



Economic Development and Redevelopment

St. Louis Park is engaged in maintaining and growing its economy in ways that further enhance the community's economic, natural, and social vitality as a part of sustaining St. Louis Park's high quality of life.

As a first-ring suburban community, St. Louis Park is continually reinventing itself through innovative revitalization, expansion, and redevelopment projects that bring new businesses, housing and livable community options. The city also has highly ranked schools and up-to-date recreation amenities and facilities. The strength and stability of its businesses, institutions, neighborhoods and service organizations has made St. Louis Park an economically vibrant city with a AAA bond rating.

The purpose of the Economic Development and Redevelopment section is to provide guidance for long-term economic revitalization, expansion, and redevelopment efforts in St. Louis Park. This section describes the city's economic goals, strategies, key indicators, tools, initiatives and priority redevelopment areas.

Traditionally, economic development has been viewed as the process of creating jobs and increasing the tax base in order to broaden the community's tax base. The city views economic development and redevelopment more holistically by encouraging economic growth, diversification, and revitalization that enhances the natural and built environment and advances the overall health and vitality of the community. This approach entails creating and maintaining a community that is equally hospitable to businesses and residents.

Economically successful communities find innovative ways to properly balance the needs and desires of both businesses and residents. In general, the city pursues economic development and redevelopment not only to expand the city's tax base and create family-supportive jobs but also to fulfill the city's vision, clean up and protect the environment, promote economic diversification and vitality through small business development, and encourage the highest and best land uses incorporating Livable Communities, Transit Oriented Development, and Sustainability planning principles. The city looks to facilitate projects that will result in making the community healthier, more economically vibrant and environmentally sustainable.

Economic development however does not occur within a vacuum and is not merely the purview of the city. Rather it requires a concerted, collaborative effort involving business, education, government, nonprofit organizations, and neighborhoods to ensure that the city's economic future remains healthy and vibrant.

Where We Have Been Economic Development Authority (EDA)

In 1970, the city established a Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA). In 1988, the city formed a separate Economic Development Authority (EDA) to foster local economic growth and prosperity and a separate Housing Authority. The EDA has the powers and duties given to it under Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 469, Economic Development, which includes the authority to hire personnel and expend funds for economic development and redevelopment purposes, to acquire land and buildings for development and redevelopment, and to request the city to levy taxes for the support of those activities.

The EDA is committed to working with the business community to create opportunities for new and existing companies to thrive in the city. Given its various powers and financial resources, the EDA utilizes flexible business assistance and development programs within a strategic framework as a means to effectively encourage economic expansion, diversification, revitalization, and redevelopment that is complementary to the community. In this capacity the EDA reviews and considers redevelopment proposals that request financing assistance for specified costs. The EDA consists of seven members. EDA membership is the same as the City Council although the officers may vary.

The EDA and city staff handle business assistance activities, tax increment financing requests, redevelopment project assistance, public/private financial packages, real estate transactions, brownfield assistance, commercial rehabilitation/small business resources/help, green building, grant writing, and other related activities that promote economic development and redevelopment in the city.

The city's Economic Development Strategic Plan encourages the city to build upon its strengths and opportunities, mitigate its weaknesses and future threats, and ultimately, create a nurturing environment for economic development, diversification, and redevelopment in the future.

Redevelopment Districts History

Economic development is both strategic and transactional. The EDA implements its strategic goals through individual initiatives. In the 1970s and 1980s the city identified three economically distressed areas in need of transition and established its first Redevelopment Districts. The Oak Park Village Redevelopment District (along Louisiana north of Hwy 7) was established in 1973 to replace a polluting industrial use with townhouse, apartment, and commercial uses overlaid on a network of parks and open spaces. The Excelsior Boulevard Redevelopment District, which ultimately evolved into the Park Commons area, was originally established in 1977 to intensify existing development in order to create a community focal point in this area of the city. Some early successful redevelopment projects included Byerly's, Target, and the Parkwood Shores Apartments.

The Highway 7 Redevelopment District, which included most of the corridor along the south side of the highway and the commercial area between France Ave and Joppa Ave, was established in 1985 to eliminate physical blight, improve the corridor's image/ appearance, improve the corridor's transportation functions, undertake environmentally-sound redevelopment, improve economic viability, and enhance the commercial area at the east end.

In the 1990s, the EDA also established two additional Redevelopment Districts. The Victoria Ponds Redevelopment District (north of Texas Ave & 28th St) in the Texa Tonka neighborhood assisted in the environmental clean up and redevelopment of a former asphalt plant and a segment of an abandoned rail line into residential townhouses and a regional trail corridor. The following year the Park Center Housing District was established to facilitate the development of the Parkwood Shores assisted living housing project. In 1996, the EDA expanded its overall Redevelopment Project Area (the designated area in which the city may undertake various types of redevelopment and reinvestment initiatives) to include a large portion of the city.

Beginning in 1994, the city conducted a grassroots, long-term strategic planning process called Vision St. Louis Park. One of the recommendations from this community-wide visioning process was to create a "town center" in the Excelsior Boulevard Redevelopment District, including support for the principles of the Livable Communities Act adopted by the Minnesota Legislature in 1995. In 1996, the Park Commons Concept Plan was adopted which ultimately resulted in the successful Excelsior & Grand mixed-use redevelopment project, as well as major improvements to Wolfe Park.

Where We Are Today

Employment Key Indicators

St. Louis Park is a major contributor to the economic vibrancy of the western Twin Cities submarket. The city plays a leadership role in economic development to provide its residents with high quality options for living, working, healthcare, shopping, and recreating within the community. An effective economic development program ensures a growing, well-balanced tax base that eases the tax burden on all property owners. Providing residents with quality employment options locally helps bolster the economic vitality of the community as well as reduces transportation costs and carbon emissions. Pairing employers with the community's highly educated talent pool facilities gains in innovation and productivity leading to further growth and expansion. This synergism further enhances the attractiveness of the community for both businesses and residents.

