

St. Louis Park Planning Commission

2022 Annual Report



"Branches" by Randy Walker. Installed at Via Sol in 2022

Commissioners

Jim Beneke, chair and school representative

Mia Divecha

Matt Eckholm

Jessica Kraft, vice chair

Michael Salzer

Tom Weber

Jan Youngquist

youth representative (vacancy)

Incoming commissioner

Katie Merten

Staff

Karen Barton, community development director

Sean Walther, planning manager/deputy CD director

Gary Morrison, zoning administrator

Laura Chamberlain, senior planner

Jacquelyn Kramer, associate planner

Executive summary

The planning commission is an eight-member advisory group of citizen volunteers appointed by the city council. The 2022 members included, Jim Beneke (chair and school representative), Mia Divecha, Matt Eckholm, Jessica Kraft, Michael Salzer, Tom Weber, and Jan Youngquist. The youth commissioner opening remained vacant throughout the year. Katie Merten was appointed to fill the vacancy left by Commissioner Kraft's resignation December 1, 2022.

Commissioners pride themselves in their thoughtful consideration of applications. Commissioners review detailed staff reports, conduct fair and civil public hearings, discuss complex issues in study sessions and provide sound recommendations in a timely fashion.

2022 accomplishments

Key duties:

- Review development projects, planning studies and zoning amendments.
- Hold public hearings and make recommendations to the city council.

2022 activities:

- The commission reviewed 21 applications in 2022, including recommendations on new developments: Beltline Station Development, Wooddale Avenue Apartments (Arbor House), and Wooddale Station Apartments (OlyHi).
- Review of a zoning code amendment related to electronic signage.
- Review of planning studies and reports for comprehensive plan implementation, zoning code audit, and density bonuses in the vertical mixed-use zoning district.

Summary of 2023 work plan

Review development applications. Hold study sessions and hearings to make informed recommendations to city council.

Long range planning activities. Review and provide input on studies.

- Transit-oriented development light rail transit station area planning updates

Zoning code studies

- Review residential districts, including two-family dwellings in low density residential areas
- Temporary use regulations
- Transit-oriented development district

