

Community Engagement Summary – August 2025



ST. LOUIS PARK ZONING CODE UPDATE, PHASE 2

This community engagement summary covers the initial engagement efforts for phase 2 of the St. Louis Park Zoning Code Update. As of August 24, the community engagement effort has included an informational StoryMap, as well as a survey asking for people's input on existing neighborhood nodes/corridors and community districts/centers in St. Louis Park. The informational StoryMap contains links that connect viewers to the survey versions in English, Spanish, and Somali. The survey is now closed; however, the StoryMap remains active, providing information to the public. Information on the zoning code project is available on the city website, which links to the StoryMap and survey. The update and engagement opportunities have been promoted at City events, through email blasts, and were included in the Park Perspective newsletter.

Business and Mixed-Use Zoning: Informational StoryMap

A StoryMap is an interactive webpage that guides visitors through information in a sequential manner. The StoryMap provides background information on the project, descriptions of the current zoning districts, including uses and standards, and maps of the current business and mixed-use districts overlaid with Place Type Frameworks. The StoryMap also includes descriptions of the Place Type Framework and 2040 Comprehensive Plan, explaining their relevance in the zoning code update. Finally, the StoryMap guides users through discussion topics that are being considered in the code update and provides additional resources.

Business and Mixed-Use Zoning: Survey

A survey on business and mixed-use areas was the primary tool for collecting direct feedback. The survey was embedded on the first page of the StoryMap and linked on the project page on the city website. Respondents were able to select their preferred language (English, Spanish, or Somali) and click a link to navigate to a separate webpage with the survey.

The survey was open from May 22 to August 24, 2025. There were a total of 240 responses, 239 of which were in English and 1 of which was in Spanish.

Survey Results

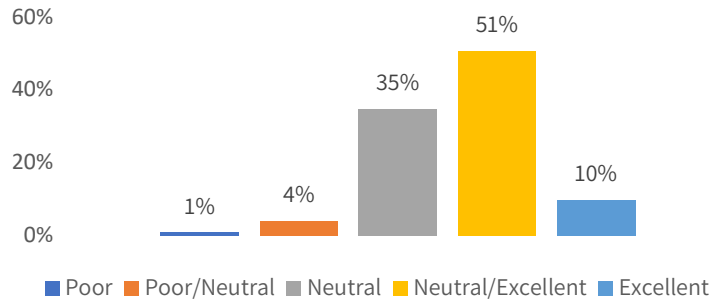
Neighborhood Commercial Node and Corridor Questions

1. The neighborhood commercial nodes and corridors that were visited by over half of survey respondents, in order of most to least visited, were:
 - » Excelsior Boulevard, east of Highway 100 (81%)
 - » Texas & Minnetonka (80%)
 - » Louisiana & Cedar Lake Road (74%)
 - » Excelsior Boulevard, west of Highway 100 (65%)
 - » Louisiana & Minnetonka (57%)



» Dakota & Minnetonka (51%)

2. When asked about their experience in these areas on a scale from Excellent to Neutral to Poor, 61% of respondents rated their experience as between neutral and



excellent.

