



## Plan By Neighborhood

### Vision For Neighborhoods

St. Louis Park's Plan by Neighborhood is guided by the city's vision of creating and maintaining a very "livable community" built upon strong neighborhoods. The ideal neighborhood has a center, public gathering places, green spaces, identifiable edges, and a walkable environment. Although each neighborhood has a unique history, development pattern, character, challenges, and opportunities, all neighborhoods should ideally provide a healthy living environment with convenient access to essential community services, including transportation options, jobs, parks and open space, shopping, services, entertainment, and other urban amenities.

Strong neighborhoods are the backbone of St. Louis Park being a healthy community. As the community and neighborhoods face inevitable change over time, the city values the preservation and enhancement of each neighborhood's unique sense of identity based on its location, natural features, history, development character and residents. Ideally, strong neighborhoods also provide connectedness and support for a wide range of individuals and families, a source of friendship and neighbors you can rely upon if the need arises.

To support its Livable Community Vision, St. Louis Park has established ten Livable Community Principles consisting of the following:

- » Walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods
- » Life-cycle housing choices
- » Higher density, mixed-use development
- » Human scale development
- » Transit-oriented development
- » Multi-modal streets and pathways
- » Preserved and enhanced natural environment
- » Attractive and convenient public gathering places
- » Public art, heritage, and culture
- » Unique community and neighborhood identity

Most of these Livable Community Principles explicitly address the desired character of the community's neighborhoods and the major role strong neighborhoods play in creating a livable community.

### Where We Have Been

Although St. Louis Park's early urban development in the late 19th century began by progressing outward from the original village center, at the intersection of the Minneapolis & St. Louis Railroad (now CP Rail) and Wooddale Avenue, this concentric growth pattern was overtaken by outward expansion from Minneapolis. A secondary influence was the two streetcar lines that extended outward from Minneapolis in the early 20th century: St. Louis Park Line along West Lake Street/Minnetonka Boulevard and the Como-Harriet Line along the south edge of the city. The city's oldest neighborhoods with traditional street grids are located in these areas – south, east and central- with more suburban neighborhood development patterns occurring in the western and northern areas of the community. Homes in the older and more traditional neighborhoods have an average year built in the 1930s and 1940s with the oldest homes built in the 1920s and earlier. The newer and more suburban neighborhoods contain homes primarily built in the 1950s and after. Approximately 60% of the city's housing stock was constructed in a short time period following WWII, from the late 1940s through the 1950s, primarily as starter homes for GI Bill families.

Neighborhood planning began in St. Louis Park in the mid-1980s with the establishment of the Neighborhood Watch/Block Captain Program in 1983. In 1990, the city council formed the Neighborhood Revitalization Task Force to address the need for and the benefits of developing a neighborhood revitalization program. Based on the Task Force's recommendation to pursue such a program, the city council appointed the Neighborhood Revitalization Committee and directed this group to implement a neighborhood revitalization program. In 1992, the city established a Neighborhood Revitalization Commission (NRC). The purposes of the NRC were to:

- » Create and maintain a sense of community
- » Improve the appearance of neighborhoods
- » Increase the feeling of security
- » Identify and satisfy social needs
- » Work toward achieving a high quality of life in St. Louis Park

In 1991, the Neighborhood Revitalization Committee identified neighborhoods defining neighborhood boundaries primarily by rail corridors, major streets, natural features and/or municipal borders. The exceptions are the smallest neighborhoods which are mainly isolated residential subdivisions, including Minikahda Oaks, Amhurst, Minnehaha, Westdale, Crestview, Kilmer and Shelard Park. The final neighborhood boundaries were drawn after residents were surveyed about their perceptions of their neighborhoods. This city-wide survey also was used to determine what St. Louis Park residents liked and did not like about their neighborhoods. The City of St. Louis Park has defined 35 neighborhoods that encompass the entire land area of the city. These neighborhoods are diverse in land area and population, ranging from 30 to 2,000 acres in area and from 100 to 3,000 residents. Figure 5-20 shows a map of the 35 neighborhoods.

In 1996, the city established the pilot Neighborhood Revitalization Grant Program that provides funding specifically for neighborhood improvement activities and projects.

In 1998, a full-time staff position was created to focus on the coordination of neighborhood programs, organizations and activities.