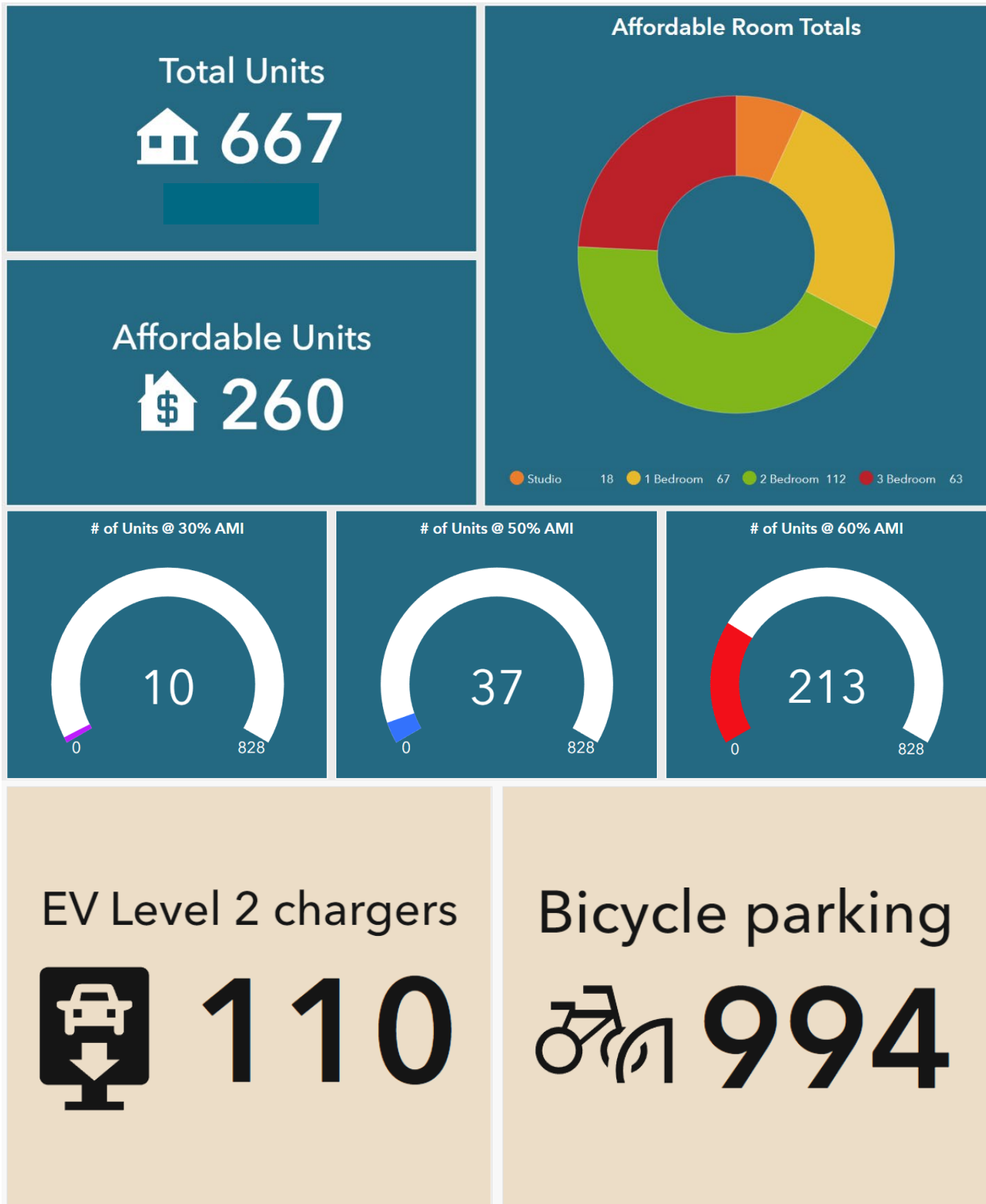
Racial equity and inclusion

- Identify strategies to broaden participation and reduce barriers to public participation. Review notification methods, online opportunities to submit input, and consider when providing translation services, transportation or childcare may be warranted.
- Participate in racial equity training.
- Hold a planning commission meeting at an off-site location to foster community relationships.

Opportunities for collaboration

Include other bodies like the environment and sustainability commission when conducting commissioner training.

Development highlights of 2022



More information on development projects can be found in the [development dashboard](#).

Further information on housing affordability in St. Louis Park can be found in the [housing dashboard](#).

Beltline Station



Location: 4601 and 4725 Hwy. 7 and 3130 Monterey Ave. S.

Sherman Associates received approvals to construct a mixed-use development at the southeast corner of CSAH 25 and Beltline Boulevard.

- Building 1 – seven-story mixed-use building with six levels of market rate housing (156 units) and approximately 19,500 square feet of neighborhood commercial space, potentially anchored by a grocer
- Building 2 – four-story all affordable apartment building with 82 units, 77 units will be available at 60% AMI and five units will be available at 30% AMI. Twenty-two units will be three bedrooms
- Building 3 – five-story market rate apartment building with 146 units
- Parking ramp – approximate 592-stall, six-story parking ramp, which is proposed to include 268 LRT park and ride stalls and approximately 1,800 square feet of retail/commercial space

Sustainable features, including on and off-site solar, green space, plazas and public art, will be incorporated throughout the development. The development will adhere to the city's green building policy. The multi-phase redevelopment will have 384 units of which 82 (21%) would be affordable.

Construction will begin in spring 2023, and all phases will be complete by the end of 2025.

