



City of St. Louis Park 2024 Legislative Priorities

Strategic Priorities

The St. Louis Park City Council adopted the following strategic priorities in 2018. These priorities guide long-range planning as well as daily decisions and activities.

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.

Continue to lead in environmental stewardship.

Providing a broad range of housing and neighborhood-oriented development.

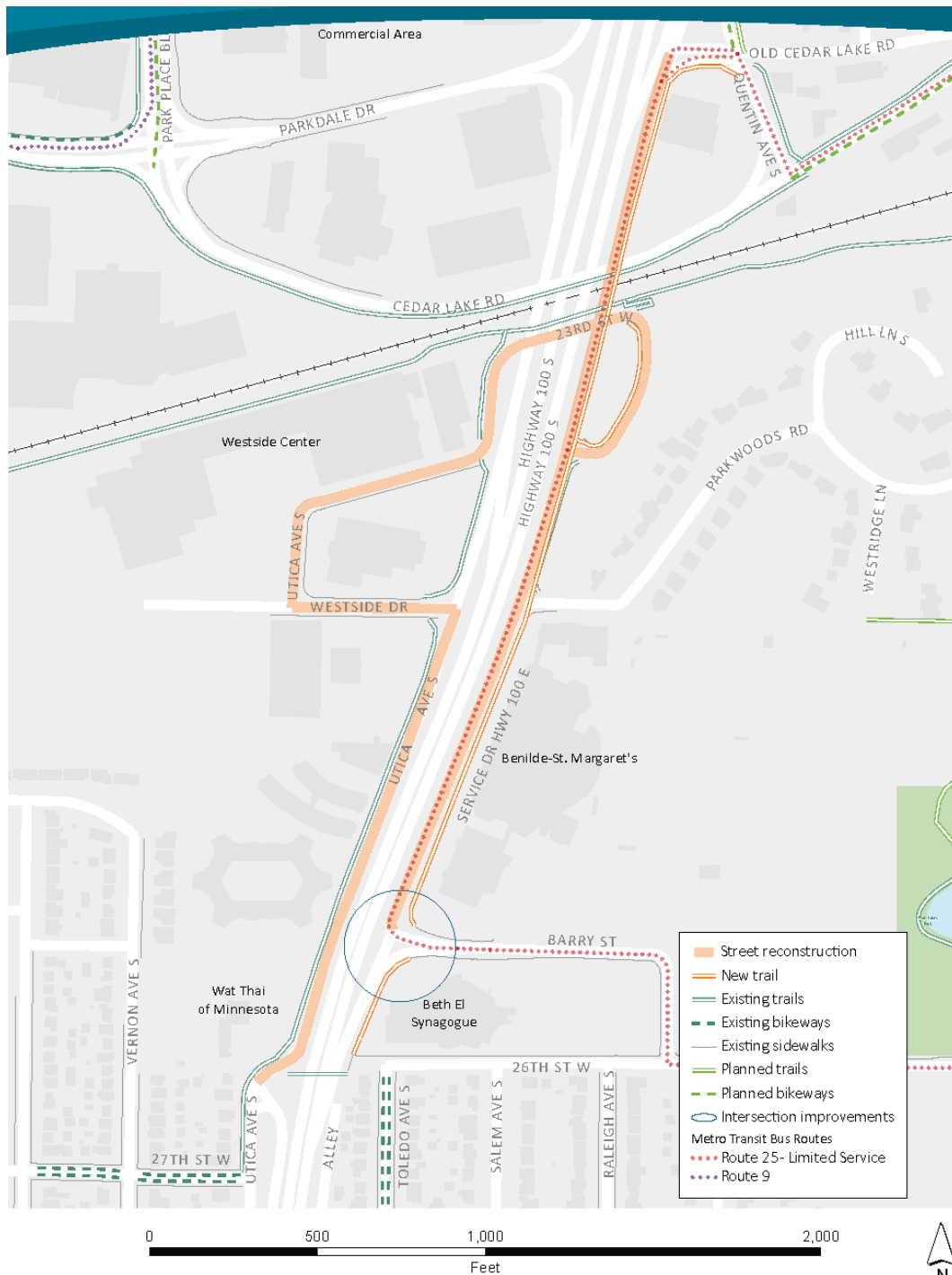
Providing a variety of options for people to make their way around the city comfortably, safely and reliably.

