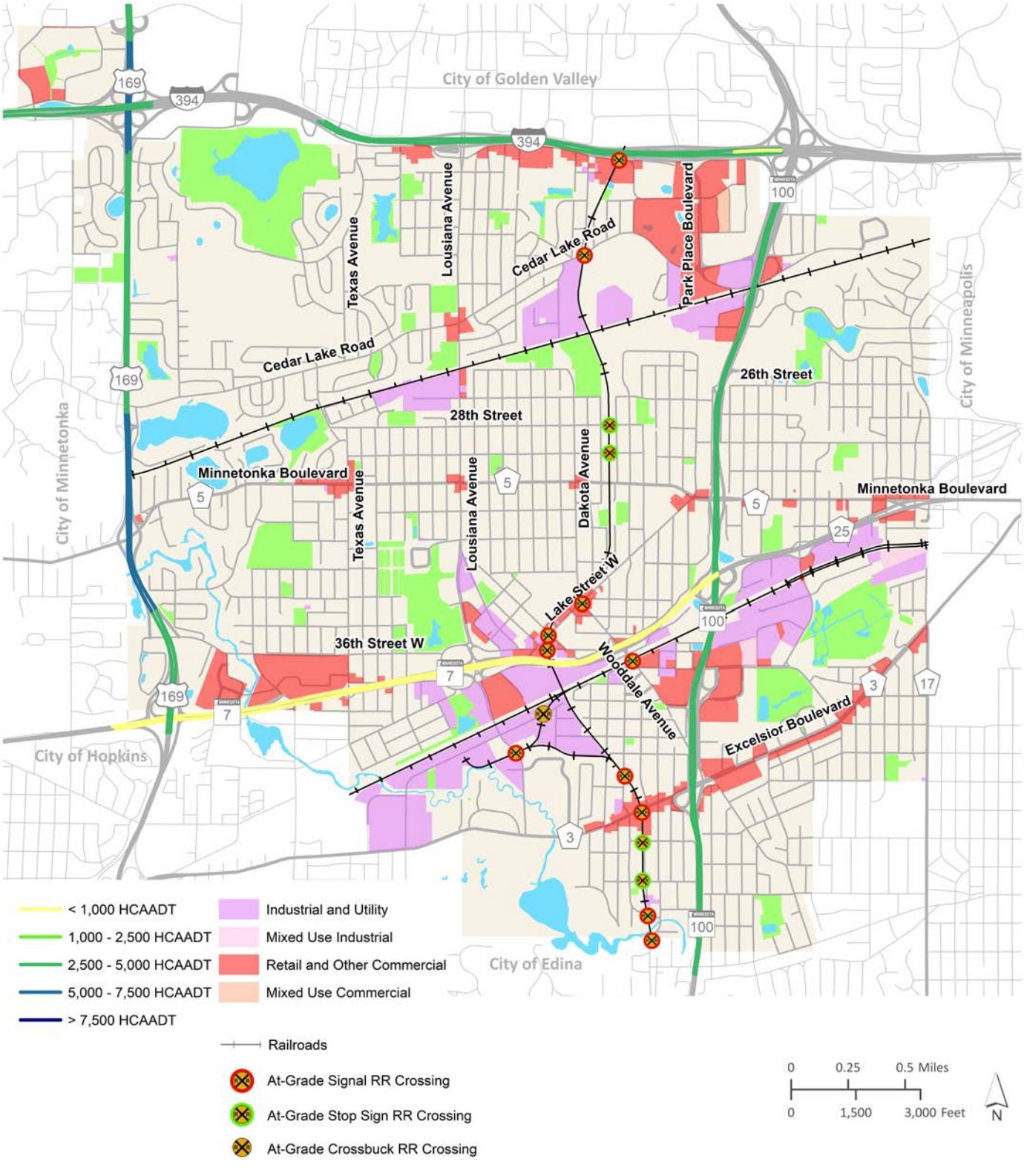
The City of St. Louis Park has developed in a manner that efficiently and effectively accommodates for heavy commercial vehicle activity. Existing freight uses are in proximity to and have good access to regional roads. This minimizes the impact to the rest of community. Further, there are no planned land use changes that would significantly impact or require changes to the freight roadway network. Truck traffic on the major highways that pass-through St. Louis Park (I-394, TH 169, TH 100) is quite high. Truck traffic on TH 7 is heavy but not as high as the other major facilities. Heavy commercial annual average daily traffic (HCAADT) volumes are presented in Figure 6-27.

Rail Freight

St. Louis Park has three active rail lines in the city:

- Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway – operates northeast- southwest through town south of and approximately parallel to Cedar Lake Road
- Canadian Pacific (CP) Railway operates two lines in town:
  - Bass Lake Spur that runs east- west through town south of and parallel to TH 7, used by Twin Cities & Western Railroad Company (TC&W)
  - Minneapolis, Northfield and Southern (MN&S) Railway Spur that runs north- south through town west of and parallel to TH 100

Figure 6-27. Freight System



Source: Metropolitan Council, City of St. Louis Park, 2018

Created by SRF, 2018

Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway (BNSF)

The BNSF Railway traverses the entire width of St. Louis Park from the southwest to the northeast with the alignment located approximately parallel to Cedar Lake Road. This single-track route was formerly a double track and was constructed between 1879 and 1881. Today this line utilizes a seamless track which has significantly reduced the noise levels in this corridor. The line abuts residential development along much of the right-of-way and travels at relatively high speeds. There is no vehicle at-grade access across the BNSF corridor. The adjacent North Cedar Lake Regional Trail runs parallel to the rail line south of the tracks for most of the line's 3.6 miles through St. Louis Park.

CP Rail Bass Lake Spur

The CP Bass Lake Spur line was constructed in 1910. It passes through the entire city in a southwest to northeast direction. It is located south of and parallel to TH 7 and contains a double track and numerous railcar storage sidings along the route. This corridor is also utilized by Twin Cities & Western railroad (TC&W), which carries product from western Minnesota and South Dakota. The length of the mainline track, measured from city limit to city limit, is approximately 2.8 miles.

The CP Rail Bass Lake Spur has limited vehicle access across it. At-grade crossings occur at Beltline Boulevard and Wooddale Avenue and grade-separated crossings occur at Louisiana Avenue and TH 100.

The Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail is located in this corridor. SWLRT will be collocated within this rail corridor as well.

CP Rail MN & S Spur

This railroad traverses the city north/south on a relatively narrow corridor west of and parallel to TH 100 at approximately Dakota Avenue. This route differs substantially from other railroads within the city in that it is not a major regional route. It was originally designed as an inter-urban electric route, although it never operated electric trains. In 1920, it was converted to a freight carrying line and functioned primarily as a by-pass or transfer railroad. It was used as a carrier by firms wishing to avoid the congestion and possible delay in the metropolitan core. Currently, both CP Railway and TC&W operate over this track. Along the MN&S, speeds are regulated to 15 mph or less and the right-of-way has residential development throughout most of its length in the city. There are numerous local street crossings along the MN&S.

Freight Rail Safety

Key freight rail issues for the city are safety with the products being transported, noise and vibration, and sidewalk, trail and street crossings. One product transported is ethanol, and it is volatile and flammable. City emergency plans take into account the possibility of freight rail accidents and spills. Noise and vibration are important in considering surrounding land uses and activities. Safe interactions with trains at all rail crossings are important as well. Proper use of signage and warning devices is critical to ensuring the highest level of protection for the community.

The location and number of rail lines in the city create a barrier to pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle mobility. The city is taking opportunities to increase access across railroad right of ways including at Beltline Boulevard and Wooddale Avenue where the regional trail will be separated, and over the BNSF near Peter Hobart School. In addition, when rehabilitation of at-grade crossings, existing bridges, and underpasses is needed, the city will look to enhance the crossings of the rail line.

Where We Are Headed – Planning for Freight

CP Rail Interchange Track (Switching Wye)

The CP Railway also operates an interchange track or switching wye between the two CP Rail segments. The track is used both by CP Railway and TC&W to switch trains from the CP Rail Bass Lake Spur and the CP Rail MN&S Spur, because they are at different elevations where they intersect. .

This wye interchange will be reconfigured as part of the SWLRT. The north leg of the switching wye will be removed to accommodate the LRT track and the north or south bound CP Rail Bass Lake Spur trains will merge on to the CP Rail MN&S line a new bridge and track just north of the Cambridge Street railroad bridge. The south leg of the switching wye will remain to allow access to the one remaining freight rail user in St. Louis Park, located west of Louisiana Avenue and north of Minnehaha Creek. The long range goal is to remove the switching wye altogether, and improve pedestrian traffic between Methodist Hospital and the Louisiana Avenue SWLRT station.

Freight Mobility Goals and Strategies

1. Minimize impacts of railroad operations in St. Louis Park.

Strategies

A. Invest in safety and crossing improvements along active railroad corridors, with particular attention to where SWLRT, trails and at-grade crossings occur.

B. Grade separate trails and roadways near rail lines where possible.

C. Work to eliminate blocking and switching operations and remove the switching wye in St. Louis Park.

D. Address noise and vibration impacts by working with agencies and railroads to implement such measures as improving the tracts, adding buffers, and using other effective measures.

Aviation

Where We Have Been

There are no airports or heliports in St. Louis Park, nor are any planned. The only regular landing of aircraft is by helicopters at a helistop serving Methodist Hospital.

Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport (MSP) is the region's major airport. Built in 1920, it is located seven miles to the southeast of St. Louis Park, and very accessible by freeway. Aircraft noise has been the source of occasional complaints by city residents. St. Louis Park is represented on the MSP Noise Oversight Committee (NOC) established by the Metropolitan Airports Commission in 2002.

Several smaller airports are also nearby: Flying Cloud Airport (built in 1941) is located eight miles to the southwest in Eden Prairie; and Crystal Airport (built in 1946) is located six miles to the north in the City of Crystal.

In the past 10 years a couple of aviation related items have occurred:

- Maintained presence on the Noise Oversight Committee.
- Maintained procedures for ensuring compliance of all buildings to FAA regulations.

Where We Are Today – Aviation

The proximity to the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport (MSP) exposes St. Louis Park to air traffic noise. The map of the MSP Airport Noise Policy Area (adopted in 1996) shows the entire city to be outside of the one mile aircraft buffer line demarcated by the Metropolitan Council, and it is well beyond the updated 2007 60-DNL noise exposure contour line within which federal funds are available to mitigate noise in residences. However, the map also illustrates that the city is located directly under the glide and take-off paths of the southeast runways. The frequency of overhead aircraft flights, and the resulting noise, has caused concern on the part of some city residents. Interactive maps of arrival and departure aircraft flight tracks along with other information on noise issues are available on the Metropolitan Airports Commission Noise Program Website, www.MACnoise.com.

The Methodist Hospital helistop, located on the roof of the west side of the hospital building, is used for the transportation of patients. It is registered with the FAA, and is licensed, inspected and approved by the Minnesota Department of Transportation, Office of Aeronautics, in accordance with Chapter 8800 of the Minnesota Rules. Prescribed take-off and landing paths are in use which minimizes noise impacts on the surrounding residential areas.

Although there are currently no heliports in the City of St. Louis Park, the city's zoning ordinance makes provision for them in areas zoned for Office Use. The zoning ordinance sets limits on their hours of operations, take-off and landing flight paths, and proximity to residential areas.

Where We Are Headed – Aviation Planning

MSP Airport and the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) continue to work closely with cities and neighborhoods impacted by aircraft noise. St. Louis Park is represented on the MSP Noise Oversight Committee (NOC) established by the Metropolitan Airports Commission in 2002. The purpose of this committee is to bring industry and community representatives together to discuss noise issues at MSP, and ultimately, to bring policy recommendations to the MAC.

