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## **Planning commission meeting and study session**

The St. Louis Park planning commission is meeting in person at St. Louis Park City Hall, 5005 Minnetonka Blvd. Members of the public can attend the board of zoning appeals and planning commission meeting in person or watch the meeting by webstream at [bit.ly/watchslppc](https://bit.ly/watchslppc) and on local cable (Comcast SD channel 14 and HD channel 798). Visit [bit.ly/slppcagendas](https://bit.ly/slppcagendas) to view the agenda and reports.

You can provide comment on agenda items in person at the meeting or by emailing your comments to [info@stlouispark.org](mailto:info@stlouispark.org) by noon the day of the meeting. Comments must be related to an item on the meeting agenda.

### **Agenda**

#### **PLANNING COMMISSION**

1. Call to order – roll call
2. Approval of minutes – May 1, 2024 and May 22, 2024
3. Hearing
  - 3.a. Tree preservation ordinance
4. Other Business
5. Communications
6. Adjournment

#### **PLANNING COMMISSION STUDY SESSION**

1. Zoning code update
2. Cannabis zoning

#### **Future scheduled meeting/event dates:**

August 21, 2024 – BOZA meeting

September 4, 2024 - planning commission regular meeting

September 18, 2024 - planning commission regular meeting

October 9, 2024 - planning commission regular meeting\*

\*Meeting held on October 9 since Rosh Hashanah begins on October 2.

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## **Planning commission**

### **Study Session**

Members present: Jim Beneke, Mia Divecha, Matt Eckholm, Katie Merten, Tom Weber, Jan Youngquist

Members absent: none

Staff present: Sean Walther, Laura Chamberlain, Katelyn Champoux and Michael Bahe

Ms. Champoux and Mr. Bahe introduced themselves and their roles on city staff and planning.

Mr. Walther stated the application process for planning commissioner has now ended and 9 applications were received. He noted that the decision should be made in around one month. He added that several commissioners are serving beyond the original term and under the bylaws, they can continue to do so until they are reappointed, or another person is appointed. He noted that city staff and the city council greatly appreciate the continued service of all the planning commissioners and the commission's patience while the city studies the boards and commissions program, recruitment and selection processes. The city values its volunteer board members and commissioners and the thoughtful consideration and recommendations they provide to the city.

#### **1. Tree preservation ordinance**

Ms. Champoux and Mr. Bahe presented the staff report and spoke about the proposed amendments to the city's tree preservation ordinance.

Chair Divecha asked when someone pays the tree replacement fee, where does that money go. Mr. Walther stated it goes into a fund for the city's tree planting programs for public trees on public land.

Commissioner Weber noted he has a large tree in his backyard and asked if it were to be struck by lightning, would the city replace it. Mr. Bahe stated no because it is on private property. Mr. Walther stated if it is a significant or heritage tree, the ordinance requires the tree be healthy to be subject to the code. He added an exception would be for commercial or multi-family residential properties with approved landscape plans. They would just need to replant one tree in place of the tree removed in that situation.

Chair Divecha asked if this ordinance covers only commercial properties. Mr. Bahe stated commercial and multifamily and new subdivisions are covered.

Commissioner Merten asked about what other cities do for tree ordinances. Ms. Champoux stated it is mixed as to what other cities do.

Mr. Walther stated after this discussion, the findings will be brought to city council for further discussion before the city starts the formal public hearing process.

Commissioner Youngquist asked how the proposed ordinance will define commercial properties. Mr. Walther stated we are using the term broadly in this conversation, meaning commercial of all types, retail, office, industrial, and multifamily residential.

Commissioner Youngquist asked if there has been any consideration on how this might affect city goals such as affordable housing and noted the costs of developing affordable housing and tree requirements. Mr. Walther stated staff is aware a balance will need to be struck but added they have not quantified these implications. He added in part the impact on a neighborhood is similar whether it is market rate or affordable development, and we would want to see trees preserved and/or replaced.

Mr. Bahe added many tree programming projects and increased city incentives are happening in traditionally lower income areas of the city and restoring the tree canopy in those areas.

Commissioner Weber asked where credits go for heritage tree preservation. Ms. Champoux said it would happen when you have a development contract with the city. Mr. Walther stated some trees may be removed for a particular development, but when heritage trees are preserved, the credit would reduce the replacement requirements for the trees removed and potentially lowering the fees that need to be paid to the city when there is a shortfall of new plantings to cover the replacement requirement.

Commissioner Youngquist asked how many heritage trees there are and where they are in St. Louis Park. Mr. Bahe stated on public property staff knows where they are, but not on private property.

Mr. Walther commented that staff has really emphasized preserving trees in new development applications near environmentally sensitive areas, such as next to a creek or wetland area, at the edges of lots where they provide screening and are generally out of the way of new buildings, and when very large and more remarkable mature trees exist. He added the heritage tree definition and canopy goals are new tools to advocate for tree preservation.

Commissioner Weber asked how much of an effect there is on the tree canopy with ash tree removals and replacements. Mr. Bahe stated eventually that gap will be filled again but it might take some years for the canopy to be replaced.

Commissioner Weber asked if there may be an incentive program for residents to remove a tree where they might receive assistance from the city for replacement of the removed tree if they promise to replace it within a certain amount of time.

Commissioner Merten added an education program for residents related to tree removal and replacement may be helpful.

Mr. Bahe stated the city would not have the funding for a program like that, and it might be counter to our goals to assist residents unless it were an epidemic. He added city efforts are for tree preservation.

Commissioner Merten asked if there is an education program for residents on removal of diseased ash trees. Mr. Bahe stated yes and noted the city received a grant from the DNR for removal and replanting and subsidies for residents for this.

Commissioner Beneke asked about replanting. Mr. Bahe stated if someone removes a 30-inch diameter tree, they need to replant 30 inches of new trees, or approximately 10-15 new 2-inch to 2.5-inch trees for each large tree removed.

Commissioner Weber noted the Three Rivers trail plan and preferred route on Dakota Avenue. He added the city council should add language to the Three Rivers plan that says you must replace the no tree loss option as a parameter of municipal consent, to save trees over parking. Mr. Walther stated this may come down to a legal question and there may be a limit on conditions, but noted there are negotiations that can happen. He added the city's strategic priorities cover trees and environment, as well as the Living Streets Policy, so things are in place already along with the tree preservation ordinance.

Chair Divecha asked about the 20% penalty and the credits and asked why there was not just a set penalty for removing a heritage tree. Ms. Champoux stated they worked to find a balance hoping by offering incentives it will be more appealing to folks to preserve heritage trees. Mr. Walther added the 20% is likely a practical allowance to give some flexibility without penalty.

Chair Divecha asked how developers typically react to the tree preservation ordinance and has it ever been a barrier or a non-issue. Mr. Walther stated he is not aware of the penalty causing a developer to walk away from a project.

Commissioner Weber asked what happens if a replacement tree dies, and if the owner is responsible for replacement again. Mr. Walther stated there is a 1-year warranty period and inspection and a replacement tree would need to be planted while under warranty. He also noted that while it is not monitored regularly but staff does review approved landscaping plans when new requests are submitted and if the landscaping has not been maintained, the city can require it to be back brought back into compliance.

Mr. Walther stated this will go to city council now for discussion and decisions along with budget considerations.

## **2. Arrive & Thrive update**

Ms. Chamberlain presented the report.

Commissioner Beneke asked if there are any issues with ground contamination. Ms. Chamberlain stated there is not as much ground contamination in this area, but because it is historically an industrial area with the railroad there, it is an area of concern, especially near Bass Lake and flooding potential.

Chair Divecha asked how the smaller building size is enforced. Mr. Chamberlain stated that will be the next step they look at with maximum building widths and guidelines with a zoning district or overlay.

Commissioner Youngquist asked about the commercial space that is butted against a trail and also going through a residential area, noting it does not seem it would be successful with only access coming from the west. Ms. Chamberlain stated she will ask the consultant on that, and added the connection would be only for the neighborhood and residential uses.

Chair Divecha asked about the pedestrian connections along Beltline Boulevard and asked if the apartments there are occupied now. She noted there is a crosswalk, but not a stop and asked if that is being looked at. Ms. Chamberlain stated that is not being looked at right now, but stated Beltline Boulevard width with the redesign and construction has gone from 4 to 3 lane, and the crossing location is intentional, while there were limits on where to put traffic lights. She stated there may be mitigations to look at now that the apartments are now occupied there.

Commissioner Eckholm stated he prefers the 15-18 story building in the Burlington location.

Commissioner Weber asked what the future use planned in this location. Ms. Weber stated the future use there is mostly office commercial space but noted in the Phase 2 there was a lot of feedback from residents on how they love the Micro Center store. She noted the city would like to help them find an alternate location as they are a great draw.

Commissioner Youngquist asked about a bike ped connection over Hwy. 100. Ms. Chamberlain stated that is not in the plan as this time, but staff is hoping this plan can act as a catalyst for more conversations on this.