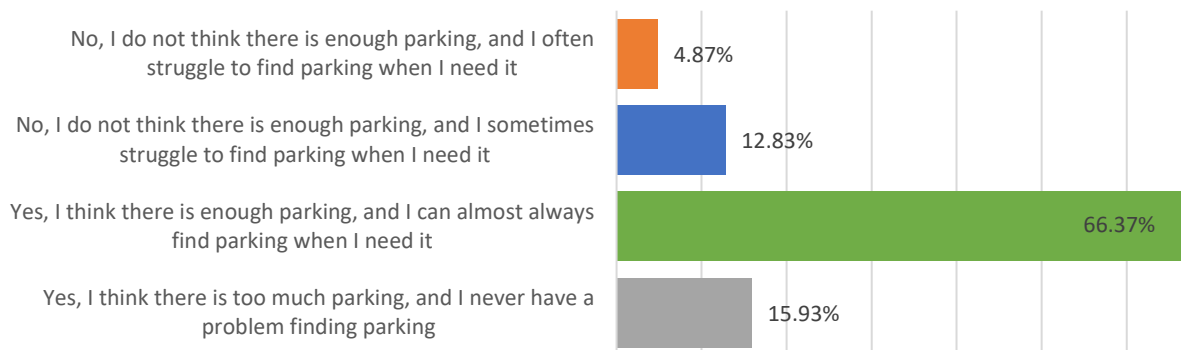
3. 55% of respondents said that the City should not allow additional neighborhood commercial node locations.
- » In the open-ended question asking where candidate locations for new nodes and corridors should be, many respondents did not give a location but shared general support for mixed-use and walkability.
 - » Locations that were suggested included:
 - Existing transit corridors like light rail stops, bike/pedestrian paths, and bus routes
 - Cedar Lake Trail and North Cedar Lake Trail
 - Cedar Lake and Virginia intersection
 - Along the major east/west streets, including Minnetonka, Cedar Lake, and Excelsior
 - Louisiana & 27th or 28th, Wooddale & 36th
 - Excelsior
 - Extend the zone from France to Ottawa on Minnetonka
 - Brookside, Creekside
 - Alabama & 36th, stretching to Hwy 100
 - Texas and Cedar Lake Road, 169 and Cedar Lake Road
 - Beltline and 35th
 - Minnetonka & Dakota
 - Lake and Minnetonka
 - Wooddale, south of Excelsior
 - Walker Lake
 - Around the St. Louis Park branch of the Hennepin County Library
 - Texas and Hwy 7
 - Excelsior/Brookview
 - Texas and Wayzata, Louisiana and Wayzata
 - Along 26th or 28th, Cedar Lake Road, or on Wooddale and Morningside

4. When asked if the City should allow taller buildings in business and mixed-use nodes/ corridors, 68% responded that maximums on building heights should be kept the same, while 28% said to allow 4-6 stories.
 - » Comments regarding why respondents were not interested in changing building height maximums focused on:
 - The approachability of areas with shorter buildings
 - Maintaining a quaint/small-town vibe, sense of community, historic feel
 - Concerns about taller buildings causing higher traffic, parking issues, aesthetic decline, privacy, crime, and reduced sunlight, visibility, and green space
 - Interest in smaller-scale multi-family housing and commercial that blends into the neighborhood
 - Concern about fire safety in taller buildings above 4 stories
 - Concern that higher buildings tend to have non-local landlords
 - » Comments regarding why respondents were interested in allowing some degree of increased building height options focus on:
 - Responds to rising housing needs and affordability
 - Greater use and walkability of the area
 - Increasing the tax base
 - Maximize the remaining space for development
 - Creating more retail opportunities
 - Interest in matching building height to surrounding uses more directly
5. When asked if zoning for **commercial uses** nodes and corridors should be more restrictive or more flexible, the average response skewed slightly towards more flexible.
6. When asked about the types of **commercial uses** they would like to see more or fewer of, many respondents stated they like the mix of uses in these areas as is; they also mentioned matching parking and traffic flow with uses allowed.
 - » The types of commercial uses respondents stated they would like to see include:
 - Restaurants, coffee shops, ice cream
 - Grocery stores, health and wellness, specialty shops
 - Alcohol/ places serving alcohol (breweries, wine shops)
 - More outdoor seating areas
 - Local businesses/ mom and pop shops
 - Arts: galleries and performance spaces
 - Hobby stores (books, crafts etc.)
 - Services (salons, chiropractor)
 - Small office-type uses (yoga studio, insurance, tutoring, medical, dental)
 - Dispensaries/smoke shops
 - Convenience and hardware stores
 - Co-working spaces
 - Day care

