All meetings of the St. Louis Park City Council will be conducted by telephone or other electronic means starting March 30, 2020, and until further notice. This is in accordance with the local emergency declaration issued by the city council, in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and Governor Walz’s “Stay Safe MN” executive order 20-056.

Some or all members of the St. Louis Park City Council will participate in the Aug. 24, 2020 city council meeting by electronic device or telephone rather than by being personally present at the city council’s regular meeting place at 5005 Minnetonka Blvd.

Members of the public can monitor the meeting by video and audio at https://bit.ly/watchslpcouncil or by calling +1-312-535-8110 meeting number (access code): 372 106 61 for audio only. Cisco Webex will be used to conduct videoconference meetings of the city council, with council members and staff participating from multiple locations.

6:30 p.m. - STUDY SESSION

Discussion items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Citywide speed limit evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Fire department staffing structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>8:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Future study session agenda planning and prioritization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8:20 p.m.</td>
<td>Communications/updates <em>(verbal)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8:25 p.m. Adjourn

Written reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Menthol, mint, and wintergreen flavored tobacco products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>July 2020 monthly financial report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>West End Office Park minor amendment to special permit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Notice of eviction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Request to vacate portions of unused utility easements at 8200 Minnetonka Blvd.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The agenda is posted on Fridays on the official city bulletin board in the lobby of city hall and on the text display on civic TV cable channel 17. The agenda and full packet are available by noon on Friday on the city’s website.

If you need special accommodations or have questions about the meeting, please call 952-924-2525.
Executive summary

Title: Citywide speed limit evaluation

Recommended action: **Due to the COVID-19 emergency declaration, this item is considered essential business and is Categorized as Time-Sensitive**

- None at this time. The purpose of this item is to update the city council regarding staff’s speed limit evaluation and recommendations.

Policy consideration: Does the council wish to implement speed limit changes on city streets based on a safety, engineering, and traffic analysis?

Summary: In May 2019, provisions passed by the Minnesota legislature gave cities increased authority to set speed limits. To clarify, the legislation does not grant cities the ability to change speed limits on county roads or MnDOT highways, only on roads under the city’s jurisdiction. In the case where a street is a border street, the adjacent municipality must also agree to the speed limit change. In March 2020, council directed staff to continue to investigate the feasibility and impacts of changing speed limits within the city.

After conducting a comprehensive traffic evaluation, staff recommends that speed limits should be changed citywide using a “category” approach. Generally, the recommended speed limit for local neighborhood streets is 20 mph. More busy roads that connect neighborhoods have a recommended speed limit of 25 mph. The busiest roads have a recommended speed limit of 30 mph. One road is recommended for a 35-mph speed limit.

If the council supports staff recommendations, speed limit changes could not occur until 2021. Additional considerations (race equity and inclusion, environmental factors, police and enforcement) and implementation considerations (financial, city code, signage, communications, and evaluation plans) are continuing to be reviewed and would be included in the final evaluation brought to council.

Financial or budget considerations: Financial impacts relating to changing speed limits are currently estimated at $200,000. Costs include new signs, signal timing, and public outreach. Costs are assumed to be paid for using general obligation bonds.

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

Supporting documents: Discussion
DRAFT citywide speed limit evaluation
Existing and recommended speed limit maps
Study session report, March 9, 2020 – (pages 190 – 220)

Prepared by: Ben Manibog, transportation engineer
Reviewed by: Debra Heiser, engineering director
Approved by: Tom Harmening, city manager
Discussion

**Background:** In May 2019, the Minnesota legislature passed a provision that gave cities authority to set speed limits. They went into effect on Aug. 1, 2019. The full language of this provision is provided below:

Minnesota Statues, Section 169.14, Subd. 5h. Speed limits on city streets. A city may establish speed limits for city streets under the city’s jurisdiction other than the limits provided in subdivision 2 without conducting an engineering and traffic investigation. This subdivision does not apply to town roads, county highways, or trunk highways in the city. A city that establishes speed limits pursuant to this section must implement speed limit changes in a consistent and understandable manner. The city must erect appropriate signs to display the speed limit. A city that uses the authority under this subdivision must develop procedures to set speed limits based on the city’s safety, engineering, and traffic analysis. At a minimum, the safety, engineering, and traffic analysis must consider national urban speed limit guidance and studies, local traffic crashes, and methods to effectively communicate the change to the public.

A report regarding speed limit evaluation was provided to the council at their March 9, 2020 study session and is attached for reference.

This report is an update on those efforts and a summary of the analysis that has been completed to-date. Attached is a draft speed limit evaluation. The document is broken into nine sections: Policy, Goals, Guidance, National and local examples, Existing speed limits, Traffic evaluation, Findings and conclusions, Recommendations, and Next steps. Below is a summary of each section, see the evaluation document for further detail on each of these sections.

**Policy:** Existing city policies prioritize equitable traffic safety and access for people walking/rolling, biking, and taking transit over vehicles. Policies referenced and considered as a part of the DRAFT speed limit evaluation were:

- Active Living: Sidewalks & Trails Plan (2008)
- Complete Streets policy (2013)
- Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) policy (2013)
- Vision 3.0 (2017)
- Council strategic priorities (2018)
- Climate Action Plan (2018)
- Comprehensive Plan 2040 (2019)
- Living Streets Policy (2019)

**Goals:** Drawing from these existing city policies, staff established goals to help frame how to set speed limits. The goals were:

- To support the city’s goal to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries that are a result of crashes on city streets.
- To reflect the city’s goal in creating a mobility system that prioritizes walking first, then bicycling and transit, and then motor vehicle use.
- To ensure the quality and function of the transportation system contributes to equitable outcomes for all people.
To support the movement of people and goods.
To be understandable, consistent, replicable, reasonable, and contextually appropriate.
To clearly communicate and educate the new speed limits and their connection to safety, especially as people enter the city.

Guidance: In our analysis, staff hired a consultant (SEH) to research national guidance (see attached study session report) and looked at guidance from other national organizations. These included:

- National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)
- National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO)
- National Cooperative Research Program (NCHRP)
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

National and local examples: To better understand different methods of setting speed limits and their impacts, the city spoke with staff from cities that have changed their speed limits both locally and nationally. Discussions with cities included:

- City of Minneapolis
- City of Saint Paul
- City of Edina
- City of Renton, WA
- City of Wheaton, IL
- Town of Marana, AZ

Existing speed limits: Historically, speed limits in Minnesota have been set statewide based on Statute 169.14. To paraphrase and highlight portions applicable to St. Louis Park, speed limits for urban streets are set at a default of 30 mph. Alleys are set to a default of 10 mph. The authority to change speed limits in this statute has been given to the MnDOT Commissioner of Transportation. Speed limits in St. Louis Park that differ from statute were the result of a request of the roadway owner to complete a speed study. See the attached map of existing speed limits in the city.

The following city streets differ from these default speeds:

- A few neighborhood streets are set at 25 mph. Those are the result of MnDOT speed studies conducted from the late 1960’s to the mid-1980’s.
- Cedar Lake Road was formerly owned and maintained by Hennepin County. Its current speed limit, 35 mph, was set by MnDOT and has remained since its turnback to the city.
- The East Highway 100 frontage road near Beth El Synagogue was formerly under ownership and control of MnDOT. Its current speed limit, 40 mph, was set by MnDOT and has remained since its turnback to the city.

Traffic evaluation: To get an understanding of existing vehicle speeds and other traffic conditions, staff pulled together existing data, including a citywide traffic crash analysis, traffic volumes and traffic speeds.
Crash analysis
Crash data from 2017 to 2019 was reviewed and analyzed by a consultant (Spack Solutions) to understand trends and patterns. The full citywide crash analysis report will be ready for release later this year.

Key findings from the crash analysis that help inform future speed limits include:

- While crashes happen on all types of streets, crashes are concentrated on higher-traffic streets, which often have higher design and operating speeds.
- Streets with higher speed limits were more likely to have fatal or high injury crashes when compared to streets with lower speed limits.
- People walking and biking are overrepresented in severe and fatal crashes in St. Louis Park. While both combined make up less than 2% of all crashes (out of 3775 total), pedestrians and bicyclists make up 33% of fatal crashes (out of 3 total) and 43% of high injury crashes (out of 21 total).
- 34% of crashes in St. Louis Park happen at intersections. However, those crashes make up 67% of fatal crashes and 70% of high injury crashes. Failing to yield the right of way was a frequent cause of pedestrian and bicycle crashes.

Existing vehicle counts and speeds
Volume and speed data from about 800 readings were used to conduct the evaluation. The collected data came from multiple sources:

- The city frequently conducts speed studies to evaluate road conditions in response to traffic requests or to aid in the engineering design process. This review utilizes data collected within the last four years. The data set includes speeds from 375 locations on city streets.
- Every four years, the city takes traffic counts on Municipal State Aid System (MSAS) roads in accordance with MnDOT. During the last round of counting, the city elected to collect speed information as well. This review utilizes data collected in 2017. The data set includes speeds from 123 locations on city streets.
- The city often uses speed feedback boards deployed through our police department. These boards display the speed in which drivers are traveling and reminding them of the existing speed limit. This review uses data collected from the last three years. This data set includes speeds from 314 locations on city streets.

Staff’s initial speed findings are divided into three groups:
1. Low traffic roads (less than 2,000 vehicles a day)
2. Medium traffic roads (between 2,000 and 12,000 vehicles a day)
3. High traffic roads (more than 12,000 vehicles a day)

Those findings are shown in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Median speed</th>
<th>Average speed</th>
<th>85th percentile speed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All city streets</td>
<td>23.5 mph</td>
<td>23.4 mph</td>
<td>27.8 mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low traffic roads</td>
<td>21.1 mph</td>
<td>21.0 mph</td>
<td>25.5 mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium traffic roads</td>
<td>28.9 mph</td>
<td>28.4 mph</td>
<td>33.4 mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High traffic roads</td>
<td>27.6 mph</td>
<td>29.5 mph</td>
<td>34.7 mph</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some takeaways from our findings are:

- The average speed across all low traffic streets was 21 mph.
- Low traffic roads are the city’s safest streets based on the citywide crash study, although severe and fatal crashes have happened on them.
- The city regularly receives resident concerns about people driving too fast on roads of all traffic levels. These complaints, when compared with the existing speed data, suggest that the current speed limit does not reflect the expectations of residents. The city can support these expectations by setting a speed limit that promotes safety and community needs for these streets.
- The median speeds of medium and high traffic roads are similar, ranging from 27 to 29 mph. This indicates that the current speed limit is higher than most drivers are comfortable traveling and lowering it will support safety on those streets. Characteristics of higher traffic roads, when compared to medium traffic roads, are the higher number of lanes. The increased width of the road makes it more difficult for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross.