OlyHi (Wooddale Station)



Location: 5950 West 36th Street **Developer:** Saturday Properties and Anderson Companies

OlyHi is a mixed-use project immediately south of the upcoming Wooddale light rail station. The plans include two buildings with 315 residential units, 12,000 square feet of commercial space, and ample public space.

The West Building provides 69 units of apartments specifically targeted towards seniors. This building also provides about 12,000 square feet of commercial space that extends the commercial corridor along 36th Street. The east building proposes 246 units. Live/work units with flexible patios face 36th Street and provide active uses in front of the space reserved for commercial and residential parking.

The most iconic feature of this project will be the multiple public spaces surrounding the buildings. The main public space is a plaza right off of the light rail station with a mix of green space and hardscape that can be adapted to a variety of uses. Native landscaping was selected to minimize the water needed. Shading devices and commercial spaces will make this space inviting to a wide audience. Adjacent to the public plaza, the west building provides a community space that will serve as an asset for the community for gatherings and meetings.

Prior to submittal, the development team worked with LISC Twin Cities on conducting community workshops in early April 2022 to inform the potential retail uses on the site, suggest ways to improve access and flow of the area, and offer ideas on the design of the public spaces. The community input gathered has informed the developer's proposal.

Construction is expected to start summer 2023 and last 18 months.

Arbor House (Wooddale Avenue Apartments)