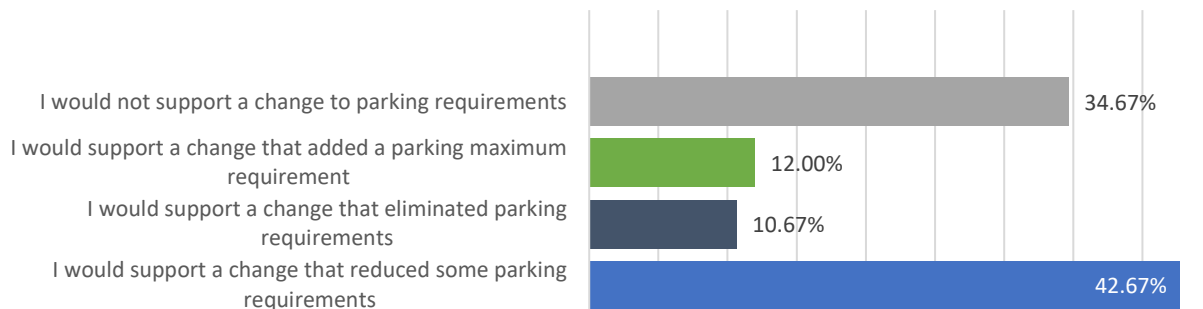
- » The types of commercial uses respondents stated they would like to see fewer of were:
 - National chains
 - Bars and liquor stores
 - Dispensaries/smoke shops
 - Auto-related uses (gas stations, tire stores, repair shops)
- 7. When asked if the zoning for commercial nodes and corridors should be more restrictive or more flexible regarding **residential uses**, responses on average skewed slightly towards more flexible.
- 8. When asked what type of **residential uses** they would like to see in these areas, responses included:
 - » 3-story apartment buildings
 - » Row homes, townhomes, condos (many added owner occupied)
 - » Housing co-ops
 - » Mid- to high-density
 - » Flexible housing for multigenerational living, “mother-in-law” units, ADUs, tiny houses,
 - » Duplexs, triplexes, fourplexes
 - » Affordable mixed with full-priced housing units
 - » Single family homes
 - » Senior housing, single-level living options
 - » Vertical mixed use (commercial on the bottom, residential on top)
 - » Concerns about affordable and low-income housing
 - » Concerns about large-scale/high-rise apartments
 - » General interest in a diversity of housing types
- 9. When asked if neighborhood commercial node and corridor areas are sufficiently balanced for pedestrian, bike, and auto access, responses skewed slightly towards needing to be more oriented for pedestrians and bike.
- 10. When asked to elaborate on the balance of pedestrian, bike, and auto access in these areas, responses included:
 - » A need for parking so visitors can drive to nodes, but a desire for walkability in and around nodes
 - » Desire for improved pedestrian and bicycle crossings of major roadways and intersections
 - » Mixed experiences: some find areas comfortable to explore as pedestrians or cyclists once they are at their destination, others feel areas remain too car-centric
 - » Recognition that pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure has improved
 - » Concerns over accessibility of sidewalks and bicycle infrastructure in the winter due to ice and snow
 - » Preference for bicycle infrastructure that is separate from vehicle traffic over traditional on-street bike lanes and shared lanes

- » Discomfort biking on Minnetonka
- » Concerns that focusing on bicycle infrastructure creates additional traffic congestion and reduces car lanes
- » Concern that there is too much emphasis on bicycle infrastructure, given Minnesota's long winters

11. When asked about parking availability, 66% of respondents felt that there was enough parking in commercial nodes and corridors; the next most common response at 16% was that there is too much parking.



12. Regarding support for lower parking minimum requirements and more use of on-street parking, 53% of people stated either that they would support a change that reduced parking requirements or a change that eliminated parking requirements. 35% of respondents said that they would not support a change in parking requirements.



13. The majority of respondents (58%) selected the response "No there is not enough green space" when asked if there is enough green space integrated into commercial development in commercial nodes and corridors.

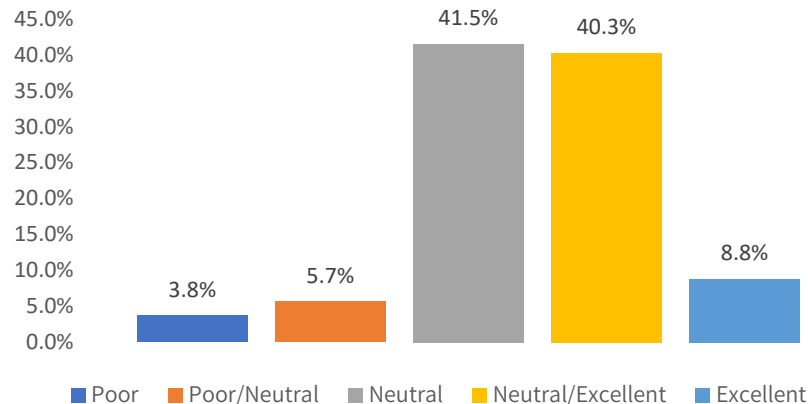
14. The average response to the question regarding whether there was enough signage to identify a business's location was that there was "just the right amount."