Aviation Mobility Goals and Strategies

1. Ensure the compliance of all city buildings subject to FAA regulations concerning rooftop lighting and coloration.

Strategies

A. Protect navigational aids within St. Louis Park from physical encroachment and electronic interference.

B. Encourage the use of noise mitigation measures in new construction, particularly in known noise complaint areas.

C. Maintain procedures for ensuring compliance of all buildings subject to FAA regulations concerning rooftop lighting and coloration. Maintain procedures for informing the FAA and MN Department of Transportation of any proposals for structures over 200 feet high.

D. Maintain representation on the Noise Oversight Committee of the Metropolitan Airports Commission.

2. Improve access to MSP airport for St. Louis Park residents and businesses through design and implementation of the city's and region's transportation plans.

Strategies

A. Continue to partner and urge implementation of the Green Line Extension/SWLRT to provide transit access to the airport.

B. Support the Midtown Greenway Streetcar to connect to the Blue Line for airport access

Chapter 7
Community Health & Safety

Vision for Community Health & Safety

The health and safety of St. Louis Park community members is fundamental to their quality of life and economic vitality. Health and safety are integrated into all five of the city's Strategic Priorities adopted in 2018.

The World Health Organization (WHO) operates with the principle that "health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." This principle guides the city's understanding of health and how the city contributes to community well-being. St. Louis Park recognizes that health is impacted by many social and physical determinants, including health and healthcare, education, economic stability, neighborhoods and the built environment, social and community context.

The city strives to address those determinants where possible so that all community members have the opportunity to reach their full health potential. A particular community health focus for the city has been youth and schools. One of Vision 3.0's five recommendations is "Prepare Our Next Generation" which encompasses both K-12 and post-secondary education.

Community safety is essential to health, well-being, and the overall vitality of the community. Residents, business owners, and people who work and visit the city need to feel safe and protected. Cities typically have public safety as one of their main functions. St. Louis Park specifically has police, fire and inspection services – all of which are looking out for the safety and well-being of people in the community.

St. Louis Park has made a practice of being proactive in its public safety services. From community-oriented policing, to fire responders paying attention to people's issues that become apparent from medical calls, to the point-of sale and rental licensing programs, people in St. Louis Park benefit from this proactive approach. With this philosophy, public safety personnel get to know the community in a more holistic way, and become partners with community members. These community connections build trust and improve the safety and well-being for everyone.

Community Health

Where We Have Been

Modern public health emerged as a response to widespread illness and environmental contamination in the late nineteenth century and early to mid-twentieth century. Broad public health efforts focused on the eradication of disease through the development of vaccines and sanitary sewer systems, securing clean water, separating industrial processes from the general population, and establishing public medical facilities. In St. Louis Park, the city contributed to these efforts by developing clean municipal water and sanitary sewer systems, cleaning up polluted sites, and pioneering building and property maintenance codes to ensure safe living conditions.

In more recent decades, the understanding of public health and how cities contribute to community well-being has evolved to include aspects of the built environment and social and economic realities that impact the long-term health of community members. St. Louis Park has expanded upon past public health efforts to include this broader understanding in planning and policy initiatives.

1995 Vision Process and Comprehensive Plan

Livable Community

In 1994, a committee of St. Louis Park community members representing government, schools, businesses, community organizations, religious institutions, and residents set a new vision for the city that focused on sense of community, connection, and principles of a livable community, which include walkability, mixed use neighborhoods, human-scale development, multi-modal streets and pathways, and transit-oriented development with the intention of creating a healthier community.

2006 Active Living Hennepin County Partnership

In 2006, the City of St. Louis Park engaged with Hennepin County and partnering cities in sharing and learning from best practices that promote more walkable and bikeable communities. The partnership encourages complete streets policies, active living resolutions, accessible and safe design of roads, trails, sidewalks, and transit, the development of community gardens, and funding and technical support for local initiatives. The city continues to be a partner in this group.

2006 Vision Process and Comprehensive Plan

Active Living: Parks and Trails Master Plan

The 2006 Vision St. Louis Park initiative provided city staff and elected officials an opportunity to learn from community members that the city's sidewalks and trails are a vital piece of the city's infrastructure. The vision process identified the need to continually improve the sidewalk and trail system to make it safe and easy for residents and visitors to move around the city without being dependent on automobiles. Such efforts help reduce reliance on cars and improve the overall health of residents by facilitating active lifestyles.

Influenced by community feedback in the 2006 Vision St. Louis Park, the city worked with community members to create the 2008 ***Active Living: Sidewalks and Trails Plan***. The plan envisions the city as a place with a connected network of sidewalks and trails that encourage physical fitness and non-polluting transportation options accessible to all ages and abilities.

Connect the Park

To implement the ***Active Living: Sidewalks and Trails Plan***, the city launched the ***Connect the Park*** initiative in 2013. This program of investing in sidewalk and trail connections aims to increase pedestrian and bike friendly neighborhoods and improve connectivity across St. Louis Park. It is a comprehensive, city-wide system of sidewalks, trails, and bikeways that provides local and regional connectivity, supports health and active living, improves safety and accessibility, and enhances overall community livability.

CONNECT THE PARK

Ten-year initiative to improve sidewalks, trails and bikeways in St. Louis Park

- 10 miles of sidewalks
- 3 miles of trails
- 32 miles of bikeways
- 2 trail bridges

Select Recent Initiatives

Urban Reforestation (2009)

A healthy and robust urban tree canopy can support more physical activity and promotes mental well-being. It also cools the city in the summer, and mitigates some of the negative health effects of climate change. The purpose of the Urban Reforestation Policy is to provide a healthy and diverse tree population and support the city's vision regarding environmental stewardship. This policy is achieved by replacing past, current, and future tree losses along corridors and in our parks with a diverse selection of trees, prioritizing native species where possible.

Health in the Park (2013)

In 2013, the city launched the Health in the Park initiative with funding from the Center for Prevention at Blue Cross Blue Shield. The city partnered with the school district, Park Nicollet and local non-profits to lead this effort. At its launch, more than 1,500 community members participated in conversations about health in the community which led to a community-wide collaboration to implement program and policy changes that align with the community's health needs in physical, mental and social well-being.

Complete Streets (2013)

Complete Streets consists of the planning, scoping, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of roads in order to reasonably address the safety and accessibility needs of users across all ages, abilities, and transportation modes. The Complete Streets Policy helps support biking and walking in St. Louis Park, and creates safer streets for all community members.

Healthy Eating and Active Living (2013)

The Healthy Eating and Active Living Policy aims to establish mechanisms to support individual, community, and environmental efforts to improve the public's health by encouraging the development and implementation of policies and practices that support and promote healthy eating and active living among residents of St. Louis Park.

Where We Are Today

St. Louis Park continues to implement policies and programs and engage citizens in activities that support a healthier community. Progress made by the Health in the Park initiative, as well as across many city departments, impacts health through a holistic approach.

Health in the Park

The Health in the Park initiative is a collaborative effort between the city, the school district and community members. Two programs make up the current Health in the Park initiative, the ***Health in the Park Champion Program*** and the ***Healthy Living Grant Program.***

Health in the Park Champion Program

The Health in the Park Champion Program is made up of volunteer community members who partner with the city and school district to advance health through program and policy changes and act as a connection point between the city, school district and the community. Volunteers sit on advisory boards, volunteer at health related community events and create their own grassroots programs such as healthy cooking classes, mental health support groups, and community walks.

Champions interested in advancing mental health awareness and resources in St. Louis Park partnered with the National Alliance for Mental Illness to bring mental health awareness classes and resources to the community from 2014-2016. Several classes were hosted at businesses, work sites, religious institutions and through community education. They have also created a show for public television, hosted tables at community events, hosted support groups and partnered with Friends of the Arts to combine art with mental health awareness.

Champions interested in promoting physical activity have proposed and coordinated bike safety classes in schools, created a safer crosswalk at Susan Lindgren Elementary School, and have hosted community walks in both the winter and summer months. They advocate for safe sidewalk and trail connections throughout the community and volunteer at various events promoting physical activity.

Champions interested in nutrition education and promotion have worked with the school district on creating more nutritious school lunches and have helped with the creation and testing of a new nutrition curriculum program. They also partnered with the University of Minnesota to bring Cooking Matters® education courses to adults and teens who are at risk of living in hunger. The Champion group currently has thirteen volunteers and is continually growing.

Healthy Living Grant Program

The Healthy Living Grant Program was created in 2017 to support grassroots community driven action related to health and well-being. The city provides funds up to $1,000 per project and in 2018 we expect to fund 10-12 projects. The Healthy Living Grant Program is open to all individuals and organizations in the community and provides funding for health projects relating to mental and physical well-being. Notable activities funded in 2017 included funding to Wayside Recovery Center for six weeks of nutrition education courses for those in recovery, the Birchwood Neighborhood 5K Walk/Run, which had 135 participants of all ages, a mental health awareness walk, and a partnership with Susan Lindgren Elementary School to bring free yoga to adult residents, parents and teachers.

Beyond the Health in the Park initiative, the opportunities to be well physically, socially and mentally are supported throughout several city departments.

Recreation and Parks

Recreation programming in the city supports physical, mental and social well-being for adults, teens and youth. Recreation programming offers a variety of physical activity programs including exercise classes, organized sport leagues, dance, karate and more, bringing the community together improving social and mental well-being.

Facilities

Parks and recreation facilities brings opportunities for social, physical and mental well-being by providing gathering spaces for community members to be active, connect with one another and spend time in nature. The city's parks and recreation system includes 52 parks and 750 acres of dedicated parks and open space, and accounts for 11.47% of land in the city. City parks have features including outdoor ice skating rinks, playgrounds, picnic tables, basketball courts and athletic fields, fostering physical activity and social connections. Recreation facilities including the Aquatic Park, Recreation Center, Skate Park, and the Recreation Outdoor Center bring opportunities for social connections and physical activities such as swimming, skate boarding and hockey, as well as numerous events, classes and programs.

Westwood Hills Nature Center

The Westwood Hills Nature Center offers 160 acres of natural area featuring trails and open space for community members to spend time in nature, as well as programming to educate youth, teens and adults and inspire appreciation for our natural world. The center partners with schools to introduce the benefits of nature to school kids during field trips, and gets youth and teens involved with volunteer opportunities through the Junior Naturalist Program.

Community Gardens

The city promotes physical, mental and social well-being through community gardens. Five community gardens are managed by the city, which are available for yearly rental, with others managed by neighborhood or apartment associations. Ensuring garden plots are accessible for lower income communities, the city offers free assistance for community garden plots. Furthermore, the city manages six edible gardens as part of the Summer Park Playground Program.

Additional information can be found in the Parks, Open Space and Natural Resources section of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

Local Food Growing

St. Louis Park supports homegrown food options that support mental health and wellness and locally sourced nutritious foods. In addition to community garden space for community members, the city also permits the keeping of bees and chickens subject to some conditions in single family residential areas.

Community Connections

Volunteer Opportunities

The city engages its community members in volunteer opportunities throughout the year with one-time and ongoing activities in virtually all departments. Each year more than 1,000 volunteers donate more than 10,000 hours of time, extending and enhancing the city's services. Offering volunteer opportunities connects community members with the work the city does and engages community members in improving their social well-being.

Neighborhood Revitalization Grant Program

The City of St. Louis Park established the Neighborhood Revitalization Grant Program began in 1996 to support neighborhoods and enhance community connections by bringing neighbors together. Financial support is provided for special projects initiated by neighbors to connect, address issues, implement ideas and get to know one another. Support of neighborhood organizations allows for community connections and reinforces residents' social well-being. Through the neighborhood grant program, several social events are held throughout the year for neighbors to connect with one another (see the Plan by Neighborhood section of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan).