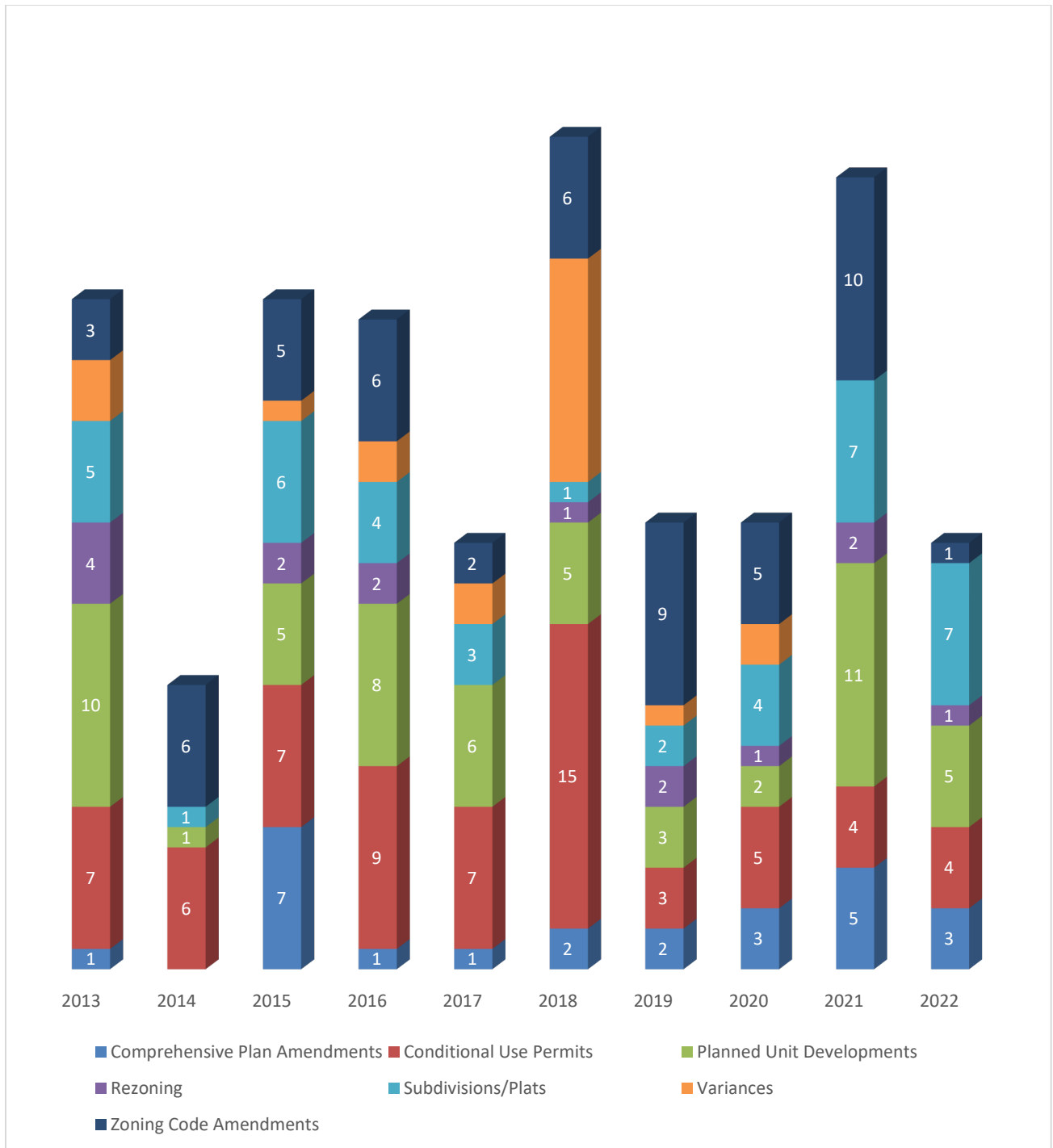
Location: 3755 Wooddale Avenue South

Real Estate Equities, LLC received city approval to construct a four-story, 114-unit multifamily building at 3801 Wooddale Ave. S. on the southeast corner of the Wooddale Avenue cul-de-sac and the Highway 100 on-ramp, site of the former Aldersgate Methodist Church. The apartment building includes amenity spaces, underground parking and surface parking on-site. The proposal includes a mix of all-affordable one-, two-, and three-bedroom units, including five units available at 30% area median income (AMI), five units available at 50% AMI, and 104 units available at 60% AMI for 26 years, exceeding the city's Inclusionary Housing Policy requirements.

Construction on Arbor House began in 2022 and is expected to be substantially complete by November 2023.



Applications reviewed over the past ten years



Previously approved developments



Parkway Residences

Location: West 31st Street between Inglewood Ave. & Glenhurst Ave.

Description: Sela Investments received approvals for Parkway Residences, located along West 31st Street near Glenhurst Avenue South. The development includes four new multifamily buildings with 223 units, as well as the rehabilitation of three existing apartment buildings that contain 24 units, creating a total of 247 residential units.

- North campus (Parkway Place) — replaces six residential buildings on the north side of 31st Street with a four-story, 95-unit apartment building with two levels of underground parking. Parkway Place opened for residential occupancy in January 2022.
- Southeast campus (Parkway Flats) — replaces two single-family homes with a six-unit townhome. Rehabilitation of the three existing apartment buildings was completed in 2021 and the townhomes opened for residential occupancy in August 2022.
- Southwest campus (Parkway Commons)— replaces three single-family homes at the corner of Inglewood Avenue and West 31st Street with a four-story, 37-unit apartment building with one level of underground parking. This is proposed to be a later phase of the project. Construction began March 2022 and expected to open in March 2023.
- West campus — (Parkway Plaza) replaces the existing strip center at the southeast corner of Inglewood Avenue and Highway 25 with an 11-story, 73-unit apartment building. The building will include parking and lobby space on the first two floors, eight floors of residential, an amenity space on the top floor and one level of underground parking. Construction is anticipated in 2023 based on market demand.

Developer: Sela Investments



Mera

Description: ESG Architecture, Stoddard Companies, and Bigos Management have received approvals for redevelopment of 9920 and 9808 Wayzata Boulevard. The development team proposes a six story, 233-unit housing development of approximately 371,000 square feet. The project will provide 20% of the units at 50% area median income.

Construction began in spring 2022.

Developer: Stoddard Companies, Bigos Management



Luxe Residential

Location: 5235 Wayzata Blvd.