Commissioner Eckholm asked if there is any way to get a bridge to better connect Wooddale and the Walker Lake area better, such as a bridge extended and turfed to help it feel more like a street to pedestrians with trees. Ms. Chamberlain stated this is being looked at in the long term.

Commissioner Youngquist asked if the maroon buildings south of the station are approved but have not been constructed. Ms. Chamberlain stated no, they are similar, but this is more of a general development being shown. She noted EDA still controls the Nash Finch site and a new developer is being researched.

Commissioner Youngquist asked since this development will be starting over, why the highest density is not next to the station. Commissioner Eckholm agreed. Ms. Chamberlain stated that is great feedback.

Commissioner Eckholm added the Johnny Pops site could also be used. Ms. Chamberlain stated staff is looking at that as well, for higher density and mixed-use development which works well in this area.

Commissioner Eckholm asked about Methodist Hospital expansion in the future. Ms. Chamberlain stated Methodist has realized they will not be able to expand in this area due to the railroad spur there.

Commissioner Youngquist asked if the large white box north of Methodist is the former Sam's club. Ms. Chamberlain stated yes.

Commissioner Youngquist asked about redevelopment of the parking lot there and if the building was involved in that as well. Ms. Chamberlain stated the city did a study in 2018, and there was a moratorium on development there. She stated the direction for that site was general commercial and then it was reassessed, and the current parking could be used for mixed use and structured parking. She noted that Loffler Corporation moved into the space, invested a lot, and brought 500 employees to the area, right next to the light rail station. She stated as of now, the entire site will not be shown for redevelopment with only the southern portion shown for redevelopment.

Commissioner Eckholm added this area -- because of soil issues -- has a cap of no more than 6 stories that can be built on that site, as well as how much parking can be there. Ms. Chamberlain stated this area is also very hard to redevelop because of soil conditions.

Commissioner Weber stated he is hopeful about the proposals for Excelsior Boulevard and if half of this can be completed, that is a win for the community. Ms. Chamberlain agreed and added it is just a question of when this can happen within the 20-year plan.

Ms. Chamberlain stated there will be an open house related to Arrive & Thrive on May 14 that commissioners are invited to attend and an online survey to launch this round of the community engagement process.

### **3. Adjournment – 8:00 p.m.**

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Sean Walther, liaison

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Mia Divecha, chair member

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## **Planning commission**

Members present: Jim Beneke, Mia Divecha (arrived 6:06 p.m.), Matt Eckholm, Katie Merten, Tom Weber, Jan Youngquist

Members absent: none

Staff present: Katlyn Champoux, Laura Chamberlain

Guests:

- 1. Call to order – roll call.**
- 2. Approval of minutes – April 17, 2024.**

*It was moved by Commissioner Youngquist, seconded by Commissioner Merten, to approve the April 17, 2024 minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously.*

- 3. Hearings – none.**
- 4. Other Business.**
  - 4a. Final plat for Park Plaza 2<sup>nd</sup> addition at 5775 Wayzata Blvd.**  
**Applicant: GW Properties**  
**Case No: 24-13-S**

Ms. Champoux presented the report.

Commissioner Merten asked if sub-dividing this means each entity will have their own address. Ms. Champoux stated yes that is correct.

Commissioner Weber asked if anything has changed from the preliminary approval and now the final plat. Ms. Chamberlain stated nothing significant has changed, only some minor utility changes, but that is all.

Commissioner Weber noted the farmers market that was in this area, and now has since been moved over by West End Office Park. He asked if that is the same farmers market and if that is permanent or a temporary placement. Ms. Chamberlain stated it is the same farmers market and noted the owners decided to move it to the office park West End area instead.

Commissioner Youngquist asked about the park dedication fees. Ms. Chamberlain stated the specifics are noted in the planning development contract which will be a requirement and is in the conditions for approval. She noted that can also be added for city council approval as well.

Commissioner Merten asked if the weird shape is a result of utilities. Ms. Chamberlain stated part of this is to accommodate a trash enclosure, but added she is not sure how that design decision was made.

*It was moved by Commissioner Beneke, seconded by Commissioner Weber, to approve the final plat to construct two buildings at 5775 Wayzata Blvd., subject to conditions recommended by staff.*

*The motion passed unanimously.*

## **5. Communications.**

Ms. Chamberlain noted the June 5<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission meeting has been cancelled and the next one will be on June 26, to accommodate the Juneteenth holiday. She noted there will be a presentation on a variance request at 2625 Louisiana Ave.

Ms. Chamberlain added there may be a study session also on June 26<sup>th</sup>.

## **6. Adjournment – 6:10 p.m.**

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Sean Walther, liaison

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Mia Divecha, chair member

### 3.a Tree preservation ordinance

#### Executive summary

**Recommended action:** Motion to recommend approval of the zoning code amendments for tree preservation.

**Summary:** The tree canopy is diminishing in St. Louis Park as tree removals continue in response to emerald ash borer (EAB) in ash trees, decline in mature oak trees and Dutch Elm disease in elm trees. Tree removal from urban development projects also contributes to canopy loss, although not to the same extent. The city supports tree planting on existing commercial and residential properties through multiple cost-share programs including annual Tree Sale, Shade SLP, Shade SLP+ and Depave SLP. The natural resources division manages public trees funded by the Park Improvement Fund and the tree replacement fees collected by the city.

In 2023, city council directed staff to explore strategies to promote tree preservation in St. Louis Park with a focus on heritage trees. Heritage trees are mature trees that contribute greatly to the city's tree canopy and provide magnified public and environmental health benefits compared to smaller trees. This report provides an overview of the proposed amendments to the existing tree protection policy in the city's zoning code. The recommendations include adding a heritage tree definition, implementing heritage tree replacement requirements, and offering heritage tree preservation credits.

**Supporting documents:** [August 28, 2023 study session minutes](#), May 1, 2024 planning commission study session unofficial minutes, [May 1, 2024 environment and sustainability commission minutes](#), [June 10, 2024 city council study session minutes](#)

**Prepared by:** Katelyn Champoux, associate planner

**Reviewed by:** Sean Walther, planning manager / deputy community development director

## Discussion

### Background

#### ***Existing condition of the tree canopy***

The tree canopy, which is the percentage of ground that is covered by tree leaves during the growing season, is diminishing in St. Louis Park. This has been caused primarily by tree removals resulting from emerald ash borer (EAB) in ash trees, decline in mature oak trees and Dutch Elm disease in elm trees. Tree removal from urban development projects is also a contributing factor, although not to the same extent. Tree canopy coverage in the city was estimated at 33.6% in September of 2022, a decline from 38.1% estimated in 2015, although this decrease is not consistent across the community.

The history of industrialization and redlining in certain neighborhoods has led to an inequitable distribution of tree cover in St. Louis Park. According to the Growing Shade tool, St. Louis Park had an existing tree canopy coverage of 34.6% in 2021 with census block groups ranging from 12% to 54.1% canopy. Despite the city's existing programs and policies to address tree loss, canopy decline is expected to continue for the next two to five years as EAB populations peak in the city.

#### ***Long-term tree canopy goals***

St. Louis Park recognizes the importance of addressing canopy loss and enhancing the local tree canopy. In past conversations, city council directed staff to establish a long-term tree canopy percentage goal, with the understanding that in the short-to-mid-term the city should expect to see a reduction as EAB-infested trees die. This goal will guide proposed refinements to existing tree preservation strategies and ideas for future policies and programs.

On May 28, 2024, staff provided city council with a report establishing long-term tree canopy goals of 30% tree canopy coverage in the city by the end of 2035 and 35% tree canopy coverage by the end of 2045. These goals were developed using multiple indicators including the current tree canopy percentage, the maximum potential canopy percentage and findings from research of similar goals in adjacent communities. Staff also considered other dynamic and more unpredictable factors such as the number of remaining private property ash trees that will succumb to emerald ash borer, future developments and road projects, weather, tree removals from natural decline in mature trees and pressure from invasive pests.

#### ***Existing tree planting and preservation strategies***

##### Tree planting and preservation programs

St. Louis Park has several programs to support tree planting and preservation. The city supports tree planting on existing commercial and residential properties through multiple cost-share programs including the annual Tree Sale, full-service planting program, Shade SLP, Shade SLP+ and Depave SLP. The natural resources division manages public trees funded by the Park Improvement Fund and the tree replacement fees collected by the city. The city also supports tree health by providing free consultations to property owners to assess tree health, subsidies for fungicide injections to preserve elm and oak trees, and bulk rate discounts for emerald ash borer treatments. A new tree injection cost share program for treatment of Dutch elm disease and two-lined chestnut borer is also launching this spring.

### Tree planting and preservation policies

Additionally, the zoning and vegetation codes provide specific protections for existing trees on public property (including boulevard trees), commercial properties (including office, industrial, and apartment uses), and new subdivisions. Within the zoning code, the landscaping section sets restrictions for tree removal, standards for replacement, and general minimum landscaping planting requirements and standards that are based on either the dimensions of the parcel or scale of development. It does not apply to trees on lots with existing single-family or two-family dwellings.

