

# VIII. How We Govern

## B. Public Safety

### B. Public Safety

#### Vision for Public Safety

St. Louis Park is committed to being a connected and engaged community.

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.

#### Police Department Services

The Police Department works diligently to address community safety and quality of life issues. Its 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 recent years 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 policy of community-oriented policing. 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." Using established operational strategies, the Police Department works in partnership with residents, business owners and other community members to deliver proactive and responsive services. Community policing innovations continue to provide new ways to make neighborhoods a safe place to work, live and play.

Community policing emphasizes interaction between officers and residents, including the appointment of officers to act as representatives for their patrol districts and special liaison officers who office and teach in the schools. An information management group collects analyzes and disseminates information to affect crime and disorder issues.

#### *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. Historically, this goal was met by working toward achieving rapid response to calls for service. Many calls for service, such as burglary, may be reported many hours after the event occurred and require more investigative work in addition to the rapid response (reporting). 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 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 (animal complaints, past-action property damage, etc). Officers are assigned to one geographic area for a year.
2. Emergency Response: Patrol officers respond to emergency incidents (medical, fire, etc). Again, officers are assigned to one geographic area for one year.
3. Criminal Investigations: Police work done after a crime has occurred. Officers prepare cases for charging, follow up on incidents, conduct search warrants, etc. This work is usually completed by a Support Service Officer (not assigned to patrol).
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, etc). Department resources are directed to problem areas and response strategies are created to effectively solve the problem.

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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. Information management group will assist in the problem solving process and officers or 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. 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, solving crime incidents and preventing crime and disorder.

Currently, there are satellite police stations at Excelsior & Grand, Meadowbrook Apartments, TexaTonka, Knollwood Mall and the West End development. There are three school liaison officers who office in various schools within the district. Two of these officers teach the DARE curriculum in the Jr. High and Intermediate schools.



### *Problem Solving*

The Police Information Management Group has developed numerous work processes to assist in the identification, analysis and dissemination of information so department personnel can work with stakeholders to address problems. Police also work with other city departments, social service agencies and other community resources to solve problems. Examples of recent problem solving efforts include: graffiti abatement, crime free multi-housing program, participation in the “Vision St. Louis Park” process and Louisiana Court and Meadowbrook Apartment programs.

For information analysis and tracking, several computer applications have been developed, such as Request Partner™ (tracking directed patrol and problem solving activities), Crime Free Database (contains current rental property owners/managers information and tracks ordinance violations), CADMINE™ (used to extract timely information for calls for service), crime set databases (used to extract very detailed information about reported crime incidents) and crime mapping (used internally as a tool to direct officers and a separate application for public use on the website).

The Police Department uses a non-traditional, community-oriented approach in addressing the growing graffiti problem within the city and west metro. Working in cooperation with other city departments, the school district, social service providers community members and other west metro cities, the city has been able to create and utilize a web-based database-GraffitiNet© to share graffiti information. Through the use of GraffitiNet©, cities can now work together in identifying and reducing graffiti incidents. This continued partnership has reduced the amount of graffiti within St. Louis Park significantly.

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### *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 in a manner where every neighborhood is surveyed once every two years. The typical issues include speeding cars, loud parties, disruptive juveniles and poorly maintained properties. 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 works with all neighborhood associations in an effort to build stronger neighborhoods. The Police Department has a Community Outreach Officer to facilitate the Neighborhood Watch program, the Crime Free Multi-housing program and National Night Out activities. 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. Also part of Neighborhood Watch is National Night Out. National Night Out takes place the first Tuesday in August and is an evening when neighbors are encouraged to join together to take back their neighborhoods and show support against crime.

**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.

**The Meadowbrook C.O.P. Shop:** The C.O.P. (Community-Oriented Policing) shop is a storefront police office in the Meadowbrook Manor Apartment Complex. The department has moved out into the community in an effort to provide better access to police services and resources and to promote a cooperative effort among police and the community in the prevention of crime.