15. Concerns identified regarding requirements for signage in commercial nodes and corridors included:
 - » Signs that are too large can be distracting for drivers
 - » Don't want billboards
 - » Lights on signs can be distracting and/or disruptive for residential neighbors
 - » If signs are too small, businesses are hard to find, especially for drivers
16. Additional comments regarding zoning changes in commercial nodes and corridors focused on the following themes:
 - » Like mixed-use areas that are easy to walk/bike to and around
 - » Want neighborhood scale to remain and to build on the existing character of older SLP neighborhoods
 - » Preference for small-scale, local businesses over box stores and larger developments
 - » Adjust parking requirements to make areas more pedestrian-friendly, including moving parking behind commercial uses, and reducing parking requirements for commercial uses
 - » Balancing pedestrian and bicycle improvements with easy access to businesses and sufficient parking
 - » Concerns that changes will allow too much multi-family housing
17. When given the choice to finish the survey or continue the survey, 77% of respondents chose to continue the survey.

Community District and Center Questions

18. The Community Districts and Centers that over half of respondents stated they visited, in order of most to least, were:
 - » Knollwood (92%)
 - » The West End (90%)
 - » Parks Commons West (84%)
 - » Park Commons (52%)

19. When asked about their experience in these areas on a scale from Excellent to Neutral to Poor, 49% of respondents rated their experience between neutral and excellent, and 42% rated their experience as neutral.

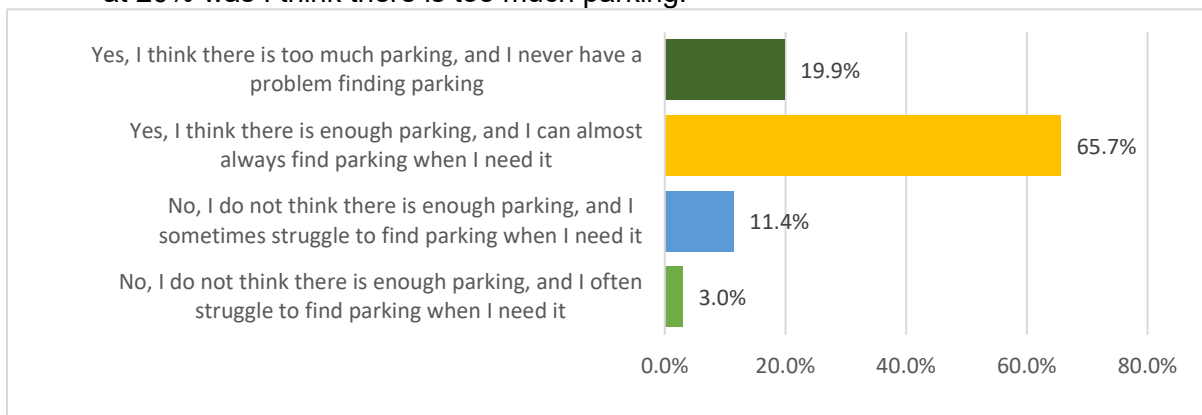


20. When asked if the City should allow taller buildings in community districts and centers, 61% responded that restrictions on building height should be kept the same, 20% support allowing 7-9 stories, and 13% support allowing 10+ stories. 10% said to reduce the maximum height to less than 6 stories.