Police Department Community Outreach

The Police Department Community Outreach team hosts a wide variety of community outreach activities and programs to promote community well-being. Community outreach activities create safer, better connected communities, including Basketball in the Park and the Skateboarding Extravaganza (see Police Department Services section).

Community Organizations

There are many community organizations throughout the city that focus on community building and improving the lives of residents in St. Louis Park. These organizations contribute to the well-being of St. Louis Park by bringing people together through events, programming and education, bringing resources to those at risk in the community and by providing financial resources.

St. Louis Park has many community focused organizations that bring resources, programs, events, and education, enhancing the lives of those living and learning in St. Louis Park. Some of these include:

- St. Louis Park Schools Community Education
- Sabes Jewish Community Center
- Children First
- League of Women Voters
- Parktacular
- Friends of the Arts
- St. Louis Park Historical Society

There are many organizations that provide resources to those at risk or in need through services, resources or funds. Some of these include:

- Perspectives
- Knights of Columbus
- Fare for All
- St. Louis Park Emergency Program
- Matter
- Park Nicollet Foundation
- Community Youth and Development Fund

Select New and Ongoing Initiatives

Tobacco-Free Places

St. Louis Park has been a regional leader in tobacco-free policies, including making our parks and open spaces tobacco-free, restricting the sale of flavored tobacco, and raising the purchasing age of tobacco to 21. Additionally, the St. Louis Park Housing Authority has become smoke-free in its publicly-owned housing.

Advancing Racial Equity

In 2016 the city initiated the Advancing Racial Equity initiative with the goal of making St. Louis Park a more equitable place for all people. This initiative began with city officials and staff participation in training and education on racial equity, to explore government's role in advancing racial equity. A full time staff member has been hired to assist in future goal development to reduce racial disparities present in the community.

A racial equity statement has been created:

> If the practices, programs and services of the city are not fair, inclusive and equitable to all, the potential of the community and those it serves is diminished. From an elected, appointed and staffing perspective, our organization does not mirror the community. We will strive for racial equity by building understanding of the issues in our organization and intentionally and proactively take measures that break down barriers to a just and inclusive community.

Kids in the Park (2017)

Stable, affordable housing is important to the health and well-being of children and their families. Furthermore, studies suggest kids who stay in the same school and the same home do better. Kids in the Park is a city-funded program that provides rental assistance for up to four years to households with school-age children that are at or below 50% area median income. This program is aimed at alleviating some of the housing instability that can impact lower income families and is available for those households that do not already receive another form of housing assistance. Kids in the Park was developed by the St. Louis Park Housing Authority in partnership with the St. Louis Park Emergency Program (STEP) and the St. Louis Park School District.

Tenant Protection Ordinance (2018)

Without adequate housing, families have trouble managing daily lives; and when this happens, their health suffers. This is a particular challenge for low income community members because a larger percentage of their income must be used to pay for rent, leaving less for other expenses that contribute to their health and well-being. In 2018, St. Louis Park passed a tenant protection ordinance, the first of its kind in Minnesota, that provides low-income renters some protection in the case that a new landlord decides to raise rents, not renew leases, or re-screen tenants.

Climate Action Plan (2018)

In February 2018, the St. Louis Park City Council adopted a Climate Action Plan with the ambitious goal of achieving carbon neutrality, having a net zero carbon footprint, by 2040. Three initiatives related to the Climate Action Plan are currently in progress to build community awareness and engagement and inspire change. The three initiatives are:

- A youth-led initiative building on the city's history of engaging its young residents;
- Centralizing information about the plan and other climate action resources into one, easy-to-find hub for households and business to reference; and
- Accelerating adoption of electric vehicles by installing chargers in public parking lots.

Living Streets (In Process)

To support healthier, more livable neighborhoods, streets must be vital, healthy places. To accomplish this, the city is developing a Living Streets Policy that will inform decision-making throughout all phases of transportation projects. Some of the Living Streets Policy components include:

- Invest in neighborhood livability
- Promote travel by walking or bicycling
- Enhance the safety and security of streets
- Improve the quality of stormwater runoff
- Support the urban forest
- Improve the aesthetics of streets

Where We Are Headed

Determinants of Health

Health is sometimes thought of solely as it relates to clinical health care; and while access to health care is still a priority for St. Louis Park, research shows that social, environmental, and economic factors, and how those factors become embedded in the built environment, have a significant impact on the health of community members. These factors are social and physical determinants of health because they influence the conditions that impact people's ability to thrive and be healthy. These include:

- Neighborhood and built environment
- Education
- Economic stability
- Health and health care
- Social and community context

These determinants can have long-term ramifications. Inequities related to opportunities, conditions, policies, and practices impact the healthy development and lifestyle of entire generations.

St. Louis Park strives to support social and physical environments that promote good health for all. The goal is to ensure the conditions in which people in the community are able to achieve a state of health and well-being, regardless of race, ethnicity, age, gender, neighborhood of residence, income, sexuality or any other characteristic.

Health Equity

Currently, there are wide disparities in the health outcomes of Minnesotans, particularly among American Indian, Hispanic/Latino and African American communities, but also for low-income populations, those with mental illnesses, and others. Many factors contribute to these health disparities, among them persistent and significant differences in the conditions that create health and the opportunity to be healthy within these communities. When these health disparities arise out of conditions that are socially determined – or, created by decisions that affect community or society at large – they are considered health inequities. In St. Louis Park, an increasingly diverse population means an increasing need to address these health inequities and the social and economic disparities that underpin them. A health equity lens is vital to the city's vision of a healthy St. Louis Park for all community members.

Moving Forward

Holistic health and well-being that is achievable for all is a priority, as the city strives to advance mental, physical, and social well-being strategies. The Health in the Park initiative will remain a priority, and will continue to engage with community members through the Champion Program and the Healthy Living Grant program, advancing physical, mental and social well-being.

Figure 7-1. Public Health Determinants

Community Health Goals and Strategies

1. Support social and mental wellbeing initiatives that span age and culture.

Strategies

A. Prioritize programs that promote health equity for all in the Healthy Living Grant program.

B. Support opportunities for children and youth to gain skills, increase self-esteem, and envision a positive future through partnership with organizations such as Children First.

C. Engage older residents in community conversations and volunteer opportunities so that they can find fulfillment in ways that benefit themselves and the community.

D. Promote volunteerism and community service among people of all ages and cultures by creating and communicating volunteer opportunities within the city.

E. Promote opportunities for people to build connections with their peers, neighbors, and the greater community by supporting activities, and events through the support of neighborhood organizations, the neighborhood grant program and the Healthy Living Grant program.

F. Celebrate young people's accomplishments, and promote activities for children and youth to increase their participation in the community through volunteer programs such as the junior naturalist and junior park leader volunteer programs.

2. Support physically healthy communities that span age and culture.

Strategies

A. Partner with the school district and support nutritional changes and education in the schools and across the community.

B. Support community nutrition education through the Healthy Living Grant program.

C. Seek ways to offer healthy nutritional options in municipal buildings.

D. Engage with the community on needs and desires pertaining to physical wellbeing.

E. Seek ways to implement initiatives that support physical activity in St. Louis Park through walking and biking in all parts of the community.

F. Support efforts led by the Health in the Park Champions that strengthen the ability of children, youth, families, seniors and people of all ages to participate in their physical health, wellness, and education, and to contribute to the development of a vibrant, growing community.

G. Support efforts to reduce exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke in outdoor areas, particularly where vulnerable populations, such as children and seniors, are likely to be present.

3. Ensure all in our community have access to healthy food.

Strategies

A. Conduct a detailed study to assess food accessibility and security in the community, and determine if there are any gaps.

B. Determine what steps the city can take to address gaps in food access and security.

4. Continue the Health in the Park initiative to support healthy growth, healthy aging, and healthy lifestyles for all.

Strategies

A. Grow the Health in the Park Champion Program, engaging with community members to adopt healthy and active lifestyles to improve their general physical and mental health and well-being and to promote healthy aging for all ages.

B. Promote access to affordable opportunities for people to participate in fitness and recreational activities and to enjoy the outdoors.

C. Support connections and opportunities that serve the homeless, mentally ill, and chemically dependent populations through the Health in the Park program.

D. Grow the Health in the Park initiative in partnership with the school district and other community organizations who wish to advance the wellbeing of those in the city.

E. Expand reach of the Health in the Park program ensuring equitable communication and opportunity for participation.

5. Consult the Climate Action Plan to increase resiliency and adaptability to the health effects of climate change.

Strategies

A. Address prospective health concerns related to climate change and the impact of extreme weather conditions on community members.

6. Improve regional collaboration around health and human services.

Strategies

A. Continue to be a part of county-wide initiatives such as Active Living Hennepin Communities and seek ways to collaborate across communities on healthy living activities and initiatives.

B. Support and make connections with community organizations and other jurisdictions that advocate for strong health, human service, and public safety systems, including services for mental health and substance abuse in partnership with the Health in the Park initiative.

C. Continue to address health issues in the community, with attention to helping provide information on resources for seniors, and vulnerable and isolated populations.

Schools and Youth

Schools and Youth were highlighted as one of the five Vision 3.0 recommendations. The recommendation "Prepare Our Next Generation" encompasses access to K-12 education as well as post-secondary education. However, the city's Strategic Priority that stems from this Vision 3.0 recommendation is "creating opportunities to build social capital through community engagement." More specifically, this Strategic Priority points to the following bullets in relation to youth:

» Connecting and engaging with the St. Louis Park School District and other community organizations to meet the needs of current and future community.

» Continuing to support youth and future generations.

Supporting Youth in the Community

The city has always valued youth in the community. In particular, the city is working on supporting youth with its own programs and initiatives, as well as with partnerships with the School District and several other organizations. Some of these include:

» City Programs and Initiatives
- Youth members on city commissions
- Cops N Kids programming – such as safety camp, holiday shopping event, fishing with a Cop
- Summer Park Playground Program for youth ages 4-12
- Structured year-round recreational activities for young people of all ages
- Providing scholarships and volunteer opportunities to assist with costs of programs
- Junior Naturalist program
- Events such as Community Link to offer families information, services, and resources
- Health in the Park – improving healthy food options in the schools
- Kids in the Park housing program
- Public housing for families in single family homes and apartments
- Tobacco policies – tobacco-free parks; prohibiting the sale of flavored tobacco products; raising the age to 21 for purchasing tobacco products
- Supporting The Nest – a place for students to gather for social, recreational, artistic and educational activities

» School District Partnerships - The city partners with the School District in a number of ways, including:
- Sharing of recreational fields and facilities
- Programs at Westwood Hills Nature Center
- Planning to improve pedestrian and bike routes to schools
- Participating in Career Day at the High School
- Partnering on school facilities, including the redevelopment of Eliot School and implementing improvements to buildings

» Community Organizations - The city provides support and partners with many community organizations to support youth, including:
- Children First – Children First is a philosophy that encourages adults to positively support children of all ages by supporting the 40 Developmental Assets, which address the relationships, experiences and expectations young people need to thrive
- Parktacular annual festival
- St. Louis Park Community Youth and Development Fund – supports a number of youth activities in the community

» Perspectives and Wayside House – support women with children

St. Louis Park Public Schools

St. Louis Park Public School District is a nationally recognized suburban public school district, serving approximately 4,600 students. The School District and the City of St. Louis Park boundaries are nearly identical and both public entities work closely and collaboratively to support residents of all ages.