**Findings and conclusions**: Based on data and research from the evaluation, the key findings are:

- Lower traffic speeds reduce both the likelihood and severity of crashes.
- A majority of states have a lower default speed limit than Minnesota. All of Minnesota’s neighboring states have a 25-mph default urban speed limit.
- The traditional approach of using 85th percentile speed to set speed limits is no longer considered the best practice for urban streets.
- When setting urban speed limits with broad authority, there are two common options from guidance and recent city speed limit changes:
  - Default citywide speed limit of 25 mph
  - Category speed limits with 20 mph on local residential streets and generally higher on busier and connecting streets.
- Success in changing speed limits in smaller cities has yet to be realized as they have been recent, and they have not yet reevaluated traffic conditions. However, larger cities such as Portland, Seattle, and Boston, have found success with the category speed limit approach.

The key findings above led to the following conclusions:

- Speed limits lower than the statutory default are justified because they:
  - Promote public health, safety, and welfare
  - Support city policies
  - Align with emerging national best practices for safe urban street operations
  - Support the city’s traffic safety goal to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries on city streets

**Speed limit recommendations**: Based on the above findings and conclusions, staff recommends that speed limits be set using a category approach. For St. Louis Park, a category approach to speed limits is the most appropriate generally with 20 mph on lower traffic roads, 25 mph on medium traffic roads, and 30+ mph on high traffic roads because:

- It is easier to communicate when compared to a single default speed limit. Hennepin County and MnDOT-owned roads will continue to have 30 mph speed limits or higher and it is unknown when or if those will change.
• These lower speed limits prioritize public health and safety (a person hit at 30 mph is three times as likely to be killed or severely injured than a person hit at 20 mph).
• A citywide 25 mph speed limit does not reflect the design, land use, mode use, and expectations of city streets.
• Low traffic roads generally serve short, local connections, have on-street parking, are narrow and require slow speeds when two cars pass each other. In addition, they have frequent entrances to residences or businesses. The average speed of low traffic roads is 21 mph.
• Medium traffic roads generally serve longer trips, have traffic signals at higher volume intersections to support safe crossing of all modes, are wider in width, and sometimes have on-street parking. The average speed of medium traffic roads is 28 mph.
• High traffic roads generally serve longer trips, have traffic signals at high volume intersections to support safe crossing of all modes, are wider in width, often do not have on-street parking, and have more than two traffic lanes. The average speed of high traffic roads is 30 mph.

The following criteria were taken into consideration while determining appropriate speed limits:

The default speed limit for roads in St Louis Park is recommended to be 20 mph.

A street or segment was recommended for a 25-mph speed limit if it met all of the following:
• Half-mile segment or more
• Regular bus service OR adjacent to SWLRT platform OR ADT > 2,000
• Continuous sidewalk/trail or predominantly non-residential zone

A street or segment was recommended for a 30-mph speed limit if it met the 25 mph criteria and all of the following:
• Half-mile segment OR road with split border with another city
• ADT > 12,000 OR 4 or more driving lanes

A street or segment was recommended for a 35-mph speed limit if it met the 30 mph criteria and all of the following:
• 0 – 2 intersections or major crossings per half mile
• Limited or no pedestrian access

Alleys will retain a 10 MPH speed limit.

Staff finds that a category speed limit approach accomplishes the original goals of the evaluation because it:
• Supports the city’s traffic safety goal to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries on city streets.
• Reflects the city’s priority in creating a mobility system that prioritizes pedestrians first, then bicyclists and transit users, then drivers.
• Aligns with current national speed limit guidance.
• Is understandable, consistent, replicable, reasonable, and appropriate for an urban context.
• Contributes to equitable outcomes for all people.
• Supports the movement of people and goods.
• Sends a clear message to the driving public that “slower is safer” on all streets.

Next steps: There are additional considerations that staff are still reviewing as a part of this evaluation. These include:
  • Race equity and inclusion considerations
  • Financial
  • City code changes
  • Signage plan
  • Communications and education plan
  • Environmental considerations
  • Police and enforcement considerations
  • Evaluation plan

Updates on these items will be included with the final speed limit evaluation report when it is brought to council later this year.
1. Executive summary

2. New legislative authority

In May 2019, the Minnesota legislature passed two provisions that give cities increased authority to set speed limits. They went into effect on Aug. 1, 2019. The full language of the first provision is provided below:

Minnesota Statutes, Section 169.14, Subd. 5h. Speed limits on city streets. A city may establish speed limits for city streets under the city’s jurisdiction other than the limits provided in subdivision 2 without conducting an engineering and traffic investigation. This subdivision does not apply to town roads, county highways, or trunk highways in the city. A city that establishes speed limits pursuant to this section must implement speed limit changes in a consistent and understandable manner. The city must erect appropriate signs to display the speed limit. A city that uses the authority under this subdivision must develop procedures to set speed limits based on the city’s safety, engineering, and traffic analysis. At a minimum, the safety, engineering, and traffic analysis must consider national urban speed limit guidance and studies, local traffic crashes, and methods to effectively communicate the change to the public.

The second provision (Section 169.011, Subd. 64) expands the definition of a residential roadway to include city streets or town roads in areas zoned exclusively for housing that are not collector or arterial streets. To utilize this provision, cities are not required to do a study. Instead, the city must post speed limit signs at the beginning and end of the roadway section.

The City of St. Louis Park plans to use the new laws to change speed limits from the state statutory urban speed limit of 30 mph. Cities must do so “in a consistent and understandable manner…based on the city’s safety, engineering, and traffic analysis”. They must also provide “appropriate signs” and consider “methods to effectively communicate the change to the public”.

3. Local policy and input that informs speed limits

Existing City of St. Louis Park policies prioritize equitable traffic safety and access for people walking, rolling, biking, and taking transit. Details of existing city policies and plans that inform speed limits are included in the following sections.

• City council speed limit staff direction

On March 9, 2019, staff provided a written report to the city council, updating them on the status of speed limits in Minnesota. In the report, staff provided information regarding the new local legislative authority to change speed limits, existing speed limit data in the city, and staff’s proposed path forward. The council was asked if they wish staff to continue to investigate the feasibility and impacts of changing speed limits within the city. Following the meeting, staff was given direction to continue to investigate changing speed limits.

• Active Living: Sidewalks and Trails Plan (2008)

As a part of Vision St. Louis Park in 2007, the city heard from community members that we needed more infrastructure for pedestrians and bicyclists. A group of community members was brought together to create a Community Advisory Committee.
committee along with city staff created the Active Living: Sidewalks & Trails Plan. The plan called for the creation of a connected network of bikeways, sidewalks, and trails throughout the community. Some of the goals and strategies established for this system inform the setting of speed limits:

- **Bicycle and Pedestrian Goals**
  - Establish safe crossings of highways, arterial roads and rail corridors using innovative traffic calming strategies, improved traffic control systems and where possible, grade separations.
- **Objectives**
  - Reduce the number and severity of pedestrian and bicycle accidents in St. Louis Park.
- **Strategies**
  - Sidewalks
    - Use innovative designs to calm traffic and enhance streetscapes to make streets safer and more pleasant for pedestrians.

- **St. Louis Park Complete Streets policy (2013)**
  In 2013, the city council approved a resolution that it is the city's policy to utilize complete streets principles and to work with partner agencies so that complete streets elements are evaluated with city transportation projects. The term Complete Street is defined by Minnesota Statute 174.75.

  Complete Streets considers the needs of motorists, pedestrians, transit users and vehicles, bicyclists, and commercial and emergency vehicles moving along and across roads, intersections, and crossings in a manner that is sensitive to the local context and recognizes that the needs vary in urban, suburban, and rural settings.

  The applicable benefits that inform setting speed limits as described in the city’s policy are:
  - Improve the safety of all users on roadways.
  - Create transportation networks that support more walking and biking that encourage more physical activity and improving physical health.
  - Create equity in access and transportation options for individuals not able to operate a vehicle.
  - Positive impacts to the environment by creating transportation options other than the single-occupant vehicle.
  - Improve the quality of life by creating walkable neighborhoods.

- **Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) policy (2013)**
  In 2012, the city council directed city staff to identify best practices for further development and promotion of the Minnesota GreenStep Cities Program, including the adoption of an Active Living Policy. In 2013, the city council approved an active living policy that included healthy eating to more holistically address community health.

  The applicable parts of the HEAL policy that inform setting speed limits are:
Built Environment
The City of St. Louis Park recognizes that the built environment influences active living opportunities and that the City of St. Louis Park influences the built environment at many scales through infrastructure investments, land use policies and regulations, and city financial assistance. The city will:

• Plan and construct a built environment that encourages walking, biking and other forms of physical activity.
• Utilize Complete Streets principles to design and maintain streets in a manner that is appropriate to the community context and safe for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists and transit passengers of all ages and abilities, as well as trucks, buses, and automobiles.

Vision 3.0 (2017)
In October 2017, the city council approved Vision 3.0. Every ten years, the city launches an ambitious grassroots effort to ask residents about their hopes and dreams for the future of St. Louis Park. The third installment of the vision process produced five recommendations from the community for St. Louis Park’s future. Two of the five recommendations highlight creating an equitable and forward-thinking transportation system:

- Develop future-focused transit and mobility solutions
- Commit to being a leader in racial equity and inclusion
  - Work with community partners to make diversity and inclusion a priority in all components of city business.

St. Louis Park strategic priorities (2018)
In May 2018, the city council approved strategic priorities. The strategic priorities are a result of the recommendations brought forward during the Vision 3.0 process. The five priorities are intended to articulate and provide direction to staff on those things the city council feels will have the most powerful/positive impact on the St. Louis Park community by 2028. Two of the strategic priorities speak most to setting equitable speed limits:

- 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.
  - 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 providing a variety of options for people to make their way around the city comfortably, safely, and reliably.
  - Researching and implementing multiple and affordable mobility solutions for all.