As a fully developed city, economic development efforts have primarily involved revitalizing key business centers, both commercial and industrial as well as redeveloping undervalued, underutilized, blighted, and/or contaminated properties. Equally important has been the city's emphasis on helping local businesses grow and expand their enterprises. The city has also focused on recruiting new businesses and industries that are complementary to the community's existing employment base.

Employment Trends

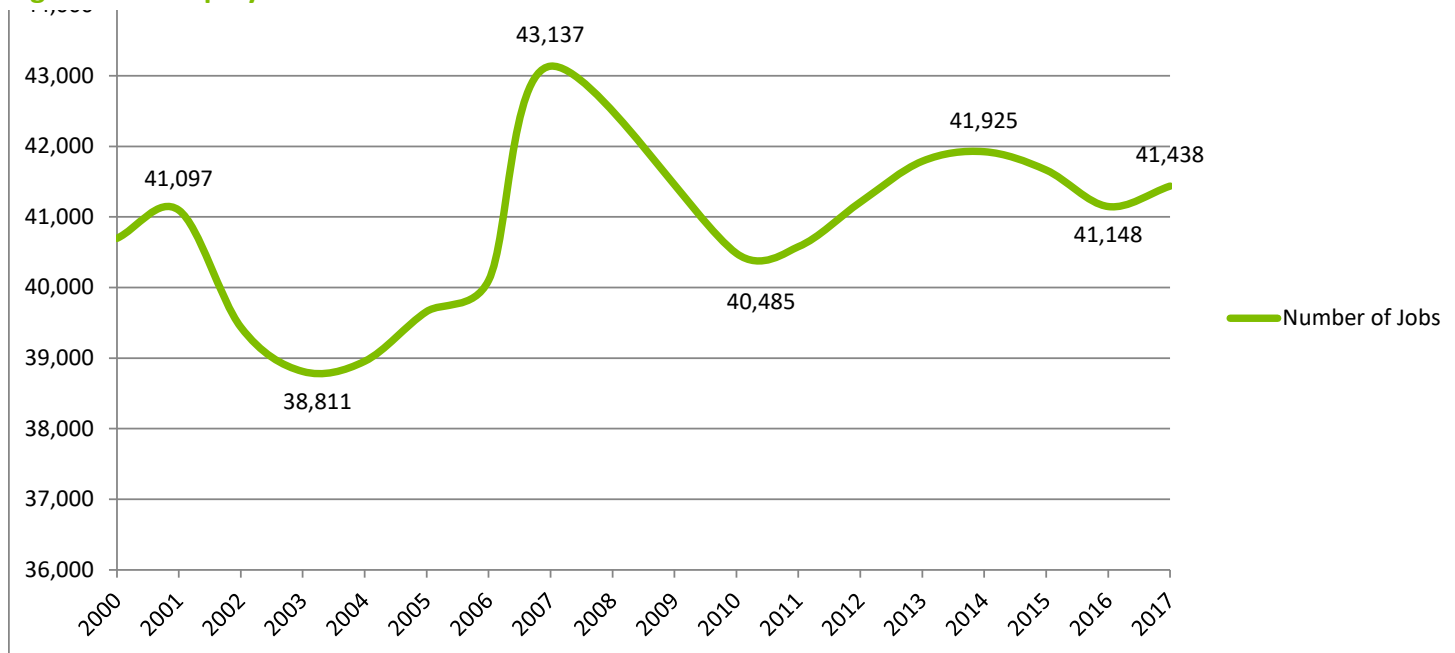
The Metropolitan Council monitors annual employment numbers by city. Table 5-7 shows employment in St. Louis Park for 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010-2017. After healthy employment growth in both the 1980s and 1990s, there was a small decline in jobs during the 2000-2010 time period. Figure 5-7 shows employment fluctuation during the 2000s.

Table 5-7. Employment Trends 1980-2017

YEAR	NUMBER OF JOBS	CHANGE
1980	31,978	3,748
1990	36,791	4,813
2000	40,696	3,905
2010	40,485	(211)
2011	40,579	94
2012	41,210	631
2013	41,790	580
2014	41,925	135
2015	41,665	(260)
2016	41,148	(517)
2017	41,438	290

Source: Metropolitan Council

Figure 5-7. Employment Trends



Jobs-to-Households Ratio

St. Louis Park has a history of maintaining a healthy balance between businesses and residents. A key indicator of this balance is the jobs-to-households ratio shown in Table 5-8. The city's overall job-to-household ratio for 2016 was 1.76 or just under 2 jobs for every household. This is above the regional average ratio of 1.5.

