

VISION



ST. LOUIS PARK

**A special report
about our community's future**



VISION St. Louis Park Committee

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Robert Ramsey for reworking
many pages of task force
reports into a manageable form
which allowed us to share our
findings with the entire community.

All the volunteers who served
on the Vision St. Louis Park
Steering Committee
and Task Forces.

Vision St. Louis Park

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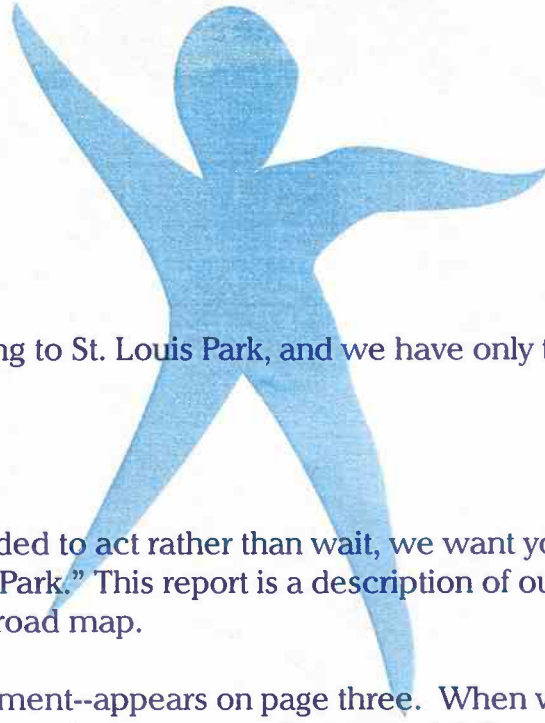
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*We are indebted to Ms. Reeves
who died midway through
this project but contributed
greatly to this effort.



VISION St. Louis Park



Dear Neighbor,

Ready or not, the future is coming to St. Louis Park, and we have only two choices:

1. Wait for things to happen
2. Make things happen.

Because St. Louis Park has decided to act rather than wait, we want you to know about "Vision St. Louis Park." This report is a description of our community's destination and a road map.

Our destination--the vision statement--appears on page three. When we achieve our vision, we will have created a community so special that people will make a conscious decision to make St. Louis Park their lifetime home.

Are we there yet?

No, but we have a road map: the recommendations described on pages four through eleven.

Please, take a few minutes to read this report and consider the kind of community we can create. Then help us ensure a bright future for St. Louis Park by working with us to make our vision a reality. You can begin now: mail us your comments (see back cover), call 924-2519 or fax your comments to 924-2170.

It's time to begin the journey.

Vision St. Louis Park Committee



The Vision Statement was adopted in 1994 by the members of "Vision St. Louis Park," a committee representing government, schools, businesses, community organizations, religious institutions, and St. Louis Park residents. After adopting this vision statement, task forces were formed to suggest actions to make this vision a reality.



Our **VISION** for the Future

St. Louis Park: our community of choice for a lifetime...

... Diversity is a natural part of everyday life that enriches the entire community. Community leaders are as diverse as St. Louis Park's population. Community decisions are made within a caring framework of mutual understanding and respect.

... Responsive service is a hallmark of city government. City government provides valued service by continuously assessing the community's current needs and anticipating future needs. City government is enriched by citizen participation, positive community leadership, and active collaborations and partnerships.

... It is a safe environment in which to live, work and learn. Safety is the result of an active partnership among citizens, businesses, community organizations and law enforcement agencies working together to solve problems and prevent crime.

... Educational opportunities for all ages abound because a high value is placed on lifelong learning. Quality lifelong learning results from collaboration among schools--both public and private--and families, neighborhoods, businesses, city government, and community institutions.

... Children are a top priority for the entire community. Families, schools, city government, community institutions and businesses are actively involved in creating an environment that enables children to build the assets they need to succeed.