Climate Action Plan (2018)
In 2018, the city council passed a Climate Action Plan with the goal of achieving carbon
neutrality – having a net zero carbon footprint – by 2040. The plan provides guidance for residents, businesses, and the city on reducing the greenhouse gas emissions and impacts of climate change. The plan was created by the St. Louis Park Environment and Sustainability Commission in partnership with the youth of St. Louis Park.

One of the seven major goals of the plan is to reduce vehicle emissions by 25% by 2030 as compared to the business-as-usual forecast. One of the initiatives under this goal informs the setting of citywide speed limits:

i. Initiative 6.4: Enable reduction of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) from single-occupancy vehicles
   1. Continue to modify land use and encourage alternative modes of transportation, consistent with the city’s complete streets policy and any future living streets policy.

- **St. Louis Park 2040 Comprehensive Plan (2019)**
  In 2019, the city council adopted the city’s 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The plan carries out the city’s future vision and 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. Many goals and strategies across multiple departments and city services reinforce creating a safe transportation system prioritizing vulnerable road users and focusing on elevating the role race plays in all aspects of city business.

  • **Racial equity goals and strategies**
    - Break down barriers in creating a just and inclusive community for all
      - Expand racial equity conversations within all areas of city business
    - Ensure racial equity in city services and programs to make a tangible difference for all.
      - Apply a racial equity lens to all city work and city decisions
      - Re-evaluate established city systems and processes to effectuate change in how the city conducts its business.

  • **Mobility system goals and strategies**
    - 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.
      - Incorporate an approach that is based on surrounding land use context when planning and designing transportation projects
      - Continue to explore and evaluate flexible and innovative designs and seek guidance from established best practices, to achieve desired outcomes.
      - Promote and support adaption of the mobility network to take advantage of improved technologies and mobility modes.
    - Ensure the quality and function of the transportation system contributes to the equitable outcomes for all people
      - 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.
• Eliminate fatalities and serious injuries that are a result of crashes on city streets
  o Prioritize safety investments in line with the modal hierarchy
  o Protect pedestrians and bicyclists through design decisions that strive to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries
  o Use enforcement, design decisions, and operational norms to reflect an acute awareness for protecting all users of the mobility systems.

  ▪ Pedestrian mobility goals and strategies
  • Provide for the needs of pedestrians by removing barriers
    o Employ traffic management measures where appropriate to enhance safe pedestrian mobility.

  ▪ Bicycle mobility goals and strategies
  • Provide for the needs of bicyclists, removing barriers to active transportation
    o Implement emerging best practices in bikeway design

  ▪ Vehicular mobility goals and strategies
  • Provide well-designed and well-maintained city streets that balance the needs of users, residents, businesses, and property owners.
    o Identify traffic management measures in conjunction with upgrades to the mobility system.
    o Maintain the roadway network in a safe and fiscally responsible manner
  • Work to ensure roadways efficiently connect residents, employees, and visitors to local and regional destinations.
    o Promote and support the use of Travel Demand Management strategies to achieve more efficient use of the existing community mobility network and reduce congestion problems.

• Living Streets Policy (2019)
In 2019, the city council approved the Living Streets Policy. Living Streets is an effort to balance the important role of our right of way to move traffic and accommodate utilities with the equally important need for a multi-modal transportation system and a cleaner environment. The purpose of living streets is to build community, provide environmental benefits, and provide economic benefits.

The city’s Living Streets vision statements most applicable to inform setting speed limits are:
• The city will 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.
• Transportation will occur via complete, integrated, efficient, safe, and comfortable networks for all users regardless of age or abilities, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit passengers, as well as trucks, buses, and automobiles.
The environment, in terms of local air and water quality and in terms of global impacts like climate change, will be positively impacted by the city’s transportation-related decision-making. The transportation system will benefit all users equitable, particularly vulnerable users and the most underinvested and underserved neighborhoods.

Living Streets is built on six principles that guide the implementation of the policy, two of which are most applicable to setting speed limits:

- **Traffic management**
  - Traffic is an important element of livability. The methods for traffic management depend largely on the type of roadway, its function, and the modes of travel expected on the roadway.
  - The concept of traffic management is usually focused on limiting cut-through traffic, decreasing the speed of vehicles, and enhancing safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.
  - Data will be collected on existing conditions. Recommendations will be made on which traffic management measure(s) could be utilized based on the context of the specific transportation project.

- **Creating a sense of place**
  - Creating an atmosphere that is positive, pleasant, and safe, helps attract and retain residents in the community.
  - Elimination of signals, signs, or utility poles.

4. **St. Louis Park speed limit goals**
Staff established goals to help frame this speed limit evaluation. The goals are based on applicable existing city policies and the new Minnesota speed limit statutes.

- To support the city’s goal to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries that are a result of crashes on city streets.
- To reflect the city’s goal in creating a mobility system that prioritizes walking first, then bicycling and transit, and then motor vehicle use.
- To ensure the quality and function of the transportation system contributes to equitable outcomes for all people.
- To support the movement of people and goods.
- To be understandable, consistent, replicable, reasonable, and contextually appropriate in setting speed limits.
- To clearly communicate and educate the new speed limits and their connection to safety, especially as people enter the city.

5. **National guidance and consideration for setting urban speed limits**
In recent years, the transportation industry has sought change in the approach to setting urban speed limits and that is now beginning to yield new and updated guidance. This guidance is moving toward a safe-systems approach to setting speed limits on urban streets rather than one focused on current observed traffic speeds. This section outlines this new and updated guidance.
• **National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)**
  In 2017, the NTSB released a comprehensive report *Reducing Speeding-Related Crashes Involving Passenger Vehicles*. The report directly addresses the traditional methods for setting speed limits and the challenges with those methods:

  “Typically, speed limits are set by statute, but adjustments to statutory speed limits are generally based on the observed operating speeds for each road segment – specifically, the 85th percentile speed of free-flowing traffic. Raising speed limits to match the 85th percentile speed can result in unintended consequences. It may lead to higher operating speeds, and thus a higher 85th percentile speed. In general, there is not strong evidence that the 85th percentile speed within a given traffic flow equates to the speed with the lowest crash involvement rate for all road types. Alternative approaches and expert systems for setting speed limits are available, which incorporate factors such as crash history and the presence of vulnerable road users such as pedestrians” *(Executive Summary, Page x)*.

  The report goes on to say:

  “The relationship between speed and injury severity affects more than just speeding vehicle occupants. This is particularly true in urban areas where the interaction between vehicles and vulnerable road users such as pedestrians is considerably higher. A safe system approach to setting speed limits emphasizes the consideration of human biomechanical tolerances and shifts the focus from vehicles to all road users. Especially in urban areas, it has emerged as an alternative to the use of the 85th percentile speed in setting speed limits in speed zones” *(Rethinking How to Set Speed Limits, page 29)*.

  The report recommends changes to the Federal Highway Administration’s (FHWA) Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices “MUTCD”:

  “...to, at a minimum, incorporate the safe system approach for urban roads to strengthen protection for vulnerable road users” *(page 29)*.

• **Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)**
  The MUTCD sets minimum standards and provides guidance to ensure uniformity and consistency on the public transportation system. In the State of Minnesota, the Minnesota Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MnMUTCD) is used. The MnMUTCD and MUTCD are, in general, identical in language, and exact in language as it references speed limits. It is routine that new and addendum language of the MUTCD is adopted by the MnMUTCD.

  Based on the NTSB recommendation, the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (NCUTCD) began collecting feedback and considering changes to the MUTCD related to setting speed limits.

  The current MUTCD offers the following standards (not guidance) for setting speed limits:

  • “Speed zones (other than statutory speed limits) shall only be established on the basis of an engineering study that has been performed in accordance with traffic..."
engineering practices. The engineering study shall include an analysis of the current speed distribution of free-flowing vehicles.

- “The Speed limit sign...shall display the limit established by law, ordinance, regulation, or as adopted by the authorized agency based on the engineering study. The speed limits displayed shall be in multiples of 5 mph” (Section 2B.13 page 56).

The current MUTCD offers the following guidance (not standard) on setting speed limits:

- “States and local agencies should conduct engineering studies to reevaluate non-statutory speed limits on segments of their roadways that have undergone significant changes since the last review, such as the addition or elimination of parking or driveways, changes in the number of travel lanes, changes in the configuration of bicycle lanes, changes in traffic control signal coordination, or significant changes in traffic volumes”.

- “When a speed limit within a speed zone is posted, it should be within 5 mph of the 85th-percentile speed of free-flowing traffic” (Section 2B.13, page 58).

The current MUTCD offers the following option (not guidance nor standard) on setting speed limits:

- “Other factors that may be considered when establishing or reevaluating speed limits are the following:
  A. Road characteristics, shoulder condition, grade, alignment, and sight distance;
  B. The pace;
  C. Roadside development and environment;
  D. Parking practices and pedestrian activity; and
  E. Reported crash experience for at least a 12-month period” (Section 2B.13, page 58).

The NCUTCD recently approved recommended changes to the current MUTCD related to setting speed limits. These recommendations are provided to the FHWA for consideration in the next edition of the MUTCD, which requires federal rulemaking. The FHWA has not initiated rule making for the next edition of the MUTCD yet, but this is expected to begin within the next year. The recommendations approved by the NCUTCD include:

- “Removing from standard that “The engineering study shall include an analysis of the current speed distribution of free-flowing vehicles”.
- Upgrading and revising the considerations for establishing speed zones to read: “Factors that should be considered when establishing or reevaluating speed limits within speed zones are the following:
  A. Speed distribution of free-flowing vehicles (such as current 85th percentile, the pace, and review of past speed studies).
  B. Reported crash experience for at least 12-month period relative to similar roadways.
  C. Road characteristics (such as lane widths, curb/shoulder condition, grade, alignment, median type, and sight distance).
D. Road context (such as roadside development and environment including number of driveways and land use, functional classification, parking practices, presence of sidewalks/bicycle facilities).

E. Road users (such as pedestrian activity, bicycle activity).”

- Revising the guidance statement regarding the posted speed limit being made within 5 mph of the 85th percentile speed to apply only “on freeways, expressways, or rural highways”.

- **National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) speed limit guidance**

  The National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) guide *City Limits: Setting Safe Speeds for Urban Streets* provides urban speed limit guidance and was released in late July 2020.