Description: Greystar has received city approval for a planned unit development (PUD) for a new six-story apartment building in the West End, at the current Olive Garden site. The project will include 207 units ranging in size from studio to three-bedrooms and two levels of underground parking. The site will also include a new pocket park along 16th Street and pedestrian improvements connecting the apartment to the rest of the West End.

Construction began fall 2021.

Developer: Greystar



Volo at Texa-Tonka

Location: 7916 Minnetonka Blvd. and 2939-2901 Texas Ave.

Description: Volo at Texa-Tonka includes a 101-unit, four to five-story multifamily building on the corner of Texas Avenue and Minnetonka Boulevard, and an 11-unit, two-story town home building on the northern half of the site. The apartment building includes amenity spaces, underground parking and enclosed parking at the first floor and surface parking on-site with other site amenities. Both buildings provide walk up units for future residents. The development also helps connect the neighborhood to the Texa-Tonka shopping center and surrounding amenities like Rainbow Park and Cedar Lake Trail with a public trail connection through the site. The development will include 20 percent of the units as affordable at 50 percent area median income.

A groundbreaking was held September 2021, and construction is expected to last 16 months.

Developer: Pastor Properties



Union Park Flats

Location: 3700 Alabama Avenue

Description: Project for Pride in Living (PPL) has approval to construct a three story, 60-unit affordable apartment building on a portion of 3700 Alabama Avenue, the site currently owned and operated by Union Congregational Church. The site is three blocks from the Wooddale Light Rail Transit Station, which is currently under construction and will be completed in 2023. Union Church will sell a portion of their property to an affiliate of PPL; PPL will own and manage this new housing for the long term. The church will use the proceeds from the land sale to renovate the existing sanctuary and narthex to preserve the 1940s church building while making it more welcoming and accommodating.

Construction is anticipated to begin spring 2023.

Developer: Project for Pride in Living



Arlington Row East and West

Location: Intersection of Wayzata Boulevard and Texas Avenue

Description: Melrose Company received approval to develop two properties near the 7700 block of Wayzata Boulevard and Texas Avenue. The west parcel will be developed into two three-story apartment buildings with 34 units and off-street parking covered by a solar power carport. The east parcel will be developed into a three-story apartment building with 27 units and surface parking to the north.

Developer: Melrose Company

Completed projects



Via Sol

Location: SE quadrant of Hwy 7 and Wooddale Ave

Description: PLACE, a non-profit developer, constructed a mixed-use, mixed-income transit-oriented redevelopment at the southeast quadrant of Highway 7 & Wooddale Ave called Via. The project includes 217 apartment units, a bike shop, a makers' space, e-generation and greenhouse and approximately 1-acre urban forest.

The development incorporates a mix of renewable energy sources, including an anaerobic digester, a wind turbine and solar panels, which provides 90% of the heat and power for the development. The entire development is designed to achieve LEED certification.

Residents began moving in on August 1, 2022.

Developer: PLACE

Nordic Ware campus expansion

Location: 5005 Highway 7 (County Road 25)

Description: Dalquist Properties received approval for two amendments to an existing special permit to allow a 45,000 square foot expansion of warehouse and loading dock operations at the Nordic Ware campus at 5005 Highway 7 (County Road 25). They also requested a zoning text amendment to revise the conditions of food service uses in the I-G general industrial zoning district, in order to construct a small café in the southeast corner of the property serving trail and Beltline light rail station users.

Construction is complete and a ribbon cutting was held on Aug. 23, 2022 for the expanded office, manufacturing and warehouse building. The Bundt Café will open at a later date.

Developer: Dalquist Properties



Zoning code amendment

Electronic signage

City code allowed electronic signs up to 20 square feet at one site and only visible from one side. The St. Louis Park operations and recreation department conducts several recreational activities at the rec center both within the building and at Wolfe Park. The department applied for a zoning code amendment to allow 40-foot, double sided electronic signage to advertise recreational and community activities.