... A wide spectrum of quality housing is available to meet residents' housing needs through all stages of life. City government, businesses and local institutions work together to ensure there is a range of financial and structural choices in housing.

... Business provides a solid base for the community and benefits from strong support from residents, schools and government. Residents' retail and service needs are met within the community. Businesses, community organizations, schools and city government work together to create household supporting jobs, spur desirable business growth and address environmental challenges.

... Residents have strong connections to the community thanks to community pride, civic commitment, mutual respect, and neighborliness. Individuals, neighborhoods, and community institutions work to enhance the community, solve problems, prepare future leaders, and market the community's assets.

Achieving Our VISION - DIVERSITY

As an inner ring suburb, St. Louis Park is experiencing changing demographics. Although diversity can sometimes be divisive, we advocate using St. Louis Park's increasingly diverse population as a source of strength.

We examined multicultural issues to find ways to increase community participation by all groups and involve diverse populations in community leadership. We also sought to address real and perceived human relations problems and foster a community-wide attitude of acceptance and understanding.

Our key recommendations:

- Provide diversity training for school staffs
- Foster diversity among city and school district employees
- Encourage diverse role models
- Expand involvement of religious institutions
- Create mentoring programs in multicultural leadership
- Offer multicultural expos
- Create crisis response groups
- Foster open selection for advisory groups
- Expand participation in community celebrations.

When carried out, these measures will help St. Louis Park celebrate and use its diversity to enrich everyday life.

Diversity Task Force members:

Sharon Anderson
Susan Bloyer
Dawn Conner
Mark Felton
Marsha Finkelstein
Michael Garelick
Steven Hansen
Ruth Kirshner
Josine Peters
Jerry Rotman, Chair
Jeff Roy
Rosie Turner
Susan Wiseman



This is only a summary of the Diversity Task Force Report for Vision St. Louis Park. For a copy of the complete report, call 924-2519.

Achieving Our VISION - RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT

We were asked to identify ways to promote responsive government and civic involvement. The primary issues facing our community include how to develop a continuous pool of new community leaders, nurture partnerships and collaborations, expand organizational commitment to the broader community, and encourage responsible and responsive city services.

Our general suggestions cover the need to provide a school curriculum on civic affairs, community-wide leadership training, and an orientation for new commission members. We also looked for ways to offer incentives for neighborhood involvement and recognize the contributions made to the community's quality of life.

We also recommend these steps to personalize city government:

- Expand office hours at City Hall
- Require customer service training for city employees
- Conduct customer satisfaction surveys
- Have city employees wear name tags
- Provide ombudsperson services
- Improve signage in city buildings
- Use volunteer greeters
- Create open call-in lines
- Decentralize City Council meetings.

Implementing these and other measures can help assure that the best government remains the government closest to home.

Responsive Government Task Force members:

Cindy Ahrens
Barbara Bearman
Chuck Ellis
Marie Hartmann
Marilyn Hoeft
Bob Larson
Bill MacMillan, Chair
Phyllis McQuaid
Laurie Powell
Kenneth Schlenker
Virginia Schlenker
Don Turkington



This is only a summary of the Responsive Government Task Force Report for Vision St. Louis Park. For a copy of the complete report, call 924-2519.

Achieving Our VISION - A SAFE COMMUNITY

Like citizens everywhere, St. Louis Park residents are concerned about crime and safety. Although St. Louis Park is a relatively safe community, our task force looked for new ways to prevent crime in homes, schools, businesses and neighborhoods. We also looked for ways to deal with the fear of crime and provide help to crime victims.

Our key recommendations:

- Create a greater sense of community
- Remove barriers to involvement
- Increase neighborhood watch groups
- Get citizens to take ownership and responsibility
- Strengthen consequences
- Establish zero-tolerance school policies
- Educate citizens about law enforcement needs
- Implement the Crime Free Multihousing Program
- Decentralize policing
- Build assets in children
- Develop local resources for victims.