  NACTO’s guide identifies two general approaches for setting default speed limits and states the following:

  “Cities have two options for setting default speed limits: citywide or by category of street (e.g., major, minor, alley).

  Citywide speed limits are generally easier to implement and may be easier for drivers to follow. However, in cities where there is clear differentiation between major arterial streets and local or minor streets, setting speed limits based on category of street can sometimes allow cities to lower speed limits on a number of streets below what would be allowable citywide (i.e., 20 mph on minor streets vs. 25 mph citywide).

  If cities have the authority to set default speed limits, they should decide whether to implement citywide limits or category limits based on what makes the most sense given the total conditions” (page 46).

  If setting a default citywide speed limit, NACTO recommends using 25 mph:

  “Setting or lowering default citywide speed limits is an inexpensive, scalable way to quickly improve safety outcomes, and establish a basis for larger safety gains. Default cityside limits also provide consistent expectations and messages about speed across the jurisdiction, which is easy for drivers to follow” (page 47).

  If setting speed limits using categories, NACTO recommends:

  - Major streets: 25 mph.

    “A 25 mph speed limit on urban multi-lane streets has demonstrable safety benefits for all users. Major streets feature a combination of high motor vehicle traffic volume, signalization of major intersections, and an inherently multimodal street environment” (page 49).

  - Minor streets: 20 mph.

    “A 20 mph speed limit on minor streets supports safe movement and contextually appropriate design on the majority of city streets. Since minor streets tend to have either very low volumes or operate at the speed of the most cautious driver, cities can apply a category speed limit to minor streets without detailed review of street characteristics. Minor streets include physically small
streets where low speeds are often already present, as well as low-vehicle-volume streets with few or no transit stops” (page 50).

- Alleys and shared streets: 10 mph

NACTO identifies that cities can define “slow zones”: “Slow Zones are specifically designated areas with slower speeds than otherwise similar streets in the same jurisdiction. Neighborhood-scale or site-specific zones are useful for addressing high-priority areas such as areas with elevated collision rates or sensitive land uses (schools, parks, etc.). Cities should create slow zones based on their own location-specific needs, but several types of slow zones are relatively common” (page 54).

The NACTO guide includes additional details for analyzing speeds on major streets if a jurisdiction is not able to set default citywide or category speed limits. The guide recommends setting safe speed limits by evaluating conflict density and activity level.

Their recommendations say that streets with high activity and high conflict density should have 20 mph speed limits while urban streets with low activity levels and low conflict density should have maximum speed limits of 35 mph.

- National Cooperative Research Program (NCHRP) report on speed limit guidance

There is an active research study on speed limits that is not yet available, so its full recommendations could not be considered as part of this analysis. Engineering will consider the completed study as part of future evaluations of speed limits. The research objectives of the National Cooperative Research Program (NCHRP) project 17-76 are to:

- Identify and describe factors that influence operating speed; and
- Provide guidance to make informed decisions related to establishing speed limits on roadways

On April 7, 2019, the NCHRP completed the first phase, which included an analysis of existing information, a research plan to address gaps to develop the guidance, and an outline or framework of the draft guidance and recommendations.

The research team presented to AASHTO on June 18, 2019 with an update on the project. Based on the second research objective, the team aims to create speed limit guidance and a tool to set speed limits. In developing these, the team focuses on the following as guiding principles:

- Easy to explain
- Avoid “black box” feel
- Consistent results
- Defendable/demonstrate sources of decision rules
- Flexible so future knowledge can update decision rules
- Can be used for all roadway types/contexts
- Group similar roadway types/contexts
- Different set of decision rules for each roadway type/context groups
The team makes a distinction between different setting groups: Limited access (freeways), undeveloped (rural), developed, and full access. For the St. Louis Park context of local speed limit setting, limited access and undeveloped will be omitted from this evaluation. The categories are still in DRAFT form.

i. Full Access (DRAFT)
   1. Rounded down 50th [percentile]
   2. Closest 50th

ii. Developed (DRAFT)
   1. Closest 50th
   2. Rounded down 85th
   3. Closest 85th

“Full Access” streets are defined as:
- Local roads in suburban contexts
- Collector and local roads in urban contexts
- Non-freeways in urban core contexts

“Developed” streets are defined as:
- Collector and arterial roads in suburban contexts
- Arterial roads in urban contexts

For reference, the Metropolitan Council considers St. Louis Park an “Urban Center” city under their “ThriveMSP 2040 Community Designations”.

In both cases, the NCHRP team is considering evaluating roads for speed limits using the 50th percentile speeds (median) instead of an 85th percentile. This is in line with the 2017 NTSB speed study and the subsequent NCUTCD recommendations.

- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
  i. USLIMITS
     In 2008, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) developed a knowledge-based expert system called USLIMITS for recommending speed limits in speed zones that are considered to be credible and enforceable while taking pedestrians and bicyclists into consideration.

     The current version, USLIMITS2, was created in 2012 as a “user-friendly, logical, and objective tool for local communities and agencies with limited access to engineers experienced in conducting speed studies for setting appropriate speed limits. For experienced engineers, USLIMITS2 can provide an objective second opinion and increase confidence in speed limit setting decisions.

  ii. Optimization
The optimum speed limit is the speed limit that yields the minimum total societal cost, which includes vehicle operation costs, crash costs, travel time costs, and other social costs. This method of setting speed limits is rarely used due to the difficulty of quantifying key variables.

- **Speed limits in other states**
  A 2010 report by NHTSA provides a summary of state speed laws for all fifty states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. According to the study, statutory speed limits for city streets range from 20 to 45 mph. However, most states set default speed limits of 25 or 30 mph. Of the 52 statutory speed limits for city streets:
  - 40% (21) set speed limits at 25 mph
  - 29% (15) set speed limits at 30 mph
  - 19% (10) did not set a statutory speed limit for city streets
  - 6% (3) set speed limits at 35 mph
  - And 6% (3) had a combination of 25 and 35 mph limits depending on the categorization of the road or area type

In 2017, a majority of states (30) had a default urban speed limit of 25 mph, including all of Minnesota’s neighboring states (see Figure ###). In addition, 17 states allow 20 mph speed limits if certain conditions are met. Since 2017, some states have made changes to their speed limits under various conditions.

![Map of default urban speed limits by state as of 2017](image)

**Figure ###:** Default urban speed limit by state as of 2017
6. Speed limit changes from local cities

In May 2018, the cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul announced their intentions to change their speed limits citywide. Both are still underway in their implementation and look to complete them by the end of fall.

- **Minneapolis**
  The City of Minneapolis is reducing their speed limits on city streets as follows:
  - 20 mph on City of Minneapolis minor streets. These are predominately local residential streets.
  - 25 mph on most major City streets. Major streets are generally arterial and collector streets.
  - 35 mph on four short segments of major City streets based on conditions.
  - Alleys and Nicollet Mall will retain speed limits of 10 mph.

- **Saint Paul**
  The City of Saint Paul is reducing their speed limits on city streets as follows:
  - Principal and Minor Arterial streets are major streets and will generally have 25 mph speed limits and were evaluated to determine whether a higher speed limit is appropriate based on context and design.
  - Collector streets are generally major streets with 25 mph speed limits and were evaluated to determine whether a lower speed limit is appropriate based on context and design.
  - Local streets are generally minor streets with 20 mph speed limits and were evaluated to determine whether a higher speed limit is appropriate based on context and design.
  - Alleys will retain speed limits of 10 mph.

- **Edina**
  The City of Edina is considering changing their speed limits. In late July 2020, their engineering staff presented a draft speed limit evaluation. Their recommendations were:
  - 30 mph on four-lane major streets
  - 25 mph on two-lane major streets
  - 20 mph on major streets within School Zones (no change from current restriction)
  - 20 mph on minor streets
  - 15 mph on minor streets within School Zones (no change from current restriction)
  - 10 mph on alleys (no change from current restriction)

Their council indicated a preference for a uniform approach rather than a tiered approach. Therefore, Edina is reworking their speed limit evaluation and plan to report updated recommendations by the end of 2020. Their implementation could occur as early as 2021 but may be delayed to 2022.
7. **Speed limit changes from similar-sized cities**

While the policies from local cities did include resources and other expected impacts, much of the understanding from their policies and those available from NACTO and others focus on large cities. Large cities often have more resources or in-house capacity to accomplish certain tasks. So, the city sought information and lessons learned from other smaller cities who have also changed their speed limits to understand possible impacts for a city of our size.

- **Renton, WA**

  Renton, Washington is a first-ring suburb of Seattle with a population of about 100,000. In 2019, Renton created a process for neighborhoods to lower their default speed limit from 25 mph to 20 mph.

  In order for Renton to consider a request to reduce speed limits from 25 mph to 20 mph the following must occur:
  
  i. Staff consults the MUTCD
  
  ii. The requestor gathers signatures on a petition in which each property, dwelling unit, or business is allowed one signature.
  
  iii. The petition must be signed by at least 60% of property owners, business owners, and residents in the neighborhood.
  
  iv. The request will be brought to the city council where staff may recommend approval, denial, or modification of the request.
  
  v. City council may approve, deny, or modify the speed limit request.

  The City of Renton estimated the cost of changing out approximately 450 existing “Speed Limit 25 mph” signs to “Speed Limit 20 mph” signs is $20,500.

  The city has yet made any changes to neighborhood speed limits. Only one neighborhood has come forward wanting to pursue this petition, but the COVID-19 pandemic has stopped further activity.

- **Wheaton, IL**

  Wheaton, Illinois is a western suburb of Chicago with a population of roughly 50,000. In 2018, Wheaton lowered the speed limit for residential neighborhoods from 30 mph to 25 mph. The changes were based on a traffic study the city had conducted through a consultant.

  While 25 mph is the new speed limit for the majority of residential streets, some streets considered “major collector” and “arterial” streets where traffic volumes were above 6,000 vehicles a day remained at a 30-mph speed limit. Two streets retained their 35-mph speed limit.

  For Wheaton’s implementation plan, they estimated the total cost to be about $250,000. These costs included $174,000 for two additional police officers and an additional patrol vehicle to “effectively complete an outcome driven enforcement effort”. Without the police department components, the speed limit changes amounted to about $55,000.
Marana, AZ

Marana, Arizona is a northwest suburb of Tucson with a population of about 35,000. In 2020, Marana lowered and raised the speed limit on a variety of streets. The changes were categorized as the following:

i. **Updates** – new streets added and changes made to reflect existing conditions

ii. **Simplifications** – posting the same speed limit for both directions or eliminating short speed zones

iii. **Adjustments** – changes based on engineering judgement or study

The analysis behind the changes varied depending on the segment ranging from looking at horizontal curvature of the road to formal speed studies. The new speed zones range from 25 mph to 45 mph.