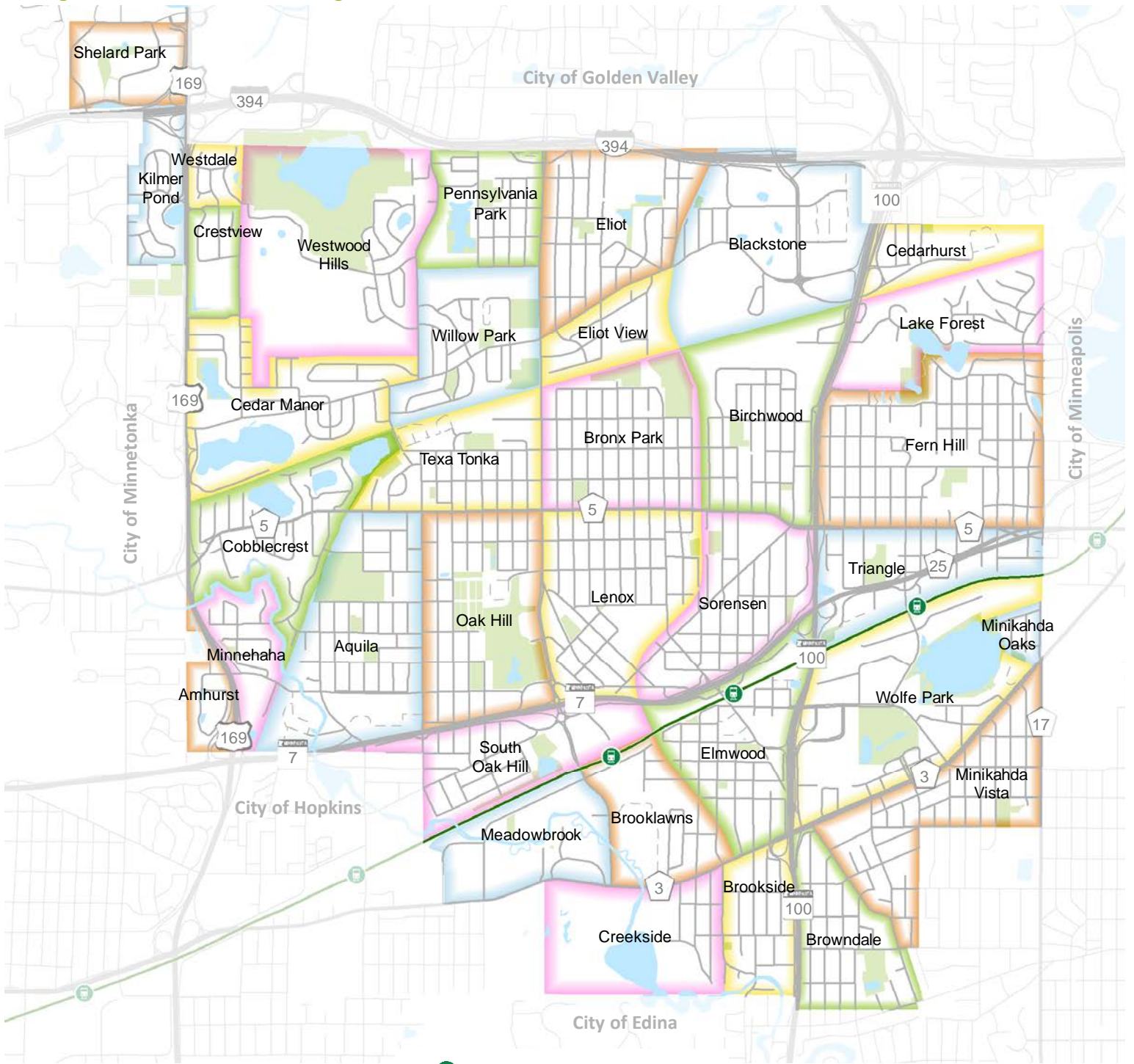
The Plan by Neighborhood has been a chapter of the city's Comprehensive Plan since 2000. In 2009-2011, the Plan by Neighborhood chapter was significantly updated and reformatted to add more maps and future neighborhood priorities and opportunities, as well as make the neighborhood plans easier to use.