Table 5-8. Jobs-to-Households Ratio 1980-2016

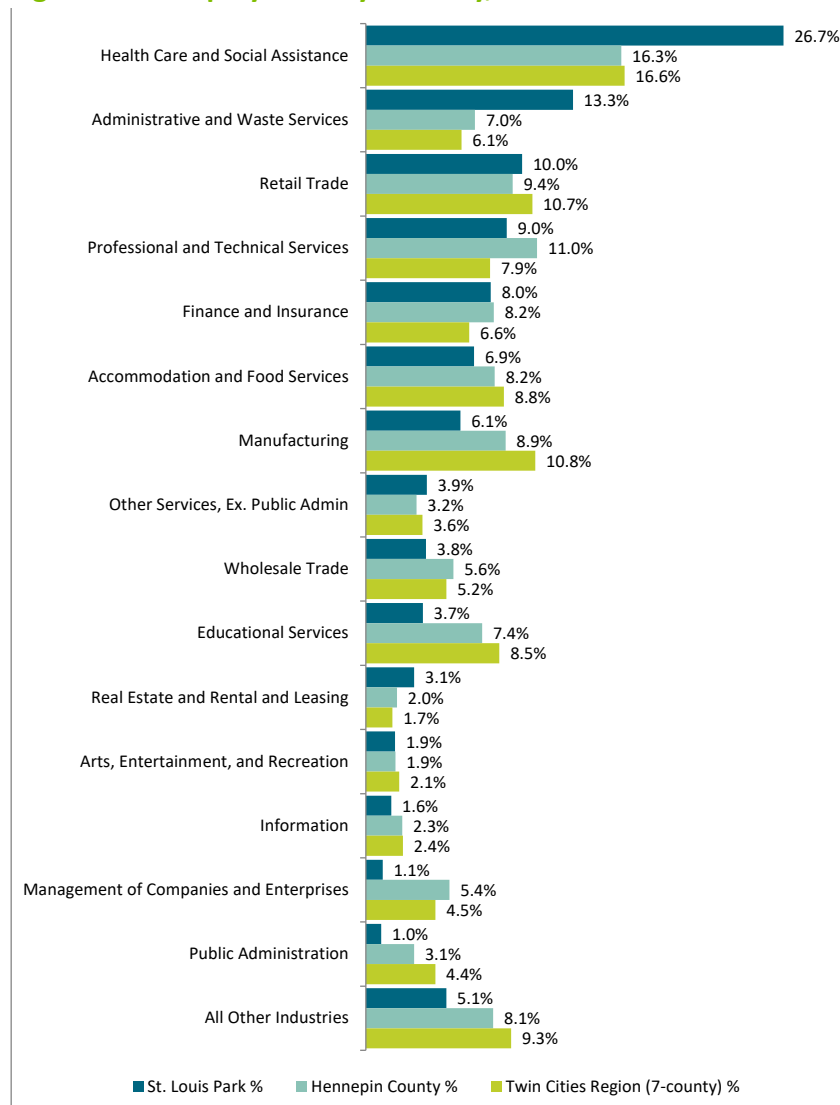
YEAR	# OF JOBS	# OF HOUSEHOLDS	JOBS-TO-HOUSEHOLDS RATIO
1980	31,978	17,669	1.81
1990	36,791	19,925	1.85
2000	40,696	20,773	1.96
2010	40,485	21,743	1.86
2016	41,148	23,432	1.76

Source: Metropolitan Council

Employment by Industry Sector

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) maintains quarterly and annual records of employment and wages by industry. Employment includes those workers whose employers contribute to the State unemployment insurance fund which, in effect, is the bulk of the persons who work in St. Louis Park, with the primary exception of self-employed workers. Figure 5-8 shows the distribution of St. Louis Park's 2017 employment by major job category, as well as a comparison with Hennepin County and the State of Minnesota.

Figure 5-8. Employment by Industry, 2016



The largest employment sector in St. Louis Park is Health Care and Social Assistance at 26.7%. Park Nicollet and Health Partners' sizable presences in St. Louis Park has resulted in the attraction of a variety of medical-related businesses which seek close proximity to these employers. Other significant employment sectors in the community are Administrative and Waste Services at 13.3% and Retail Trade at 10.0%. Other sizable employment sectors include Professional and Technical Services, and Finance and Insurance.

Park Nicollet Health Services is by far the community's largest employer, providing 11% of all of the jobs in the city. The next largest private sector employers, Wells Fargo and Japs-Olson Company, provide a combined 4.5% of all jobs. It should be noted as well that the second highest employer in 2017, Wells Fargo Home Mortgages, was not located in the city in 2008, a testament to the city's ability to attract high-quality employment.

St. Louis Park's major employers and the number of employees for each employer in 2017 are shown in Table 5-9.

Table 5-9. Major Employers in St. Louis Park, 2017

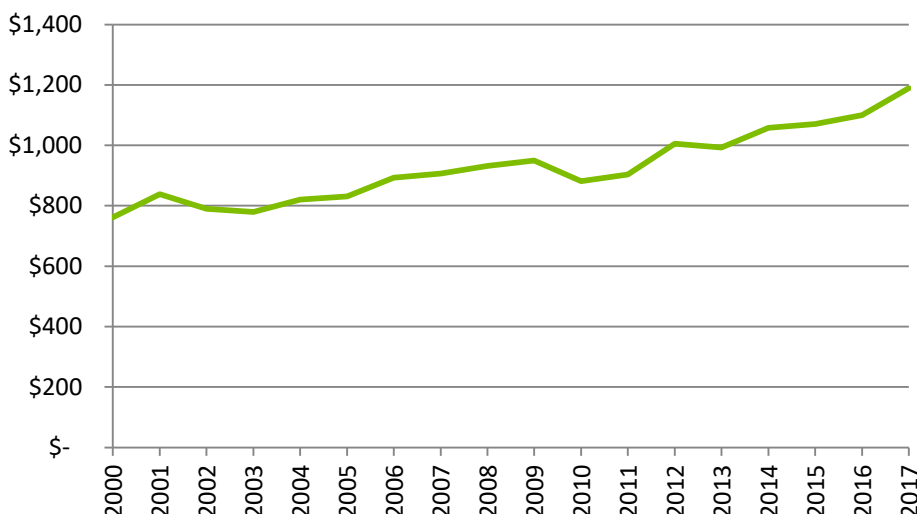
NAME OF COMPANY	PRODUCTS/SERVICES	# OF EMPLOYEES
Park Nicollet Health Services	Health Services	6,708
Wells Fargo Home Mortgage	Financial Services	1,450
St. Louis Park Public Schools	Public Elementary & Secondary School	1,100 TOTAL (including seasonal/temp)
Japs-Olson Co.	Other Comm. Printing	645
Sholom Home SLP	Senior Care Services	497
MoneyGram International	Financial Transaction Processing	442
HealthPartners	Health Services	400
Center for Diagnostic Imaging (formerly MN Medical Scanning Corp./Consultants)	Medical Laboratories	400
Lunds & Byerly's (Formerly Byerly's foods)	Grocery	300
St. Louis Park, City of	Executive Offices	440 TOTAL (including seasonal/temp)
Northland Aluminum Products (NordicWare)	Household Cooking Appliance Mfg.	235 FT & 150 TEMP
Sabes Jewish Community	Individual And Family Services	313 TOTAL (including seasonal/temp)
AAA Minneapolis	Travel Arrangement Reservation Services	205
Target (SLP)	Retail Store	195
Adolfson & Peterson	Commercial & Institutional Construction	192
Target (Knollwood)	Retail Store	177

Source: City of St. Louis Park

Wages

Figure 5-9 illustrates the average weekly wages of the city's population. Since 2000, wages have climbed steadily; according to the American Community Survey, the city's median household income in 2016 was \$68,451.

