



## Chapter 8

# Implementation of the Plan

The 2040 Comprehensive Plan provides high level, long-term guidance for making decisions about the community's future growth, redevelopment, and infrastructure investments. While the 2040 Plan is the city's primary long-term plan, its vision, goals, strategies, and maps can only be achieved if it is used on a regular basis. Using the 2040 Plan requires striking a balance between adhering to the enduring vision, goals and strategies described in the plan while also adapting to conditions that will change over the life of this plan. Implementation of city-led initiatives will also involve further planning and budgeting to ensure new actions can be fully achieved and sustained over time.

## Individual Element Implementation Plans

Some elements/sections within the 2040 Plan contain specific implementation plans, including Housing, Economic Development & Redevelopment, and Parks/Open Space/Natural Resources. In particular, the Where We Are Headed sub-section of the Housing Plan section outlines tools, programs and policies that can be utilized by the city, residents, developers, and funders to implement St. Louis Park's housing goals and strategies.

## System Plans

The 2040 Plan refers to other system plans that the city uses to guide city infrastructure and investments. These plans include the city's Sanitary Sewer Plan, Water Supply Plan, and Surface Water Management Plan. These system plans serve as ongoing tools for implementing the goals and strategies in the 2040 Plan. These plans may be updated and modified over time without updating the 2040 Plan.

## Specific Area and Topic Plans

The city uses specific area and topic plans as tools for implementing the 2040 Plan. Current plans, studies and design guidelines that will continue to provide direction to the city include the following:

- » Beltline Area Framework & Design Guidelines
- » Elmwood Area Land Use, Transit and Transportation Study
- » Louisiana Station Area Framework & Design Guidelines
- » Design Guidelines for the South Side of Excelsior Boulevard
- » Southwest Corridor Investment Framework: Transitional Station Area Action Plans
- » West End Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR)
- » Climate Action Plan
- » Active Living: Sidewalks & Trails Plan
- » Minnetonka Boulevard Design Plan
- » Xenia Avenue/Park Place Boulevard Corridor Bicycle and Pedestrian Study

The city will continue to use these plans and additional future plans to provide the information needed to implement the 2040 Plan. Future plans and studies may ultimately lead to amendments to the 2040 Plan. A list of potential future studies are listed in Table 8-1.

**Table 8-1. Planning Studies 2018-2020**

STUDY/PROJECT	PRIORITY	TIMING
Commercial Areas- New Small Area Plan		
» Historic Walker Lake Revitalization Plan	A	2018-2019
» Texa-Tonka Neighborhood Commercial Node	A	2019
» Neighborhood Commercial Nodes study for new Mixed Use areas	B	2020
Park Commons Plan Update (Park Commons West)	B	2020
Food Access Study	A	2019
CSAH #25: Feasibility Plan	A	2019

## Official Controls

### Zoning Ordinance

The Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 36 of the City Code, establishes general zoning regulations for development of lots and buildings, the city's zoning districts including permitted uses, and performance standards for specific uses and areas of the city. The Zoning Ordinance establishes base zoning districts and three floodplain overlay zoning districts that are used to geographically identify zoning districts city-wide as shown by the district boundaries on the zoning map.