The zoning code provisions for tree removal and replacement apply to *significant trees*, which the city defines as: “Any tree, with the exception of salix (willow), boxelder, Siberian elm and black locust, is considered to be significant under the landscaping section of the zoning ordinance if it is at least five caliper inches for deciduous trees and six caliper inches for conifers. Aspen, cottonwood, or silver maple are considered significant if they are at least 12 inches in diameter at 4.5 feet from the ground.”

Property owners may remove up to 20% of the total diameter inches of significant trees on the site without being required to replace them. Any removal over 20% requires replacement at a rate of 1.5 caliper inches replaced for every one diameter inch removed. Property owners have several options for replacement. They can replace on site, replace off-site in public spaces with city consent, or pay a fee-in-lieu of planting.

### ***Previous direction and discussion***

In 2023, city council directed staff to explore strategies to promote tree preservation in St. Louis Park with a focus on heritage trees. Heritage trees are mature trees that contribute greatly to the city’s tree canopy and provide magnified public and environmental health benefits compared to smaller trees.

Following this direction, staff researched best practices, reviewed policies with similar goals from neighboring communities and identified potential improvements to the existing tree preservation policy. In May 2024, staff presented the proposed policy amendments to the planning commission (PC) and environment and sustainability commission (ESC). Both the PC and ESC indicated support for the proposed amendments. Staff later brought this proposal to a city council study session on June 10, 2024, during which all council members in attendance indicated support for the proposed changes.

Additional resources will be required to effectively inspect and enforce existing tree protection codes and the additional code improvements outlined in this report. Staff requested one additional natural resources full-time equivalent (FTE) as part of their 2025 operating budget request. This FTE would be responsible for the fieldwork required for tree protection code enforcement and dedicate approximately 15 hours per week to these activities. If city council requests additional policy changes outside the scope of this report, staff will need to return later to discuss the resources required for those changes.

## Proposed improvements to existing tree preservation policy

The following section outlines proposed amendments to the existing tree preservation policy in the city’s zoning code. Staff believe these amendments will demonstrate the value of heritage trees to the city through a balance of penalties for removing and incentives for preserving trees.

### ***Heritage tree definition***

Staff recommend adding a heritage tree definition to recognize the importance of mature trees and promote preservation of these community assets. We reviewed heritage tree definitions from other cities and find the following definition appropriate for St. Louis Park.

A *heritage tree* is a healthy deciduous tree measuring 30 inches or greater in diameter at standard height (dsh) or a healthy coniferous tree measuring 25 inches or greater in dsh.

(Diameter at standard height, or dsh, is a common method used for measuring trees. It refers to a tree’s diameter measured at 4.5 feet (54 inches) above the ground.)

### ***Heritage tree replacement requirements***

As mentioned above, the zoning code allows property owners to remove 20% of the diameter inches of significant trees on a site without requiring replacement. It also requires replacement of significant trees at a rate of 1.5 caliper inches replaced for every one diameter inch removed. Staff recommend keeping this formula for significant trees.

For heritage trees, staff recommend requiring replacement of every diameter inch of heritage trees removed from commercial properties and any new subdivisions. Requiring replacement for any heritage tree removal would further emphasize the importance of heritage trees to the community. Staff research found that removal restrictions vary from city-to-city, but cities generally set a heritage tree removal allowance that is equal to or lower than that of significant trees, or other similarly defined trees.

*Table 1. Proposed tree replacement requirements.*

	<b>% tree removal allowed without replacement</b>	<b>Replacement rate</b>
<b>Significant tree</b>	20%	1.5
<b>Heritage tree</b>	0%	2.0

Staff recommend requiring a standard heritage tree replacement rate of two caliper inches replaced for every one diameter inch removed to disincentivize heritage tree removal.

### ***Heritage tree preservation credits***

Although existing trees factor into the tree replacement calculations, there is not an explicit credit for preserving trees on site. Adding an explicit credit may better communicate public interests and incentivize property owners to preserve heritage trees on a site. The property owner would benefit from reduced tree removal costs and replacement requirements, while the public would benefit from preserving mature trees that greatly contribute to the local tree canopy.

Staff recommend a heritage tree preservation credit that reduces the total inches of trees a property owner must replace. As proposed, property owners would receive a credit of one caliper inch for every one diameter inch of heritage trees preserved on the site, The credit would be limited to 50% of the required replacement total. The intent of providing a 1:1 credit is to further recognize the outstanding benefit of heritage trees and incentivize preservation by reducing tree replacement costs.

### **Next steps**

Following the public hearing and planning commission recommendation, staff will bring the proposed tree preservation ordinance to city council for a first reading on Monday, August 19, 2024. Staff anticipate the second reading of the ordinance to occur on Monday, September 9, 2024. Staff recommend the ordinance go into effect on January 1, 2025.

**Ordinance amending Chapter 36, Article I, Section 36-4. Definitions and Chapter 36, Article V, Section 36-364(j). Restrictions for tree removal; standards for replacement**

**The City of St. Louis Park does ordain:**

**Whereas**, the city has experienced a decline in tree canopy due to tree removals resulting from emerald ash borer in ash trees, decline in mature oak trees and Dutch Elm disease in elm trees, and

**Whereas**, the city has goals and policies to increase tree canopy to 30% by the end of 2035 and 35% by the end of 2045, and

**Whereas**, the planning commission conducted a public hearing on August 7, 2024 on the ordinance, and

**Whereas**, the city council has considered the advice and recommendation of the planning commission (case no. 24-15-ZA),

**Now, therefore be it resolved** that the following amendments shall be made to Chapter 34 of the city code pertaining to vegetation and Chapter 36 of the city code pertaining to zoning:

**Section 1.** Definitions. Chapter 36-4 of the St. Louis Park City Code is hereby amended to delete the struck-out language and to add the following underlined text.

*Diameter at ~~breast~~ standard height (DBH) (dsh)* means the diameter of a tree measured at a height of 4 1/2 feet from the ground level.

*Heritage tree means a healthy deciduous tree measuring 30 inches or greater in diameter at standard height (dsh) or a healthy coniferous tree measuring 25 inches or greater in dsh.*

*Significant tree* means any healthy tree, with the exception of salix (willow), ~~Box elder~~, Siberian elm and black locust, is considered to be significant under the landscaping section of the zoning ordinance if it is at least five ~~caliper~~ diameter inches for deciduous trees and six ~~caliper~~ diameter inches for conifers. Aspen, ~~box elder~~, cottonwood, or silver maple are considered significant if they are at least 12 inches in diameter at 4.5 feet from the ground.

**Section 2.** Restrictions for tree removal; standards for replacement. Chapter 36-364(j)(2) of the St. Louis Park City Code is hereby amended to delete the struck-out language and to add the following underlined text.

~~a. No significant tree shall be cut down, destroyed, or removed from any property unless it is authorized by a permit issued by the city in a manner provided by this section.~~

~~b. No land shall be altered which will result in the removal or destruction of any significant tree unless the destruction is authorized by a permit issued by the city. The application for such permit shall include the following:~~

~~1. The name, address, and phone number of the person applying for the permit.~~

~~2. The name and address of the property owner.~~

~~3. A tree inventory of the site certified by a registered land surveyor, landscape architect, or forester which identifies the size, species, condition, and locations~~



~~on the land of all existing significant trees on the property. In addition, this inventory shall identify all significant trees which will be cut down, removed, or lost due to grading or other damage. The tree inventory shall be verified by the city forester.~~

- ~~4. Where the tree removal involves land alteration, a grading plan which identifies the following:
    - ~~i. A minimum scale of one inch equals 50 feet.~~
    - ~~ii. All existing and proposed contours at two (2) foot intervals.~~
    - ~~iii. Location of all existing and proposed structures.~~
    - ~~iv. Any grade change or land alteration, whether temporary or permanent, of greater than one foot measured vertically, affecting 30 percent (as measured on a horizontal plane) or more of a tree's root zone.~~
    - ~~v. Utility construction which may result in the cutting of 30 percent or more of a tree's roots within the root zone.~~
    - ~~vi. Any areas where soil compaction is planned to a depth of six inches or more, or of 30 percent or more of the surface of the soil within a root zone.~~~~
  - ~~5. A plan for the protection of trees intended to be saved.~~
  - ~~6. A statement of the proposed use of the land including a description of the type of building or structure existing or proposed to be constructed on the site.~~
  - ~~7. The number, type and size of trees required to be replaced by this section.~~
  - ~~8. The proposed locations of the replacement trees.~~
- a. Allowable tree removal.
1. Up to twenty (20) percent of the diameter inches of significant trees on any parcel may be removed without replacement requirements. Replacement according to the tree replacement schedule is required when removal exceeds more than twenty (20) percent of the total significant tree diameter inches.
  2. Replacement according to the tree replacement schedule is required for removal of all heritage tree diameter inches.
  3. Diseased, dead, or structurally unsound trees are exempt from the provision of this section. The City Forester is responsible for determining whether a tree is diseased, dead or structurally unsound.
- b. Tree replacement schedule. Tree removals over the allowable tree removal limit on the parcel shall be replaced according to the following schedule:

1. Significant trees shall be replaced with new trees at a rate of one and one half (1.5) caliper inch replaced for every one (1) diameter inch removed.
  2. Heritage trees shall be replaced with new trees at a rate of two (2) caliper inches replaced for every one (1) diameter inch removed.
- c. Heritage tree preservation credits.
1. A credit may be applied to the required tree replacement if a healthy, heritage tree is preserved on a site. The tree must be approved by the city as a quality tree worth saving. The credit will be applied at a rate of one (1) caliper inch for every one (1) heritage tree diameter inch preserved, up to fifty percent (50%) of the required replacement. If a heritage tree for which credit is provided does not survive one year after construction, the developer will be required to pay the fee-in-lieu.
- d. Approval of a permit for the removal of any significant or heritage tree or approval of a permit for land alteration which results in tree destruction shall be subject to and conditioned upon the owner or developer replacing the loss or reasonably anticipated loss of all live significant and heritage trees. The amount of trees to be provided in replacement shall be determined by the following formula:
1. Significant trees  
$$((A/B)-0.20) \times \underline{1.5} \times A = \underline{D} \ C$$

A = Total diameter inches of significant trees lost as a result of land alteration or removal.