Figure 5-9. Average Weekly Wages Per Earner 2000-2017



EDA Economic Development Assistance

As part of the EDA's mission to preserve and enhance the community's built environment, plan for growth, and advance the physical and human development of the city, the EDA provides the following assistance to businesses considering locating, expanding or redeveloping within the community:

- » Business retention and expansion assistance
- » Business recruitment
- » Business locating/relocating
- » Small business startup, expansion, development services, and financial assistance
- » Site and building selection
- » Property redevelopment
- » Sustainable ("Green") development assistance
- » Public/private financial assistance
- » Tax increment financing assistance and administration
- » Grant preparation and management – brownfield remediation, Transit Oriented Development, and livable communities
- » Demographic/community research
- » Community promotion
- » Diversification/racial equity

In addition, the EDA supports the St. Louis Park Business Council, an affiliate of the TwinWest Chamber of Commerce and Greater MSP, in an effort to partner with the broader local business community so as to increase business retention and job growth, improve the region's workforce, and provide business a voice in public policy.

The EDA will utilize financing tools to alleviate extraordinary expenses that place proposed projects at a competitive disadvantage. The intent is to "level the playing field" with other locales where such expenses may not be present; not to provide an advantage for one business over another. Financing mechanisms available to the city/EDA include:

- » Tax increment financing
- » Tax abatement
- » Business loans
- » Redevelopment assistance

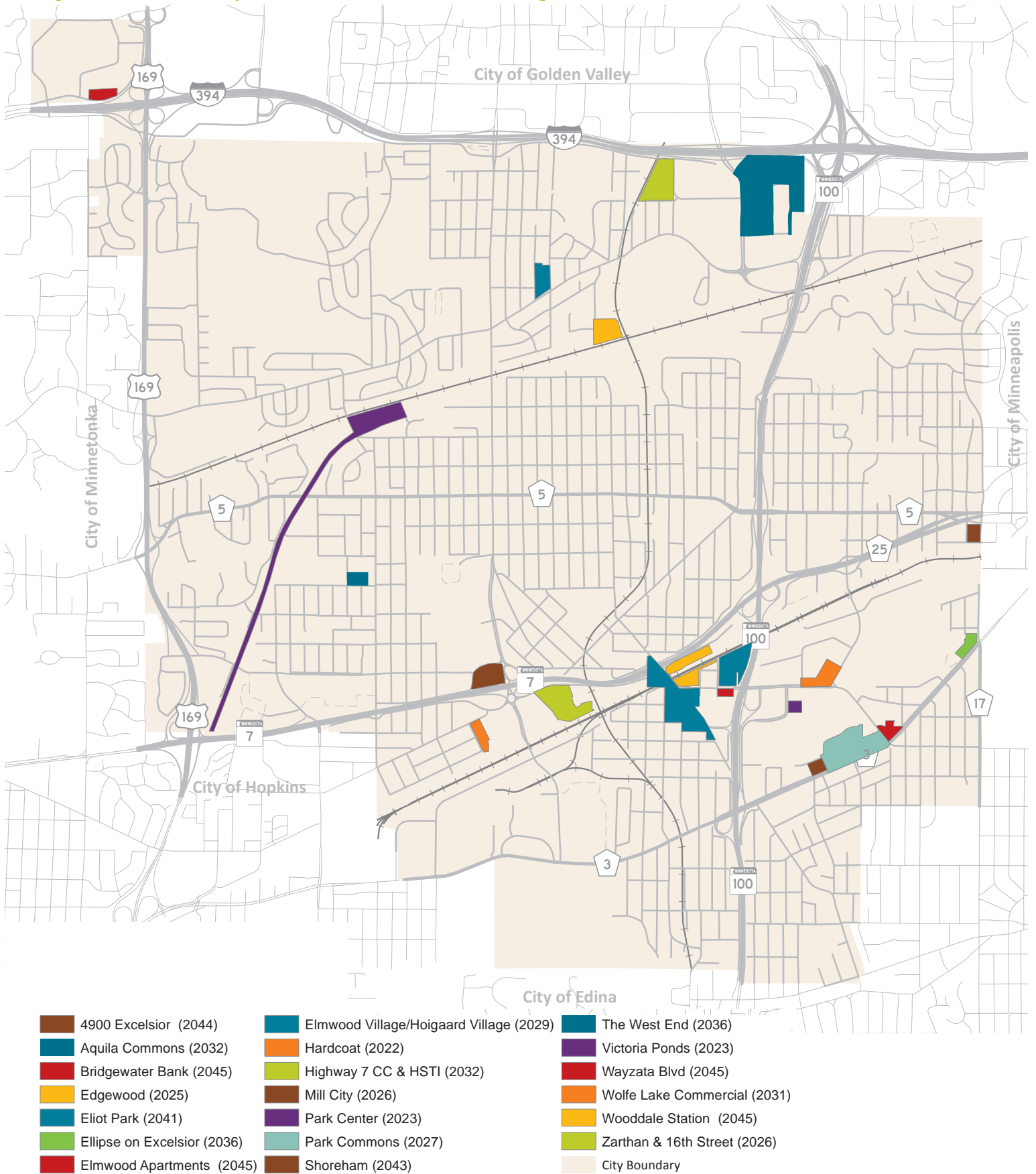
The EDA also partners with other government agencies and organizations which provide loans and (in limited cases) grants for specified development purposes. Of these, one of the most commonly utilized economic development tools is tax increment financing.

Tax Increment Financing

St. Louis Park has considerable experience creating and administering TIF Districts. The city has established TIF Districts and Hazardous Substance Subdistricts to facilitate various phases of economic development projects. Over the past 20 years, the city has continued to establish additional districts. In 2018 the city has one inactive (Victoria Ponds) and twenty active TIF districts, and one HSTI District (Hwy 7 Corporate Center). The city's Redevelopment Project Area was updated in 2015 to include the entire city limits. Figure 5-10 indicates the locations of the city's various TIF Districts. Districts are continuously created and de-certified as needed or required.