Our report further emphasizes the need to focus on prevention and youth intervention, reinforce community values, foster supportive partnerships, and concentrate on education as well as law enforcement.

Safe Community Task Force members:

Jeff Chanen, Chair
John Herbert
Colleen Johnson
Sharon Johnson
Michael Kadesky
Patrick Kruegel
Jim Lanenberg
John Luse
Gene Murphy
Steve Platisha
Gregg Reed
Linda Trummer



This is only a summary of the Safe Community Task Force Report for Vision St. Louis Park. For a copy of the complete report, call 924-2519.

Achieving Our VISION - LIFELONG LEARNING

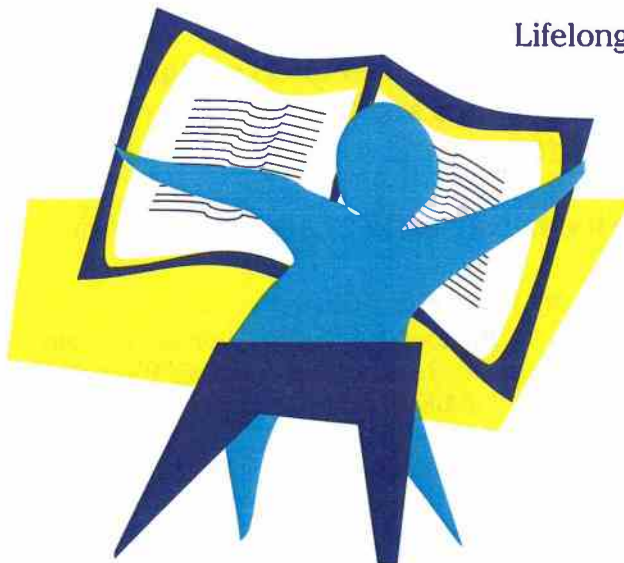
Although St. Louis Park is already--more than most--a lifelong learning community, we can build on existing programs to create an environment where learning never stops.

Our report spells out what's hot and what's not in community education. It pinpoints populations that are currently underserved. It also identifies the community's three greatest learning needs: 1) family learning opportunities, 2) intergenerational programs, and 3) neighborhood educational activities.

Our recommendations for fostering lifelong learning and supporting local public and private schools:

- Establish apprenticeship programs
- Develop a summer Junior Achievement program
- Teach parents to use the "information highway"
- Create intergenerational linkages
- Offer parenting classes to teens
- Form a local alumni association
- Try new time slots for community education programs
- Decentralize community education offerings into neighborhoods
- Reinvent community education as a broker of learning resources.

If the community has the will to act, these measures can bring the dream of a fully activated, lifelong learning community to fruition in St. Louis Park



Lifelong Learning Task Force members:

Debra Bohn
Bridget Gothberg
Eileen Hansen
Tom O'Meara
Mary Jean Overend
Bob Ramsey, Chair
Nell Robie
Jerry Rotman
Wayne Smith
Bob Tift
Lynette Waldenberger

This is only a summary of the Lifelong Learning Task Force Report for Vision St. Louis Park. For a copy of the complete report, call 924-2519.

Achieving Our VISION - CHILDREN FIRST

Although the Children First initiative was underway before the Vision St. Louis Park process began, it is such an important component of community life that it was incorporated into our vision statement.

This unique citywide initiative now employs a full-time coordinator and is guided by a team of citizens, students and representatives of the city, education, business, health and religious communities.

Children First focuses on involving everyone in the community in building the 30 assets children need to become caring, productive and responsible adults. These assets are building blocks for healthy development and include internal assets such as educational commitment, positive values and social competence and external assets such as family and community support, parental control and structured time use.

The mission of Children First is to create a community that gives children our top priority so all youngsters can benefit from strong families, positive relationships with adults, and positive peer influence.