The St. Louis Park School District was organized in July of 1890 with two schools and 51 students, and recently celebrated its 125th anniversary. Over the decades, school enrollment has fluctuated greatly tied to changes in general population demographics, and public facilities have been both opened and closed to respond to these fluctuations. In 2010 the School District initiated a reconfiguration of its elementary, middle, and high schools in order to better leverage its financial resources. Cedar Manor School was closed, and programs based at the Eliot, Central, and Lenox community centers were consolidated. The Junior High School was changed to a Middle School, with grades 6-8. All of the elementary schools became Kindergarten through 5th grade.

Where We Are Today

St. Louis Park Public Schools is a caring, diverse community with a tradition of putting its children first. There are currently six schools within the public school district, including four elementary schools (K-5), one middle school (6-8) and one high school (9-12),with a total enrollment of approximately 4,600 students.

Community Education

The School District recognizes that the success of children in school and beyond is heavily influenced by available opportunities and the success of the community that surrounds them. The School District operates a robust Community Education program, which includes Early Learning programming for children ages 0-5 and their families, childcare services for school age children, and additional programming and volunteering opportunities for youth, adults, and seniors.

Where We Are Headed

Bond Referendum

In 2017, voters in St. Louis Park approved a $100.9 million bond referendum aimed at addressing increasing enrollment, aging facilities, and a need for more flexible learning spaces to accommodate next century learning. The bond referendum will also allow the district to achieve strategy four in the 2015-2020 strategic plan, which states that the district will ensure that facilities are consistent with the needs of learners and community. Major changes include: moving the Park Spanish Immersion School to the Cedar Manor building, remodeling the Central Community Center for District Offices, installing air conditioning at elementary schools; and numerous other building renovations and remodeling.

As part of its mission, St. Louis Park Public Schools is committed to ensuring all students achieve their highest level of achievement; preparing all students to contribute to society; offering high quality opportunities for lifelong learning; providing multiple pathways to excellence; challenging all learners to meet high standards; and providing a safe and nurturing environment that energizes and enhances the spirit.

The 2015-2020 Strategic Plan guides the work of the school district. It includes four key strategies – each with multiple results to be achieved – all of which are measured to ensure that the mission is achieved.

Racial Equity

St. Louis Park community members come from all parts of the world, which contributes to a diverse and ever-changing student body. Students benefit from this opportunity to learn with classmates from all racial, ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The school district welcomes and celebrates its diversity, aims to close racial achievement gaps, and become the least demographically predictable public school district in Minnesota. St. Louis Park is also home to several private schools as shown in Table 7-2.

Table 7-1. Public Schools Enrollment

NAME	GRADES	ENROLLMENT
Aquila Elementary School	K-5	569
Peter Hobart Elementary School	K-5	524
Susan Lindgren Elementary School	K-5	525
Park Spanish Immersion School	K-5	509
Middle School	6-8	1026
High School	9-12	1435

Table 7-2. Private Schools Enrollment

NAME	GRADES	ENROLLMENT	DESCRIPTION
Torah Academy	P/K-8	299	Jewish day school
Holy Family Academy	P/K-8	187	Catholic day school
Minneapolis Jewish Day School	K-8	200	Jewish day school
Metropolitan Open School	K-8	8	Mixed-age, non-traditional day school
Groves Academy	1-12	272	School for students w/ learning disabilities & attention disorders
Benilde-St. Margaret's High School	7-12	1131	Catholic junior high and high school
Bais Yaakov High School	9-12	27	All girls, Jewish high school
Yeshiva of Minneapolis	9-12	31	All boys, Jewish high school
French American School of Minneapolis	P/K-5	60	French language immersion day school
Talmud Torah	2-8		Supplementary afternoon/ evening Jewish education

Inspection Services

Building and Property Standards

Property value is a driver of community vitality. Aging structures require owner maintenance and investment to prevent deterioration from occurring. Even a small percentage of structures showing neglect can lead to a perception of blight beginning. The city will continue to evolve and develop proactive property maintenance programs to help encourage owners to maintain their property values. Developing these programs and streamlining processes will assist home owners and businesses to remodel, expand, and reduce energy usage leading to enhanced public health and safety throughout the city.

Building Inspections

New construction and remodeling is regulated by the Minnesota Construction Code and city ordinances, which include regulations for building, plumbing, electrical, mechanical, energy, and several other aspects of building construction. Permits are required for construction work and are issued after application and review of the proposed work by the city inspection staff. On average 8,000 construction permit applications are processed each year and over 20,000 inspections are performed annually.

The city also serves as a representative in collecting information and fees for State agencies such as the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry and the Metropolitan Council. A state surcharge is applied to all construction permits and sewer access charges are calculated for the potential additional load on sewage treatment for the metropolitan area when new buildings or more intensive uses are proposed.

Property Maintenance Program

The city has a comprehensive Property Maintenance Code requiring all buildings be maintained in compliance with the building code they were constructed under to ensure that structural and life safety components are not changed or removed.

These inspections on housing and commercial properties also enforce safety, health, and fire codes, thereby creating and maintaining a livable and viable community.

Point-of-Sale Inspections

Since the first housing inspection in 1972, the Inspections Department has established a model point-of- sale inspection program which has the sole purpose of maintaining the housing stock to quality standards. The city requires property inspections whenever there is a transfer of ownership of any building. A commercial, industrial or residential property owner must apply for the certificate and have an inspection of the building and property before selling the property. Inspectors verify the property meets the Maintenance Code and issue a certificate if in compliance. A code violation occurring from building deterioration or improper modification must be corrected before the seller is issued the certificate. In many building transactions the buyer can enter into an agreement with the city known as a Temporary Property Maintenance Certificate, acknowledging the deficiencies and assuming responsibility to resolve them within a specified time.

Inspections provide an opportunity to verify installation and working condition of life safety elements, such as working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in all dwelling units. These important and relatively easy to install life safety items have been the most common deficiency identified during inspection programs.

Rental Licensing and Inspections

All dwelling units ranging from single family to apartment complexes that are not owner occupied must be licensed annually. The multi-housing rental inspections program began in the late 1970s and the one- and two- family residential inspections program began in 2004. These two programs were established to ensure landlords as well as owner-occupied home owners comply with the same property maintenance code. Overall, the growing rental inspection program helps ensure uniformity in the inspection of 324 multi-family buildings with over 9,000 individual units, 900 units of duplexes/townhomes, and 770 single family homes.

Vacant houses are considered non-owner occupied and must be licensed and inspected as for rental properties to ensure they remain secure and maintained.

Inspections of rental units and common spaces are completed at least once every two years to verify compliance with the Property Maintenance Code. Inspections of individual units are also performed if a tenant calls with concerns over property condition. The licensing program also includes provisions focused on improving community livability through enforcing crime-free provisions. This program is involves a joint operation between Inspections and the Police departments. Property owners are required to have all tenants sign a crime-free lease addendum. Continued public nuisance behavior or criminal activity will result in the owner being notified by Police staff and requested to develop a plan with the tenant to change behavior. Failure of a tenant to comply may lead to the owner being required to terminate the lease. The program was initiated in 2008 and proved helpful in reducing activities which may lead to deterioration of a property and the community.

Property Maintenance Inspection

Property maintenance service is essential to the St. Louis Park community. The city receives approximately 600 complaints annually on single family homes, multi-family buildings, commercial and industrial, railroad and public right of way properties. The types of complaints range from trash, litter, garbage, graffiti, junk vehicles, broken windows, unpainted structures to unsafe structures, illegal dumping and hazardous waste disposal.

During the past decade, the city has conducted three separate city-wide surveys in all of the residentially zoned districts resulting in 700 homes now in compliance. In addition two commercial and industrial district surveys were conducted, resulting in 200 additional commercial buildings complying with the property maintenance code. By conducting these surveys, the city has demonstrated a proactive approach to the community as well as a quick and consistent response approach to complaints.

The city has utilized a low interest loan incentive programs for home improvements in conjunction with city-wide property evaluations to help residents with limited means maintain their properties. This approach has been successful in reducing the enforcement perception of large scale evaluations and generates positive improvements in overall property condition visible to the generalcommunity.

Nuisance Complaints

The Inspections Department addresses nuisances which potentially affect the health, safety and well-being of the community. Junk and garbage may serve as refuge for insects and rodents which carry communicable disease, and therefore pose a health risk. Graffiti adds to an overall feeling of decline in an area. If not removed promptly, it can be interpreted as a sign of low community pride. Inspectors routinely respond to complaints and work with offenders to remedy nuisance situations. Several hundred complaints about possible code violations are received each year through direct contact or on the internet based mystlouispark.org for reporting issues or maintenance items within the city.

Integration with other programs

Verifying properties are well maintained is also accomplished as a component of other programs. Licensing of various businesses such as restaurants, hotels, environmental emissions and others include provisions that buildings and properties must be maintained per the Maintenance Code. Verification is done during the regular annual inspection for these businesses. Other opportunities are provided during regular Fire Department inspection of commercial building approximately every two years.

Air, Water and Soil Hazards

Air Quality

Since the passage of the federal Clean Air Act in 1963, air pollution has been more widely understood by the public as an important issue for health and quality of life reasons. The Minnesota Legislature has passed its own version of the Clean Air Act, an important step to comply with federal regulations. Since 2001, there have been several air-quality related pollution alerts in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. These alerts typically occur during the summer months, but can occur year- round. Most frequently, these alerts are related to high levels of ground-level ozone (smog) and fine particulate matter (soot).

Within St. Louis Park, the major impact to air pollution is emissions from vehicle travel. There are also several industries holding permits from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to allow emissions of certain chemicals into the atmosphere. These emissions do not generally result in complaints to the city, however.

Asbestos

Asbestos was used in many construction applications until the mid-1970s. The mineral fiber was added to a variety of products such as shingles, tile, siding, and insulation to strengthen them and to provide heat insulation and fire resistance. Asbestos was found to be a potential health hazard in the mid-1970s because elevated levels of air-borne asbestos fibers, when inhaled, increase the risk of several lung diseases including the development of lung cancer.

The presence of asbestos in a home or building is not necessarily hazardous, however. The danger is that asbestos materials may become damaged and release fibers into the air. After identifying the potential health hazards of asbestos, the State of Minnesota developed guidelines and requirements for the removal of asbestos from many buildings, especially from school buildings. Removal itself can be dangerous and requires special clothing and the use of respirators to limit exposure to asbestos fibers which are easily airborne during demolition.

The city's involvement in asbestos is to provide residents with awareness of the hazards associated with handling asbestos materials including proper removal techniques and disposal.

Carbon Monoxide

Each year, many persons in Minnesota require medical attention as a result of carbon monoxide poisoning. Carbon monoxide results from incomplete burning of any carbon-containing fuel, and is potentially a serious health hazard. Carbon monoxide, like oxygen, is colorless, odorless, tasteless, and non-irritating, and it is readily absorbed by red blood cells replacing oxygen in the body and resulting in damage to body tissue.

Carbon monoxide may become a problem within a home when fuel-utilizing devices such as furnaces, water heaters, or gas dryers are improperly adjusted or vented. Carbon monoxide may also be a problem in enclosed parking facilities. The Inspections Department licenses and inspects all enclosed parking facilities annually. In addition, Property Maintenance Inspectors examine furnaces and gas appliances for proper ventilation. Informational pamphlets and ensuring carbon monoxide detectors are installed in all residential dwellings reduces the likelihood of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Radon

Radon is an odorless, colorless, tasteless gas that is produced by the natural decay of uranium and radium in the soil.

