



# 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.





*Page intentionally left blank*