## Neighborhood Planning Areas

As part of the updating process for the 2030 Plan by Neighborhood chapter in 2011, seven (7) Neighborhood Planning Areas (NPAs) were established to more efficiently facilitate neighborhood input and identify common neighborhood issues and opportunities. The seven (7) NPAs cluster the 35 neighborhoods into larger geographic areas separated by the community's most significant "edges", which are major roadways (MN Hwy 100, MN Hwy 7, and Louisiana Avenue) and the rail corridors. Based on the success of using the seven (7) NPAs to attract neighborhood input for the Plan by Neighborhood update project, the city has continued to use the NPAs as a more effective and efficient means of seeking neighborhood input. Figure 5-21 shows a map of the seven (7) NPAs, which are:

- » NORTHEAST : Blackstone, Cedarhurst, Eliot, Eliot View
- » NORTHWEST: Cedar Manor, Crestview, Kilmer, Pennsylvania Park, Shelard Park, Westdale, Westwood Hills, Willow Park)
- » WEST CENTRAL: Amhurst, Aquila, Cobblecrest, Minnehaha, Oak Hill, Texa Tonka
- » CENTRAL: Birchwood, Bronx Park, Lenox, Sorenson
- » EAST CENTRAL: (Fern Hill, Lake Forest, Triangle)
- » SOUTHEAST: (Browndale, Minikahda Oaks, Minikahda Vista, Wolfe Park)
- » SOUTHWEST: (Brooklawns, Brookside, Creekside, Elmwood, Meadowbrook, South Oak Hill)

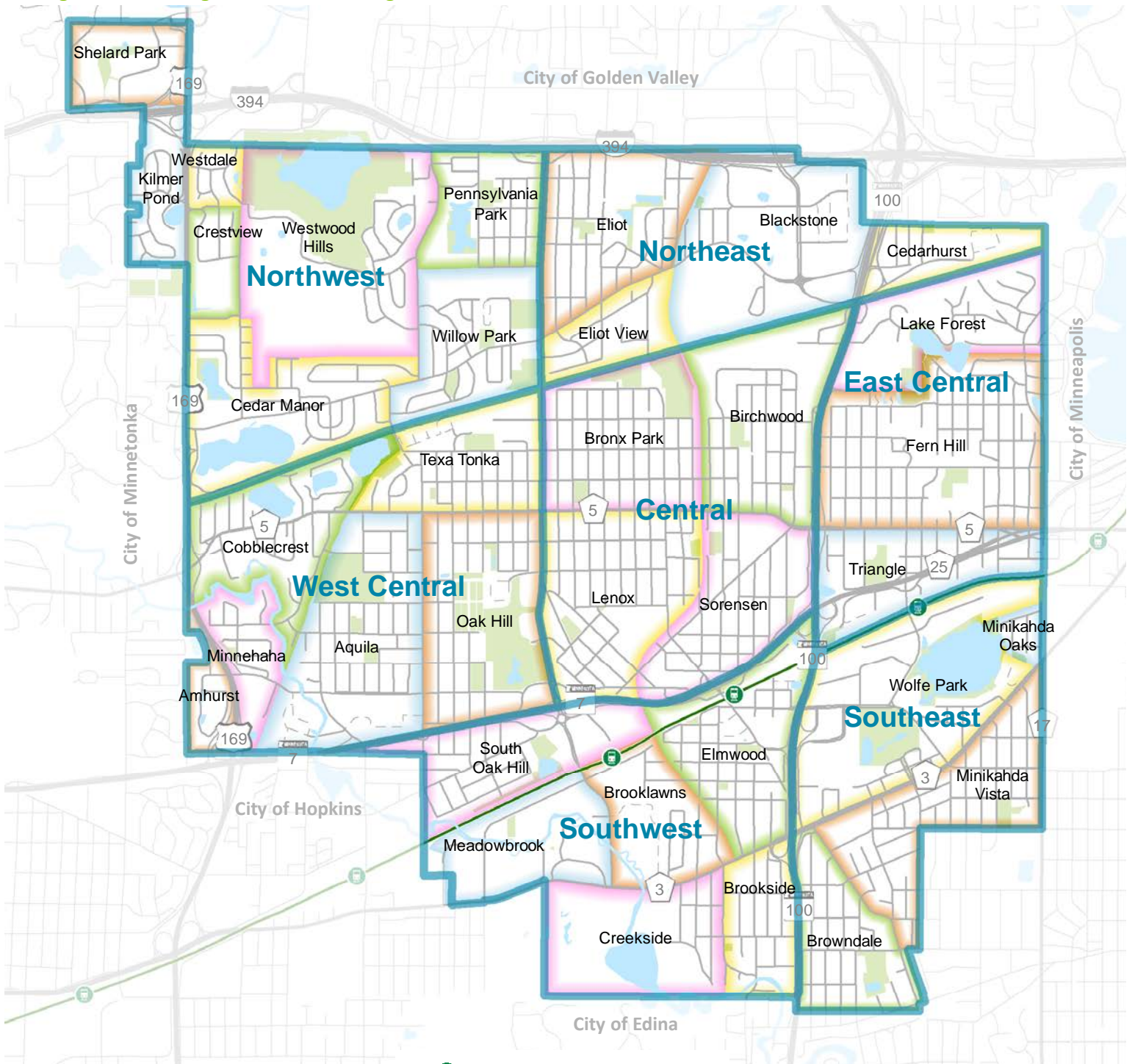
**Figure 5-20. St. Louis Park Neighborhoods**