Among the Children First recommendations:

- Launch a public awareness campaign to inform each citizen about Children First to encourage their active participation in developing assets in youth
- Help all types of organizations in St. Louis Park determine how they can put children first
- Encourage parents to spend at least 22 minutes a day with their child
- Find ways to connect youth with caring adults
- Focus on neighborhood involvement as a means to connect youth with adults
- Work on ways to provide year-round structured activities for youth of all ages
- Provide volunteer opportunities for all youth.

By creating a caring community for youth today, we build a better tomorrow for everyone.

Children First Vision Team members:

Karen Atkinson	Brandon Gallagher	Dennis Ormseth
Charlene Barghini	Cris Gears	Travis Pearson
Peter Benson	Bill Gleeson	Josine Peters
Jack Chaffee	Bridget Gothberg	Bob Ramsey
Cari DeWall	Eileen Hansen	James Sanderson
Ed Egermeier	Ben Hershey	Mary Jacobs Spaulding
	Carl Holmstrom	Ann Stokes
	Mick Johnson, Chair	Ashley Tomoson
	Nancy Lapakko	Gail Toatley
	Charlie Meyer	Linda Trummer
	Mancel Mitchell	Jerry Waldman
	Alex Ngo	Sue Wolfe



For more information about Children First, call 928-6075.

Achieving Our VISION - HOUSING

Any residential community can only be as good as its housing stock. For this reason, we addressed issues that are critical to maintaining quality housing in St. Louis Park: how to provide a fair share of low-income housing while enhancing neighborhoods, how to create more “move-up” housing, how to ensure safe and well-maintained homes, and how to support quality multifamily housing.

Among our recommendations for preserving and improving St. Louis Park’s housing stock:

- Limit additional low-income housing
- Publicize existing housing-related services
- Strengthen existing inspection, licensing and zoning
- Encourage remodeling of homes and multifamily dwellings
- Encourage maintenance of homes and multifamily dwellings
- Increase city rehabilitation loan funds
- Pursue funding for first-time mortgage programs.

St. Louis Park has always been a leader in providing quality, affordable housing. These recommendations will only enhance our community’s “livability quotient” well into the future.



Housing Task Force members:

Sally Berdt
Ardyce Eckdahl
Wallace Eckdahl
Judie Erickson
Cynthia Guddal
Bruce Larson
Dudley Moyan
John Palmatier
Rick Person
Tom Powers
Sue Sanger, Chair
Cindy Stromberg
Lisa Thorson
Jack Trump
Tonya Walls

This is only a summary of the Housing Task Force Report for Vision St. Louis Park. For a copy of the complete report, call 924-2519.

Achieving Our VISION - BUSINESS

St. Louis Park is both a residential and a business community. Business growth and land development are essential for increasing job opportunities, providing easy access to goods and services, and expanding the community's economic base.

To achieve these goals, we formulated proposals for supporting and encouraging business growth and renewal, and creating a positive climate for business and developers.

Our recommendations:

- Adopt a proactive marketing plan to attract business and development
- Create a strategic plan to support existing businesses
- Create a strategic plan to attract new businesses and develop vacant property
- Develop a more user-friendly permit process
- Provide public relations training for city staff
- Reactivate the Board of Appeals.

The result of these recommendations should foster healthy growth and development for years to come.

Business Task Force members:



Mark Anthony
Kristen Bertas
Douglas Black
Arnie Bloomquist
Matthew Burton
Carol Bush
Bonnie Crouch, Chair
Teresa Fogarty
Sharon Hanson
Cathy Harrington
Dently Haugesag
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Sherry Martin
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Mark Merchlewitz
John Miller
Linda Ross
Laurie Trach
Jon Weber
Judith Weeks
John Woodhead

This is only a summary of the Business Task Force Report for Vision St. Louis Park. For a copy of the complete report, call 924-2519.

Achieving Our VISION - COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

An integral part of our community's health is ensuring that residents strongly identify with St. Louis Park and develop long-term ties to its people, neighborhoods and community institutions.