Minnesota has widespread low grade uranium and radium deposits. Radon levels above the 4 pc/l recommended by the EPA are found in one out of three homes in Minnesota. Radon can enter a home anywhere there is an opening between the home and the soil as well as through some solid material.

Exposure to radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer deaths in the United States behind cigarette smoking.

The Inspections Department is committed to increasing an awareness of the potential health risks associated with radon. Radon home testing kits have been made available at a minimal cost to all residents. Inspectors will meet with homeowners at no charge to help them determine the sources of radon in their homes and will explain mitigation options. Also available is information about how radon entry can be stopped relatively easily and inexpensively.

VOCs

In 2007, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) began an investigation regarding volatile organic compounds (VOCs) contamination in St. Louis Park. VOCs refer to a variety of chemicals that are by-products of industrial processes or found in household products that can have health impacts on respiratory and immune systems. Contamination was found in the ground water in certain parts of the city. The concern was the potential for VOC vapors permeating through the soil and accumulating inside residential homes and businesses causing human exposure. As a precaution, the EPA worked with the city to test buildings and implement mitigation measures in over forty buildings where elevated VOC levels were identified.

Noise

Municipal codes prohibit noises above certain decibel levels because loud noises potentially impose significant health hazards and disturb peace and quietude. Hearing loss is the most common health problem associated with elevated noise levels, but excessive noise has been found to change heart rates, elevate blood pressure and increase blood cholesterol. Excessive noise can also become a nuisance that can interfere with our normal residential and business activities. The Inspections Department enforces the noise ordinances codes to minimize excessive community noise.

Wells

Significant well installations (development) occurred in St. Louis Park prior to the time when a municipal water supply was available. Early properties used private wells as a water source. Although construction of infrastructure improvements to provide municipal water began in the 1930s with the goal to connect water to every property, there were likely over 5,000 private wells drilled in the city. In spite of the fact that all residential properties have access to a public water supply, many residential wells are still being used for watering lawns. Because wells are a potential source of unsafe drinking water, ground water contamination, and even contamination of the municipal water supply, the Minnesota Health Department requires all unused wells to be cement-sealed and capped or registered with the state. Inspectors are making incremental progress toward sealing wells as houses are sold. New information and the ability to map those locations where wells are likely to exist have improved the progress.

State Plumbing code requires backflow prevention devices on systems and devices with a potential to contaminate the public drinking water system. The Department of Inspections monitors wells, backflow prevention devices, and inspects all new plumbing installations. The Inspections Department ensures that commercial and residential properties with boilers, irrigation systems, and industrial process utilize the correct backflow prevention device and perform annual testing to ensure these protection devices are operating properly.

Lead

The lead found in the environment in St. Louis Park generally had its genesis either in leaded gasoline or in lead-based paints. Lead was used in gasoline to improve performance and mileage in automobiles and resulted in both air-borne and soil-borne lead. Lead was also used in oil based paints, especially in red and white paint to improve coverage and durability. In the late 1970s, lead was identified as a health risk and was eliminated from paint. Leaded gasoline was also phased out as automobile engines were redesigned to burn unleaded gas.

Many residents have elevated lead levels in the soil around their house as a result of deteriorating lead-based paint. Others living near highly traveled roadways may have exterior high lead levels in the soil close to the roadway caused by leaded gasoline.

Lead can become a health risk if ingested or inhaled. The population most vulnerable to health risk from lead is women of child-bearing age and children under six. Elevated lead levels in the soil are not dangerous if proper precautions are practiced.

Lead based paints inside the home are potentially hazardous because of lead levels in dust which forms as paint deteriorates over time. Potential solutions to lead contamination range from expensive measures, such as soil replacement or total removal of lead-based paint, to less expensive measures, which include paint encapsulation and proper vegetative cover. The test for determining health risk is not the amount of lead in the environment, but the amount of lead that has entered the blood stream. Children with elevated blood lead levels can be treated effectively medically.

Because the potential for lead paint exists in literally every home constructed or painted prior to 1979, the State of Minnesota has recommended that every child be tested annually in order to monitor the blood lead levels. In addition, education can play an effective role in informing residents about how to reduce health risks. The city is pursuing an active role in informing the public about the risks and abatement methods for dealing with lead in the environment. Home inspections also reveal whether peeling paint is an issue that requires attention. Do it yourself test kits for lead can be purchased at local hardware store and are easy to use.

Contaminated Sites

Environmental pollution is monitored, regulated and/or treated by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), the Minnesota Department of Health, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, the Hennepin Conservation District, and others. At this point, partial inventories of polluted sites exist, but much of this information is incomplete and difficult to assemble. A more complete inventory of polluted sites could assist the city in designing its policies and programs. Examples of polluted sites in St. Louis Park are listed in the table on the following page.

A number of private and municipal plans are in place to remediate environmental contamination. The city continues to support solutions to clean up the environment and attempt to return “brownfield” sites to productive use.

Table 7-3. Contaminated Sites

TYPE OF POLLUTION	DESCRIPTION
Groundwater Pollution, e.g. Reilly Tar and Chemical Corp. site (Superfund Site)	The Reilly Tar & Chemical Corporation operated a wood preserving plant on this site from 1917 to 1972. The process involved the distillation of coal tar to produce creosote that was then used in treating lumber. Over the years, both coal tar and creosote impacted the site and contaminated four City wells. As a result the site was placed on the state and federal Superfund list. In order to control and properly remediate the site the City of St. Louis Park purchased it in 1972. Since that time, portions of the site (about 30% of the area) were developed for multi-family and commercial purposes. The remaining portions of the site were converted into parkland and play fields (Oak Hill Park). Monitoring and testing of groundwater continues.
Lead Pollution, e.g. National Lead Company site (Superfund site)	National Lead Co. operated a lead smelter on its site between 1940 and 1982. As a result, lead contaminated the air and soil, and was suspected of causing elevated levels of lead in the ground water. National Lead Co. agreed to participate in stabilization and capping of the site, and long- term ground water monitoring. In 2005, Real Estate Recycling (RER), the St. Louis Park Economic Development Authority and several other public agencies worked together to acquire this infamous site along with several neighboring blighted properties and successfully implemented a $20 million clean-up and redevelopment plan. The resulting Highway 7 Corporate Center is an attractive, 80,000 square foot office-showroom facility which has attracted national-credit tenants and several hundred high quality jobs and significant tax base. In February 2008, RER received a Certificate of Completion from the MPCA for successfully completing its Response Action Plan for the site.
Land fill at Park Nicollet clinic site	This site was originally mined for sand and gravel, and subsequently used as a dump site. Land fill operations ceased in the early 1960s after accumulating garbage to a depth of approximately 30 feet. A medical clinic was constructed on this site, and in the early 1990s a medical office building and parking structure were added. As decomposition occurred, methane gas and other organic compounds were emitted, and the soil has shifted and settled. The shifting soil necessitated substantial reconstruction of one building on the site. The clinic entered into the VIC (Voluntary Investigation & Cleanup) program with the MPCA and continues to monitor the methane.
Underground gasoline storage tanks	In 1987, the State of Minnesota initiated a program to detect and clean up gasoline leaks and spills from underground gasoline storage tanks. Such spills occur most frequently in locations where equipment is fueled, maintained and stored, such as gas stations, service stations, bus garages, or equipment storage facilities. Under this program, more stringent controls on storage tank installation and maintenance have become mandatory, and funding has been allocated for cleanup costs through the State's Petrofund.
Dry cleaning operations	The dry cleaning process uses perchloroethylene, a chemical solvent, and hydrocarbon-based solvents. With dry cleaners in neighborhoods and malls, dry cleaners are one of the largest groups of chemical users that come into direct contact with the public. Because of the potential health and environmental concerns associated with dry cleaning solvents, the State assists in cleanup of soil, groundwater, and surface water contamination through its Drycleaner Fund.

Fire Department Services

The Fire Department provides a wide range of services to the community, including:

- Education and fire prevention
- Community code enforcement
- Emergency Medical Response
- Building, fire and life safety inspections
- Community EMT/Mobile Integrated Healthcare
- Fire suppression
- Technical rescue
- Hazardous materials response
- Emergency management and disaster preparedness

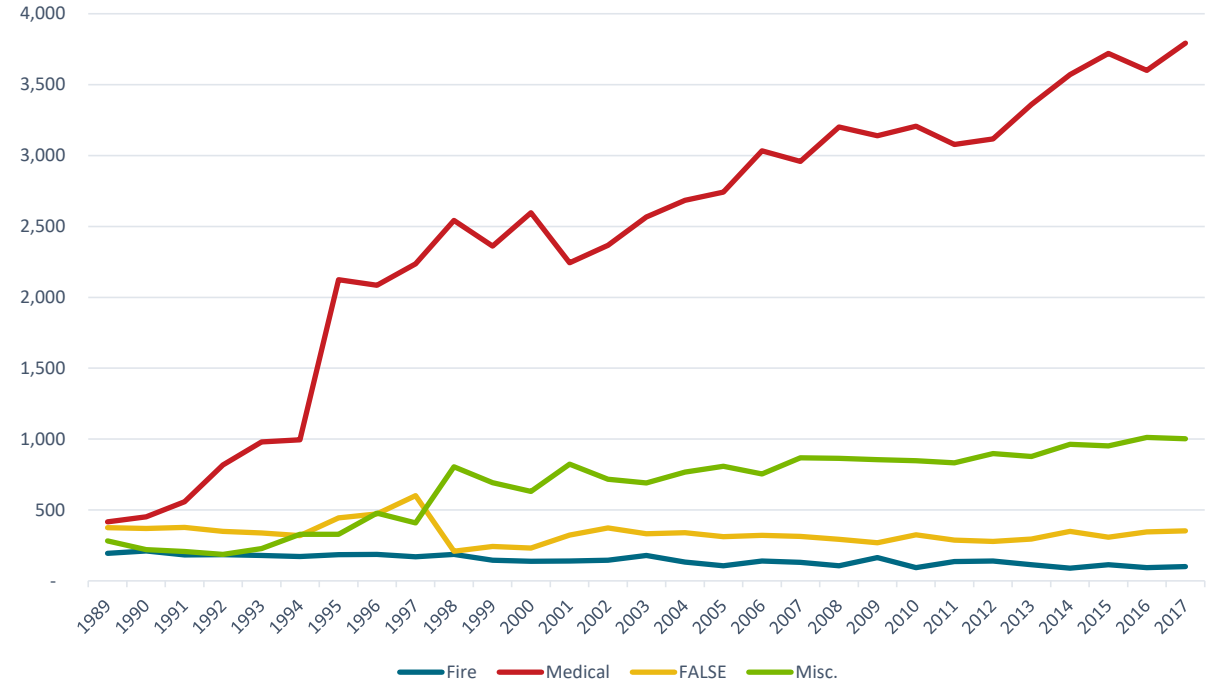
Resources and the Demand

Current Procedures/Practices

The department responds to a growing number of calls currently in excess of 5,200 calls for service annually. Calls ranging from emergency and non-emergency medical response, structure fires, to car accidents, and fire alarms. Emergency responses are handled by the on duty staff with robust call back, auto aid and mutual aid agreements to cover additional demand. The fire department responds out of two state of the art fire stations and has a diverse fleet consisting of 3 engines, 1 ladder, 2 Light Rescues, 1 boat, 1 RAMP vehicle, an ATV for wildland along with various support vehicles.

Over the last 20 years, the city has supported a combination model of staffing using both career and part time members. The transition of the volunteer firefighters to a part time duty crew resource coupled with the additional career staff allows for a more predictable level of staffing and enhances firefighter safety.