The amendment proposes to allow properties 20 acres or larger and zoned residential and park and open space to have up to 40 square feet of electronic sign face area instead of 20 square feet currently allowed by code. Electronic signs are subject to the same performance criteria as are required for standard signs. This includes setbacks and brightness standards.

On May 11, 2022, the planning commission recommended approval of the zoning code amendment. City council approved the amendment on June 6, 2022.

Appendix A: Full List of 2022 Applications

Conditional use permit – Westside Wine and Spirits

Applicant: Thomas Schoenberger
Case No.: 21-42-CUP

Preliminary and final plat – 20 West End

Applicant: Jason Howard, Sambatek
Case No.: 21-43-S

PUD amendment – Shops at West End

Applicant: Erika Bennett on behalf of ARC WEMPSMN001, LLC
Case No.: 21-39-PUD

Comprehensive plan amendment, preliminary and final plat, planned unit development – Beltline Station Development

Applicant: Sherman Associates, Inc.
Case No.: 22-01-CP, 21-05-S, 22-06-PUD

Comprehensive plan amendment, preliminary and final plat, planned unit development – Wooddale Avenue Apartments (Arbor House)

Applicant: Real Estate Equities
Case No.: 22-02-CP, 21-03-S, 22-04-PUD

Preliminary and final plat – STEP Expansion

Applicant: Derek Reise on behalf of St. Louis Park Emergency Program (STEP)
Case No.: 22-08-S

Preliminary and final plat, conditional use permit – Xchange II Medical Office

Applicant: Davis Healthcare Real Estate Services
Case No.: 22-10-S, 22-11-CUP

Preliminary and final plat, conditional use permit – 2220 Florida Avenue South

Applicant: Martin Bell
Case No.: 22-15-S, 22-21-CUP

PUD amendment – Chick-fil-A

Applicant: Todd Richards, HR Green, on behalf of Chick-fil-A
Case No.: 22-13-PUD

Zoning code amendment – electronic signs

Applicant: City of St. Louis Park – operations and recreation department
Case No.: 22-12-ZA

Conditional use permit – Sota Clothing

Applicant: McKenzie Veum on behalf of Sota Clothing

Case No.: 22-17-CUP

Preliminary and final plat, planned unit development – Wooddale Station Apartments (OlyHi)

Applicant: Saturday Properties and Anderson Companies

Case No.: 22-18-S, 22-19-PUD

Comprehensive plan amendment, zoning map amendment – 7116 Minnetonka Boulevard

Applicant: Anh Nguyen

Case No.: 22-22-CP, 22-23-Z

Study Session Reports and Discussions

- Wooddale Station development
- Comprehensive plan implementation – diversity, equity, and inclusion policy
- Comprehensive plan implementation – housing activity
- Zoning code audit
- Density bonus in mixed-use zoning district