B = Total diameter inches of significant trees situated on the land.

~~C = Tree replacement constant (1.5).~~

~~D~~ C = Replacement trees (number of caliper inches).
  2. Heritage trees  
$$(A \times 2) - (B - A) = C$$

A = Total diameter inches of heritage trees lost as a result of land alteration or removal.

B = Total diameter inches of heritage trees situated on the land.

C = Replacement trees (number of caliper inches)
- g. Protected tree replacement fee. If a significant or heritage tree that was identified for preservation and received replacement credit or zoning ordinance consideration is removed or damaged during construction, the developer will be required to pay to the city a cash mitigation. The fee is based on the diameter inches of the tree(s) damaged or removed. The fee per diameter inch is set forth in the city's fee schedule as the cash in lieu of replacement trees fee.

**Section 3.** This ordinance shall take effect on January 1, 2025.

First reading	August 19, 2024
Second reading	September 9, 2024
Date of publication	September 18, 2024
Date ordinance takes effect	January 1, 2025

Reviewed for administration:

Adopted by the city council \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kim Keller, city manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nadia Mohamed, mayor

Attest:

Approved as to form and execution:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Melissa Kennedy, city clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Soren Mattick, city attorney

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## **Planning commission**

### **Study Session**

Members present: Jim Beneke, Mia Divecha, Matt Eckholm, Katie Merten, Tom Weber, Jan Youngquist

Members absent: none

Staff present: Sean Walther, Laura Chamberlain, Katelyn Champoux and Michael Bahe

Ms. Champoux and Mr. Bahe introduced themselves and their roles on city staff and planning.

Mr. Walther stated the application process for planning commissioner has now ended and 9 applications were received. He noted that the decision should be made in around one month. He added that several commissioners are serving beyond the original term and under the bylaws, they can continue to do so until they are reappointed, or another person is appointed. He noted that city staff and the city council greatly appreciate the continued service of all the planning commissioners and the commission's patience while the city studies the boards and commissions program, recruitment and selection processes. The city values its volunteer board members and commissioners and the thoughtful consideration and recommendations they provide to the city.

#### **1. Tree preservation ordinance**

Ms. Champoux and Mr. Bahe presented the staff report and spoke about the proposed amendments to the city's tree preservation ordinance.

Chair Divecha asked when someone pays the tree replacement fee, where does that money go. Mr. Walther stated it goes into a fund for the city's tree planting programs for public trees on public land.

Commissioner Weber noted he has a large tree in his backyard and asked if it were to be struck by lightning, would the city replace it. Mr. Bahe stated no because it is on private property. Mr. Walther stated if it is a significant or heritage tree, the ordinance requires the tree be healthy to be subject to the code. He added an exception would be for commercial or multi-family residential properties with approved landscape plans. They would just need to replant one tree in place of the tree removed in that situation.

Chair Divecha asked if this ordinance covers only commercial properties. Mr. Bahe stated commercial and multifamily and new subdivisions are covered.

Commissioner Merten asked about what other cities do for tree ordinances. Ms. Champoux stated it is mixed as to what other cities do.

Mr. Walther stated after this discussion, the findings will be brought to city council for further discussion before the city starts the formal public hearing process.

Commissioner Youngquist asked how the proposed ordinance will define commercial properties. Mr. Walther stated we are using the term broadly in this conversation, meaning commercial of all types, retail, office, industrial, and multifamily residential.

Commissioner Youngquist asked if there has been any consideration on how this might affect city goals such as affordable housing and noted the costs of developing affordable housing and tree requirements. Mr. Walther stated staff is aware a balance will need to be struck but added they have not quantified these implications. He added in part the impact on a neighborhood is similar whether it is market rate or affordable development, and we would want to see trees preserved and/or replaced.

Mr. Bahe added many tree programming projects and increased city incentives are happening in traditionally lower income areas of the city and restoring the tree canopy in those areas.

Commissioner Weber asked where credits go for heritage tree preservation. Ms. Champoux said it would happen when you have a development contract with the city. Mr. Walther stated some trees may be removed for a particular development, but when heritage trees are preserved, the credit would reduce the replacement requirements for the trees removed and potentially lowering the fees that need to be paid to the city when there is a shortfall of new plantings to cover the replacement requirement.

Commissioner Youngquist asked how many heritage trees there are and where they are in St. Louis Park. Mr. Bahe stated on public property staff knows where they are, but not on private property.

Mr. Walther commented that staff has really emphasized preserving trees in new development applications near environmentally sensitive areas, such as next to a creek or wetland area, at the edges of lots where they provide screening and are generally out of the way of new buildings, and when very large and more remarkable mature trees exist. He added the heritage tree definition and canopy goals are new tools to advocate for tree preservation.

Commissioner Weber asked how much of an effect there is on the tree canopy with ash tree removals and replacements. Mr. Bahe stated eventually that gap will be filled again but it might take some years for the canopy to be replaced.

Commissioner Weber asked if there may be an incentive program for residents to remove a tree where they might receive assistance from the city for replacement of the removed tree if they promise to replace it within a certain amount of time.

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Commissioner Merten added an education program for residents related to tree removal and replacement may be helpful.

Mr. Bahe stated the city would not have the funding for a program like that, and it might be counter to our goals to assist residents unless it were an epidemic. He added city efforts are for tree preservation.

Commissioner Merten asked if there is an education program for residents on removal of diseased ash trees. Mr. Bahe stated yes and noted the city received a grant from the DNR for removal and replanting and subsidies for residents for this.

Commissioner Beneke asked about replanting. Mr. Bahe stated if someone removes a 30-inch diameter tree, they need to replant 30 inches of new trees, or approximately 10-15 new 2-inch to 2.5-inch trees for each large tree removed.

Commissioner Weber noted the Three Rivers trail plan and preferred route on Dakota Avenue. He added the city council should add language to the Three Rivers plan that says you must replace the no tree loss option as a parameter of municipal consent, to save trees over parking. Mr. Walther stated this may come down to a legal question and there may be a limit on conditions, but noted there are negotiations that can happen. He added the city's strategic priorities cover trees and environment, as well as the Living Streets Policy, so things are in place already along with the tree preservation ordinance.

Chair Divecha asked about the 20% penalty and the credits and asked why there was not just a set penalty for removing a heritage tree. Ms. Champoux stated they worked to find a balance hoping by offering incentives it will be more appealing to folks to preserve heritage trees. Mr. Walther added the 20% is likely a practical allowance to give some flexibility without penalty.

Chair Divecha asked how developers typically react to the tree preservation ordinance and has it ever been a barrier or a non-issue. Mr. Walther stated he is not aware of the penalty causing a developer to walk away from a project.

Commissioner Weber asked what happens if a replacement tree dies, and if the owner is responsible for replacement again. Mr. Walther stated there is a 1-year warranty period and inspection and a replacement tree would need to be planted while under warranty. He also noted that while it is not monitored regularly but staff does review approved landscaping plans when new requests are submitted and if the landscaping has not been maintained, the city can require it to be back brought back into compliance.

Mr. Walther stated this will go to city council now for discussion and decisions along with budget considerations.

## **2. Arrive & Thrive update**

Ms. Chamberlain presented the report.

Commissioner Beneke asked if there are any issues with ground contamination. Ms. Chamberlain stated there is not as much ground contamination in this area, but because it is historically an industrial area with the railroad there, it is an area of concern, especially near Bass Lake and flooding potential.

Chair Divecha asked how the smaller building size is enforced. Mr. Chamberlain stated that will be the next step they look at with maximum building widths and guidelines with a zoning district or overlay.

Commissioner Youngquist asked about the commercial space that is butted against a trail and also going through a residential area, noting it does not seem it would be successful with only access coming from the west. Ms. Chamberlain stated she will ask the consultant on that, and added the connection would be only for the neighborhood and residential uses.