**The Texatoka C.O.P. Shop:** A police substation has also been established at the Texatoka Shopping Center. This office is also used as an off-site station for officers while on duty.

**The Excelsior and Grand C.O.P. Shop:** A police substation has been established at the Excelsior and Grand complex. This office is staffed by Support Services personnel and is also used frequently by district officers for report writing and follow-up work.

**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.

**Neighborhood Surveys:** Neighborhood surveys are distributed and color-coded by neighborhood so that citizen input can be used to identify problems and initiate problem-solving strategies. Districts will be surveyed on a revolving basis, so that progress and changes can be evaluated approximately every two years.

**394 Virtual Block Club:** This program is designed to improve communication between business owners/managers along the 394 corridor and their local Police Departments. Cities involved in this project stretch from Minneapolis to Wayzata.

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**Citizens Police Academy:** This six-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.

**Chaplains Program:** The department has seven volunteer Chaplains that are available to provide professional, non-denominational services for the Police Department employees and their families and also for citizens.

**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 8-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.

## Goals and Strategies

### Goal 1

Continue to emphasize safety and the prevention of crime and disorder.

### Goal 2

Build problem-solving relationships with people in the community. Continue to encourage neighborhood involvement and partnerships to promote a safe and healthy community.

### Goal 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.

### Goal 4

Through the use of our Information Management Team, continually analyze relationships contributing to safety and crime.

#### Strategy A

Expand all community outreach efforts such as Neighborhood Watch, Neighborhood Associations, Crime Free Housing through daily activities and special events.

#### Strategy B

Continue to utilize all available technologies as analytical tools through the Information Management process to produce accurate, meaningful statistics for internal and external use.

#### Strategy C

Assist in researching the possibility of expanding the Information Management concept to include all city departments in an effort to more effectively and holistically address a wide variety of problems and issues.

#### Strategy D

Utilize a variety of methods to continue public education efforts regarding crime/call trends that impact citizen's perceptions of safety.



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### Fire Department Services

The Fire Department protects life and property from fire and environmental hazards, responds to medical emergencies, performs rescues and is responsible for coordinating city-wide emergency management. The department also aggressively inspects commercial buildings and multi-family dwellings for fire and related safety hazards and provides educational services to the public regarding fire prevention. Major goals of the Fire Department are to reduce environmental and fire hazards, create a self-reliant community through fire education, engineering and enforcement, while efficiently addressing emergency needs and economically providing essential services.

#### Fire Emergencies

##### A) Current Procedures/Practices

The Fire Department has been traditionally known for its ability to effectively suppress fires, and in the process, to perform rescue operations to persons trapped within burning buildings. The St. Louis Park Fire Department is well equipped to perform this function.

Two fire stations are strategically located in St. Louis Park, one north and the other south and roughly centered east to west. These fire stations, built in the 1960s, house equipment designed to meet the basic needs of the community. The city's 911 service is state of the art and has improved dispatching of teams and equipment to meet a variety of emergencies. The city has mutual aid agreements with 33 neighboring suburban fire departments, as well as state wide agreements that can provide St. Louis Park with additional personnel and equipment capable of fighting major fires, acts of terrorism or natural disasters.

A major change took place in the Fire Department in 1987, when a shift was made from perceiving the duties of the department as only fire suppression to include emergency medical services, with a strong focus on fire prevention. This has coincided with a two decade long decrease in fires, particularly major fires in buildings, as is indicated in table at right.

Emergency Calls					
Year	Fire	Medical	FALSE	Misc.	Total
1980	268	8	181	320	777
1981	293	10	184	277	764
1982	217	13	193	255	678
1983	200	21	209	211	641
1984	215	21	223	248	707
1985	227	30	258	193	708
1986	202	125	282	215	824
1987	230	300	321	299	1,150
1988	258	378	353	333	1,322
1989	195	416	375	283	1,269
1990	211	453	370	221	1,255
1991	183	558	378	207	1,326
1992	186	818	349	188	1,541
1993	180	980	338	228	1,726
1994	173	995	319	330	1,817
1995	186	2,125	444	330	3,085
1996	188	2,085	472	479	3,224
1997	171	2,236	601	410	3,418
1998	187	2,543	209	805	3,744
1999	146	2,361	244	693	3,444
2000	138	2,597	233	632	3,600
2001	140	2,243	323	823	3,529
2002	146	2,366	373	718	3,603
2003	179	2,566	332	692	3,769
2004	133	2,684	341	767	3,925
2005	108	2,741	312	808	3,969
2006	141	3,032	322	755	4,250
2007	132	2,959	314	868	4,273
2008	107	3,200	293	864	4,464