Appendix B: 2023 Work Plan

Time Frame	Initiative		Strategic Priorities	Purpose (see last page for definitions)
Ongoing	Review development applications; hold study sessions and hearings in order to make informed recommendations to city council.	<input type="checkbox"/> New Initiative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continued Initiative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ongoing Responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> Commission Initiated Project <input type="checkbox"/> Council Initiated Project <input type="checkbox"/> Report Findings (council requested) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Formal Recommendation (council requested)
Ongoing	Identify strategies to broaden participation and reduce barriers to public participation.	<input type="checkbox"/> New Initiative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continued Initiative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ongoing Responsibility	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> Commission Initiated Project <input type="checkbox"/> Council Initiated Project <input type="checkbox"/> Report Findings (council requested) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Formal Recommendation (council requested)
Q1 2023 – Q4 2023	Update light rail station area plans	<input type="checkbox"/> New Initiative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continued Initiative <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing Responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> Commission Initiated Project <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council Initiated Project <input type="checkbox"/> Report Findings (council requested) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Formal Recommendation (council requested)
Q2 2022 – Q3 2023	Review residential districts, including two-family dwelling units (twin homes and duplexes) on appropriately sized lots in low density residential areas.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Initiative <input type="checkbox"/> Continued Initiative <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing Responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> Commission Initiated Project <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council Initiated Project <input type="checkbox"/> Report Findings (council requested) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Formal Recommendation (council requested)
Q4 2022 – Q1 2023	Review temporary use regulations	<input type="checkbox"/> New Initiative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continued Initiative <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing Responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commission Initiated Project <input type="checkbox"/> Council Initiated Project <input type="checkbox"/> Report Findings (council requested) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Formal Recommendation (council requested)
Q3 2023 - Q2 2024	Transit oriented development zoning regulations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Initiative <input type="checkbox"/> Continued Initiative <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing Responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> Commission Initiated Project <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council Initiated Project <input type="checkbox"/> Report Findings (council requested) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Formal Recommendation (council requested)

Time Frame	Initiative		Strategic Priorities	Purpose (see last page for definitions)
Q2-Q3 2024	Hold a planning commission meeting at an off-site location to foster community relationships.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Initiative <input type="checkbox"/> Continued Initiative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ongoing Responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commission Initiated Project <input type="checkbox"/> Council Initiated Project <input type="checkbox"/> Report Findings (council requested) <input type="checkbox"/> Formal Recommendation (council requested)
Q3-Q4 2024	Racial equity and inclusion training. Possibly joint training with other boards and commissions like ESC and police advisory commission. Alternatively, staff will share information or resources regarding the latest city policies and activities that intersect with the planning commission's work plan.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Initiative <input type="checkbox"/> Continued Initiative <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing Responsibility	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> Commission Initiated Project <input type="checkbox"/> Council Initiated Project <input type="checkbox"/> Report Findings (council requested) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Formal Recommendation (council requested)

Parking Lot

Items that are being considered by the board/commission but not proposed in the annual work plan. Council approval is needed if the board/commission decides they would like to move forward with an initiative.

Initiative	Comments:
Water conservation and water recycling	Explore ways to encourage reduced water use, capture and reuse of storm water, and protect ground water resources.
Housing analysis	Explore setting policy targets for different housing types in the city based on present inventory and unmet demand, and promote homeownership opportunities as well as inclusionary housing goals.
Transitional industrial zoning district	This item was identified in the comprehensive plan. Several amendments have been made to the existing industrial districts that reflect elements of this idea through applicant-driven requests in the past two years. For this reason, it is a lower priority.

City of St. Louis Park Strategic Priorities

1. St. Louis Park is committed to being a leader in racial equity and inclusion in order to create a more just and inclusive community for all.
2. St. Louis Park is committed to continue to lead in environmental stewardship.
3. St. Louis Park is committed to providing a broad range of housing and neighborhood oriented development.
4. St. Louis Park is committed to providing a variety of options for people to make their way around the city comfortably, safely and reliably.
5. St. Louis Park is committed to creating opportunities to build social capital through community engagement.

Purpose: definitions

Commission Initiated Project

- Project initiated by the board or commission

Council Initiated Project

- Project tasked to a board or commission by the city council

Report Findings

- Initiated by the city council
- Board and commission will study a specific issue or topic and **report its findings or comments to the city council in writing**
- No direct action is taken by the board/commission

Formal Recommendation

- Initiated by the city council
- Board and commission will study a specific issue or topic and **makes a formal recommendation to the city council on what action to take**
- A recommendation requires a majority of the commissioners' support

Work plans may be modified, to add or delete items, in one of three ways:

- Work plans can be modified by mutual agreement during a joint work session.
- If immediate approval is important, the board or commission can work with their staff liaison to present a modified work plan for city council approval at a council meeting.
- The city council can direct a change to the work plan at their discretion.