Creating opportunities to build social capital through community engagement.

Capital investment priorities

1. TH100 Service Road Loop Investments

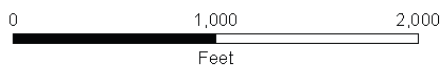
Replace outdated infrastructure, increase community connectivity and improve safety for all. This project will feature new LED streetlighting, enhanced pedestrian crossings, replacement of aging pavement and modifications to existing intersections. To create a new bicycle and pedestrian facility, this project also includes the construction of the West End trail connection along the East TH100 service drive, which will make it easier and safer for people to move through the area to access destinations and transit.



2. Oxford / Louisiana Area infrastructure investment

Increase access to businesses and healthcare, promote climate preparedness and enhance pedestrian connectivity.

The planned public improvements for the Oxford/Louisiana area include construction and repair of aging sidewalks; critical repairs to water, sewer, and storm sewer facilities; general improvements or upgrades related to traffic and pedestrian safety, including replacement of streetlights, striping, and signs; replacement or repair of pavement, curb, and gutter; roundabout construction; stormwater quality improvements and flood storage.



Climate, Energy, and Buildings

The City of St. Louis Park supports innovative strategies in the pursuit of a more sustainable climate worldwide, including the adoption of near-term emission reduction targets as described in the city's Climate Action Plan.

Advanced state energy code

Legislation for an advanced commercial state energy code was passed in 2023. Support continued adoption of improved residential energy codes for efficient building standards, which will reduce household energy use and decrease carbon emissions.

Amend state health code

Reduce barriers for businesses to use refillable containers for food and beverages to reduce single-use packaging waste.

Construction codes

Oppose legislation that would reduce the current minimum building and energy code standards or limit future adoptions of improved energy conservation standards and support improved access to recycling.

Compost use

Adopt a food waste compost requirement in MNDOT specs to support markets for compost use by providing a uniform standard to be used in city, county and state projects and close the circle between food waste collection, composting and compost use.

Environment and sustainability

Support the adoption of ambitious policies and the creation of innovative programs to reach the goals of the state's Climate Action Framework and the St. Louis Park Climate Action Plan.

Extended producer responsibility

Support adoption of extended producer responsibility (EPR) legislation for packaging in order to reduce environmental and financial impacts of disposal of non-recyclable or non-reusable packaging products.

Fee-for-service programs

Support maintaining minimum standards for building safety, longevity, and energy conservation, and allow local governments to continue with fee-for-service permitting and inspection to help fund quality city programs. Agreement with the League of Minnesota Cities position which seeks authority for cities to charge fees that are reasonably related to the cost of providing the service, permit or license.

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Solid waste management tax

Eliminate the diversion of solid waste management tax revenue to the general fund for other purposes and provide to local government for recycling programs as originally intended, through increasing SCORE recycling grants. Increase fees on construction and demolition waste disposal to fund reuse and recycling of building materials. Direct funding for zero waste programs to areas of environmental justice concern.

Residential fire sprinklers

Oppose efforts that prohibit future adoption of residential fire sprinkler codes. Previous unsuccessful legislative efforts have attempted to prevent the state building code from requiring residential fire sprinkler systems, which poses safety risk.

Smart salting

Support the creation of incentives for private salt applicators to reduce the volume of salt they apply to improve the effectiveness of salt application while reducing chloride pollution in waterways.

Urban forest management

Urban forests are facing numerous threats from Dutch elm disease, oak wilt, drought, storms and emerald ash borer. Related costs put pressure on city budgets. The state currently has no program to assist cities in recovering expenses due to damage from Emerald Ash Borer. Support establishing an ongoing state grant program with at least \$15 million per year that is usable for urban forest management.

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Economic Development

The City of St. Louis Park supports a thriving local economy of small and large businesses and strives to create a place where people can live, work, and play.

Affordable Commercial Center

Small businesses are struggling to find affordable commercial space, which is vital to their long-term success. Affordable ownership opportunities are also key to the ability of small businesses to build assets and generational wealth. One way to effectively address these needs is to provide opportunities through a commercial land trust model. St. Louis Park has acquired a commercial building and is currently working with a commercial land trust to rehab and subdivide the building into multiple spaces that will be sold to small businesses enabling them to secure affordable space and build wealth. Taking the land costs out of the equation allows for the creation of affordable commercial space that remains affordable in perpetuity.