Chair Divecha asked about the pedestrian connections along Beltline Boulevard and asked if the apartments there are occupied now. She noted there is a crosswalk, but not a stop and asked if that is being looked at. Ms. Chamberlain stated that is not being looked at right now, but stated Beltline Boulevard width with the redesign and construction has gone from 4 to 3 lane, and the crossing location is intentional, while there were limits on where to put traffic lights. She stated there may be mitigations to look at now that the apartments are now occupied there.

Commissioner Eckholm stated he prefers the 15-18 story building in the Burlington location.

Commissioner Weber asked what the future use planned in this location. Ms. Weber stated the future use there is mostly office commercial space but noted in the Phase 2 there was a lot of feedback from residents on how they love the Micro Center store. She noted the city would like to help them find an alternate location as they are a great draw.

Commissioner Youngquist asked about a bike ped connection over Hwy. 100. Ms. Chamberlain stated that is not in the plan as this time, but staff is hoping this plan can act as a catalyst for more conversations on this.

Commissioner Eckholm asked if there is any way to get a bridge to better connect Wooddale and the Walker Lake area better, such as a bridge extended and turfed to help it feel more like a street to pedestrians with trees. Ms. Chamberlain stated this is being looked at in the long term.

Commissioner Youngquist asked if the maroon buildings south of the station are approved but have not been constructed. Ms. Chamberlain stated no, they are similar, but this is more of a general development being shown. She noted EDA still controls the Nash Finch site and a new developer is being researched.

Commissioner Youngquist asked since this development will be starting over, why the highest density is not next to the station. Commissioner Eckholm agreed. Ms. Chamberlain stated that is great feedback.

Commissioner Eckholm added the Johnny Pops site could also be used. Ms. Chamberlain stated staff is looking at that as well, for higher density and mixed-use development which works well in this area.

Commissioner Eckholm asked about Methodist Hospital expansion in the future. Ms. Chamberlain stated Methodist has realized they will not be able to expand in this area due to the railroad spur there.

Commissioner Youngquist asked if the large white box north of Methodist is the former Sam's club. Ms. Chamberlain stated yes.

Commissioner Youngquist asked about redevelopment of the parking lot there and if the building was involved in that as well. Ms. Chamberlain stated the city did a study in 2018, and there was a moratorium on development there. She stated the direction for that site was general commercial and then it was reassessed, and the current parking could be used for mixed use and structured parking. She noted that Loffler Corporation moved into the space, invested a lot, and brought 500 employees to the area, right next to the light rail station. She stated as of now, the entire site will not be shown for redevelopment with only the southern portion shown for redevelopment.

Commissioner Eckholm added this area -- because of soil issues -- has a cap of no more than 6 stories that can be built on that site, as well as how much parking can be there. Ms. Chamberlain stated this area is also very hard to redevelop because of soil conditions.

Commissioner Weber stated he is hopeful about the proposals for Excelsior Boulevard and if half of this can be completed, that is a win for the community. Ms. Chamberlain agreed and added it is just a question of when this can happen within the 20-year plan.

Ms. Chamberlain stated there will be an open house related to Arrive & Thrive on May 14 that commissioners are invited to attend and an online survey to launch this round of the community engagement process.

### **3. Adjournment – 8:00 p.m.**

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Sean Walther, liaison

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Mia Divecha, chair member



## 1 Discussion of community engagement for zoning code update, phase 1

**Recommended Action:** No action is requested at this time. Staff will present the results of the community engagement that occurred for the proposed new residential zoning districts. The planning commission is asked to provide feedback to staff on the comments received from the community engagement process and the proposed amendments.

**Background:** During June and July, staff and project consultants facilitated community engagement opportunities that included the following:

- Communication of the public input opportunities was sent to all households via information in the Park Perspective city newsletter that is mailed to every address, as well as posts placed on social media platforms and information boards displayed at Ecotacular as part of Parktacular (with a QR code for people to link to the online project page and input opportunities).
- Emails sent to those that signed up for updates.
- Seven in-person open houses at multiple locations and times of the day and days of the week.
- Information boards displayed at Ecotacular, which included a QR code for people to link to the online project page and input opportunities. The table at this event was staffed by the planning and zoning division.
- Virtual meeting introducing the proposed residential zoning updates as well as background zoning/housing information; a recording of the presentation portion of the meeting was available afterward on the online project page.
- An online interactive proposed zoning map that allows people to leave their comments and respond to others' comments about specific locations on the proposed zoning map.
- Short online surveys allowing people to provide their input related to each of the four proposed districts and additional standards for some of the housing types.

**Overview of community engagement and input:** The attached Community Engagement Summary describes the various community engagement activities, level of involvement, comments received and key takeaways. The following is a breakdown of how people responded:

- Online project information accessed by 400+ people
- Online survey – 61 responses
- Online proposed zoning map – 32 comments
- In-person open houses – 29 attendees
- Virtual meeting – 5 attendees

Additionally, the city made several posts to our various social media platforms. The table below lists the dates posts were made on the platforms, the likes, shares, and number of comments received. The comments are attached at the end of the report.

Facebook-Date	Comments	Shares
6/6/2024	19	0
6/21/2024	3	0
7/9/2024	45	5
7/27/2024	6	11
Instagram-Date	Comments	
6/6/2024	10	
6/21/2024	0	
7/9/2024	2	
7/27/2024	3	
LinkedIn-Date	Comments	Reposts
6/6/2024	0	0
6/21/2024	0	1
7/9/2024	0	0
Nextdoor-Date	Comments	
6/13/2024	10	
6/21/2024	0	

In addition to the comments provided to the social media posts, comments were also submitted on the zoning code update story map available on the city website. Story map provided an interactive map and the ability to leave comments directly onto the proposed zoning map. The surveys provided the ability to comment specifically about each zoning district, and the online zoning map provided the ability to comment on specific areas of the city. A variety of comments were received that center around the following:

- Concern was expressed about adding additional housing types to the existing single-family only zoning districts.
- Support was expressed about adding additional housing types to the existing single-family only zoning districts.
- Support was expressed for additional housing types along transportation corridors.
- Some areas were encouraged to be zoned for N-2 instead of N-1. (See zoning map for the location of these comments.)

The survey included an opportunity to rate on a scale of 1-5 (1 being the lowest) their level of support for the question asked. The average level of support on the scale for each proposed district is as follows:

- N-1: 2.9
- N-2: 4.2
- N-3: 4.3
- N-4: 3.5

**Next steps:** The comment period ended on July 31, 2024. Staff are in the process of reviewing the comments with the intent of looking for trends or unique comments that we may want to consider for revisions to the draft ordinance. Staff are interested in receiving similar comments from the planning commission in preparation of our report to the city council.

The consultants and staff will present the community engagement summary, the planning commission's recommendation, and the complete draft amendments to the city council on September 9, 2024. Staff will ask the city council for direction to proceed with having the planning commission conduct the public hearing, then upon completion of the public hearing, bringing the ordinance to the council for adoption.

**Attachments:**

- Community Engagement Summary
- Online Interactive Proposed Zoning Map showing Place-Specific Comments
- Copy of survey made available for each neighborhood district (same survey questions for each district)
- Proposed dimensional standards for the proposed N-1 through N-4 zoning districts
- Social media posts and comments

**Prepared by:** Jeff Miller, HKGi

**Reviewed by:** Gary Morrison, zoning administrator

Sean Walther, planning manager/deputy community development director

# Community Engagement Summary

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## ST. LOUIS PARK ZONING CODE UPDATE, PHASE 1

This community engagement summary covers the activities that occurred in June and July 2024 including in-person public open houses, a virtual public meeting, an online presentation of the proposed residential zoning updates and background zoning/housing information, and online input options for the proposed new residential districts and the proposed zoning map. Communication of the proposed zoning updates and the opportunities for information and providing input included information in the Park Perspective city newsletter that is mailed to every address, posts on social media platforms, and information boards displayed at city hall and the rec center (with a QR code for people to link to the online project page and input opportunities).

### In-Person Open Houses

The in-person open houses were held at multiple locations and times of the day.

Events: June 13, 14, 15, 18, 24 and 27

Total Attendance: 26

Key Takeaways:

- Concerns about decreased property values and generally decreased quality of life for current homeowners
- Congestion and parking issues will increase
- Green space in the City will be reduced, both on individual lots (impervious surface percentages) and existing undeveloped areas/ greenspaces being developed
- Interest in increased commercial development
- Changing character of neighborhoods by taking away single family only neighborhoods

### Virtual Meeting

The virtual meeting was also recorded and available afterward on the online project page.

Events: June 12

Total Attendance: 5

Key Takeaways:

- Participants asked questions rather than providing input, including the following
  - What is driving the zoning changes that enable the expansion of housing?



- What are the housing types allowed in the new districts?
- Has there been an assessment of property valuation impacts?
- Will reduced lot size minimums result in potential lot splits?
- Are some of the new housing types geared toward subsidized housing?