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### B) Fire Prevention

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. In 2008, emergency responses averaged between four and five minutes on 90% of the calls. 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. This has enabled the Fire Department to transfer from a total full time staff to a combination of full time and part time staff. This change has resulted in savings to the community while other programs, such as mutual aid, have at the same time enhanced efficiency in fire suppression.



### *Fire Sprinkling*

Fire sprinkling systems are the most efficient means to reduce losses due to fire. Consequently, a major goal of the city is to promote fire sprinkling systems for all commercial, industrial, institutional and multi-family buildings. Fire sprinkling is 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 sprinkling system.

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 which were constructed prior to newer standards for sprinkling and the cost of retrofitting sprinkling 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.

Fire sprinkling 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 sprinkling devices.

### *Smoke Detectors*

Smoke detectors are an inexpensive way to save property and lives. Smoke detectors are now required in all sleeping rooms, hallways outside of sleeping rooms and on each floor of all new construction. Other ordinances require smoke detectors to be provided in older multi-family buildings. The presence of working smoke detectors 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 detectors save lives and property.

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### *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 detectors, improper storage of flammable materials, hazardous wiring and the decreases in frequency and severity of fires. Inspections programs are continually being evaluated for their effectiveness in meeting city goals of health and safety.

### *Medical Emergencies and Rescue Operations*

#### **A) Medical Emergencies**

Table N-1, which indicates calls for service, shows a dramatic shift to medical calls in 1995. Currently, 70% of all calls answered by the Fire Department are medical calls. This figure represents a change in policy between the Police and Fire Department, whereby the Fire Department began responding with police to all medical emergencies. All full time Fire Department staff are trained and equipped as emergency medical technicians (EMT) with automatic external defibrillators to treat life threatening heart problems.

#### **B) 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 Plan, which was originally developed as a response to the threat of nuclear war, is being continually reviewed and updated in response to ever changing situations and statutory requirements. The Plan requires volunteers and city employees to be trained for various responsibilities and operations designed to save lives and property, minimize damage and restore the needs of the community in the event of a civil disaster emergency.

If an emergency should occur, the City Manager, who is also

the 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 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.

#### **C) Hazardous Material Storage**

The Fire Department keeps data related to the storage of hazardous materials. Fire Department personnel work closely with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to control chemical and petroleum product leaks that may occur. The focus of the Fire Department is on prevention. The Fire Department has recorded the location of all reportable quantities of hazardous materials used by industry, as well as the location of all flammable storage tanks. This information is essential when considering the potential of fire or other disaster.

The Fire Department issues permits for placement and removal of flammable storage tanks. If a tank has been in the ground over one year and not used, the Fire Department will order it removed or abandoned in place.

### *Issues*

#### **A) 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 is on the rise and like other juvenile crime, presents problems for the community. Addressing juvenile problems with new approaches, including asset building and restorative justice, are beginning to be considered as alternatives to other punishment.

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### B) False Alarms

The number of private fire alarm systems has been increasing. This increased number has also resulted in an increased number of false alarms, which directly impacts the cost of fire services. Starting in 1988, in order to deal with the rising costs of responding to false alarms, the Fire Department has joined the Police Department in charging property owners for false alarms.

### C. Aging Facilities

Early in 2006, Fire Stations #1 and #2 were identified as having several significant physical and operational deficiencies within both buildings. Correcting the fire station deficiencies and providing workable facilities for the next fifty years is one of the most significant city building investments to be undertaken in years.