Figure 7-2. Volume of Service Calls since 1989



The fire department is directed by a full-time fire chief who serves as the city's Emergency Management Coordinator. There is a full time Deputy Chief of Operations, and Assistant Chief of Training and EMS and an Assistant Chief of Prevention who serves as the Fire Marshal. Currently, a full time career staff of 27 firefighters working 24 hour shifts coupled with a 25 part-time duty crew firefighters provide the staffing to address the demands for service. The department is divided into four divisions; Prevention, Suppression EMS/Community Health Management, and Emergency Management.

Community Risk Reduction

Fires cause loss to both life and property. Fires also result in long term losses for the community. For example, if a burned business chooses to relocate elsewhere, local jobs are lost.

Fires cause a community disruption if fire destroys a public building such as a school. It follows that limiting fire loss has both a safety and financial impact on the community. For these reasons, fire prevention has been a major focus of the Fire Department over the past decade. Programs have been developed which:

- Provide education to residents and business owners about fire prevention
- Aggressively inspect multi-family, institutional, commercial and industrial buildings to address fire and safety hazards
- Promote fire sprinkling and smoke detectors

A proportional relationship exists between fire loss and the time between the onset of a fire and the response to the fire. The mission to minimize fire loss requires both early detection and rapid effective response.

The economical delivery of quality services is the goal of all city departments. While the number of calls for service has increased, the number of major fires has decreased and is coincident with the attention to fire prevention.

Fire Sprinklers

Fire sprinkler systems are the most efficient means to reduce the loss of life and property. Fire sprinklers also protect firefighters during response. Consequently, a major goal of the city is to promote fire sprinkler systems for all commercial, industrial, institutional and multi-family buildings. Fire sprinklers are required for new construction by the State Building Code, based on occupancy, classification of use, building construction and building size. The State Fire Code establishes design standards for the actual sprinkler systems.

The State Building Code has been modified over the years to better address health and safety in buildings. New buildings and building additions must be constructed to new standards. There are many existing buildings in St. Louis Park that were constructed prior to newer standards for sprinklers and the cost of retrofitting sprinkler systems to existing buildings can be burdensome for some building owners.

To address this, the city council adopted a Special Assessment Program to allow sprinkler systems to be paid for over a 10 year period. This program is offered to eligible applicants at attractive interest rates. Initiated in 1994, this program continues to be popular with over $600,000 in special sprinkler assessments issued since 2004.

Economical fire sprinkler technology is also available to make one and two family residential properties safer. The Fire Department is exploring ways to encourage retrofitting existing homes and new homes with fire sprinkler devices.

A community where all buildings are sprinkled will have minimum to zero fire loss.

Smoke Alarms

Smoke alarms are an inexpensive way to save property and lives. Smoke alarms are now required in all sleeping rooms, hallways outside of sleeping rooms and on each floor of all new construction. Other ordinances require smoke alarms to be provided in older multi-family buildings. The presence of working smoke alarms in all buildings which house people would greatly enhance safety in the community. The Fire Department has initiated many programs to inform the public about how smoke alarms save lives and property.

Prevention Priorities

1. Continue to evaluate historical trends, inspection records and at risk populations to ensure education and prevention efforts are reaching the right audience.
2. Consider high risk areas within the community where prevention education could add value.
3. Survey customers for feedback to reinforce positive interactions with the community.
4. Continually evaluate the needs for each program including staffing, budgetary impacts, volunteers and grant programs.

Fire Inspections for Buildings

The Fire Department inspects all commercial, industrial, multi-family and institutional buildings to identify and correct fire and safety hazards. Single family houses are inspected for housing code deficiencies by the department of Inspections at the time of sale. The effectiveness of the inspections can be measured by the co-relationship between correcting such deficiencies as non-working smoke alarms, improper storage of flammable materials, hazardous wiring and the decreases in frequency and severity of fires. Fire Department Inspections in collaboration with Building Department Inspections prioritize high risk occupancies, senior facilities and change of use occupancies to ensure they continue to meet the city goals of health and safety.

Medical Emergencies and Rescue Operations

Emergency medical calls continue to climb as our population both increases and ages. Future approaches to emergency medical response will include more of a community health management approach. New response models designed which direct the right resource at the right time for the right cost are propelling the fire department into a more integral role in overall community health. The Fire Department staff are all trained to the level of Nationally Registered EMT, some staff are Nationally Registered Paramedic and a growing number are certified as Community EMT's. The Fire Department works under medical direction and provides a variety of interventions including naloxone, nebulization, beta antagonist, glucose, and epinephrine, cardiac resuscitation and defibrillation.

Emergency Management

Under Emergency Management, the city developed an All Hazard Emergency Disaster Plan (Plan) to prepare the community to meet any emergency that may occur from man- made, natural causes or domestic terrorism. The Emergency Operations Plan, which is continually reviewed and updated in response to ever changing situations and statutory requirements, is designed to save lives and property, minimize damage and restore the needs of the community in the event of disaster.

The City Manager, who is also Director of Emergency Management, works with the Mayor and Council to ensure that the needs of the community are met, with the Fire Chief coordinating the emergency operation. This includes issuing orders and using facilities such as hospitals and schools if necessary for the ultimate good of the community. The plan also recognizes the potential roles of Minnesota Homeland Security and Federal Emergency Management, the National Guard, Red Cross, Salvation Army, Hennepin County Emergency Management and health and medical services in the event of such an emergency.

Hazardous Material Storage

The Fire Department keeps data related to the storage of hazardous materials within the community. Fire Department personnel work closely with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to control chemical and petroleum product leaks that may occur. The fire department staff is trained regularly on pipeline and rail car safety and collaborates with both county and state emergency management.

The fire department issues permits for placement and removal of flammable storage tanks.

Arson

The Fire Department investigates fires to determine cause. If the cause is found to be arson, the Fire Department works with police to prosecute any identified arsonist. Prosecution has been found to be the best tool against arson. Juvenile arson can represent a problem for the community. Addressing juvenile problems with new approaches, including asset building and restorative justice, are now considered as alternatives to other punishment.

Senior needs

Senior housing creates one of the largest demands for medical emergency service of any land use due to decreased mobility and increased frailty of this group of citizens. The disproportionate medical service demands of this particular land use have caused some concern when evaluating department budget constraints. Increased density of senior populations, particularly those requiring skilled services, will place greater demands on resources.

Fire Department Goals and Strategies

1. **Build a resilient St Louis Park through an emphasis on prevention and community risk reduction.**

Strategies

A. Continue as an active participant to advance racial equity within St. Louis Park by training and the continued use of tools to ensure consistency and effectiveness in providing the best service in the most equitable way.

2. **Protect the community and maintain a healthy, safe environment for city residents and businesses.**

Strategies

A. Continue to provide leadership, mentorship and accountability that is flexible to meet changing community needs, focused on developing and preparing new leaders for the future while maintaining accountability to the community.

B. Maintain sufficient emergency response equipment, apparatus and staffing levels to ensure community protection, provide for firefighter safety and wellbeing and plan for changes in demand for service.

C. Continue to respond to and address health issues in the community. Pilot cost saving projects in the rapidly growing field of mobile integrated healthcare. Improve access to health care for all residents, lower the costs, and use the appropriate care for the type of call.

D. Use all-hazards approach to emergency management and crisis in order to be prepared for any variety of incidents and disasters. Plan and prepare to be able to provide appropriate response and be resilience when the community is most vulnerable.

3. **Encourage and promote cost-effectiveness and efficiency in our service delivery and eliminate redundancy when appropriate.**

Strategies

A. Training- Provide oversight and management for all Fire Department training and educational programs to ensure that the local, state, and federal mandates are met.

B. Revenue Enhancement- Identify and implement available sources of revenue in order to fund operational and structural improvements, and to lessen the burden on taxpayers. Seek to capture additional revenues through the expansion of contract services, enhanced reimbursable services and development of new value-added services for other public and private sector entities.

C. Technology- Continue to leverage technology in fire services to help keep our community and staff safe.

4. **Continue to build relationships within the community and promote neighborhood involvement and partnerships to promote a safe and healthy community.**

Strategies

A. Collaborate and cooperate in a positive manner with the community as a whole. Continue to capitalize on employing the abundance of healthcare resources in our service to the community.

Police Department Services

A community's quality of life is dependent upon its citizens feeling comfortable, safe and protected. St. Louis Park works diligently to maintain community safety and order, prevent crime, and protect life and property from fire and environmental hazards.

The Police Department's mission is to provide citizens with quality service, professional conduct, and a safe environment in which to live, work and learn. The Police are committed to an active partnership with the community to work together to solve problems and prevent crime and disorder.

In 1995 the Police Department shifted its emphasis from an agency responding to crime to an agency dedicated to preventing crime. This shift resulted in a commitment to the Community-oriented Policing operating philosophy that the department continues to employ today. Community-oriented Policing has been recently recognized as best practices in policing by The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing Report issued in 2015. Community-oriented policing and partnership building with the community help identify and solve problems before they become more serious issues or turn into crime. The intent is to work on prevention and resolving issues that affect the well being of the community. Preventing crime is defined as, "The anticipation, recognition and appraisal of a crime risk and the initiation of some action to remove or reduce the risk." Community policing emphasizes interaction and partnerships between officers, residents, schools, businesses, places of worship and local city government. Community policing innovations continue to provide new ways to make neighborhoods a safe place in which to live, work and learn.

Public Safety and Order

The major purpose of the Police Department is to provide a safe and secure city by curtailing crime and disorder in the community. Operational strategies of the Police Department were developed to encompass the entire range of services available to effectively address crime and disorder in addition to quality of life issues. Using established operational strategies, the Police Department works in partnership with other city departments, residents, business owners, school officials and other community members to deliver both proactive and response services. Operational strategies include:

1. Incident Response: Patrol officers responding to routine calls for service (past-action crime reports, animal complaints, etc.).
2. Emergency Response: Patrol officers respond to emergency incidents (medical, fires, vehicle accidents, in progress crimes, etc.).
3. Criminal Investigations: Police work done after a crime has occurred. Patrol Officers fully investigate crimes they respond to, however there are times when Investigators need to conduct further investigation, conduct search warrants, and prepare cases for processing.
4. Preventive/Directed Patrol: Information is collected, analyzed and disseminated to department personnel in an effort to proactively address specific issues (typically, traffic complaints, animal complaints, nuisance properties) and crime trends. Department resources are directed to problem areas and response strategies are created to effectively solve problems.
5. Problem Solving: A systematic process for identifying, analyzing, responding and assessing an issue that may become a problem. This work includes partnerships with all stakeholders. The Department's Information Management Group will assist in the problem solving process. Officers and other department personnel are responsible for conducting the appropriate response strategies.
6. Collateral Services: This encompasses Police services such as animal control, the dispatch center and clerical staff who assist officers in their work.

Partnership Building

The Police Department understands the interdependent relationship it has with the community and recognizes the importance of keeping the community connected and engaged with the city. When police are assigned to geographic areas for an extended period of time, it gives officers an opportunity to interact with community members and to develop and maintain relationships. When people feel the police are attentive to quality of life issues in the neighborhood, they are more likely to share information which enables police to become more effective at identifying problems or issues that are arising, preventing crime and disorder and solving crime incidents that do occur.

The police department also partners with Hennepin County in the Joint Community Police Partnership (JCPP) which is a collaborative effort of the cities of Bloomington, Brooklyn Center, Brooklyn Park, Crystal, Hopkins, Richfield and St. Louis Park. The mission of the JCPP is to enhance communication and understanding between law enforcement officers and multicultural residents of these cities. By building trust and communication between the police and community members, we will ultimately improve the safety and livability of our communities.