Figure 5-10. Redevelopment and Tax Increment Financing Districts



Small Business Resources

In an effort to help entrepreneurs and small business owners successfully start, grow, and expand their enterprises the city provides a variety of small business resources. These resources include:

Small Business Liaison

The city's small business liaison offers small business owners a single point of contact for various small business assistance information. The Small Business Liaison is the point person for referring businesses to the wide variety of small business resources and programs offered locally and by various metro agencies and organizations. The Small Business Liaison also helps businesses search for appropriate available properties within St. Louis Park, helps determine the permit, licensing and zoning requirements pertinent to their particular projects, provides guidance on city permit and approval processes, as well as responds to questions and concerns as they arise.

Open to Business Program

The city provides small business advising services through its Open to Business program. Through this program the city offers one-on-one technical assistance to existing local businesses, aspiring entrepreneurs, and parties interested in opening a business in St. Louis Park. The assistance is free and confidential and is provided through a partnership with the Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers (MCCD). Business owners and managers receive counseling with a business advisor from the MCCD staff who provides help with planning and organizing business ideas, financial management, marketing, regulatory compliance, and assistance with leases or property purchases. Business advisors help develop business and marketing plans, identify both strategic and financial challenges and opportunities, and tailor solutions. They also help connect entrepreneurs to potential financing options and resources as well as training programs, community services, and industry contacts. MCCD also offers a small business loan program. Advising sessions occur at city Hall one time a month or by appointment. The service is free to those who live or work in St. Louis Park.

Revolving Loan Fund

The St. Louis Park Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) provides local businesses with gap financing in conjunction with commercial lending to enable local businesses to grow and expand their companies within St. Louis Park. For-profit new and existing businesses located in St. Louis Park can apply for RLF financing. Women, minority and veteran-owned businesses are encouraged to apply. Preference will be given to projects that retain existing jobs and/or create new jobs.

PACE-Property Assessed Clean Energy Program

St. Louis Park offers alternative financing for energy efficient and renewable energy upgrades to buildings through its PACE program. PACE is available through a partnership with the St. Paul Port Authority (SPPA). It provides funding for energy efficiency and renewable energy upgrades to buildings, from smart energy efficiency upgrades to roof-top solar power systems, including:

- » Energy efficiency improvements: Lighting, mechanical systems, window upgrades, temperature controls, HVAC equipment, new elevators, new insulation, etc.
- » Renewable energy systems: Solar water heat, photovoltaics, wind, geothermal electric, geothermal heat pumps, geothermal direct-use
- » Electric vehicle charging systems: New and upgraded circuits and related equipment to enable vehicle charging
- » To be eligible you must own or manage a commercial, industrial and multi-family residential property located in St. Louis Park.

Web Listing of Available Small Business Resources

On its web site the city provides a section outlining the various small business resources available in St Louis Park and the metro area as well as available properties. Information can be found on starting or expanding a business, financing options, obtaining city approvals, as well as a robust list of links to other agencies and organizations that offer assistance.

Community Development Partnerships

The city utilizes partnerships with other government agencies and non-profits such as the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), Metropolitan Council, Hennepin County and others to offer economic development incentives and programs. Partnerships often expand opportunities for economic development and may increase a project's eligibility for certain grant programs. The city also actively collaborates with the TwinWest Chamber of Commerce through its St. Louis Park Business Council as well as St. Louis Park Public Schools.

Where We Are Headed

Leveraging City's Locational Advantage

Within a metropolitan region, proximity and convenience translates into time savings, business operation efficiencies and higher productivity. As a first ring suburb of Minneapolis, St. Louis Park is well-located within the Twin Cities marketplace and is desirable for convenient commuting and efficient shipping. St. Louis Park has immediate and convenient access to four major highways, two regional trails, bus services, and light rail transit coming within the decade. Businesses, employees and residents are only minutes from downtown Minneapolis, professional sporting events, world renowned theaters and museums, abundant shopping and restaurants as well as colleges, universities, parks, lakes and trails. St. Louis Park will continue to leverage its central locational advantage to retain and attract businesses and residents.

Employment Growth

Given its central location within the Twin Cities metropolitan region, the city expects to see significant growth in commercial and industrial investment continuing in the coming years, resulting in healthy employment growth. Based upon future employment projections prepared by the Metropolitan Council, the number of jobs in the community will grow substantially over the next 22 years.

Table 5-10 shows employment growth of 5% (2010-2020), 4% (2020-2030), and 3% (2030-2040) with cumulative growth of 16% (2010-2040). Considering the city had 41,438 jobs in 2017, the Metropolitan Council projection means a 13% increase in employment over the next 22 years. Considering St. Louis Park is fully developed, these new jobs will be accommodated through expansion and/or intensification of existing facilities and redevelopment.

Roughly half of these jobs could be accommodated in The West End area (near I-394 and Highway 100) when it is fully developed, due to addition of at least 701,420 square feet of office and 350,000 square feet of retail.

Table 5-10. Employment Projections 2000-2040

YEAR	# OF JOBS	CHANGE	CHANGE %
2000	40,696	3,905	-
2010	40,485	(211)	(0.52%)
2017	41,438	953	2.35%
2020	43,400	1,962	4.73%
2030	45,300	1,900	4.38%
2040	46,850	1,550	3.42%

Source: Metropolitan Council

The city is expected to see modest residential growth over the next twenty years (13% growth in number of households) thus necessitating the need for business growth and redevelopment in order to maintain a balanced tax base between residential and non-residential land uses. Business growth and redevelopment is anticipated to occur within St. Louis Park along its major roadways and within areas designated as employment areas.

Due to anticipated changes in demographics, the city is likely to see increased demand for healthcare related services. This demand will result in increased needs for medical office space and jobs in the community.