## Online presentation of the proposed residential zoning updates

The ESRI StoryMap tool was used to create a hub for online community engagement. Two StoryMap presentations were created to complement each other. The first presentation explained the proposed updates to the zoning code and zoning map along with opportunities to share feedback, both through an online interactive proposed zoning map that allows people to leave their comments and respond to others' comments about specific locations on the proposed zoning map, as well as short surveys allowing people to provide their input related to the four proposed new residential districts. The second presentation provided background on the process including previous mapping, links to project-related meetings, and descriptions of the additional housing types being considered for inclusion in the residential districts. This information resource was launched in May 2024.

Unique Visitors: 457

## Online Interactive Proposed Zoning Map

Available both as an input tool embedded within the StoryMap, and as a separate link, Social Pinpoint is an interactive mapping input tool that allows participants to provide comments directly on a map and view, comment, and like/dislike comments left by others. Participants are encouraged to use color-coded markers to indicate what type of comment they are leaving ("I have a concern" or "I like this") and to choose a specific spot on the map to leave the comment. This input option was launched in May 2024 and was open through the end of July 2024.

Unique Visitors: 78

Unique Stakeholders (number of people responding with like, dislike, or other comments):  
21

Number of Comments: 48

Key Takeaways:

- Increase the range of housing options near transit, community services, businesses, and public spaces
- Additional places appropriate for the new N-2 and N-3 districts were identified on the map
- Additional places appropriate for mixed-use development identified, particularly Minnetonka Boulevard
- Increasing housing options should include increasing more affordable homeownership opportunities



- Consideration of the potential environmental impacts of increasing density, e.g. impervious surfaces, yard setbacks, and tree cover

Specific comments are shown in the following table and on the attached map:

Comment	Up Votes	Down Votes
It seems like the whole northern part of Elmwood neighborhood is better suited for N-2 designation. The proximity of the LRT station and already larger housing buildings would argue for more density options.	8	2
Regarding all areas: We should be doing everything we can to make home OWNERSHIP more affordable. Home ownership builds wealth according to tons of sources. If these units are not owned by those who live there, then some landlord somewhere is building wealth, but not the renters. Our goal should be to make OWNERSHIP affordable, not enrich landlords or leasing companies.	8	2
Along Cedar Lake Road (between Louisiana & Zarthan) would be better as N-2). Some of these lots would be great spots for future four-plexes or low-rise apartment buildings.	7	1
Like the opportunity for greater density along Louisiana.	7	1
We do not need any additional multi-family housing in St. Louis Park. We can hardly sustain the residents who already live here, both in existing multi-family/apartment homes and single-family homes. There isn't enough infrastructure to support more people living here. I understand that more housing makes all housing more affordable, and I am in support of that. But SLP simply doesn't have the space.	7	9
I would like to know more about what impact these changes would have on things like hardcover limits and tree cover. Will this affect setbacks? Can the desired increase in densities be achieved without increasing the footprint of land degradation? What type of natural resource protections will be enforced during redevelopment? What role does the Natural Resources staff have in zoning proposals?	6	0
I like n3 zones Minnetonka blvd in eastern SLP is a great location for these.	6	0
These blocks adjacent to Wooddale/Dakota seem like better candidates for N-2. There are already multifamily buildings in some of these lots.	6	1
I'd like to see more land in the city allow greater density and mixed uses. Higher density makes ownership more affordable and is a more sustainable method of creating more walkable, livable neighborhoods. I'm disappointed to see most of the higher density areas relegated to areas around loud, noxious highways and away from green spaces.	5	2
I think these zoning districts are similar to what is already built, and allows for greater diversity in housing options. I think this new zoning code will be amazing for the city. I would love to live in a courtyard cottage someday!	4	1



Comment	Up Votes	Down Votes
I like the increase in zoning type along Minnetonka Blvd, but would like to understand why there isn't a mixed use option? This busy corridor could benefit from more local and small businesses. Good transit connections and being close to neighborhood homes would allow for people to walk and reduce driving.	4	0
Please consider increasing the number of bedrooms that may be rented in the N-2 District to six.	3	3
Texas Ave is where one of the few remaining Metro Transit routes run. What's the logic behind limiting what lots are rezoned alongside the 17 route?	3	0
This is a large empty space, more density (N3+) with mixed use would be a benefit to the neighborhood.	3	0
I am strongly opposed to allowing two-or three-unit buildings on blocks in neighborhoods that have long been dedicated to detached housing except for the perimeter of the neighborhood along roads such as Excelsior Boulevard or France Avenue. I will submit a more detailed comment separately.	2	4
For those that are concerned about these changes to R-1 & R-2 neighborhoods, I encourage you to read "Escaping the Housing Trap" by Charles Marohn (a fellow Minnesotan based in Brainerd). What SLP is proposing is exactly what we need to start to solve our housing crisis without so much reliance on government housing/subsidies. I would like to see the city offer low interest loans for CURRENT homeowners to convert garage spaces or add additional dwelling units.	2	0
I love the plan for this intersection, leaves lots of flexibility for future changes!	2	0
I appreciate the upzone city wide that will allow for more variation in housing types. As a close suburb to the city it is crucial that we allow denser housing and provide opportunities to live in a desirable area for those that can't afford a home. Restricting zones to single family is the primary cause of the housing crisis.	1	0
Concern about lining Mtka Blvd with multi family housing. It's an extremely busy road with narrow, unsafe side walks. Adding lots of people within existing infrastructure adds concerns for pedestrian safety, overloads existing roadways (merge concerns), makes bike lanes even more dangerous), and will make the neighborhoods feel less welcoming with larger buildings blocking the view to parks and quaint neighborhoods.	1	0
This intersection is a prime expansion opportunity for local businesses, providing a more walking/biking-friendly neighborhood, therefore creating more connection within the community	1	0
This intersection should be allowed to grow with local businesses, creating a more walkable neighborhood and build community around common areas	1	0



Comment	Up Votes	Down Votes
Any changes in this unique corner of St Louis Park would be disastrous as this neighborhood SFH sparse development style preserves the top housing stock and desirability/ reputation of St Louis Park being elevated. No further density makes sense north of Minnetonka Blvd adjacent to Minneapolis. Completely different story elsewhere in St Louis Park, however. East St Louis Park should be left alone in general.	1	1
This area, with its close proximity to West End, could be a good candidate for N2 housing!	1	0
A diversity of housing options will make it easier for residents to find affordable homes that meet their needs. Denser development along transit thoroughfares like Minnetonka Blvd gives opportunity for increased bus ridership and will make investments like separated bike lanes even more impactful.	0	0
Other major thoroughfares like Minnetonka Blvd and Louisiana Ave include upzoning, but the city is essentially ignoring the Excelsior Blvd corridor which is a real loss. It's the perfect example of TOD and walkable access to major services. The homes immediately adjacent to commercial zoning should be N2 to allow duplexes so there's some increased density while still maintaining the general character of the neighborhood (e.g., not allowing apartments).	0	0
This area is walkable to a new LRT station. N2 opportunity while keeping affordable homeownership access with singlefamily N1.	0	0
N2 opportunity - walkable to major services and there are bus stops just down the street. This corridor is great example of the N2 description but not being included.	0	0
Great example of co-locating commercial and density along major corridors.	0	0
This neighborhood is walkable to major services like grocery and located along a transit route. N2 opportunity along W 36th street.	0	0
Happy to see this stay business use - This area is full of small businesses leveraging light industrial space for alternative uses, which is what we want to see. Keep this area for business use to avoid business displacement.	0	0
Good example of concentrated density near major services and public space.	0	0
No services (other than MS) - good for SF homes.	0	0
Park and ride nearby - good for increased housing opportunities.	0	0
Large parcel on this corner is a good mixed use opportunity to increase commercial uses at this intersection while also creating housing opportunities.	0	0





Comment	Up Votes	Down Votes
This area has a lot of existing homeownership that is affordable. Maintaining those homeownership opportunities are important.	0	0
Parcel immediately adjacent to existing N2 could be good N2 options like this street here.	0	0
Only allowing development directly on thoroughfares such as France A S is imperative to preserve this area's desirability. Find other places to develop more density rather than introduce it.	0	0
Prime N2 opportunity as it's surrounded by dense development and SFH restricts investment and affordability. Lots of amenities immediately surrounding both north and south. The zoning should reflect general blends rather than random islands of SFH	0	0
Incentivize more apartments in this area. Lots of empty parking lots that could be housing near the park and school. Infill is a huge miss.	0	0
N2 long ago could have helped more people afford to live here. The zoning changes in West St. Louis Park almost seem too mild for what's needed. The business owners could use more local patrons throughout 55426.	0	0
Elmwood will have major developments on 3 of four corners of the neighborhood. I have concern on density and traffic. When the city approved the affordable housing project at Aldersgate with almost zero regard to the residents of Elmwood, they said the Jensen press wasn't happening and the United methodist church development was paused. Well two of those have happened so I would hope city would consider this before adding another.	0	0
Parks are important, keep an many as possible!	0	0
"The legend colors make the map difficult to navigate. Never use shades of the same color.	0	0
The only good choice was green for POS."	0	0
Families move to SLP for the proximity to the city and for the amazing single family communities here. SLP has been a staple in the affordable single family homes while also being close to the city...keep it up! Thank you all	0	0
"As a father and avid cyclist, you cannot consider anything more (that will add cars or people) on Minnetonka until you fix the road and sidewalks...it cannot handle any more traffic.	0	0

## New Residential Districts Surveys



Another tool for collecting feedback was surveys for each new residential district as well as for the additional standards proposed for some housing types. These surveys were embedded within the StoryMap after each new district section and the additional standards section). Respondents were able to navigate to a separate webpage or respond to the survey within the StoryMap allowing them to reference the relevant information as they completed the survey.