To assist in providing easily accessible services to the community the police department utilizes three substations located throughout the city:

1. The Texa-Tonka Community Oriented Policing (C.O.P.) Shop: A police substation has been established at the Texa-Tonka Shopping Center. This office is also used as an off-site station for officers while on duty.
2. The Excelsior and Grand C.O.P. Shop: A police substation has been established at the Excelsior and Grand complex. This office used frequently by district officers for report writing and follow-up work.
3. The West End C.O.P. Shop: A police substation has also been established at the West End Shopping Center. This office is also used frequently by district officers for report writing and follow-up work.

Neighborhood Building

Although most people think robbery, assault, and rape would be the crimes of greatest concern to neighborhoods, surveys conducted by the Police Department have consistently shown that residents are far more concerned with “quality of life” issues. Neighborhood surveys are conducted by the department and every neighborhood is surveyed once every two years. The typical issues identified include speeding cars, loud parties, disruptive juveniles and poorly maintained properties. These surveys are followed up by meetings within that neighborhood to address any additional questions on how the department will be addressing the concerns from the surveys.

The quality of life issues, for the most part, cannot be solved by enforcement action alone, so problem solving efforts by the Police Department involve coordinating appropriate city departments, community resources and neighborhood associations.

Quality of life issues require a new set of referrals and partnerships because in neighborhoods, the residents themselves must voluntarily comply with identified neighborhood standards. Partnerships between police and neighborhoods are desirable to raise neighborhood awareness. The Community Liaison staff person works with all neighborhood associations in an effort to build stronger neighborhoods and connections in the community. This helps people to know their neighbors and watch out for each other, creating a better sense of community and sense of security.

A neighborhood association is simply a group of neighbors who come together to coordinate efforts to maintain or improve a neighborhood. It's about developing relationships with each other, the city government and other neighborhoods. St. Louis Park neighborhood associations have no governing authority and cannot implement ordinances or regulations. Most neighborhood associations in St. Louis Park keep neighbors updated through a newsletter or regular email updates and sponsor community building activities. Each year, Neighborhood associations are given an opportunity to apply for grant funding provided by the city for those activities. They also serve as liaisons from their neighborhoods to the city. Neighborhood Leaders assist with information sharing of development projects, road construction projects and various other projects, initiatives and events hosted by the city, and provide feedback regarding those projects.

In collaboration with the police and other city departments, the community liaison also hosts an annual Neighborhood Leaders Forum to bring neighborhood leaders together to learn about city initiatives, share ideas, receive grant applications, and hear from guest speakers.

Community Engagement

Community Engagement is critical to involve residents in a partnership with the police department. St. Louis Park officers and staff are committed to an active partnership with our community as we work together to solve problems and prevent crime. The police department's Community Outreach group is a full time staff that works on engaging the community through various programs. Community Outreach Programs include:

Neighborhood Watch

This program involves the active participation of neighborhood residents in cooperation with law enforcement to reduce crime in the community. There are over 300 Neighborhood Watch groups in the city.

National Night Out

This annual city-wide event is hosted the month of August to bring neighbors outside and to encourage them to get to know one another. Police, Fire, and other city departments go to parties to interact with residents, answer questions and to get the word out about crime prevention.

Citizens Police Academy

This ten-week training program is an opportunity for citizens who live or work in St. Louis Park to interact with members of the Police Department, increase their understanding of the role and function of the Police Department, and learn how citizens can play an integral part in crime prevention.

New American's Academy

The six week academy is designed for adult immigrants and refugees who want to learn more about police procedures and laws, as well as an overview of other city services. This is done in partnership with the St. Louis Park Community Education Adult Options program.

Home Premise Surveys

Upon request, an officer will complete a Home Premise Survey of residents' homes in St. Louis Park and advise the homeowners of things that can be done to provide better security for their homes.

Business Premise Surveys

Upon request, an officer will complete a Business Premise Survey for business owners or managers in St. Louis Park and advise the businesses of things that can be done to provide better security for their businesses.

Crime Free Multi-Housing Program

This is a three-phase program designed to reduce the incidents of crime and disorder in rental property. Phase 1 is an eight-hour training seminar for apartment owners and/or managers. Phase 2 is a survey of the apartment complex to make sure it meets minimum security requirements. Phase 3 is a crime prevention meeting for tenants. Police officers are assigned to rental properties in their districts. Each officer has continued contact with apartment managers and owners to discuss various issues.

Bicycle Patrol Program

The bike patrol works primarily in the city's parks and trails, interacting with the public, answering questions and providing information and literature about the city and the parks. Bike patrol also works with other agencies on problem areas.

Chaplains Program

The department has seven volunteer Chaplains that are available to provide professional, non- denominational services to residents in need and for the Police Department employees and their families.

Coffee with a Cop

Instead of coming to the Police Department to speak with an officer, this program puts officers in a coffee shop to simply be available for questions. This is also a great way for members of the community to meet their police officers in a casual relaxing atmosphere.

Cops N Kids programing

The department has implemented a number of youth activities to engage young members of the community. The police department offers an annual safety camp, Cops N Kids Holiday Shopping event, fishing with a Cop event, the Skate Park Extravaganza, Jobs in the Park and mentoring activities with students during winter, spring and summer breaks.

Police Department Goals and Strategies

1. **Continue to emphasize safety and the prevention of crime and disorder through the use of the Community Oriented Policing philosophy.**

   #### Strategies

   A. Develop crime prevention partnerships with our schools, businesses, neighborhoods and places of worship.

   B. Continue employee development in Fair and Impartial Policing and Procedural Justice.

2. **Build problem-solving relationships with people in the community. Continue to encourage neighborhood involvement and partnerships to promote a safe and healthy community.**

   #### Strategies

   A. Provide education on the role of the police department in the community through the New Americans Academy, Citizens Academy, and School Resource Officers.

   B. Building strong neighborhoods through National Night Out, Neighborhood Watch programs and the Neighborhood Associations.

   C. Enhanced Community engagement activities such as Coffee with a Cop and our Cops N Kids programming.

   D. Continue to partner with Hennepin County in the Joint Community Police Partnership to enhance communication and understanding between law enforcement officers and multicultural residents.

3. **Expand the ability of city staff to solve problems, decrease incidents of crime and disorder and assist people in making connections to needed services.**

   #### Strategies

   A. Identify and address quality of life issue in the community through community surveys and neighborhood meetings.

   B. Engage other city departments, community members, and local businesses to assist in crime prevention.

Page intentionally left blank

Chapter 8
Implementation of the Plan

The 2040 Comprehensive Plan provides high level, long-term guidance for making decisions about the community's future growth, redevelopment, and infrastructure investments. While the 2040 Plan is the city's primary long-term plan, its vision, goals, strategies, and maps can only be achieved if it is used on a regular basis. Using the 2040 Plan requires striking a balance between adhering to the enduring vision, goals and strategies described in the plan while also adapting to conditions that will change over the life of this plan. Implementation of city-led initiatives will also involve further planning and budgeting to ensure new actions can be fully achieved and sustained over time.

Individual Element Implementation Plans

Some elements/sections within the 2040 Plan contain specific implementation plans, including Housing, Economic Development & Redevelopment, and Parks/Open Space/ Natural Resources. In particular, the Where We Are Headed sub-section of the Housing Plan section outlines tools, programs and policies that can be utilized by the city, residents, developers, and funders to implement St. Louis Park's housing goals and strategies.

System Plans

The 2040 Plan refers to other system plans that the city uses to guide city infrastructure and investments. These plans include the city's Sanitary Sewer Plan, Water Supply Plan, and Surface Water Management Plan. These system plans serve as ongoing tools for implementing the goals and strategies in the 2040 Plan. These plans may be updated and modified over time without updating the 2040 Plan.

Specific Area and Topic Plans

The city uses specific area and topic plans as tools for implementing the 2040 Plan. Current plans, studies and design guidelines that will continue to provide direction to the city include the following:

- Beltline Area Framework & Design Guidelines
- Elmwood Area Land Use, Transit and Transportation Study
- Louisiana Station Area Framework & Design Guidelines
- Design Guidelines for the South Side of Excelsior Boulevard
- Southwest Corridor Investment Framework: Transitional Station Area Action Plans
- West End Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR)
- Climate Action Plan
- Active Living: Sidewalks & Trails Plan
- Minnetonka Boulevard Design Plan
- Xenia Avenue/Park Place Boulevard Corridor Bicycle and Pedestrian Study

The city will continue to use these plans and additional future plans to provide the information needed to implement the 2040 Plan. Future plans and studies may ultimately lead to amendments to the 2040 Plan. A list of potential future studies are listed in Table 8-1.

Table 8-1. Planning Studies 2018-2020

STUDY/PROJECT	PRIORITY	TIMING
Commercial Areas- New Small Area Plan		
» Historic Walker Lake Revitalization Plan	A	2018-2019
» Texa-Tonka Neighborhood Commercial Node	A	2019
» Neighborhood Commercial Nodes study for new Mixed Use areas	B	2020
Park Commons Plan Update (Park Commons West)	B	2020
Food Access Study	A	2019
CSAH #25: Feasibility Plan	A	2019

Official Controls

Zoning Ordinance

The Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 36 of the City Code, establishes general zoning regulations for development of lots and buildings, the city's zoning districts including permitted uses, and performance standards for specific uses and areas of the city. The Zoning Ordinance establishes base zoning districts and three floodplain overlay zoning districts that are used to geographically identify zoning districts city-wide as shown by the district boundaries on the zoning map.

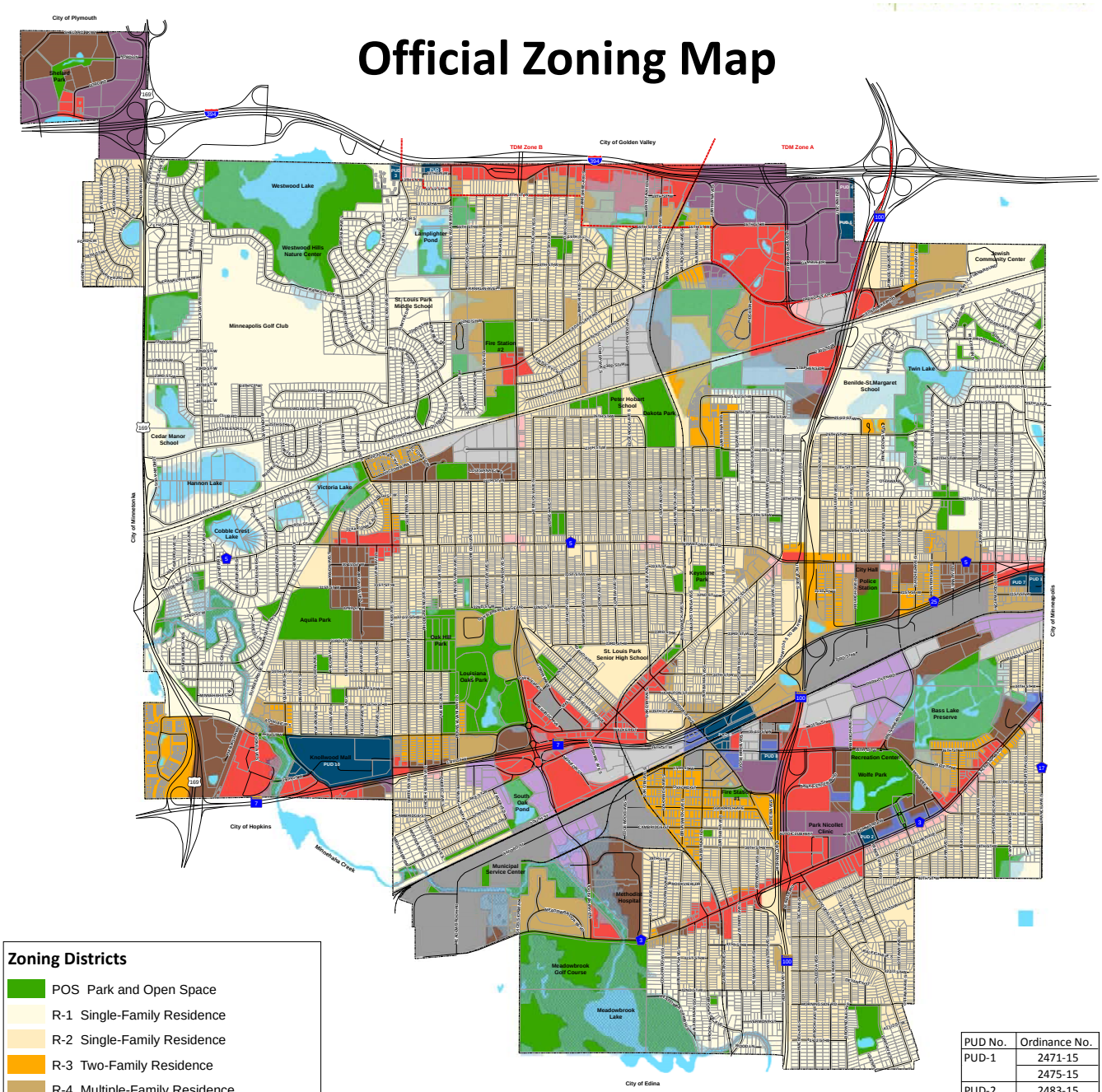
Figure 8-1 shows the city's current Official Zoning Map.