Redevelopment Assistance Objectives

St. Louis Park's EDA has a variety of financial tools at its disposal to facilitate economic development, redevelopment, and business growth and expansion. The EDA considers applications for financing on a case-by-case basis. The EDA will evaluate the merit of providing financial assistance for private redevelopment projects to the extent they achieve the following public purposes:

Implement Vision St. Louis Park Goals

The project will help fulfill the strategic directions outlined in Vision St. Louis Park of being a connected and engaged community, a leader in environmental stewardship, of providing a well-maintained and diverse housing stock, as well as promoting and integrating arts, culture and community aesthetics where appropriate.

Enhance Livability

The principles of Livable Communities are incorporated into the project; additionally, the project brings many of those same livability qualities to surrounding neighborhoods. Livable developments use high quality urban and architectural design to create pedestrian oriented environments that provide opportunities for positive face-to-face interaction. Design is used to integrate land uses, housing styles and socioeconomic groups. The project is accessible to parks, services, shopping and jobs. The project preserves mature trees, preserves or creates open space and, when possible, makes use of creeks, ponds or other natural amenities to enhance attractiveness and provide recreational opportunities. The project also incorporates public art.

Enhance Neighborhoods

The project will have a positive impact on surrounding neighborhoods. It will preserve and/or enhance parks and open space, locally unique physical elements, and anchoring institutions (i.e. schools, houses of worship, civic centers, etc.). Projects will preserve or strengthen the mixture of activities for residents to use and enjoy (shopping, working, schooling, playing and worshipping).

Provide Highest and Best Land Use

The project results in more efficient land use through greater density and higher quality buildings, thus increasing the property's market value. Redevelopment proposals will be evaluated as to whether they result in the highest and best land usage.

Increase Tax Base

The project will increase the property's tax yield by at least 2:1. Additional priority is given to projects sited in areas experiencing declining property values, high vacancy or underutilization.

Retain and Create Jobs

The project retains local employment and/or increases the number and quality of jobs (e.g. stable employment with attractive wages and benefits).

Increase Affordable Housing

The project meets or exceeds the requirements for workforce housing as set forth in the City's Inclusionary Housing Policy.

Improve Infrastructure

The project contributes to needed infrastructure improvements to the water/sewer, streets and telecommunications systems.

Protect and Remediate the Environment

The project will remediate existing environment contamination and will not create new contamination.

Sustain the Environment

The project incorporates sustainable "green" building design resulting in energy efficiencies, enhanced stormwater management, reduced water usage, decreases the capital and operating costs of local government as required by the City's Green Building Policy.

Increase Transit Usage

The project will enhance mobility and increase the ability for residents to safely access local amenities and services. Transit Oriented Development (TOD) projects preserve or enhance the "walkability" of neighborhoods and reduce the need for automobile trips by providing interconnected walking, bicycling and public transit opportunities.

Enhances or Reuses Existing Quality Buildings

The project improves buildings or reuses existing structures which preserves the structural and architectural integrity in St. Louis Park, and where appropriate, replace buildings that are inadequate for current business or residential needs or are functionally obsolete.

Eliminates Blighted, Outmoded or Problem Properties

The project is proposed for a building or site that is not well maintained or is no longer safe and/or functionally viable.

Improve Ownership/Management Status

The project is proposed for an area that has experienced significant turnover in ownership, management and/or tenancy.

Remove Nonconforming Land Uses

The project brings appropriate land use changes to an area where non-conforming land uses exist.

Meet Market Demand

The project is consistent with current market demand and/or is proposed for an area where developer interest is significant.

Meet Development Potential

The project substantially increases the property's total market value

Relate to Adjacent Development

The project, by its proximity, can be tied into and enhanced by other recently completed projects.

Act as a Catalyst

By both quality and proximity, the projects will serve as a catalyst for additional redevelopment, private reinvestment or remodeling in nearby neighborhoods so as to lead to their economic stabilization and revitalization.

Priority Redevelopment Areas

Looking into the future, the city has proactively identified areas within the community that are anticipated to face significant long-term pressures to change and will likely need some public attention in order to capture future redevelopment opportunities (Figure 5-11). The priority redevelopment areas, which are identified below, are those that are expected to redevelop within the 2040 planning horizon.

They are dominated by three types of areas: future transit station areas for the planned SWLRT line, neighborhood commercial nodes, and community commercial centers/corridors. In addition, the Wayzata Blvd./I-394 and Cedar Lake Road/Hwy. 100 areas have struggled to attract significant reinvestment as they have aged and the existing mix of land uses and development types in these areas have become mismatched with major changes in the transportation system and regional economy, e.g. older highway commercial along Wayzata Blvd. predating the conversion of Hwy. 12 to I-394 and older industrial at the Cedar Lake Road/Hwy. 100 interchange.