 Planned Transitway Stations

 Green Line Extension

**Figure 5-21. Neighborhood Planning Areas**

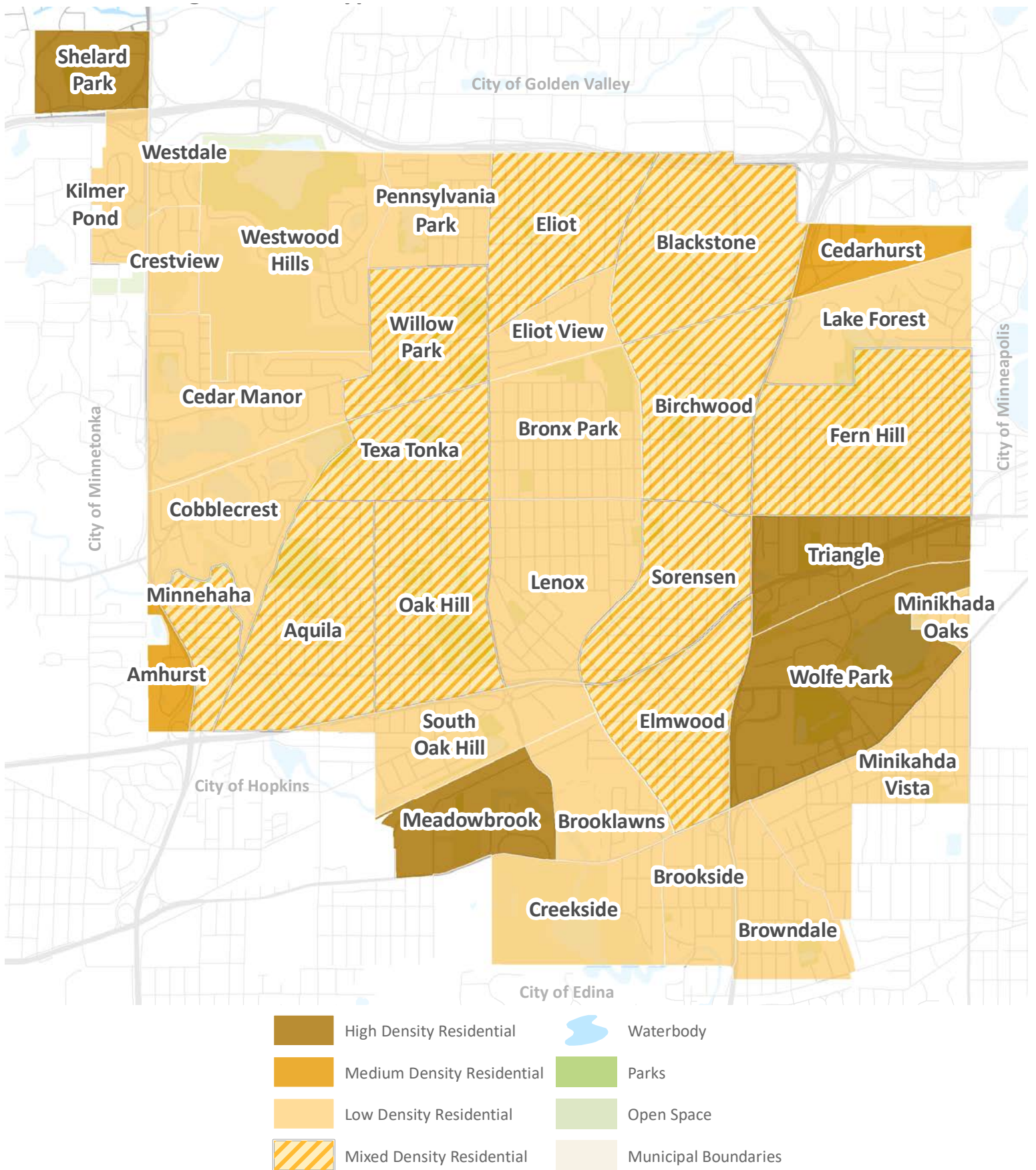


Planned Transitway Stations



Green Line Extension

Figure 5-22. Residential Neighborhood Type



## Where We Are Today

### Neighborhood Housing Options

Overall, St. Louis Park's mix of residential land uses and housing types is distributed around the community. Some neighborhoods contain a balanced mix of housing options within them, while others contain predominately one type of housing, either single-family detached houses, medium density housing, or high density housing. Figure 5-22 shows a map of the 35 neighborhoods categorized by their mix/type of housing options. About a third of the community's neighborhoods (11 neighborhoods) contain a broad mix of housing options. About half of the neighborhoods (18 neighborhoods) contain predominately low density residential land uses as measured by percentage of housing units that are single-family detached houses. Just two (2) neighborhoods contain predominately medium density residential land uses. Four (4) neighborhoods contain predominately high density residential land uses.

### Neighborhood Commercial Areas

St. Louis Park has three existing commercial centers:

- » Knollwood
- » Park Commons West
- » Park Place Plaza at West End

St. Louis Park contains commercial corridors along two of its major community roadways, consisting of the following:

- » Excelsior Boulevard

St. Louis Park contains a number of neighborhood commercial nodes at key street intersections within the community, including the following:

- » Texas and Minnetonka (Texa-Tonka)
- » Minnetonka & Louisiana
- » Minnetonka & Dakota
- » Minnetonka & Lake
- » Minnetonka & Ottawa
- » Minnetonka & France
- » Louisiana & Cedar Lake Road

Existing and emerging mixed-use areas in the community include:

- » Park Commons
- » Historic Walker Lake
- » The West End
- » Shelard Park
- » Belt Line Station Area
- » Wooddale Station Area
- » Louisiana Station Area

### Neighborhood Parks

There are 30 neighborhood parks, with most of the community's 35 neighborhoods having their own neighborhood park. Those neighborhoods without their own neighborhood park have a neighborhood or community park located near them. The city does not have any current plans to acquire additional land for park purposes. Among the amenities found in neighborhood parks are play structures, athletic fields, community gardens, ponds, athletic courts, lakes, trails, sun/picnic shelters, park buildings, limited vehicle parking, sliding hills, and winter skating areas. In addition to neighborhood parks, St. Louis Park has community parks (8), community playfields (5), passive open spaces (20), historical parks (3), regional trails (2), and two golf courses (one public, one private).