The engineering work and sign replacements were all done in-house. The costs for the changes was lumped into the annual sign replacement budget.

8. **St. Louis Park crash analysis implications for speed limits**

Crash data from 2017 to 2019 was reviewed and analyzed by a consultant (Spack Solutions) to understand trends and patterns. The full crash analysis report will be ready for release later this year.

Key findings from the crash analysis that help inform future speed limits include:

- While crashes happen on all types of streets, crashes are concentrated on higher-traffic streets, which often have higher design and operating speeds.
- Streets with higher speed limits were more likely to have fatal or high injury crashes when compared to streets with lower speed limits.
- People walking and biking are overrepresented in severe and fatal crashes in St. Louis Park. While both combined make up less than 2% of all crashes (out of 3775 total), pedestrians and bicyclists make up 33% of fatal crashes (out of 3 total) and 43% of high injury crashes (out of 21 total).
- 34% of crashes in St. Louis Park happen at intersections. However, those crashes make up 67% of fatal crashes and 70% of high injury crashes. Failing to yield the right of way was a frequent cause of pedestrian and bicycle crashes.
9. National safety research implications for speed limits

A number of studies demonstrate the relationship between speed and road safety. Generally, higher speeds increase the likelihood of a crash and the likelihood that a crash will be severe or fatal.

The NTSB 2017 report Reducing Speeding-Related Crashes Involving Passenger Vehicles summarizes the connection between speed and safety:

“Speed—and therefore speeding—increases crash risk in two ways: (1) it increases the likelihood of being involved in a crash, and (2) it increases the severity of injuries by all road users in a crash.

The relationship between speed and crash involvement is complex, and it is affected by factors such as road type, driver age, alcohol impairment, and roadway characteristics like curvature, grade, width, and adjacent land use. In contrast, the relationship between speed and injury severity is consistent and direct. Higher vehicle speeds lead to larger changes in velocity in a crash, and these velocity changes are closely linked to injury severity. This relationship is especially critical for pedestrians involved in a motor vehicle crash, due to their lack of protection” (Executive Summary page ix).

A key factor in the likelihood of a crash is how far it takes to stop. Figure XXX outlines the relationship between stopping sight distance and speed. Stopping sight distance grows with speed. According to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), it takes the average driver 301 feet to stop at 40 mph, 197 feet at 30 mph, and 112 feet at 20 mph. A change from 30 mph to 20 mph results in an average driver stopping 85 feet sooner, which is almost five car lengths of 18 feet each. Note that other research yields different stopping sight distances based on different reaction times and speeds of breaking (AASHTO guidance is conservative), but it always takes longer to stop at higher speeds.

Figure XXX: Stopping Distance and Speed

Figure XXX shows the relative crash risk for a pedestrian hit at different speeds. A person is significantly more likely to lose their life or sustain a serious injury as the speed at impact increases. A person hit at 30 mph is three times as likely to be killed than at 20 mph.

Figure XXX: Pedestrian Risk and Impact Speed
While the fact that lower traffic speeds increase safety is well established, there has been less study on the impact of speed limits on traffic speeds. A 2018 Insurance Institute for Highway Safety study *Lowering the Speed Limit from 30 to 25 mph in Boston: Effects on Vehicle Speeds* is the most recent detailed look at the impact of a change in speed limits on vehicle speeds. The study concluded that “…lowering the speed limit in urban areas is an effective countermeasure to reduce speeds and improve safety for all road users”.

The study found significant reductions in the probability of vehicles exceeding 30 mph and 35 mph. There was a 29.3 percent decline in the odds of speeding for vehicles traveling faster than 35 mph. Reduction in higher urban speeds is especially valuable because risk to pedestrians increases dramatically between 25 mph and 35 mph.

The study showed only a small change in the average traffic speed in Boston after the speed limit change, reinforcing that people generally drive to what they feel is comfortable given the context and design of the street. These results also suggest that there was less speed differential with the 25-mph limit than with the 30-mph limit since higher-end speeds decreased. Minimizing speed differential has been one of the long-standing rationales for using the 85th percentile for setting speed limits. But, this study reinforces that behavior on urban streets is different than rural and highway conditions.
10. St. Louis Park traffic speed study implications for speed limits

To develop an understanding of how motorists currently behave on different types of streets under existing speed limit regulations, the city performed an evaluation of existing speeds on roadways within St. Louis Park.

Speed data from almost 800 locations were used in this evaluation. The collected data came from multiple sources:

- The city frequently conducts speed studies to evaluate existing driving conditions to determine the appropriate action to take in response to a citizen concern (through the traffic committee) or to aid in the engineering design process. This review utilizes data collected within the previous four years and includes speeds from 375 locations on city streets.
- Every four years, the city takes traffic counts on Municipal State Aid System (MSAS) roads in accordance with MnDOT. During the latest round of counting, the city elected to collect speed information as well. This review utilizes data collected in 2017 and includes speeds from 123 locations on city streets.
- The city often uses speed feedback boards deployed through our police department. These boards display the speed in which drivers are traveling and reminding them of the existing speed limit. This review utilizes data collected within the previous three years and includes speeds from 314 locations on city streets.

Data from all sources were typically collected via traffic tubes for at least 48 hours in the middle of a typical weekday. When traffic tubes can’t be used, the counts are conducted using video analysis. Speed data was collected by direction and all data points count each direction as an individual study.

Staff’s initial speed findings are divided into three groups:

- Low traffic roads (less than 2,000 vehicles a day)
- Medium traffic roads (between 2,000 and 12,000 vehicles a day)
- High traffic roads (more than 12,000 vehicles a day)

The general findings are shown in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Median speed</th>
<th>Average speed</th>
<th>85th percentile speed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All city streets</td>
<td>23.5 mph</td>
<td>23.4 mph</td>
<td>27.8 mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low traffic roads</td>
<td>21.1 mph</td>
<td>21.0 mph</td>
<td>25.5 mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium traffic roads</td>
<td>28.9 mph</td>
<td>28.4 mph</td>
<td>33.4 mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High traffic roads</td>
<td>27.6 mph</td>
<td>29.5 mph</td>
<td>34.7 mph</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key takeaways from the speed study include:

- The average speed across all low volume streets was 21 mph.
- Low traffic streets are the city’s safest streets based on the citywide crash study, although severe and fatal crashes have happened on them.
- The city regularly receives resident concerns about vehicles driving too fast on roads of all traffic levels. These complaints, when compared with the existing speed data, suggest that the current speed limit does not reflect the expectations of residents and that the
city can support this by setting a speed that supports safety and community expectations on these streets.
- The median speeds of medium and high traffic roads are similar, ranging from 27 to 29 mph. This indicates that the current speed limit is higher than most drivers are comfortable traveling and lowering it will support safety on those streets. Characteristics of higher traffic roads, when compared to medium traffic roads, are the higher number of lanes. The increased width of the road makes it more difficult for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross.

11. Race Equity and Inclusion (REI) considerations

12. Findings and conclusions

Based on data and research documented in this evaluation, the key findings from our evaluation are:

- Lower traffic speeds reduce both the likelihood and severity of crashes.
- A majority of states have lower default speed limits than Minnesota. All of Minnesota’s neighboring states have a 25 mph default urban speed limit.
- The traditional approach of using 85th percentile speed to set speed limits is no longer considered the best practice for urban streets.
- When setting urban speed limits with broad authority, there are two common options from guidance and recent city speed limit changes:
  - Default citywide speed limit of 25 mph
  - Category speed limits with 20 mph on local residential streets and generally higher on more busy and connecting streets.
- Success in changing speed limits in smaller cities has yet to be realized as they have been recent and have not yet reevaluated traffic conditions. However, success in larger cities such as Portland, Seattle, and Boston, have found success with the category speed limit approach.

The key findings above led to the following conclusions:

- Speed limits lower than the statutory default are justified because they:
  - Promote public health, safety, and welfare
  - Support city policies
  - Align with emerging national best practices for safe urban street operations
  - Support the city’s traffic safety goal to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries on city streets

13. Speed limit recommendations

Based on the above findings and conclusions, staff recommends that speed limits be set using a category approach. For St. Louis Park, a category approach to speed limits is the most appropriate generally with 20 mph on lower traffic roads, 25 mph on medium traffic roads, and 30+ mph on high traffic roads because:

- It is easier to communicate when compared to a single default speed limit. Hennepin County and MnDOT-owned roads will continue to have 30 mph speed limits or higher and it is unknown when or if those will change.
- These lower speed limits prioritize public health and safety (a person hit at 30 mph is three times as likely to be killed or severely injured than a person hit at 20 mph).
• A citywide 25 mph speed limit does not reflect the design, land use, mode use, and expectations of city streets.
• Low traffic roads generally serve short, local connections, have on-street parking, are narrow and require slow speeds when two cars pass each other. In addition, they have frequent entrances to residences or businesses. The average speed of low traffic roads is 21 mph.
• Medium traffic roads generally serve longer trips, have traffic signals at higher volume intersections to support safe crossing of all modes, are wider in width, and sometimes have on-street parking. The average speed of medium traffic roads is 28 mph.
• High traffic roads generally serve longer trips, have traffic signals at high volume intersections to support safe crossing of all modes, are wider in width, often do not have on-street parking, and have more than two traffic lanes. The average speed of high traffic roads is 30 mph.

The following criteria were taken into consideration while determining appropriate speed limits:

The default speed limit for roads in St Louis Park is recommended to be 20-mph speed limit.

A street or segment was recommended for a 25-mph speed limit if it met all of the following:
• Half-mile segment or more
• Regular bus service OR adjacent to SWLRT platform OR ADT > 2,000
• Continuous sidewalk/trail or predominantly non-residential zone

A street or segment was recommended for a 30-mph speed limit if it met the 25 mph criteria and all of the following:
• Half-mile segment OR road with split border with another city
• ADT > 12,000 OR 4 or more driving lanes

A street or segment was recommended for a 35-mph speed limit if it met the 30 mph criteria and all of the following:
• 0 – 2 intersections or major crossings per half mile
• Limited or no pedestrian access

Alleys will retain a 10 MPH speed limit.