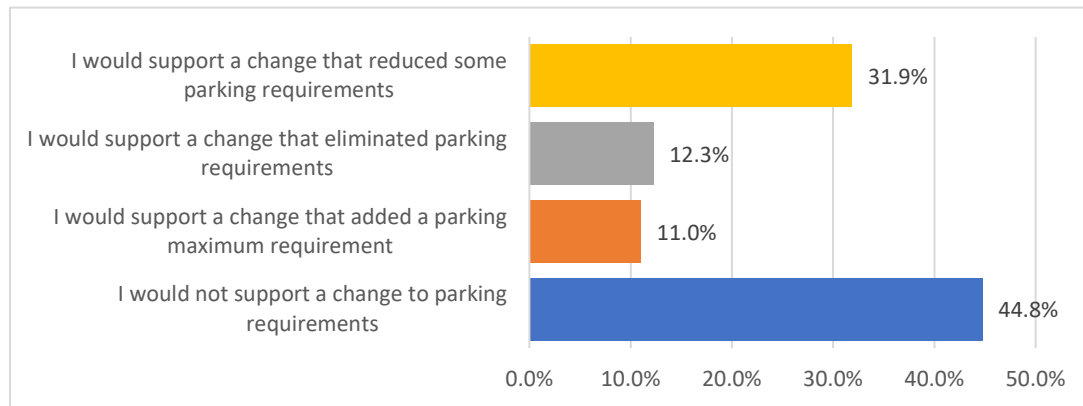
- » Comments regarding why respondents were not interested in changing building height maximums focused on:
 - Smaller buildings feel more walkable and approachable, so the height shouldn't be changed
 - Want to preserve feel of St. Louis Park, increasing building heights will change that
 - Provide good mix of uses and density as it is
 - Don't want to lose sunlight, views, sight lines
 - Don't want increased density in the area
- » Comments regarding why respondents were interested in allowing some degree of increased building height maximumx focus on:
 - Allowing increased density
 - Recognizing that these existing areas are the best place for density and taller buildings
 - Small building height increase to allow for additional housing and more housing affordability In some areas, it makes sense to increase it, e.g. near highways and the West End, where there is more separation from lower density residential areas
 - Flexibility, not everywhere should allow more than 6 stories, but some areas can accommodate it

21. When asked if zoning for **commercial uses** in community districts and centers should be more restrictive or more flexible, the average response skewed slightly towards more flexible.
22. When asked about the types of **commercial uses** they would like to see more or fewer of in community districts and centers, many respondents identified specific uses.
 - » The types of commercial uses respondents would like to see more of include:
 - Locally run businesses/ mom and pop shops
 - Restaurants, coffee shops, ice cream, health food and specialty shops
 - Leisure locations open later (coffee shops, breweries, wine shops)
 - Arts and entertainment (performance spaces, movie theaters)
 - Hobby stores (books, crafts etc.)
 - Neighborhood services, (small groceries, convenience stores, hardware stores)
 - Retail, clothing, specialty shops
 - Green spaces
 - » The types of commercial uses respondents would like to see fewer of include:
 - National chains
 - Bars and liquor stores
 - Dispensaries/smoke shops
 - Fast food
 - Amazon warehouses
 - Fewer auto-oriented uses
 - Businesses that produce noise or odors outside of regulation hours
23. When asked if the zoning for community districts and centers should be more restrictive or more flexible regarding **residential uses**, responses on average skewed towards more flexibility.
24. When asked what type of **residential uses** they would like to see in these areas, responses included:
 - » More condos, opportunities for first-time homeowners
 - » Row homes, townhomes, condos (many added owner occupied)
 - » Apartments are well-suited to community districts
 - » Medium density rentals over high density apartments buildings
 - » Duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes
 - » Affordable mixed with full-priced housing units
 - » More options for affordable housing
 - » Single family homes
 - » Senior housing, single-level living options, care facilities
 - » Vertical mixed use (commercial on the bottom, residential on top)
 - » Concerns about affordable and low-income housing
 - » Concerns about large-scale/high-rise apartments
 - » General interest in a diversity of housing types

25. When asked if community district and center areas are sufficiently balanced for pedestrian, bike, and auto access, responses skewed slightly towards needing to be more oriented for pedestrians and bikes.
26. When asked to elaborate on the balance of pedestrian, bike, and auto access in these areas, responses included:
- » Large parking lot areas in the West End (Costco parking lot), and other areas are very unfriendly for pedestrians and bicyclists
 - » Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure is important, but car travel is essential and will always be needed (accessibility, winters, seniors, parents with kids), so need a balance in these areas
 - » Within these areas, often walkable, but not easy to get to them by walking or biking
 - » Will not see an increase in bicyclists or pedestrians without further infrastructure improvements, people will not walk if they do not feel safe the entire journey they go on – last mile access is an issue
 - » Parking is available but unevenly distributed across these sites, especially the West End
 - » Does not feel safe to bike to West End or Knollwood
 - » Not enough bike storage at final destinations
 - » Adding more bike lanes will make things worse for drivers
27. When asked about parking availability, 66% of respondents felt that there was enough parking in community districts and centers; the next most common response at 20% was I think there is too much parking.