Based on unique IP addresses there were 41 unique survey respondents overall. The vast majority of respondents indicated on the surveys that they are white, live in single-unit detached housing, and own their homes. Most respondents were also male and lived with 1 to 2 other people. This input option was launched in May 2024 and was open through the end of July 2024.

### **N-1 District Survey**

The average level of support for the N-1 district was 2.8 (on a scale with 1 being the lowest level and 5 being the highest level of support). This district received the most input by far.

Key Takeaways:

- Comments about lots being too small and being combined to build multi-unit housing
- Concern about the potential for property devaluation due to rentals and multi-unit housing
- Statements that renters do not value their homes or cause problems
- Enthusiasm for the increased housing diversity that the district would allow
- Interest in continuing to have a district that only allows single-unit dwellings
- Support for smaller lot sizes
- Support for larger lots due to concerns about potential lot splits
- Support for reduced setbacks and increased lot coverage while also concern about increased lot coverage
- Issues with increased density
- Question about the effect on school boundaries

Total Responses: 35

### **N-2 District Survey**

The average level of support for the N-2 district was 3.9 (on a scale with 1 being the lowest level and 5 being the highest level of support).

Key Takeaways:

- Enthusiasm for supporting missing middle housing options
- Additional locations for this district currently proposed to be zoned N-1 could be considered



- Interest in allowing higher building heights in some locations

Total Responses: 7

### **N-3 District Survey**

The average level of support for the N-3 district was 4.3 (on a scale with 1 being the lowest level and 5 being the highest level of support). This district had the highest average level of support overall.

Key Takeaways:

- Appreciate the gradual density ramp-up
- Slight concern about the impacts of this district on the tree canopy
- Locations seem appropriate for the scale of this district

Total Responses: 6

### **N-4 District Survey**

The average level of support for the N-4 district was 3.5 (on a scale with 1 being the lowest level and 5 being the highest level of support).

Key Takeaways:

- Question of if midrise housing should only be allowed in the N-3 district to keep the limited amount of N-4 areas more dense
- Interest in allowing mixed-use within large-scale apartments

Total Responses: 6

### **Additional Standards**

The average level of support for the additional standards (on a scale with 1 being the lowest level and 5 being the highest level of support) for some housing types varied by housing type.

- Single-unit, two-unit (duplex), and attached two-unit (twinhome) dwelling: 3.9
- Courtyard cottages/bungalows: 4.2
- Three- or four-unit dwelling: 3.7
- Townhouse building: 3.3
- Low-rise apartment building: 3.4
- Mid- or high-rise apartment building: 3.5

Key Takeaways:

- Want to use these changes to create new ownership options other than single-unit dwellings
- Concern about absentee landlords

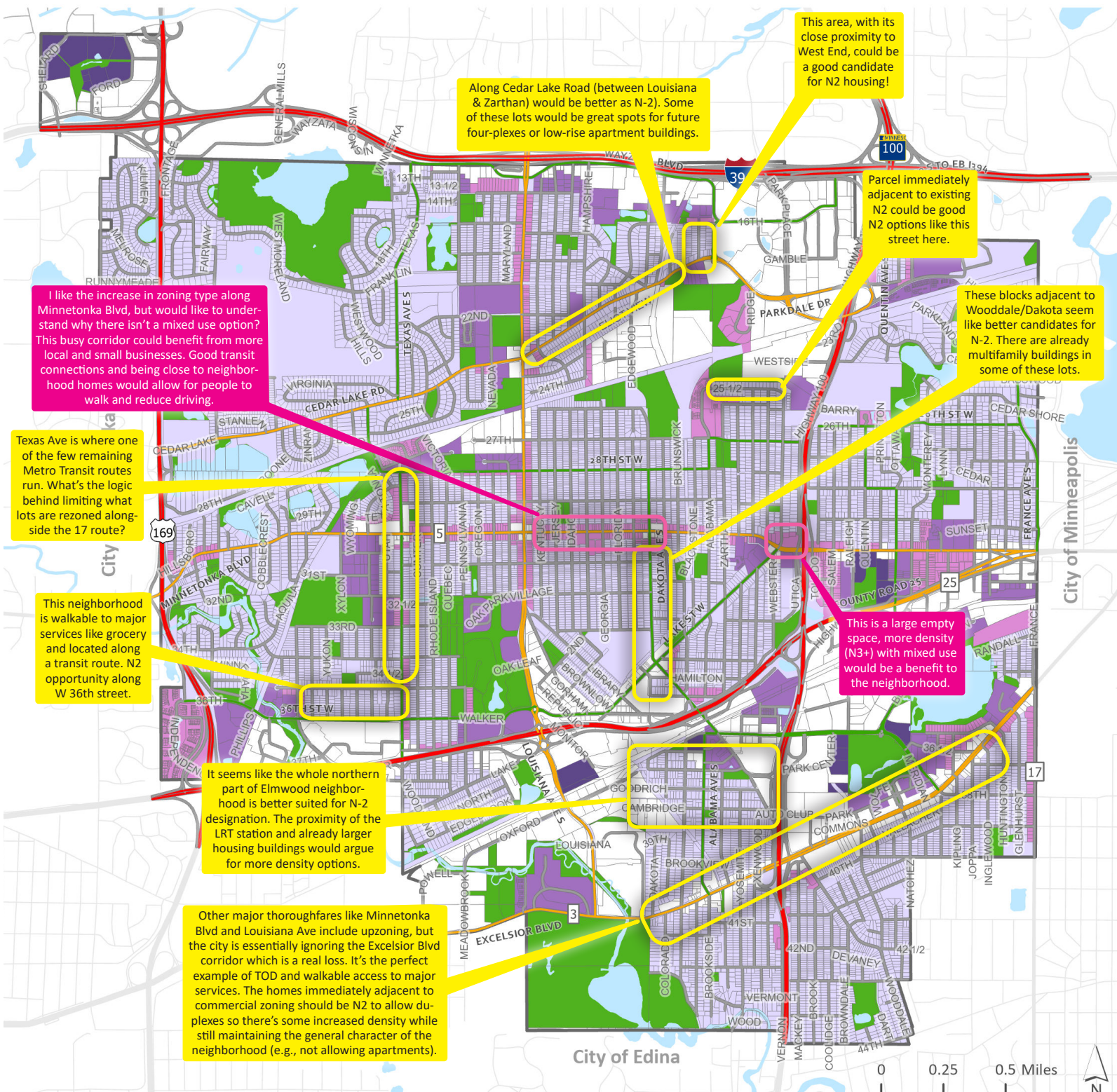


- Consideration of parking and height impacts with additional housing
- Interest in additional aesthetic requirements for apartments

Total Responses: 10

# Proposed Residential Zoning Districts Map

## Location Specific Social Pinpoint Comments



<b>Street Type</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-modal Street</li> <li>Neighborhood Street</li> <li>Transit-Priority Street</li> <li>Vehicular Street</li> <li>For N-2 Consideration</li> <li>For N-3/ Mixed Use Consideration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-Residential Zoning Districts</li> <li>POS Park and Open Space</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N-1 Neighborhood</li> <li>N-2 Neighborhood</li> <li>N-3 Neighborhood</li> <li>N-4 Neighborhood</li> </ul>	<b>Proposed Residential Districts</b>

# Share your thoughts on the proposed Neighborhood Districts

The City of St. Louis Park is updating its zoning code. In 2022, the city evaluated its zoning code and identified barriers that are preventing the city from achieving its Comprehensive Plan housing goals and strategic priorities. Your feedback is very valuable as the city updates its zoning code to support expanded housing options.

**Please circle the proposed district you wish to comment on** (If you would like to comment on more than one neighborhood district, please complete separate surveys):

**N-1**

**N-2**

**N-3**

**N-4**

1. **On a scale of 1 (not supportive) to 5 (very supportive), how supportive are you overall of the proposed Neighborhood District?** (Circle one)

**1**  
**Not Supportive**

**2**

**3**

**4**

**5**  
**Very Supportive**

**What do you think about the proposed standards for the Neighborhood District?** For each standard, please check a response and leave a comment elaborating on your response.

2. Mix of housing types allowed

- Like
- Have Concerns
- No Opinion

Please describe what you like or have concerns about

3. Lot area and width minimums

- Like
- Have Concerns
- No Opinion

Please describe what you like or have concerns about

4. Building setback minimums (front, side, rear, perimeter, distance between buildings, etc.)

- Like
- Have Concerns
- No Opinion

Please describe what you like or have concerns about

5. Building height maximum

- Like
- Have Concerns
- No Opinion

Please describe what you like or have concerns about

6. Lot coverage (percent of lot covered by buildings and impervious surfaces) maximum

- Like
- Have Concerns
- No Opinion

Please describe what you like or have concerns about

7. **Do you have any additional comments or ideas about the proposed Neighborhood District you would like to share?**

## Demographic Questions

Though these questions are optional, collecting this information helps us understand if we are reaching a representative sample of the City's overall population. All information provided is anonymous.