Staff finds that a category speed limit approach accomplishes the original goals of the evaluation because it:
• Supports the city’s traffic safety goal to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries on city streets.
• Reflects the city’s priority in creating a mobility system that prioritizes pedestrians first, then bicyclists and transit users, then drivers.
• Aligns with current national speed limit guidance.
• Is understandable, consistent, replicable, reasonable, and appropriate for an urban context.
• Contributes to equitable outcomes for all people.
• Supports the movement of people and goods.
• Sends a clear message to the driving public that “slower is safer” on all streets.
14. Signage plan
15. Traffic signal plan
16. Environmental benefits
17. Communications and education plan
18. Enforcement considerations
19. Evaluation plan
Fig 1: Existing speed limits on city roads

Legend
- Existing speed limit
  - 25
  - 30
  - 35
  - 40
- Non-city or private roads

Miles
Recommended speed limits

Legend
Recommended speed limit
- 20
- 25
- 30
- 35
- Non-city or private roads

St. Louis Park, Minnesota
Experience LIFE in the Park
Executive summary

Title: Fire department staffing structure

Recommended action: **Due to the COVID-19 emergency declaration, this item is considered essential business and is Categorized as **Time-Sensitive** **
- No formal action at this time. This discussion is intended to outline for the council proposed changes to the staffing structure for the fire department.

Policy consideration: Will the proposed staffing structure meet or exceed the service level the fire department provides in a cost-effective way?

Summary: The purpose of this presentation is to provide information for the Council regarding the current and proposed staffing structure of the fire department and to share the impacts to the budget through the elimination of the part time firefighter staff and replacing them with career employees.

The analysis staff will share at the study session is that by moving to an all career model, we increase fire prevention, lower overtime costs, reduce impacts to the capital plan, improve team cohesion, lower training costs and create a predictable level of staffing throughout the year.

Financial or budget considerations: The proposed staffing model will reduce the costs associated with the fire department’s operating budget, as well as reducing the impacts to the capital plan.

Strategic priority consideration: Not applicable.

Supporting documents: Discussion

Prepared by: Steve Koering, fire chief
Approved by: Tom Harmening, city manager
Discussion

Background: In 1996 the City of St Louis Park made a significant shift in its staffing model when it created the paid-on call firefighter position, and supplemented fire response with these employees in addition to the existing career staff. At the time this was considered innovative, controversial and a lower cost option. It is important to note that over the 105 year history of the department that restructuring of staff has covered almost every possible design including citizen volunteers, volunteer firefighters, all career, combination and even a period where there was no department - we used other cities to provide the service. Staff feels we now need to consider another structural change to meet the needs of the community.

Over the past 25 years the current staffing model has served the community and has gone through several iterations to attempt to maximize the effectiveness of the part time force against the dollars invested. Since its inception, 104 members have been part of the workforce, with just one part time member remaining from the original group. Over the course of the last 25 years, 32 part time members have become fulltime employees; 13 at St. Louis Park and 19 for other cities. Currently, eight of our career staff were hired from our part time ranks. One of the current challenges of the part time firefighter model is the low retention rate - 35% over the last 10 years, or 16 of 45 hires were retained.

In 2018 the fire department’s 2018-2023 strategic plan identified the sustainability of our staffing model as one of six key drivers of our five-year strategy. Over the course of the last few years, attempts have been made to align the model with the changing workforce needs to try and meet the growing demands of response against the expanding demands on the part time employees by forces outside of the fire department. These challenges validate what is rapidly becoming a national trend of recognizing the higher costs and viability or sustainability of the current combination model (part-time/full-time). COVID 19 created yet another set of challenges for the model and as costs have escalated, it served as a tipping point to evaluate all potential approaches to reduce operating costs without lowering the service level to the community.

The analysis that we will share shows that by moving to an all career model, we increase fire prevention, lower overtime costs, reduce impacts to the capital plan, improve team cohesion, lower training costs and create a predictable level of staffing throughout the year. While this is a difficult decision on the human side of the equation, staff feels it is really unavoidable to not act on the improvements that the restructuring offers.
Executive summary

Title: Future study session agenda planning and prioritization

Recommended action: **Due to the COVID-19 emergency declaration, this item is considered essential business and is Categorized as Time-Sensitive**

- The city council and city manager to set the agenda for the regularly scheduled study session on Sept. 14, 2020.

Policy consideration: Not applicable.

Summary: This report summarizes the proposed agenda for the regularly scheduled study session on Sept. 14, 2020. Also attached to this report is the study session discussion topics and timeline.

Financial or budget considerations: Not applicable.

Strategic priority consideration: Not applicable.

Supporting documents: Tentative agenda – Sept. 14, 2020
Study session discussion topics and timeline

Prepared by: Debbie Fischer, administrative services office assistant
Reviewed by: Maria Solano, senior management analyst
Approved by: Tom Harmening, city manager
Sept. 14, 2020

6:30 p.m. Study session - *To be held via videoconference*

**Tentative discussion items**

1. **2021 budget, preliminary levies, CIP, utility rates, and fees** – Administrative services (90 minutes) In preparation for setting the preliminary levy on September 21, staff and consultants from Ehlers will present information on capital and long-range financial planning to facilitate discussion on where the 2021 budget and levy is currently at along with proposed utility rates and fees.
   
   **Due to the COVID-19 emergency declaration, this item is considered essential business and is Categorized as **Time-Sensitive**

   
2. **Future study session agenda planning** – Administrative services (5 minutes)

   **Communications/meeting check-in** – Administrative services (5 minutes)

   Time for communications between staff and council will be set aside on every study session agenda for the purposes of information sharing.

**Written reports**

3. Small business assistance program update
4. **P12** Changes to sign ordinance
### Future council items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Discussion topic</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Timeline for council discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Discuss public process expectations and outcomes</td>
<td>Staff is working on the approach for undertaking this discussion.</td>
<td>1st qtr. 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Revisit housing setback, FAR, &amp; more related to affordable housing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Oct.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Home-based businesses (HBB)/ accessory dwelling units (ADU)</td>
<td></td>
<td>ADU – 9/29/20; HBB - 1st qtr. 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Public forums at council mtgs</td>
<td>9/23/19 SS. Staff doing research of other cities.</td>
<td>1st qtr. 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Community and neighborhood sidewalk designations</td>
<td>To be combined w/ Connect the Park discussion.</td>
<td>4th qtr. 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Remove mint &amp; menthol exemption from existing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Written report 8/24/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/13</td>
<td>Easy access to nature, across city, starting w/ low-income neighborhoods</td>
<td>Combine P10 and P13. *On hold pending direction from school district.</td>
<td>*On hold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Conversion therapy ban</td>
<td></td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Changes to sign ordinance</td>
<td></td>
<td>Written report 9/14/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community health: services and connections in SLP</td>
<td></td>
<td>Oct.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Council items in progress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Discussion topic</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Next Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>STEP discussion: facilities</td>
<td>Council asked staff to consider lending options to assist STEP in buying a new bldg.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Police use of force policy review</td>
<td>Discussed 7/27/20. Staff is developing process.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Policing: structural analysis</td>
<td>Discussed 7/27/20. Staff is developing process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Revitalization of Walker Lake area</td>
<td>Council approved updated parking ord. Dec. 2019; Planning Commission working on new zoning ord. and design guidelines for the district – recommendation to council Q4; Construction of phase 1 completed summer 2019; Phase 2 currently under construction</td>
<td>Discussion of ordinance and design guidelines late 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Crime free ordinance/ affordable housing strategies</td>
<td>Council reviewed ordinance; Certain provisions of CF ordinance suspended; Work group formed; Work group presented recommendations to council 6/8/2020.</td>
<td>1st reading repeal ordinance 8/3/20, 2nd reading 8/17/20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Executive summary

Title: Menthol, mint, and wintergreen flavored tobacco products

Recommended action: **Due to the COVID-19 emergency declaration, this item is considered essential business and is Categorized as Time-Sensitive**
- No action requested at this time. Please advise staff of questions you may have.

Policy consideration: Does council wish to postpone for the time being further discussion of amending the tobacco licensing definitions or requirements.

Summary: The city has a history of proactively implementing requirements to help protect public health through reducing the access and attractiveness of tobacco products to youth within the community.

Over the past few years, the minimum age to purchase tobacco products in the city was raised to 21; prohibited sale of all flavored tobacco products exempting menthol, mint, or wintergreen; and stopped the sale of e-cigarettes and vaping products.

Minnesota has now raised the statewide minimum age to purchase tobacco to 21 and with some other changes, necessitates minor amendments to our licensing section of code that the city attorney is preparing. These will be brought to council within the next few months.

One of council’s priorities for 2020 was to discuss reviewing the definition exemption that allows menthol, mint, and wintergreen flavored cigarettes, cigars, and loose tobacco to be sold. This report provides an update on considerations including current legal challenges occurring with a community that recently passed on ordinance to prohibit sale of these flavors of tobacco products.

Financial or budget considerations: Not applicable.

Strategic priority consideration: Not applicable.

Supporting documents: Discussion

Prepared by: Brian Hoffman, building and energy director
Approved by: Tom Harmening, city manager
Discussion

Background: The city has successfully responded to health concerns as it relates to the sale of tobacco products beginning with prohibiting vending machine many years ago. In 2017 the city was the second community in the state to raise the legal age for purchase of all tobacco products to 21. Within three years the momentum resulted in the State of Minnesota raising the legal age to 21.

Later in 2017, council approved amending the tobacco license requirements to restrict the sale of all flavored tobacco with an exception for menthol, mint, and wintergreen. Then in 2019, council discussed and passed the ordinance prohibiting sale of e-cigarettes and vaping products within the city.

Present considerations: Currently, the city licenses 19 tobacco establishments. The number of establishments has been on the decline over the past few years. These licensed establishments include liquor stores, grocery stores, convenience stores and gas stations. The city currently does not have any specialty tobacco stores, however there is a pending application while the business remains under remodeling. A certificate of occupancy and licensing inspection must both be completed before a license could be issued. The code does not differentiate tobacco sales based on type of the retail establishment, as the same regulations apply to all.