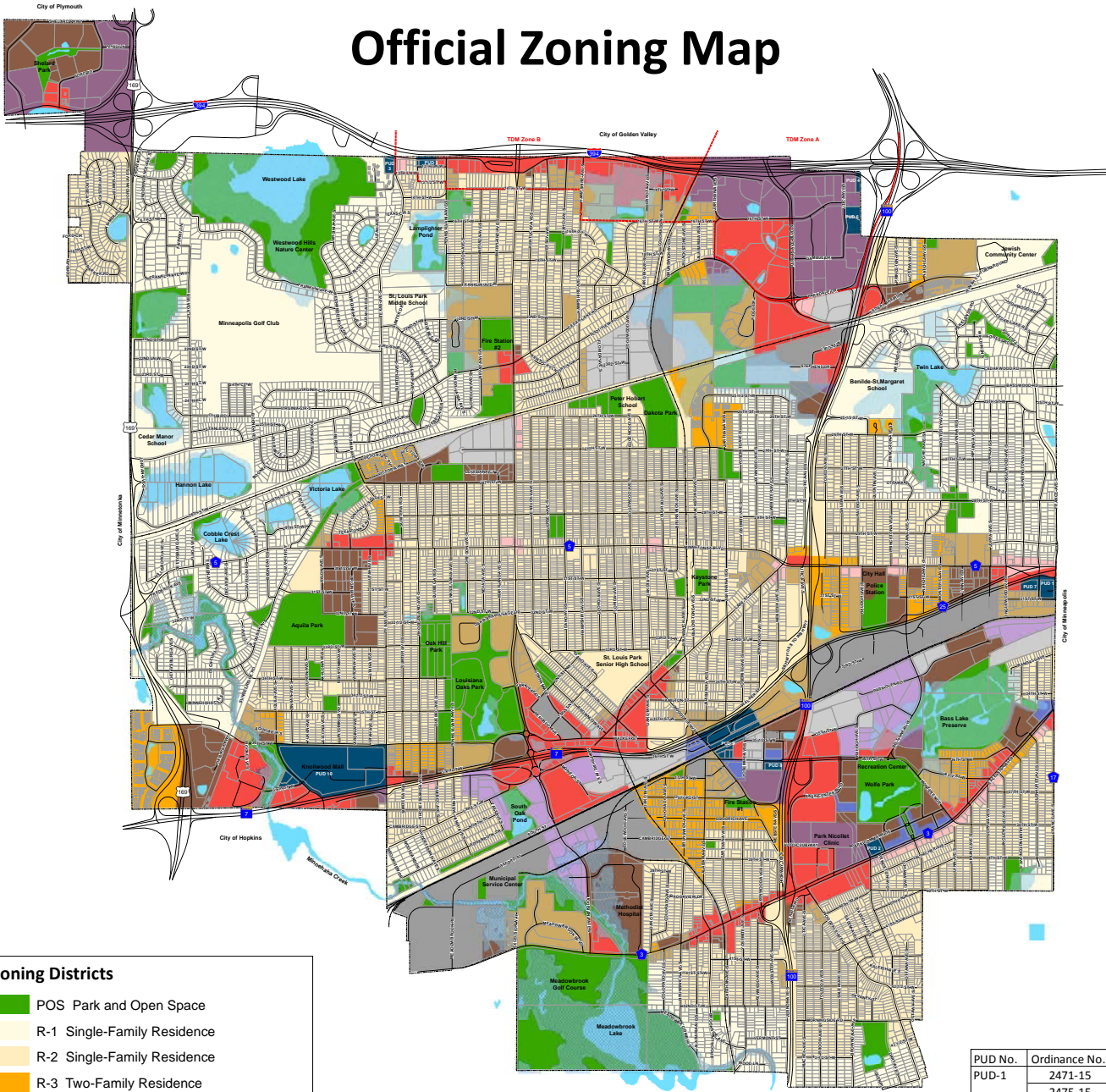
Figure 8-1 shows the city's current Official Zoning Map.

### Subdivision Ordinance

The Subdivision Ordinance, Chapter 26 of the City Code, establishes the regulations and requirements for platting land within the city. It requires all land subdivisions to be referred to the city's Planning Commission and approved by the council as having fulfilled the minimum regulations and requirements for the platting of land within the city pursuant to the authority contained in Minnesota Statutes Annotated and in order to guide the design of new subdivisions in a manner consistent with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. It includes standards for lot and roadway design, utility installation, erosion control, drainage, tree preservation, and park and trail dedication requirements.

No required changes are anticipated because of this 2040 plan update.

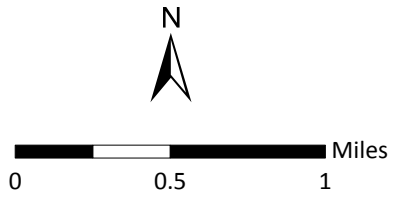
# Official Zoning Map



**Zoning Districts**

- POS Park and Open Space
- R-1 Single-Family Residence
- R-2 Single-Family Residence
- R-3 Two-Family Residence
- R-4 Multiple-Family Residence
- R-C High-Density Multiple-Family Residence
- M-X Mixed Use
- C-1 Neighborhood Commercial
- C-2 General Commercial
- BP Business Park
- O Office
- I-P Industrial Park
- I-G General Industrial
- PUD Planned Unit Development
- Floodplain
- FloodFringe
- Floodway
- Travel Demand Management Boundary

PUD No.	Ordinance No.
PUD-1	2471-15
	2475-15
PUD-2	2483-15
	2481-15
PUD-3	2502-16
	2488-16
PUD-5	2489-16
	2503-16
PUD-6	2501-16
PUD-7	2500-16
	2517-17
PUD-8	2515-17
PUD-9	2518-17
PUD-10	2520-17



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Prepared by the City of St. Louis Park  
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## Other Official Controls

In addition to the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances, the city administers plans and programs intended to implement its goals and strategies.