Cable and telecommunications

Oppose the preemption of local authority to manage public rights-of-way and land use for cable and telecommunications infrastructure, and the preemption of local franchise authority. This infrastructure is essential for the efficient, equitable and affordable delivery of local government services and policies should strengthen local authority to manage telecommunication networks.

DEED program funding

Support the continued annual funding of DEED programs at stable, sustainable or increased levels, as well as tools to invest in underserved areas of the state that would allow all regions to better prosper.

Property tax reduction for commercial properties purchased under community/commercial land trust arrangements

Support a property tax classification rate reduction for commercial properties purchased under community/commercial land trust arrangements (similar to the 4d(2) classification rate established for homesteads purchased through community land trusts) to stimulate the creation and purchase of affordable commercial properties for limited income entrepreneurs throughout the state.

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General Government continued

The City of St. Louis Park supports good governance in the form of legal authority to help residents to thrive.

Adult use cannabis

Support a regulatory framework that maintains or expands local control and removing the fee-cap for local service. Future state regulations should allow cities to manage related registration fees so they may recoup the necessary compliance costs.

Aircraft noise

Support evaluating the effects of consolidated flight tracks because of RNAV on departures.

Cable franchising authority

Support congress to recognize, support and maintain the exercise of local franchising authority. Municipal cable franchising is key to providing uniform quality, access and pricing to city residents.

Comprehensive planning

Support exempting comprehensive plans from the Minnesota Environmental Rights Act (MERA), just as they are similarly exempted from the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act. Comprehensive plans are legislative policy documents separate from executive and judicial powers.

Earned Sick and Safe Time

The 2023 legislature enacted a law requiring all employers to provide employees one hour of sick and safe time for every 30 hours worked. Support legislative clarification on the application of these rules for unique and limited city positions including seasonal employees.

Employer Mandates

Oppose any employer mandates that diminish the inherent managerial rights as they pertain to collective bargaining. Limiting public employers from determining the number of personnel hired could hinder the city's crisis response and subjects cities to risk if they are unable to meet bargained terms due to external challenges such as a competitive labor market.

Levy limits

Oppose levy limits or other proposed restrictions for local government budgets. Many local factors impact the annual decision-making around the property tax levy, including other non-tax revenue forecasts, infrastructure needs and changes to the local tax base and tax increment financing districts. Local control over the tax levy is a key tool in the city's toolbox for achieving long-term financial stability.

General Government

Local Control

Support local control as a principle that applies to many issues. Local governments must have sufficient authority and flexibility to meet the challenges of governing and providing residents with public services.

Open Meeting Law

Support including virtual options for open meetings. City responses to COVID-19 illustrated that remote participation can allow for meaningful public interaction. Cities are in need of continued flexibility to utilize technology for meetings to protect the health of elected officials, city staff and the public and to keep pace with changes to remote technology in the future.

Public health insurance

The 2023 legislative session expanded Minnesota's state-funded health insurance program to let residents with incomes above 200% of the federal poverty level enroll as well as undocumented Minnesotans. Support the continued expansion of the state's public health insurance program MinnesotaCare, allowing all Minnesotans to buy in to the program.

Safeguard public code employees

Support League of Minnesota Cities' policy related to assaults on code compliance officials and inspectors. Because of the nature of their job, code enforcement officials can be subjected to verbal assaults, threats and physical violence. Under current law, an assault on a code enforcement official not enumerated in Minn. Stat. § 609.2231, subd. 6, while performing official business can only be charged as fifth degree assault, a misdemeanor, unless it results in substantial bodily harm. All code enforcement officials should be afforded the same protections under Minnesota Statutes, and the legislature should amend the statute to expand the employees covered by the statute.

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Housing

The City of St. Louis Park supports housing for all residents in the city including policies that build and maintain housing and aid in associated costs.

Housing TIF District Modifications

Support

- Modifications to the existing Housing TIF District requirements to allow for greater flexibility for the creation of more deeply affordable housing for households at or below 30% area median income.
- Creation of transit-oriented TIF Districts.
- Expand authority for all cities to transfer unobligated pooled increment from a housing or redevelopment TIF District to support a local housing trust fund for any eligible expenditure under Minn. Stat. 462C.16

Prohibition on discrimination

Support a statewide prohibition on discrimination against source of income for renters receiving rental assistance.