Recently, some other local authorities have adopted ordinances regulating the sale of flavored tobacco products to address the youth vaping health crisis and protect public health. The Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act (FSPTCA) specifically preserves the right for state and local authorities to prohibit the sale of tobacco products. 21 U.S.C. § 387p(a)(1). In response to these ordinances, tobacco companies have initiated lawsuits against local authorities. Tobacco companies assert that these local ordinances are preempted by federal law. In other words, they claim that municipalities lack the authority to adopt these ordinances.

Tobacco companies are most significantly objecting to the sales regulation of menthol flavored tobacco products. Congress specifically delegated authority to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to determine whether menthol should be banned as a flavor in cigarettes. See 21 U.S.C. § 387g(a)(1)(A), (e). The FDA has studied the issue twice, and on both occasions, it has declined to ban the menthol flavor. Tobacco companies argue that the delegation to the FDA preempts the ability of local authorities to ban the sale of this particular flavor. They argue that allowing local authorities to ban the sale of menthol flavored tobacco products would undermine the FDA’s authority to set national standards for tobacco products. Conversely, local authorities have argued that the FSPTCA expressly reserves authority to them to regulate, or even prohibit, the sale of tobacco products. 21 U.S.C. § 387p(a)(1).

**Next steps:** Litigation regarding local ordinances to regulate menthol, mint, and wintergreen tobacco flavors is currently ongoing in Edina. The defense for this type of litigation is not covered by the city’s insurance carrier and becomes a direct expense for the city.

Until further court decisions in Minnesota provide improved clarity on if or how a city ordinance may prohibit the sale or menthol flavored tobacco products, staff recommends postponing further discussion on this issue. We will continue to monitor and update council as information becomes available.
Executive summary

Title: July 2020 monthly financial report

**Recommended action:** **Due to the COVID-19 emergency declaration, this item is considered essential business and is Categorized as Time-Sensitive**

- No action required at this time.

**Policy consideration:** Monthly financial reports are part of our financial management policies.

**Summary:** The monthly financial report provides an overview of general fund revenues and departmental expenditures comparing them to budget throughout the year. A budget to actual summary for the four utility funds is also provided with this report.

**Financial or budget considerations:** At the end of July, general fund expenditures were at approximately 52% of the adopted annual budget, which is about 6% under budget. First half property tax collections were much better than earlier anticipated. Permit revenue has continued to be strong during the summer and is exceeding budget.

**Strategic priority consideration:** Not applicable.

**Supporting documents:** Discussion
- Summary of revenues and expenditures – general fund
- Budget to actual – enterprise funds

**Prepared by:** Darla Monson, accountant
**Reviewed by:** Melanie Lammers, chief financial officer
- Nancy Deno, deputy city manager/HR director

**Approved by:** Tom Harmening, city manager
Discussion

**Background:** This monthly report provides summary information of the overall level of revenues and departmental expenditures in the general fund compared to the adopted budget throughout the year. A budget to actual summary for the four utility funds is also included with this report.

**Present considerations:**

**General Fund**

Under normal circumstances, expenditures would generally be at approximately 58% of the annual budget at the end of July. General fund expenditures are running about 6% under at 52% of the adopted annual budget through July and no departments have exceeded budget. A large portion of our low expenditures can be attributed to salary savings from positions in the general fund that were put on hold due to COVID.

A supplemental property tax settlement was received at the end of July from Hennepin County which brought first half collections to 52.8% of the general fund levy. This compares to 51.7% last year after the first half settlement.

License and permit revenues combined are at approximately 85% of budget through July. Net of the refunds that were recently issued to businesses due to the COVID-19 closures, business and liquor license revenue is at 81% of budget or $771K of the $953K budgeted. Permit revenue is at 87% of budget through July. Larger permits issued to date have included Parkway Place, The Quentin and several school district projects. A portion of the 10 West End permit was deferred to 2020 to offset related expenditures.
## Study session meeting of August 24, 2020 (Item No. 5)
Title: July 2020 monthly financial report

### Summary of Revenues & Expenditures - General Fund
As of July 31, 2020

#### General Fund Revenues:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Property Taxes</td>
<td>$25,705,886</td>
<td>$26,597,928</td>
<td>$26,880,004</td>
<td>$26,952,306</td>
<td>$28,393,728</td>
<td>$14,986,752</td>
<td>$13,406,976</td>
<td>52.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licenses and Permits</td>
<td>3,924,648</td>
<td>4,001,644</td>
<td>4,103,424</td>
<td>5,264,659</td>
<td>4,660,811</td>
<td>3,982,654</td>
<td>678,157</td>
<td>85.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fines &amp; Forfeits</td>
<td>269,200</td>
<td>282,146</td>
<td>279,700</td>
<td>274,340</td>
<td>280,000</td>
<td>72,421</td>
<td>207,579</td>
<td>25.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intergovernmental</td>
<td>1,864,877</td>
<td>2,016,435</td>
<td>1,760,900</td>
<td>1,761,763</td>
<td>1,760,082</td>
<td>964,238</td>
<td>795,844</td>
<td>54.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charges for Services</td>
<td>2,162,410</td>
<td>2,180,589</td>
<td>2,187,319</td>
<td>2,160,345</td>
<td>2,273,824</td>
<td>812,505</td>
<td>1,461,319</td>
<td>35.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rents &amp; Other Miscellaneous</td>
<td>1,318,037</td>
<td>1,427,744</td>
<td>1,367,012</td>
<td>1,500,867</td>
<td>1,456,102</td>
<td>666,594</td>
<td>789,508</td>
<td>45.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfers In</td>
<td>1,929,090</td>
<td>1,929,076</td>
<td>1,999,877</td>
<td>2,012,706</td>
<td>2,038,338</td>
<td>1,156,364</td>
<td>881,974</td>
<td>56.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment Earnings</td>
<td>160,000</td>
<td>251,494</td>
<td>180,000</td>
<td>523,124</td>
<td>210,000</td>
<td>56,853</td>
<td>153,147</td>
<td>27.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Income</td>
<td>40,950</td>
<td>35,802</td>
<td>31,300</td>
<td>57,274</td>
<td>621,280</td>
<td>375,851</td>
<td>245,429</td>
<td>60.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Fund Balance</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total General Fund Revenues</strong></td>
<td>$37,898,933</td>
<td>$38,712,858</td>
<td>$39,087,692</td>
<td>$40,737,411</td>
<td>$41,694,165</td>
<td>$23,074,232</td>
<td>$18,619,933</td>
<td>55.34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### General Fund Expenditures:

**General Government:**
- Administration: $1,341,606
- Finance: $975,752
- Assessing: $759,865
- Human Resources: $796,666
- Community Development: $1,479,911
- Facilities Maintenance: $1,162,342
- Information Resources: $1,589,432
- Communications & Marketing: $755,940
- Community Outreach: $27,637

**Public Safety:**
- Police: $9,930,681
- Fire Protection: $4,657,973
- Building: $2,544,762

**Operations:**
- Public Works Administration: $2,305,753
- Public Works Operations: $3,091,857
- Vehicle Maintenance: $1,253,367
- Engineering: $525,834

**Total Operations:** $5,101,811

**Parks and Recreation:**
- Organized Recreation: $1,582,490
- Recreational Center: $1,860,755
- Park Maintenance: $1,830,530
- Westwood Nature Center: $622,346
- Natural Resources: $559,662

**Total Parks and Recreation:** $6,455,783

**Other Depts and Non-Departmental:**
- Racial Equity and Inclusion: $- 
- Sustainability: $26,283
- Transfers Out: $1,040,000
- Contingency and Other: $315,772

**Total Other Depts and Non-Departmental:** $315,772

**Total General Fund Expenditures:** $37,898,933

---

*Primarily related to E911 expenditures from restricted fund balance.*
## Budget to Actual - Enterprise Funds
As of July 31, 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Water</th>
<th>Sewer</th>
<th>Solid Waste</th>
<th>Storm Water</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operating revenues:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User charges</td>
<td>$7,472,931</td>
<td>$3,433,842</td>
<td>$4,039,089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent revenue, permits &amp; other</td>
<td>533,242</td>
<td>510,269</td>
<td>22,973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total operating revenues</strong></td>
<td>8,006,173</td>
<td>3,944,110</td>
<td>4,062,063</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Operating expenses: | | | |
| Personal services | 1,521,345 | 878,539 | 642,806 | 57.75% | 539,901 | 299,654 | 240,247 | 63.30% | 12,500 | 1,394 | 11,106 | 11.15% |
| Supplies & non-capital | 268,300 | 195,685 | 72,615 | 72.93% | 247,550 | 50,285 | 197,265 | 23.91% | 169,100 | 169,100 | 0.00% |
| Services & other charges | 2,073,702 | 1,905,704 | 167,998 | 91.90% | 2,920,580 | 1,400,222 | 1,520,358 | 47.94% | 2,920,580 | 1,400,222 | 1,520,358 | 47.94% |
| **Depreciation** | 329,946 | 480,536 | (150,590) | 145.64% | 329,946 | 480,536 | (150,590) | 145.64% |
| **Total operating expenses** | 3,863,347 | 2,979,928 | 883,419 | 77.13% | 3,708,031 | 1,750,162 | 1,957,869 | 46.71% | 1,238,813 | 854,789 | 384,024 | 69.00% |

| Operating income (loss) | 4,142,826 | 964,182 | 3,178,644 | 23.27% | (23,241) | (31,753) | 2,912 | 110.10% | 1,827,069 | 744,038 | 1,083,031 | 40.72% |

| Nonoperating revenues (expenses): | | | |
| Interest income | 7,450 | 17,853 | (10,403) | 239.64% | 13,000 | 2,038 | 10,962 | 56.68% | 5,600 | 5,600 | 0.00% |
| Bond interest & bank charges | (412,950) | (587,986) | 175,036 | 142.39% | (87,250) | (72,361) | (14,889) | 82.94% | (23,500) | (8,654) | (14,846) | 36.83% |
| **Total nonoperating rev (exp)** | (405,500) | (570,134) | 164,634 | 140.60% | (10,000) | (6,916) | (3,884) | 63.01% | (29,250) | (64,783) | 35,533 | 221.48% |

| Income (loss) before transfers | 3,737,326 | 394,049 | 3,343,277 | 10.54% | 2,361,871 | 296,269 | 2,065,602 | 12.54% | (39,341) | (38,368) | (973) | 97.53% |

| Transfers in | | | |
| Transfers out | (638,635) | (372,537) | (266,098) | 58.33% | (873,785) | (509,708) | (364,077) | 58.33% | (248,289) | (14,835) | (103,454) | 58.33% |

| NET INCOME (LOSS) | 3,098,691 | 21,511 | 3,077,180 | 0.69% | 1,488,086 | 213,439 | 1,701,525 | 14.34% | (287,630) | (183,204) | (104,426) | 63.69% |

| Items reclassified to bal sht at year end: | | | |
| Capital Outlay | (2,649,356) | (323,693) | (2,325,663) | 12.22% | (1,411,750) | (303,418) | (1,108,332) | 21.49% | - | - | - |
| Revenues over/(under) expenditures | 449,335 | 302,181 | 751,516 | 76,336 | (516,857) | 593,193 | (287,630) | (183,204) | (104,426) | (1,789,360) | 174,903 | (1,964,263) |

*Depreciation is recorded at end of year (non-cash item).
Executive summary

Title: West End Office Park minor amendment to special permit

Recommended action: **Due to the COVID-19 emergency declaration, this item is considered essential business and is Categorized as a Required Action**

- No action required. Please provide individual comments or questions to staff. Staff intends to place the request for a minor amendment to the special permit on the September 8, 2020 consent agenda.