### Water Supply and Private Sewer

St. Louis Park City Code, Section 36-75, prohibits the issuance of a building permit for any developments or structures intended for human use or occupancy that are not connected to the public water supply or sanitary sewer system.

### Stormwater, Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Ordinance

The city’s Stormwater, Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Ordinance is located in City Code Chapter 12 (Environment and Public Health), Article V.

### Wetland Protection Ordinance

St. Louis Park City Code, Section 12-159, requires that all land disturbing activities, which impact or may impact a wetland, must be in conformance with the city’s Wetland Management Plan.

## Potential Changes to Official Controls

The city will review its official controls within nine months of adopting the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. If updates are required to bring any official controls into alignment with the 2040 Plan, the city will provide copies of all updated official controls to the Metropolitan Council following the city’s adoption of the updated official controls. Potential official control changes are listed in Table 8-2.

**Table 8-2. Zoning Ordinance Studies 2018-2020**

STUDY/PROJECT	PRIORITY	TIMING
Transit Oriented Development (TOD)/Form Based Code (FBC) ordinance	A	2019
Parking reductions/resizing zoning study	B	2020
Accessory housing units zoning study	A	2019
Rezone areas to align with updated 2040 Future Land Use Map	A	2019
Study areas to rezone from C-2 to C-1	A	2018-2019
Study a potential new Transitional Industrial zoning district	B	2019

## Fiscal Devices

### Tax Increment Financing Districts

Tax increment financing (TIF) is the primary development finance tool available to Minnesota cities (Minnesota Statutes, Sections 469.174 through 469.179) since 1973. TIF is simple in concept, but complex in its application. The challenge in using TIF lies with the complex and ever-changing statutory limitations. These complexities make it impractical to provide a thorough explanation of tax increment financing as part of the 2040 Plan. Instead, this section highlights the use of TIF as it relates to the implementation of the 2040 Plan.

Through TIF, the increased property taxes created by new development (or redevelopment) are captured. TIF uses the increase in property taxes resulting from a new development project to finance certain qualified redevelopment costs related to that project. It is this increase or difference between the current property tax on a parcel of land and the estimated property tax after development that is the tax increment. These incremental taxes are used to finance activities to address extraordinary site conditions (such as blight, soil/water contamination, utility relocations) that will encourage redevelopment. Permitted uses of the tax increment generated vary according to the type of tax increment financing and the year during which the tax increment financing district was certified but typically include: land acquisition, site preparation, parking, and public improvements. The different types of TIF Districts include:

- » Redevelopment Districts
- » Renewal and Renovation Districts
- » Soils Condition Districts
- » Housing Districts
- » Hazardous Substance Subdistricts
- » Economic Development Districts

St. Louis Park’s EDA adopted a Tax Increment Financing Policy in 1997 to ensure that this tool is used appropriately to accomplish the city’s economic development and redevelopment goals.

## Tax Abatement

Tax abatement acts like a simpler and less powerful version of tax increment financing. With TIF, the city controls the entire property tax revenue from new development. Under the abatement statute (Minnesota Statutes, Sections 469.1812 through 469.1815), the city, county and school district have independent authority to grant an abatement. Acting alone, the city cannot use tax abatement to generate the same amount of revenue as TIF. Nonetheless, tax abatement provides a valuable financing tool for redevelopment initiatives. Certain projects may be of sufficient importance to encourage county and/or school district abatement and achieve additional funding capacity.

Tax abatement in Minnesota works more like a rebate than an abatement. The city (and other units abating taxes) adds a tax levy equal to the amount of taxes to be abated. The revenue from the abatement levy can be returned to the property owner or retained and used to finance development activities. Tax abatement can be used to finance key redevelopment actions such as land acquisition, site preparation and public improvements. Tax abatement is perhaps best suited as an incentive for reinvestment in existing property. While TIF deals with only the value from new development, abatement can apply to both new and existing value. This power provides the means to encourage building rehabilitation and storefront improvements. The city could agree to abate all or part of the municipal share of taxes to encourage reinvestment tied to the plan.