Studies have determined that the best location for new fire stations, to maximize service delivery, is their current locations. Current staffing, operations and facility locations contribute to the excellent response and service delivery that St. Louis Park is experiencing. Maintaining these same service levels into the future was a critical component in the investigation of new facility locations. The city is moving forward with construction of two new facilities with expected completion of this project in 2013.

### D) 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. However, when the overall service costs of this land use is compared with other land uses, service costs appear to be more equal.

## Goals and Strategies

### Goal 1

Maintain a healthy and safe environment for city residents and businesses.

### Goal 2

Encourage and promote cost-effectiveness and efficiency in health and safety service delivery by ensuring their availability and accessibility without duplication.

### Goal 3

Emphasize prevention in all issues related to public health and safety.

### Goal 4

Build relationships with people in the community and promote neighborhood involvement and partnerships to promote a safe and healthy community.

#### Strategy A

Examine current inspection practices for inefficiencies and duplication.

#### Strategy B

Revise and update the city's Emergency Disaster Plan at least once every four years.

#### Strategy C

Find methods to reduce false alarms while not compromising effective emergency response.

#### Strategy D

Explore methods of cutting costs in all departments, e.g. explore which vehicles respond to calls.

#### Strategy E

Continue to remove storage tanks with flammable materials.

#### Strategy F

Maintain an average emergency response time of 4-5 minutes or less.

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### Strategy F

Utilize inter-departmental coordination wherever appropriate to solve issues.

### Strategy G

Continue to support and improve the emergency medical services (EMS) provided by the Police and Fire Departments and by highly specialized medical teams from hospitals or clinics located within the community.

### Strategy H

Promote programs and education in cardiac pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) by making courses and classrooms available.

### Strategy I

Undertake additional first aid and emergency training for city emergency personnel.

### Strategy J

Continue training efforts for staff to keep up to date with problems and techniques for addressing current issues.

### Strategy K

Expand the use of GIS mapping as an analytical tool.

### Strategy L

Develop accurate databases and staff ability to utilize database information.

### Strategy M

Accurately identify the potential risks with any given hazard.

### Strategy N

Improve the accuracy of reporting wherever possible.

### Strategy O

Continue to aggressively inspect multi-family, institutional, commercial and industrial buildings to address fire safety hazards.

### Strategy P

Make sure there are working smoke detectors in all buildings.

### Strategy Q

Minimize fire loss by promoting systems for early detection and continuing rapid response.

### Strategy R

Identify all buildings which do not currently have fire sprinkling systems to serve the entire building; develop a strategy for ensuring the addition of sprinkler systems based on priorities which identify the highest risk buildings as determined by building use and construction type.

### Strategy S

Achieve fire sprinkler installation in all new single-family dwellings constructed after 2012, as well as all new and existing commercial, industrial, multi-family and institutional buildings.

### Strategy T

Work with the public to reduce preventable hazards.

### Strategy U

Educate the general public about the code and the reasons for a healthier and safer community through media articles, cable TV, etc.

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### Building Codes

#### Vision for Building Codes

St. Louis Park is committed to providing a well-maintained and diverse housing stock.

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 approximately 18,000 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 housing inspections also enforce safety, health, and fire codes, thereby creating and maintaining a livable and viable community.

#### 1) 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. A business 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.

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.

#### 2) Rental Licensing and Inspections

All dwelling units ranging from single family to apartment complexes which are not owner occupied must be licensed annually. The multi-housing (apartment) inspections program began in the late 1970's 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 homes comply with the same property maintenance code. Overall, the growing rental inspection program helps ensure uniformity in the inspection of 300 buildings, over 7,000 individual units and over 700 one and

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two- family rental homes.

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 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.

### 3) Property Maintenance Inspection

Property maintenance service is essential to the St. Louis Park community. The city receives approximately 1,000 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.

In the past 5 years, 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 general community.

### 4) 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 department Report a Problem (RAP) line. This line is a dedicated phone number where complainants can leave anonymous complaints as a recorded message.

### 5) 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.