To accomplish this, the Community Connections Task Force proposes a three-prong approach: 1) physical improvements to bolster community identity and foster interaction, 2) efforts to increase the social links between people and 3) marketing efforts to differentiate St. Louis Park from other communities.

Among our recommendations:

- Create a "community focal point" in the area bounded by Excelsior Boulevard, West 36th Street, Highway 100 and Monterey Drive
- Create an environment that is friendly to walkers
- Expand our trail system
- Provide distinctive city entrance signs
- Promote public art work
- Rename some city streets
- Personalize outreach efforts to new residents
- Expand participation in community-wide festivals and events
- Promote volunteer opportunities
- Publicize community assets and resources.

Adopting these suggestions can go a long way toward promoting strong community connections through civic pride and commitment, mutual respect and old-fashioned neighborliness.

Community Connections Task Force members:



Jules Beck
Gary Carlson, Chair
Suzanne Carson
Beth Corin
Jerry Croxdale
Barry Dunayer
Max Ellis
Kris Kniefel
Martin Lee
Mindy London
Peggy Newell
Darcy Prochnow
Lynn Schwartz
Arnold Seltzer
Bill Weber

This is only a summary of the Community Connections Task Force Report for Vision St. Louis Park. For a copy of the complete report, call 924-2519.

COMMON GROUND

Although each citizen task force dealt with a distinct area of community life, a number of common themes emerged:

- Individual citizens need to be educated to effectively use existing institutions to improve the community
- All public and private community service agencies should strive to become more user-friendly
- Non-traditional outreach measures are needed to encourage all citizens to become involved
- A comprehensive database of available community resources and contacts is needed
- Collaboration is the key to success
- A successful community is as much a matter of attitude and perception as a specific set of services and amenities.





About VISION St. Louis Park

Community improvement does not come about by executive edict: it grows out of grassroots involvement. Involvement is what Vision St. Louis Park is all about.

Our visioning process began with a 37-member steering committee composed of individual residents and people representing government, schools, businesses, community organizations and religious institutions.

Aided by strategic planning professionals, this group began the process by first learning what St. Louis Park is concerned about. This was accomplished by resident surveys and focus group interviews. This and other information became the basis for community-wide goal setting which resulted in the vision statement that appears in this report.

With this vision in hand, citizen task forces were formed to address each element of the vision statement. The task forces were asked to formulate specific suggestions that will help us achieve the goals outlined in our vision statement. In other words, turn our vision into reality. All of this has been preliminary to the main event: the action phase.

We have now reached the action phase. That's why these recommendations are being submitted to you: the residents of St. Louis Park.

Although these recommendations are also being submitted to the St. Louis Park City Council, St. Louis Park School Board and the TwinWest Chamber of Commerce, our vision will not be achieved by government or community institutions. Ultimately, all 44,000 St. Louis Park residents must share responsibility for making this a healthy and thriving community in the years to come.

The test of our community will lie in our capacity to act on these themes and implement the task forces' recommendations. We have the opportunity to *design* our community of choice for the future or *resign* ourselves to live with whatever happens. You are invited to participate in living the vision: please call us at 924-2519.

We are the community and the vision is ours!

Yes, I'd like to help St. Louis Park achieve its vision.

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State & Zip: _____

Day time phone: _____ Evening phone: _____

I am especially interested in working on: _____

My suggestions for St. Louis Park's future: _____



Can you or your organization help us implement any recommendations?

Did we overlook a crucial goal?

Do you agree or disagree with our goals?

We'd like to hear from you. Please cut out this section, place it in an envelope and mail it to:
Vision St. Louis Park, 5005 Minnetonka Boulevard, St. Louis Park, MN 55416.

Thank you!

Vision St. Louis Park
c/o St. Louis Park School District 283
6425 West 33rd Street
St. Louis Park, MN 55426

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