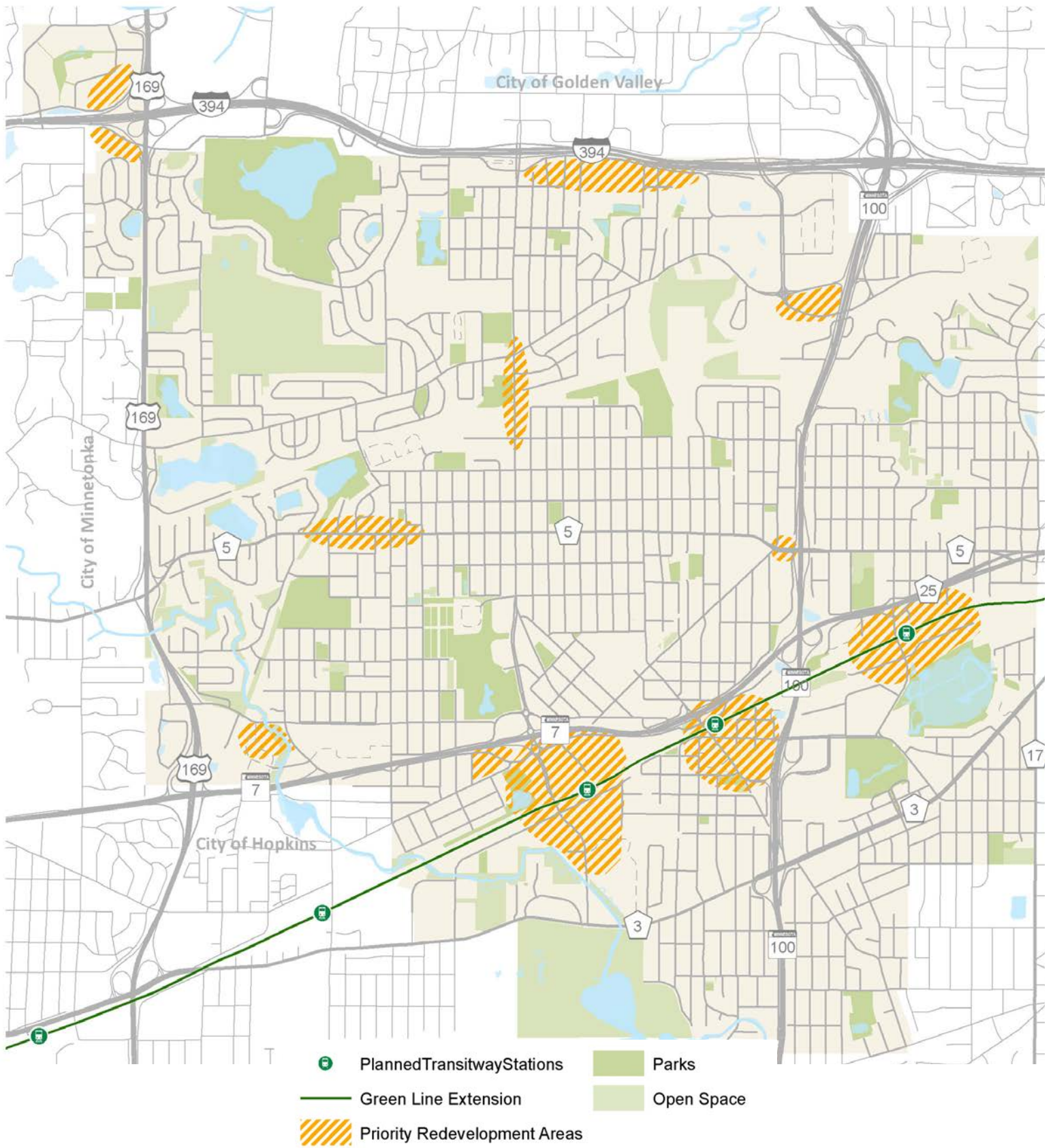
Redeveloping Areas

As part of the city's focus on creating a more livable community, specific redevelopment areas are guided for mixed-use development. The 2040 Land Use Plan map currently designates the following areas as Mixed Use or Transit Oriented Development areas: Park Commons (Excelsior Boulevard & Grand Way), Excelsior Boulevard & France Avenue, Texa-Tonka, Louisiana/Cedar Lake Road, Belt Line station area, and Wooddale station area.

REDEVELOPING AREAS

- LRT Station Areas
 - Beltline
 - Wooddale
 - Louisiana
- Neighborhood Commercial Nodes
 - Texa-Tonka
 - Louisiana & Cedar Lake Road
- Areas adjacent to The West End
 - Wayzata Blvd
 - Cedar Lake Road & Hwy 100
- Shelard Park Area
- Knollwood
- Minnetonka Boulevard / Highway 100 Interchange

Figure 5-11. Priority Redevelopment Areas



The intent of the Mixed Use land use designation and the city's Livable Communities design principles is to create compact, pedestrian-scale mixed-use buildings, typically with retail, service or other commercial uses on the ground floor and residential or office uses on subsequent floors. Mixed-use is intended to accommodate mixed-income housing, a mix of housing types on the same block, and higher density development. In addition, Shelard Park in the northwest corner of the city and the West End development at I-394 and 100 are both examples of mixing uses in an area.

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Station Areas

The SWLRT line planned for the existing rail corridor that runs through southern St. Louis Park has transit stations in three locations: Belt Line Boulevard, Wooddale Avenue, and Louisiana Avenue. Implementation of light rail presents long term opportunities for new land uses, particularly within one half-mile of the transit stations, that will both support the light rail line and benefit from proximity to light rail transit.

Beltline Boulevard Transitway Station Area

The SWLRT station area at Belt Line Boulevard lies within the Wolfe Park and Triangle neighborhoods. In the past this station area's land uses consisted of primarily industrial land uses, with some high density residential and commercial uses as part of the mix. Beginning with the 2030 Land Use Plan and continuing with the 2040 Land Use Plan, uses in this area are guided toward more intense uses for future redevelopment. In order to promote a transit-oriented, mixed use neighborhood, most of the station area is guided for the TOD, Business Park, and High Density Residential land use categories.

Wooddale Avenue Transitway Station Area

The SWLRT station area at Wooddale Avenue lies primarily in the Elmwood neighborhood. This station area has contained a mix of land uses, including industrial, commercial, and residential, but has been experiencing significant redevelopment. In the long-term this station area is guided toward becoming a TOD neighborhood containing mixed-use, high density residential, and office.

Louisiana Avenue Transitway Station Area

The SWLRT station area at Louisiana Avenue lies within three neighborhoods – Brooklawns, Meadowbrook, and South Oak Hill. This station area's land uses have been primarily industrial, commercial and office/medical, but beginning with the 2030 Land Use Plan and continuing with the 2040 Land Use Plan, land uses in this area are being guided from low intensity industrial land to more intense business park uses, which will create a higher density employment center near the transit station. As a business park and office center, it is anticipated that this station area will be a mix of reinvested in industrial and redevelopment to office, particularly medical.

Commercial Study Areas

Several commercial areas in the city have underdeveloped properties that are potential candidates for re-purposing. These include the following:

- » Knollwood
- » Park Commons West
- » Texa-Tonka
- » Louisiana & Cedar Lake Road
- » Highway Interchange Study Areas
 - Highway 100 & Cedar Lake Road
 - Highway 100 & Minnetonka Boulevard
 - I-394 & Highway 169 (Shelard Park)

The city intends to look more closely at these areas in terms of the location, market, design and regulatory frameworks to determine if changes in positioning or land use codes could help them to thrive economically for the long term.