Support Voucher Acceptance

Support additional funding for the housing choice voucher programs and other rental assistance programs and financial, tax and/or other incentives for rental property owners to participate in these programs.

Corporate ownership of single-family homes

Support additional research on the impacts of home ownership by corporate entities and encourage increased access to housing through homeownership to Minnesota families to build equity and wealth.

Rental rehab loan program

Support the establishment of a statewide housing rehab loan program to facilitate the preservation of NOAH multi-family residential rental properties and encourage owners to retain the affordability of their developments.

TOD Housing Fund

Support the statewide creation of a transit-oriented development affordable housing fund and the creation of a transit-oriented TIF District.

Public Safety

The City of St. Louis Park supports public safety policies and rules that help our front-line workers and ensure equitable and safe outcomes for residents.

Criminal background checks

Support preventing individuals who are not legally able to purchase a gun from doing so without background checks at gun shows, online, or in private transactions.

Emergency medical services

Support a solution for EMS services that balances the needs of residents and providers statewide. Current regulations do not require ambulance services to disclose important data points that would ensure a community is receiving quality services. Support allowing local units of government to designate which licensed provider may serve their communities and to determine the appropriate level of service.

Expansion of legal fireworks

Oppose legislation that expands fireworks in Minnesota. Fireworks can cause serious injuries and fires. The legal sale of consumer fireworks undermines fire prevention efforts, and their sale and use increase local public safety enforcement, emergency response and fire-suppression costs.

Gun violence protective orders

Support allowing law enforcement in certain cases to temporarily remove any guns in an individual's possession and to prohibit new gun purchases for the duration of the order.

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Health insurance coverage for disabled public safety officers

Support this mandate being fully funded by the state in perpetuity. In 2023, a bill passed reinstating full funding to reimburse employers for the cost of continued health insurance for duty disabled peace officers and firefighters, but this is one-time funding that is expected to run out in approximately three years.

Mandated law enforcement training

Support continuing the Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Board training reimbursement allocation to local agencies. Current funding is not permanent and sunsets in 2024.

Race Data Collected on Minnesota Driver's License and State Identification

Support the Minnesota Department of Public Safety to require individuals self-identify their race when applying for a driver's license or state identification. This anonymized, aggregated data would be shared with the Office of Traffic Safety for research, analysis and reporting to monitor traffic stop disparities.

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Transportation and Infrastructure

The City of St. Louis Park supports providing a variety of options for people to make their way around the city comfortably, safely, and reliably.

TH100 service road loop investment

Seeking funding

The service roads and new trail connection in this project will provide regional as well as local connections to homes, schools, places of worship and parks. This project is needed to reconstruct roads at the end of their useful life, remove barriers to active transportation and transit and improve safety for all modes. Support bonding for this regional project.

Oxford and Louisiana Area investment

Seeking funding

This project is needed to repair existing infrastructure, create active transportation connections to transit and promote environmental sustainability and climate preparedness. Support bonding for this regional project.

Transportation funding

A comprehensive transportation system is a vital component for meeting the physical, social and economic needs of our state and metropolitan region. Support sufficient and stable statewide transportation funding, for all modes of travel and local control to serve long-term needs.

Metro Green Line Extension

Support the continued work and completion of the Metro Green Line Extension Project to provide businesses, residents and visitors with multiple transportation options.

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Texas Ave. and Minnetonka Blvd.

Texas Avenue between Lake Street and Wayzata Boulevard is one of the few continuous north-to-south roadway connections in St. Louis Park. To finish the upgrade of the Texas Ave. corridor, the new intersection would include separated bicycle facilities, sidewalk, improved driver sightlines, signal replacement and ADA upgrades.

Support Hennepin County partnering in Texas Avenue/ Minnetonka Blvd intersection reconstruction.

Redesign CSAH 25

The city and county have developed a long-term vision to transform the CSAH 25 Corridor into a multimodal urban boulevard. Support Hennepin County's funding of rehabilitation/reconstruction of CSAH 25.

Transit financing

Support stable and growing revenue sources to fund the operating budget for all regional transit providers now and into the future.

Railway safety

Railways connect local and regional economies to the global marketplace and generate billions of dollars in economic activity. Recent high-profile freight train derailments, however, have highlighted safety concerns in an industry that travels through thousands of communities, including St. Louis Park.

Support accountability, safety and funding of accident prevention, as well as new rules around railway safety.