Subdivision Ordinance

The Subdivision Ordinance, Chapter 26 of the City Code, establishes the regulations and requirements for platting land within the city. It requires all land subdivisions to be referred to the city's Planning Commission and approved by the council as having fulfilled the minimum regulations and requirements for the platting of land within the city pursuant to the authority contained in Minnesota Statutes Annotated and in order to guide the design of new subdivisions in a manner consistent with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. It includes standards for lot and roadway design, utility installation, erosion control, drainage, tree preservation, and park and trail dedication requirements.

No required changes are anticipated because of this 2040 plan update.

Official Zoning Map



Zoning Districts

- POS Park and Open Space
- R-1 Single-Family Residence
- R-2 Single-Family Residence
- R-3 Two-Family Residence
- R-4 Multiple-Family Residence
- R-C High-Density Multiple-Family Residence
- M-X Mixed Use
- C-1 Neighborhood Commercial
- C-2 General Commercial
- BP Business Park
- O Office
- I-P Industrial Park
- I-G General Industrial
- PUD Planned Unit Development
- Floodplain
- FloodFringe
- Floodway
- Travel Demand Management Boundary

PUD No.	Ordinance No.
PUD-1	2471-15
	2475-15
PUD-2	2483-15
PUD-3	2481-15
	2502-16
PUD-4	2488-16
PUD-5	2489-16
	2503-16
PUD-6	2501-16
PUD-7	2500-16
	2517-17
PUD-8	2515-17
PUD-9	2518-17
PUD-10	2520-17

N

0 0.5 1 Miles

Updated: January 26, 2018

Prepared by the City of St. Louis Park
Community Development Department

St. Louis Park MINNESOTA

Other Official Controls

In addition to the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances, the city administers plans and programs intended to implement its goals and strategies.

Water Supply and Private Sewer

St. Louis Park City Code, Section 36-75, prohibits the issuance of a building permit for any developments or structures intended for human use or occupancy that are not connected to the public water supply or sanitary sewer system.

Stormwater, Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Ordinance

The city's Stormwater, Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Ordinance is located in City Code Chapter 12 (Environment and Public Health), Article V.

Wetland Protection Ordinance

St. Louis Park City Code, Section 12-159, requires that all land disturbing activities, which impact or may impact a wetland, must be in conformance with the city's Wetland Management Plan.

Potential Changes to Official Controls

The city will review its official controls within nine months of adopting the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. If updates are required to bring any official controls into alignment with the 2040 Plan, the city will provide copies of all updated official controls to the Metropolitan Council following the city's adoption of the updated official controls. Potential official control changes are listed in Table 8-2.

Table 8-2. Zoning Ordinance Studies 2018-2020

STUDY/PROJECT	PRIORITY	TIMING
Transit Oriented Development (TOD)/Form Based Code (FBC) ordinance	A	2019
Parking reductions/resizing zoning study	B	2020
Accessory housing units zoning study	A	2019
Rezone areas to align with updated 2040 Future Land Use Map	A	2019
Study areas to rezone from C-2 to C-1	A	2018-2019
Study a potential new Transitional Industrial zoning district	B	2019

Fiscal Devices

Tax Increment Financing Districts

Tax increment financing (TIF) is the primary development finance tool available to Minnesota cities (Minnesota Statutes, Sections 469.174 through 469.179) since 1973. TIF is simple in concept, but complex in its application. The challenge in using TIF lies with the complex and ever-changing statutory limitations. These complexities make it impractical to provide a thorough explanation of tax increment financing as part of the 2040 Plan. Instead, this section highlights the use of TIF as it relates to the implementation of the 2040 Plan.

Through TIF, the increased property taxes created by new development (or redevelopment) are captured. TIF uses the increase in property taxes resulting from a new development project to finance certain qualified redevelopment costs related to that project. It is this increase or difference between the current property tax on a parcel of land and the estimated property tax after development that is the tax increment. These incremental taxes are used to finance activities to address extraordinary site conditions (such as blight, soil/water contamination, utility relocations) that will encourage redevelopment. Permitted uses of the tax increment generated vary according to the type of tax increment financing and the year during which the tax increment financing district was certified but typically include: land acquisition, site preparation, parking, and public improvements. The different types of TIF Districts include:

- Redevelopment Districts
- Renewal and Renovation Districts
- Soils Condition Districts
- Housing Districts
- Hazardous Substance Subdistricts
- Economic Development Districts

St. Louis Park's EDA adopted a Tax Increment Financing Policy in 1997 to ensure that this tool is used appropriately to accomplish the city's economic development and redevelopment goals.

Tax Abatement

Tax abatement acts like a simpler and less powerful version of tax increment financing. With TIF, the city controls the entire property tax revenue from new development. Under the abatement statute (Minnesota Statutes, Sections 469.1812 through 469.1815), the city, county and school district have independent authority to grant an abatement. Acting alone, the city cannot use tax abatement to generate the same amount of revenue as TIF. Nonetheless, tax abatement provides a valuable financing tool for redevelopment initiatives. Certain projects may be of sufficient importance to encourage county and/or school district abatement and achieve additional funding capacity.

Tax abatement in Minnesota works more like a rebate than an abatement. The city (and other units abating taxes) adds a tax levy equal to the amount of taxes to be abated. The revenue from the abatement levy can be returned to the property owner or retained and used to finance development activities. Tax abatement can be used to finance key redevelopment actions such as land acquisition, site preparation and public improvements. Tax abatement is perhaps best suited as an incentive for reinvestment in existing property. While TIF deals with only the value from new development, abatement can apply to both new and existing value. This power provides the means to encourage building rehabilitation and storefront improvements. The city could agree to abate all or part of the municipal share of taxes to encourage reinvestment tied to the plan.

The State Statute grants the authority to issue general obligation bonds supported by the collection of abated taxes. The proceeds of the bonds may be used to pay for (1) public improvements that benefit the property, (2) land acquisition, (3) reimbursement to the property owner for improvements to the property, and (4) the costs of issuing the bonds.

Special Assessments

Public improvements are often financed using the power to levy special assessments (Minnesota Statutes Chapter 429). A special assessment is a means for benefiting properties to pay for all or part of the costs associated with improvements, and to spread the impact over a period of years. From a city perspective, this authority provides an important means of raising capital.

Special assessments can be used to finance all of the public improvements needed to implement the 2040 Plan. Eligible improvements include streets, sidewalks, street lighting, streetscape, and parking. Special assessments provide a means to borrow money to finance public improvements. Chapter 429 conveys the power to issue general obligation improvement bonds to finance the design and construction of public improvements. Important factors in the use of improvement bonds include:

- A minimum of 20% of the cost of the improvement to the city must be assessed against benefited properties;
- Beyond the 20% threshold, any other legally available source of municipal revenue may be used to pay debt service on improvement bonds;
- Improvements bonds are not subject to any statutory debt limit;
- Improvement bonds may be issued without voter approval.

Special Service Districts

A special service district is a tool for financing the construction and maintenance of public improvements within a defined area. Minnesota Statutes Sections 428A. O1 through 428A.1O govern the creation and use of special service districts. This legislation is currently scheduled to expire in 2028. A special service district provides a means to levy taxes (service charges) and fund improvements to and services for a commercial area.

A special service district has several applications for commercial areas in St. Louis Park:

» The district can provide an alternative to special assessments as a means of financing some of the public improvements in certain commercial areas. The service district approach avoids the benefits test imposed by special assessments. The test for the service district is that the amount of service charges imposed must be reasonably related to the special services provided. The costs of shared parking or streetscape improvements, for example, may be better spread across a district than through assessments to individual properties.

» A special service district can provide for maintenance of public improvements. Some of the improvements planned for certain commercial areas require a level of maintenance above the typical public improvement. Items such as banners and planted materials must be maintained and replaced at a faster rate than that expected for streets or utilities. A higher standard of cleaning and snow removal may be expected in certain commercial areas. Without a special service district, these costs are typically borne through the General Fund of the city.

» A special service district provides a means of providing and operating a commercial area's parking system. Use of a special service district should be considered during the negotiation of a development agreement. If the city is going to use a special service district, the city should seek agreement to a petition and waiver of veto and other objections related to the use of a special service district. The development agreement must address both the establishment of the service district and the levy of a service charge.

Housing and Economic Development Authorities

St. Louis Park has established two separate authorities, as provided for under MN Statutes, Chapter 469, for administering its fiscal devices for housing and economic development assistance. The Housing Authority is an independent governmental agency established by the council in 1970. The original Housing & Redevelopment Authority (HRA) became the Housing Authority (HA) in 1988 when the council approved transferring redevelopment powers to a new Economic Development Authority (EDA). The Housing Authority has jurisdiction over developing and administering housing programs to provide affordable housing options in the community. The EDA is also an independent governmental agency that has authority over economic and redevelopment efforts, including hiring personnel, issuing loans, acquiring land and buildings for development and redevelopment, and requesting that the city levy taxes for the support of its activities.

Capital Improvement Program

State law requires that the implementation component of a city's comprehensive plan contain a capital improvement program (CIP) for transportation, sanitary sewer, water supply, stormwater management system, parks/trails/open spaces and public facilities. The 2040 Comprehensive Plan serves as the foundation for ongoing capital improvements planning by the city necessary for the community's planned growth and improvements. The city has created a CIP that matches the estimated project costs over a five-year period with funding sources. The CIP allows the city to prioritize projects and to make best use of available revenues. By looking at future needs, the city is better able to find funding sources to fill gaps and to coordinate projects with other jurisdictions. The CIP is updated and approved annually. The city's adopted CIP is included in the Appendix.

Budgeting and Capital Improvements Plan

Each year the city staff prepares the upcoming year's budget, based on direction from the council. Revenues and expenditures are analyzed to make sustainable and responsible decisions that are consistent with the city's mission. The focus is on delivering services that maintain and grow the strength and viability of the community.

This page intentionally left blank

2040 Comprehensive Plan
St. Louis Park, Minnesota

August 2019

St. Louis Park
MINNESOTA