The State Statute grants the authority to issue general obligation bonds supported by the collection of abated taxes. The proceeds of the bonds may be used to pay for (1) public improvements that benefit the property, (2) land acquisition, (3) reimbursement to the property owner for improvements to the property, and (4) the costs of issuing the bonds.

## Special Assessments

Public improvements are often financed using the power to levy special assessments (Minnesota Statutes Chapter 429). A special assessment is a means for benefiting properties to pay for all or part of the costs associated with improvements, and to spread the impact over a period of years. From a city perspective, this authority provides an important means of raising capital.

Special assessments can be used to finance all of the public improvements needed to implement the 2040 Plan. Eligible improvements include streets, sidewalks, street lighting, streetscape, and parking. Special assessments provide a means to borrow money to finance public improvements. Chapter 429 conveys the power to issue general obligation improvement bonds to finance the design and construction of public improvements. Important factors in the use of improvement bonds include:

- » A minimum of 20% of the cost of the improvement to the city must be assessed against benefited properties;
- » Beyond the 20% threshold, any other legally available source of municipal revenue may be used to pay debt service on improvement bonds;
- » Improvement bonds are not subject to any statutory debt limit;
- » Improvement bonds may be issued without voter approval.

## Special Service Districts

A special service district is a tool for financing the construction and maintenance of public improvements within a defined area. Minnesota Statutes Sections 428A.01 through 428A.10 govern the creation and use of special service districts. This legislation is currently scheduled to expire in 2028. A special service district provides a means to levy taxes (service charges) and fund improvements to and services for a commercial area.

A special service district has several applications for commercial areas in St. Louis Park:

- » The district can provide an alternative to special assessments as a means of financing some of the public improvements in certain commercial areas. The service district approach avoids the benefits test imposed by special assessments. The test for the service district is that the amount of service charges imposed must be reasonably related to the special services provided. The costs of shared parking or streetscape improvements, for example, may be better spread across a district than through assessments to individual properties.
- » A special service district can provide for maintenance of public improvements. Some of the improvements planned for certain commercial areas require a level of maintenance above the typical public improvement. Items such as banners and planted materials must be maintained and replaced at a faster rate than that expected for streets or utilities. A higher standard of cleaning and snow removal may be expected in certain commercial areas. Without a special service district, these costs are typically borne through the General Fund of the city.
- » A special service district provides a means of providing and operating a commercial area's parking system. Use of a special service district should be considered during the negotiation of a development agreement. If the city is going to use a special service district, the city should seek agreement to a petition and waiver of veto and other objections related to the use of a special service district. The development agreement must address both the establishment of the service district and the levy of a service charge.

## Housing and Economic Development Authorities

St. Louis Park has established two separate authorities, as provided for under MN Statutes, Chapter 469, for administering its fiscal devices for housing and economic development assistance. The Housing Authority is an independent governmental agency established by the council in 1970. The original Housing & Redevelopment Authority (HRA) became the Housing Authority (HA) in 1988 when the council approved transferring redevelopment powers to a new Economic Development Authority (EDA). The Housing Authority has jurisdiction over developing and administering housing programs to provide affordable housing options in the community. The EDA is also an independent governmental agency that has authority over economic and redevelopment efforts, including hiring personnel, issuing loans, acquiring land and buildings for development and redevelopment, and requesting that the city levy taxes for the support of its activities.

## Capital Improvement Program

State law requires that the implementation component of a city's comprehensive plan contain a capital improvement program (CIP) for transportation, sanitary sewer, water supply, stormwater management system, parks/trails/open spaces and public facilities. The 2040 Comprehensive Plan serves as the foundation for ongoing capital improvements planning by the city necessary for the community's planned growth and improvements. The city has created a CIP that matches the estimated project costs over a five-year period with funding sources. The CIP allows the city to prioritize projects and to make best use of available revenues. By looking at future needs, the city is better able to find funding sources to fill gaps and to coordinate projects with other jurisdictions. The CIP is updated and approved annually. The city's adopted CIP is included in the Appendix.

## Budgeting and Capital Improvements Plan

Each year the city staff prepares the upcoming year's budget, based on direction from the council. Revenues and expenditures are analyzed to make sustainable and responsible decisions that are consistent with the city's mission. The focus is on delivering services that maintain and grow the strength and viability of the community.