Policy consideration: Does the project meet the zoning requirements for a minor amendment to the special permit?

Summary: The existing courtyard at the West End Office Park (5353, 5401 Gamble Drive and 5354, 5402 Parkdale Drive) was built in the 1970s. The owner would like to renovate the space in order to create a more active, usable outdoor amenity space where tenants can work, gather, and spend time outdoors. The proposal includes removing the water fountain and leveling some of the mounds on the site, and creating open lawn space, covered seating and working areas, and a new pedestrian connection with an accessible ramp connecting the site with the Shops at West End across the street. The buildings and parking lots will remain unchanged, and the site will be updated to meet landscaping and lighting requirements in the zoning code.

The scope of the project requires a minor amendment to the special permit (Resolution 5405). Minor amendments do not require a public hearing or planning commission review. Staff intend to place the request for an amendment on the September 8, 2020 consent agenda.

Financial or budget considerations: Not applicable

Strategic priority consideration: St. Louis Park is committed to providing a broad range of housing and neighborhood oriented development.

Supporting documents: Aerial of project site

Prepared by: Jacquelyn Kramer, associate planner
Reviewed by: Sean Walther, planning and zoning supervisor
Karen Barton, community development director
Approved by: Tom Harmening, city manager
Aerial of project site
Executive summary

Title: Notice of eviction

Recommended action: **Due to the COVID-19 emergency declaration, this item is considered essential business and is Categorized as **Time-Sensitive**

- No action at this time. Staff recommends council consider a Notice of Eviction policy requiring seven days noticing to tenants prior to bringing an eviction action.

Policy consideration: Does the council support a tenant protection policy as proposed requiring owners to provide a notice to tenants prior to filing an eviction action for nonpayment of rent?

Summary: The implementation of a Notice of Eviction policy would require rental property owners/managers to provide a notice to tenants prior to the filing of an eviction action for nonpayment of rent. The notice is meant to ensure that residents are informed and aware of the consequences of unresolved financial obligations to the landlord that are in violation of the lease. The policy was first reviewed with council at the March 25, 2019 study session and again at the October 28, 2019 study session. Representatives from HOME Line and the Volunteer Lawyers Network & the Housing Court Project provided input on the impacts of the policy largely from the tenant’s perspective at the October study session.

Council directed staff to conduct a public outreach process stressing the importance of reaching out to rental property owners for their input. The proposed policy was posted on the city’s website and social media platforms and distributed through the SPARC (St. Louis Park Area Rental Coalition) newsletter. At the January 27, 2020 council study session staff recommended that the proposed notice period be reduced from 14 days to 7 days based on the input received from the rental owners and managers.

At the same time the council was considering this policy, a similar bill requiring a notice be provided to tenants prior to filing an eviction was introduced at the 2020 legislative session. Further action on the local policy was deferred to allow the legislature to consider the bill. Since the legislature failed to take any action on the bill, the policy is being presented to council for consideration to approve at the local level.

Financial or budget considerations: Implementation and ongoing management and monitoring of this policies will require additional city staff time, as well as direct costs related to educating rental property owners of the new requirements.

Strategic priority consideration: St. Louis Park is committed to providing a broad range of housing and neighborhood oriented development.

Supporting documents: Discussion

Prepared by: Michele Schnitker, community develop deputy director and housing supervisor
Reviewed by: Karen Barton, community development director
Approved by: Tom Harmening, city manager
Discussion

Background: A bill was introduced at the 2019 legislative session that would require a notice be provided to tenants prior to filing an eviction action. The notice is meant to ensure that residents are informed and aware of the consequences of unresolved financial obligations to the landlord that are in violation of the lease or another material breach of the lease. The legislature failed to take action on the bill.

In 2019 and early 2020, council discussed adopting a local policy similar to the policy in the legislative bill. The city’s Notice of Eviction policy would require rental property owners/managers to provide a notice to tenants prior to the filing of an eviction action for nonpayment of rent or unpaid financial obligations in violation of the lease.

Action on the policy was deferred while the legislature once again considered whether to adopt a similar bill which was reintroduced at the 2020 session. Again, the legislature failed to take action on the bill. Absent a statewide notice requirement, the local policy is being presented for council consideration. The proposed policy presented at the January 27, 2020 study session reduced the notice period from 14 days to 7 days based on comments received from the public. The notice being proposed is as follows:

Notice of eviction policy/St. Louis Park: Before bringing an eviction action alleging a material breach of the lease for nonpayment of rent or other unpaid financial obligations, a landlord must provide written notice to the residential tenant specifying the allegations of nonpayment of rent or other unpaid financial obligations and must state the total amount due along with specific accounting of the total amount. The notice must be delivered personally, mailed to the residential tenant at the address of the leased premises or delivered electronically if the tenant has indicated that is their preferred form of communication. If the alleged material breach of the lease or the rent delinquency is not corrected within 7 days of the delivery or mailing of the notice, the landlord may proceed with filing a complaint based on any allegations in the notice. The landlord must attach a copy of the notice to the complaint.

Summary of public input comments: 84 comments were received on the proposed Notice of Eviction policy. A summary of the comments by self-identified groups is provided below. The online comments are available in their entirety in the January 27, 2020 city council report.

Community members:
- Many comments supporting the notice. Commenters thought it was reasonable and that it gives renters time to remedy the situation
- Several thought the notice requirement should be longer and that the city should create notice templates for owners to use
- Several others felt the ordinance isn’t necessary, that renters know when they are paying rent late, they sign a lease; leases and state statute cover rental agreements and evictions and should be adequate and should be at the discretion of the owner, no need for another layer of government regulation
- Some felt 14 days is too long, resulting in tenants being 2 months behind on rent. Small rental property owners could be put in a financial hard spot and that the notice should apply for financial arrears only
Renters:
- Agree with policy and stated it seems fair
- Reasonable to provide a short grace period
- Strikes a good balance
- Deliver in person/sign that it was received

Property owners:
- Majority felt notice requirement was not necessary. Majority of owners already provide notice (rare not to) and an opportunity for tenants to pay arrears prior to filing in the case of non-payment of rent
- Property owners commented that evictions are costly and time consuming and a last resort for owners. It is easier to negotiate than file an eviction. Most owners wait until the 10th to act spending the first part of month negotiating with tenants
- Property owners stated a 14-day period is excessive and will create the risk to the owner of losing two-months’ rent which creates a financial burden. Owners are a for-profit business that relies on timely rent payments; can’t stay in unit for free and property owners have financial responsibilities such as mortgage payments, utilities, and other financial obligations
- Unintended consequences could include: requiring higher security deposits; stricter screening criteria; increased cost of doing business passed on to tenants; landlords will remove current grace period to pay without a late fee and immediately send out the 14 day notice; will replace “reminder letter” with notice of intent to file an eviction; negatively impact tenant/landlord relationship; tenant hardship to pay rent after the 15th and then have to pay the next month’s rent two weeks later, tenants end up being buried in debt
- Owners stated there is no “major problem” that requires the city to step in and fix; felt it is an overreach of city authority; binding legal contract with terms spelled out already in place; tenants’ responsibility to read and understand terms of the lease; not local governments role – these issues should be part of the lease agreement
- Allow email/electronic notification, need clear guidelines on proof of notification delivery
- Only five other states have 14-day notice or greater requirements

Staff has consulted the city’s legal counsel on the city’s authority to implement a notice prior to eviction requirement. Counsel’s opinion is that the city has the local authority to implement the new policy and impose new requirements but cautioned that there is always a risk that the city could be challenged.

Next steps: Implementation of the notice of eviction policy will require a codification in the ordinance, most likely in the tenant protection ordinance section. If council is in favor of moving forward with the policy as proposed, staff will work with legal counsel to draft an ordinance and return to a future meeting to hold the public hearing and first reading for adoption of the proposed ordinance.
Executive summary

Title: Request to vacate portions of unused utility easements at 8200 Minnetonka Boulevard

Recommended action: **Due to the COVID-19 emergency declaration, this item is considered essential business and is Categorized as a Required Action**
- None at this time. Please inform staff of questions you may have.

Policy consideration: Are the utility easements needed for public purposes?

Summary: The city received a petition from Paster Properties to vacate portions of utility easements at 8200 Minnetonka Boulevard, also known as the Texa-Tonka Lanes. The 10-foot-wide utility easement runs north to south through the site, underneath the building. The easement, which was originally recorded in 1951, has never been used. Additionally, in 1958, the Hennepin County District Court decided that this easement did not apply to the lot, though the easement is still showing up in the property’s title documentation.

Paster Properties requests to vacate the utility easement in order to clean up the titles to the property.

City council will hold a public hearing and a first reading of an Ordinance for the vacation request on Sept. 8, 2020, followed by a second reading on Sept. 21, 2020.

Financial or budget considerations: Not applicable

Strategic priority consideration: Not applicable.

Supporting documents: Survey of lot showing utility easement location

Prepared by: Jennifer Monson, senior planner
Reviewed by: Sean Walther, planning and zoning supervisor
Approved by: Tom Harmening, city manager
Survey of 8200 Minnetonka Boulevard