28. Regarding support for lower marking minimum requirements and more use of on-street parking in community districts and centers, 45% of people stated that they would not support a change in parking requirements. 44% of people said they would support a change that reduced parking requirements or a change that eliminated parking requirements.
29. The majority of respondents (60%) selected the response “No there is not enough green space” when asked if there is enough green space integrated into commercial development in community districts and centers.
30. The average response to the question regarding whether there was enough signage to identify a business's location in community districts and centers was that there is “just the right amount.”
31. Concerns identified regarding requirements for signage in community districts and centers included:
- » Dislike for billboards
 - » If requirements are too stringent, there can be adverse consequences, signs

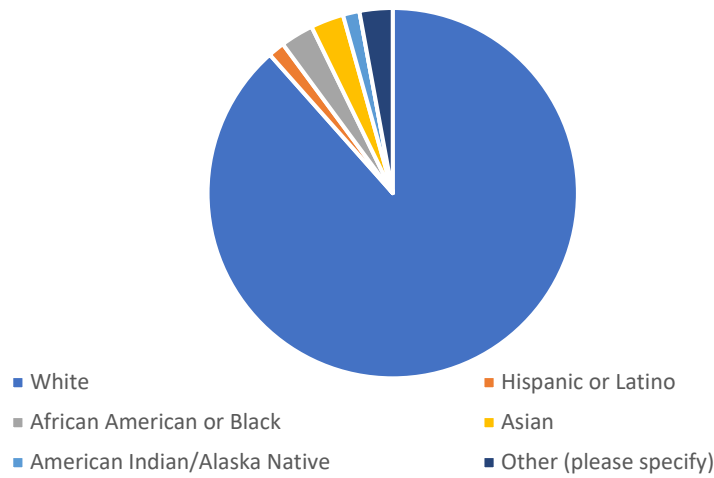


- » should be large enough that drivers can see them from the road
 - » Signs should be visible enough for drivers to see them
32. Additional comments regarding zoning changes in community districts and centers focused on the following themes:
- » Requests for more pedestrian-friendly design, slower traffic, and safer crossings.
 - » Interest in increasing density to support vibrant communities.
 - » Desire for small-scale community destinations that are walkable, such as coffee shops and restaurants
 - » Accessibility and mobility need to be considered
 - » Car charging infrastructure, dark sky requirements for lighting
 - » Street parking doesn't seem like a viable option in these areas, need to ensure there is adequate off-street parking

Demographic Questions

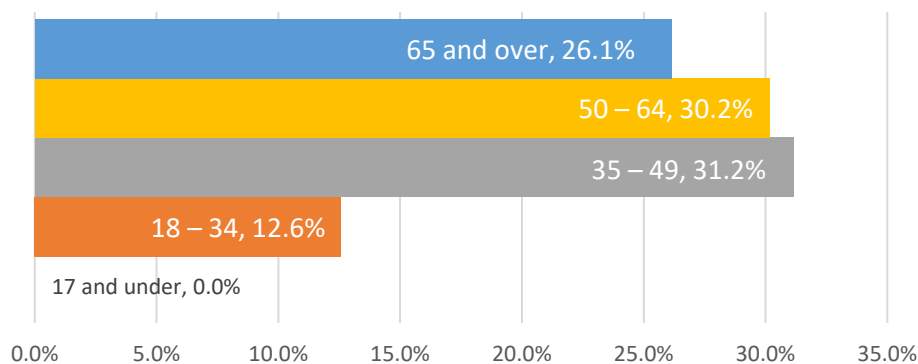
Questions 33-38 asked about the demographics of respondents.

Race: 92% of respondents identified as White, 3% African American or Black, 3% as Asian, 3% as Other, and 1.5% as Hispanic or Latinx.



Gender: Gender skewed more female (60%) than male (37%), 2% of respondents identified as non-binary

Age: The largest groups of respondents (61%) were between 35-64.



Housing Type: 88% of respondents live in single-unit detached houses, 8% live in an apartment or condo, 3% live in a townhouse or rowhouse, and 1% live in a duplex or twin-home.

Rent or Own: Respondents were majority homeowners (94%).

Household Size: Most respondents (56% have a household size of 2-3 individuals.