Existing and New Small Businesses

As the city continues to grow, revitalize and redevelop aging commercial areas, existing small businesses are often located in these potential reinvestment sites. Small businesses often face pressures to relocate (temporary or permanent), increasing rents, and/or becoming a tenant in a new mixed use development. During the community engagement process for the 2040 Plan Update, residents voiced their desire for retaining and attracting small and local businesses in the community, preferably in locations convenient to their neighborhoods. Small and local businesses contribute to making St. Louis Park unique and its desirable quality of life. The city values the important role that small and local businesses play in the economic and social vitality of the community. In order to retain and attract small businesses in the future, the city is committed to exploring additional methods for providing supportive programs and redevelopment best practices.

Sustainable “Green” Development

The city has long valued its natural resources and, consequently, has a considerable history of environmental initiatives. One of the key recommendations identified in the St. Louis Park Vision 3.0 is “St. Louis Park will continue to lead in environmental stewardship”. To that end, the city will actively encourage the development of high performance (“green”) buildings and use of sustainable site design. Sustainable Development is defined as:

Development that maintains or enhances economic opportunity and community wellbeing while protecting and restoring the natural environment upon which people depend. Sustainable Development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

High performance buildings incorporate numerous strategies that result in improved energy efficiencies and performance as well as improved employee health and productivity. The city’s Green Building Policy is being used to expand the number of new and renovated buildings that are constructed to achieve green building standards. In addition the city’s Climate Action Plan will be used to achieve reduction of energy consumption in existing buildings and promote the use of renewable energy sources. Sustainable site design promotes natural settings and results in environmentally friendly storm water management and reduced water usage.

Economic Development Goals and Strategies

1. Promote economic development and redevelopment activities that enhance the livability and vitality of the community.



Strategies

- Maintain and promote economic development financing policies and programs to assist with redevelopment and revitalization of the city’s commercial, office, and industrial areas.
- Promote sustainable building projects consistent with the city’s Green Building Policy energy savings and water conservation targets, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards, State of Minnesota B3 Guidelines, or comparable green certification applicable for each project’s particular development type.
- Encourage efficient, compact redevelopment that results in the highest and best land uses so as to minimize energy and infrastructure costs.
- Encourage economic development and redevelopment that incorporate Livable Communities planning principles as established in the Land Use section of the 2040 Plan.
- Promote the development of new market rate and affordable housing which will provide residents with additional housing options, assist in retaining and attracting talent for area employers, and further support local commercial businesses.
- Encourage redevelopment that incorporates efforts to achieve the goals of the Climate Action Plan, such as renewable energy resources, on-site and community solar, purchase of renewable energy credits through electric utility programs, and other such efforts that reduce energy usage.

2. Foster the expansion, redevelopment and revitalization of the city’s commercial, industrial and business park areas through environmentally sustainable projects.



Strategies

- Balance available land resources and future growth demands to ensure that the city has an adequate amount of land guided for commercial, office, and industrial uses to maintain a healthy tax base, offer adequate high-quality employment opportunities, and provide desirable goods and services.

- B. Encourage and support expansion, redevelopment and revitalization that contribute to a diverse and healthy mix of desirable commercial, office and industrial development types.
- C. Maintain and expand public infrastructure systems (e.g. streets, Fiber, and utilities) that provide adequate connections and capacities to meet the future needs of the city's business areas.
- D. Undertake redevelopment planning studies to explore options and establish plans for redevelopment and revitalization of identified redevelopment study areas.
- E. Collaborate with property owners and developers in SWLRT station areas to intensify or redevelop business areas consistent with Transit Oriented Development best practices and the city's LRT station area plans.
- F. Collaborate with property owners to provide new services, amenities and land uses that strengthen their business area or creatively reuse underutilized business areas.

3. Retain and foster the growth of St. Louis Park's existing high-quality businesses.



Strategies

- A. Promote strong relationships between existing businesses, government, and neighborhoods to promote a healthy and compatible working and living environment.
- B. Support the expansion of existing high-quality businesses that have an environmentally sound track record, provide desirable goods and services, and offer quality jobs (e.g. stable employment and/or attractive wages and benefits).
- C. Provide public financing policies and programs that help existing businesses with stay or expand in St. Louis Park (e.g. tax increment financing, private activity bonds, revolving loan fund).
- D. Collaborate with agencies that provide education, skill training and job placement to ensure that St. Louis Park provides a sound base of qualified employees for its employers.

4. Assist the startup, growth, diversification, and expansion of the city's small businesses.



Strategies

- A. Continue to link small businesses with resources and organizations that provide information and financial assistance needed for the retention and growth of small and locally-owned businesses.
- B. Enhance opportunities for partnerships between public and private entities that promote economic vitality of small businesses.
- C. Continue to assist small businesses in identifying appropriate locations within the city.
- D. Promote small businesses with an emphasis on women, minority and veteran owners to diversify and further strengthen the economic fabric of the city.
- E. Research, develop and implement innovative and creative programs in which to assist entrepreneurs and small businesses to expand and/or locate in St. Louis Park (i.e., affordable rent programs, grants, loans, incentive programs, etc.).

5. Recruit new businesses that are compatible with and complementary to St. Louis Park's existing businesses.



Strategies

- A. Promote St. Louis Park's strategic benefits as a prospective business location including: its first ring location in the Twin Cities metro area, convenient transportation access including easy highway access and the future SWLRT line, a high-quality workforce, and numerous community amenities.
- B. Focus the city's business attraction efforts on industry sectors with a track record of environmental sensitivity and provision of quality jobs (i.e. stable employment and attractive wages and benefits). Such industries include: headquarters and business services, financial services and insurance, health and life sciences; advanced manufacturing and technology.
- C. Encourage and support the assembly of smaller obsolete business sites into larger sites that can accommodate the development of new buildings to fit contemporary business needs and standards and will attract new businesses to St. Louis Park.