### Neighborhood Programs

The city's Neighborhood Watch/Block Captain Program continues to be a voluntary crime prevention program aimed at reducing the likelihood of becoming a crime victim. It works by teaching simple, yet proven crime prevention techniques and building relationships among neighbors and between the neighborhood and the Police Department. There are approximately 275 Block Captains throughout the city today.



Twenty-four (24) of St. Louis Park's 35 neighborhoods are represented by an organized neighborhood association. These groups can rally residents together to solve a neighborhood problem, work with the city on a special issue, and offer opportunities for neighbors to get to know one another. They also hold neighborhood get-togethers/events and park clean-ups. Many neighborhoods publish newsletters informing residents of upcoming events and neighborhood news, and/or have their own social media sites.

The city has a full-time Community Liaison position focused on the coordination of neighborhood programs, organizations and activities.

The Neighborhood Revitalization Grant Program offers funding to organized neighborhoods for activities or neighborhood improvement projects that are targeted to enhance or build community within neighborhoods. For example, these grants can be used for community building activities, communications such as mailing newsletters, and service projects. This grant program had \$40,000 available in 2018 with a \$2,100 maximum per neighborhood and \$800 per event.

The Annual Neighborhood Leader's Forum gets neighborhood leaders together to learn from each other, receive updates from city departments and receive the neighborhood revitalization grant application packet.



## Where We Are Headed

### Livability: Neighborhood Housing Options

St. Louis Park's population is projected to grow and diversify over the next twenty years. While St. Louis Park will experience demographic changes in line with national, regional and metro trends, the city's existing housing stock also influences the community's future demographic composition. For example, the community's large number of smaller starter homes attracts more single persons, younger families, and smaller households to the community. If St. Louis Park wants to enable residents to remain in the community and their neighborhood, throughout their lives, the community needs to offer a sufficiently diverse range of housing options.

Many neighborhoods will benefit from opportunities to diversify their housing options through redevelopment and rehabilitation, especially larger homes for families, senior housing, affordable housing, and non-traditional owner-occupied housing. Each neighborhood plan identifies whether or not the neighborhood has significant redevelopment potential that could add new housing options in the neighborhood.

### Vitality: Neighborhood Commercial Areas

The 2040 Comprehensive Plan identifies the city's intent to strengthen the community's existing neighborhood commercial corridors and nodes. Significant changes have occurred in the community's transportation patterns, development patterns, commercial competition and consumers' buying habits that present major challenges for many of the commercial corridors and nodes. This study would identify and evaluate these challenges as well as market viability and revitalization opportunities.

In general, reinvestment or redevelopment in many neighborhood commercial areas is challenged by inadequate space for business expansions, parking, and storm water management. Neighborhood commercial corridors and nodes may offer attractive opportunities for adding new housing options, such as residential in mixed-use buildings. These neighborhood centers also can have significant potential for enhancing neighborhoods as important public gathering places, transportation nodes, and significantly contributing to a neighborhood's sense of identity.

## Health: Active Living Neighborhoods

The city is committed to improving the community's network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities to enhance all neighborhoods as places that enable more active lifestyles and convenient connections to desirable neighborhood amenities. Each neighborhood plan identifies the pedestrian, bicycle and transit improvement priorities specifically related to that neighborhood.

Since streets represent the major portion of a neighborhood's public realm and pedestrian/bicycle facilities, improvements to make streets more pedestrian and bike-friendly are critical. Some of the most significant challenges to improving neighborhood pedestrian and bicycle networks involve crossings at rail lines, state highways and county highways, therefore, the community and the neighborhoods will often need to partner with these other entities to truly make the desired improvements.

## Neighborhood Improvement Priorities

(These are from 2011 and will be updated)

Based on the neighborhood input received, the following improvements emerged as neighborhood priorities:

- » Increasing neighborhood walkability by expanding both the network of sidewalks and trails
- » Improving traffic calming measures to create safer and more livable neighborhood streets
- » Reducing nuisances, particularly noise and light impacts from streets, rail lines, industrial areas, and larger commercial areas
- » Enhancing public natural areas and open spaces within and adjacent to neighborhoods
- » Expanding the network of bike routes
- » Expanding and improving neighborhood commercial nodes as walkable neighborhood destinations
- » Retaining and attracting small businesses to neighborhood commercial nodes
- » Improving the compatibility between adjacent industrial areas and residential areas
- » Mitigating the nuisances created by freight rail lines adjacent to residential areas
- » Improving access from the neighborhoods to the North Cedar Lake Regional Trail, particularly adjacent neighborhoods north of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad tracks.
- » Neighborhood Identity and Gathering Places

As a fully developed community, St. Louis Park neighborhoods will experience change and improvement primarily through reinvestment in existing development, public improvements, and site redevelopment. All of these investments represent opportunities to improve the neighborhood's identity or character and create more and/or improved neighborhood gathering places. Public gathering places can consist of both publicly-owned (e.g. parks, plazas, sidewalks, trails, civic facilities, schools, libraries) and privately-owned (e.g. religious facilities, cafes, coffee shops, entertainment venues) spaces. Future parks, streets, trails and other public facility projects should incorporate opportunities to enhance neighborhood identity and gathering places.

In particular, a neighborhood's unique parks and open spaces provide valuable opportunities for strengthening neighborhood identity and gathering places. Likewise, redevelopment and major property reinvestment projects have the potential to enhance neighborhoods. For instance, new private development could incorporate a public plaza, public art, benches, wider sidewalks, transit amenities, neighborhood-related architecture or unique signage.

## 35 Individual Neighborhood Plans

The 35 individual neighborhood plans are located in the appendix of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

Each neighborhood plan consists of the following components:

- » History and Character
- » Neighborhood Features List and Map
- » Neighborhood Features
- » Neighborhood Statistics
- » Recent Plans and Studies
- » 2040 Future Land Use Plan Map, Changes, and Distribution

For each Neighborhood Planning Area (NPA), the following are identified:

- » Relevant 2040 Citywide Future Directions
- » Improvement Priorities and Opportunities Specific to Each NPA