8. What is your race or ethnicity? (Check all that apply)

- White
- Hispanic or Latino
- African American or Black
- Asian
- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

9. What is your gender? (Check one)

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Prefer to self-describe: \_\_\_\_\_

10. What is your age range? (Check one)

- 17 and under
- 18 – 34
- 35 – 49
- 50 – 64
- 65 and over

11. What type of home do you live in? (Check one)

- Single-Unit Detached House
- Two-Unit Dwelling (Duplex/Twinhome)
- Three- and Four-Unit Dwelling
- Detached Courtyard Cottage/Bungalow
- Townhouse/ Row House
- Apartment/Condo
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

12. Do you own or rent your home? (Check one)

- Own
- Rent
- Unhoused

13. What is your household size? (How many people live in your home, including yourself?) (Check one)


- 1 individual
- 2-3 individuals
- 4-6 individuals
- More than 6 individuals







The N-1 Neighborhood District features a variety of house scale building options, from single-unit homes to three-unit buildings, all designed to look like traditional houses.









Allowed Housing Types		
House Scale	N-1	
	- Single-unit dwelling	✓
	- Courtyard cottages/bungalows, detached	✓
	- Two-unit dwelling (duplex)	✓
	- Attached two-unit dwelling (twinhome)	✓
	- Three-unit dwelling	✓

Site and Building Standards	Housing Type	
	Single-unit small dwelling [only lots with alleys] Single-unit dwelling Two-unit dwelling (duplex) Attached two-unit dwelling (twinhomes) Three-unit dwelling	Detached courtyard cottages / bungalows
Building height maximum (ft)	30	
Setbacks		
Front yard setback minimum (ft)	25	
Side corner yard setback minimum (ft)	15	
Side interior yard setback minimum (ft) for attached garage or lot with alley	5	*
Side interior yard setback minimum (ft) for detached garage on lot without alley	9ft for one side yard and 5ft for the other side yard; if there is an attached garage then 5ft for both side yards	
Rear yard setback minimum (ft)	25	*
Distance between buildings minimum (ft)	*	10
Perimeter setback minimum (ft)	*	10
Lot Coverage		
Principal building coverage maximum	35%	
Impervious surface coverage maximum	60%	

Lot Size Standards	Housing Type					
	Single-unit small dwelling [only lots with alleys]	Single-unit dwelling	Two-unit dwelling (duplex)	Attached two-unit dwelling (twinhomes)	Three-unit dwelling	Detached courtyard cottages / bungalows
Lot with Alley Access						
Lot width minimum (ft)	30	40	70	60	100	
Lot area minimum (sq ft)	3,600	4,800	8,800	7,800	13,000	
Lot without Alley Access						
Lot width minimum (ft)	*	50	90	70	110	
Lot area minimum (sq ft)	*	6,000	11,200	9,100	14,300	

\* = Not applicable

The N-2 Neighborhood District offers a range of low-rise housing, from single-unit homes to low-rise apartment buildings.



Allowed Housing Types		
House Scale		N-2
	- Single-unit dwelling	✓
	- Courtyard cottages/ bungalows, detached	✓
	- Two-unit dwelling (duplex)	✓
	- Attached two-unit dwelling (twinhome)	✓
	- Three-unit dwelling	✓
Low-rise scale		N-2
	- Four-unit dwelling	✓
	- Small townhouse building (up to 4 units per building)	✓
	- Low-rise apartment building (up to 3 stories)	✓

Site and Building Standards	Housing Type		
	Single-unit small dwelling [only lots with alleys] Single-unit dwelling Two-unit dwelling (duplex) Attached two-unit dwelling (twinhomes) Three-unit dwelling Four-unit dwelling	Townhouse (small) Apartment (low-rise)	Detached courtyard cottages / bungalows
Building height maximum (ft)	40	40	40
Setbacks			
Front yard setback minimum (ft)	25	25	25
Side corner yard setback minimum (ft)	15	15	15
Side interior yard setback minimum (ft) for attached garage or lot with alley	5	10	*
Side interior yard setback minimum (ft) for detached garage on lot without alley	9ft for one side yard and 5ft for the other side yard; if there is an attached garage then 5ft for both side yards	10	*
Rear yard setback minimum (ft)	25	25	*
Distance between buildings minimum (ft)	*	15	10
Perimeter setback minimum (ft)	*	20ft if adjacent to N-1 district (sideyard only)	10
Lot Coverage			
Principal building coverage maximum	35%	*	35%
Impervious surface coverage maximum	60% (One- to three-unit dwellings) 75% (four-unit dwellings)	75% (Townhouses) 80% (Apartments)	60%
DORA (designed outdoor recreation area) minimum	*	12%	*

Lot Size Standards	Housing Type					
	Single-unit small dwelling [only lots with alleys]	Single-unit dwelling Two-unit dwelling (duplex)	Attached two- unit dwelling (twinhomes)	Three-unit dwelling Four-unit dwelling Apartment (low-rise)	Townhouse (small)	Detached courtyard cottages / bungalows
Lot with Alley Access						
Lot width minimum (ft)	30	40	70	60	20	100
Lot area minimum (sq ft)	3,600	4,800	8,800	7,800	2,600	13,000
Lot without Alley Access						
Lot width minimum (ft)	*	50	90	70	20	110
Lot area minimum (sq ft)	*	6,000	11,200	9,100	2,600	14,300

\* = Not applicable



The N-3 Neighborhood District includes both low-rise and mid-rise housing, such as townhouses and apartment buildings.

Allowed Housing Types	
<b>Low-rise scale</b>	
	- Four-unit dwelling
	- Small townhouse building (up to 4 units per building)
	- Low-rise apartment building (up to 3 stories)
<b>Mid-rise scale</b>	
	- Large townhouse building (up to 8 units per building)
	- Mid-rise apartment building (up to 6 stories)

Site and Building Standards	Housing Type			
	Townhouse (small)	Apartment (low-rise)	Townhouse (large)	Apartment (mid-rise)
Building height maximum (ft)	75			
Setbacks				
Front yard setback minimum (ft)	15			
Side corner yard setback minimum (ft)	15			
Side interior yard setback minimum (ft) for attached garage or lot with alley	10			
Side interior yard setback minimum (ft) for detached garage on lot without alley	10			
Rear yard setback minimum (ft)	10			
Distance between buildings minimum (ft)	15	1/2 the building height	15	1/2 the building height
Perimeter setback minimum (ft)	20ft if adjacent to N-1 district		30ft if adjacent to N-1 or N-2 districts	
Lot Coverage				
Principal building coverage maximum	*			
Impervious surface coverage maximum	75%	80%	85%	
DORA (designed outdoor recreation area) minimum	12%			

Lot Size Standards	Housing Type			
	Townhouse (small)	Apartment (low-rise)	Townhouse (large)	Apartment (mid-rise)
Lot with Alley Access				
Lot width minimum (ft)	20	60	20	60
Lot area minimum (sq ft)	2,600	7,800	2,600	7,800
Lot without Alley Access				
Lot width minimum (ft)	20	70	20	70
Lot area minimum (sq ft)	2,600	9,100	2,600	9,100

The N-4 Neighborhood District accommodates a mix of mid-rise and high-rise housing, including townhouses and apartment buildings.

Allowed Housing Types	
<b>Mid-rise scale</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Large townhouse (up to 8 units per building) ✓</li> <li>- Mid-rise apartment building (up to 6 stories) ✓</li> </ul>
<b>High-rise scale</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High-rise apartment building (7 or more stories) ✓</li> </ul>

Site and Building Standards	Housing Type				
	Townhouse (small)	Apartment (low-rise)	Townhouse (large)	Apartment (mid-rise)	Apartment (high-rise)
Building height maximum (ft)	More than 75				
<b>Setbacks</b>					
Front yard setback minimum (ft)	15				
Side corner yard setback minimum (ft)	15				
Side interior yard setback minimum (ft) for attached garage or lot with alley	10				
Side interior yard setback minimum (ft) for detached garage on lot without alley	10				
Rear yard setback minimum (ft)	10				
Distance between buildings minimum (ft)	15	1/2 the building height	15	1/2 the building height	1/2 the building height
Perimeter setback minimum (ft)	20ft if adjacent to N-1 district		30ft if adjacent to N-1 or N-2 districts		Half the building height if adjacent to N-1, N-2, or N-3 districts
<b>Lot Coverage</b>					
Principal building coverage maximum	*				
Impervious surface coverage maximum	80%			85%	
DORA (designed outdoor recreation area) minimum	12%				

Lot Size Standards	Housing Type				
	Townhouse (small)	Apartment (low-rise)	Townhouse (large)	Apartment (mid-rise)	Apartment (high-rise)
<b>Lot with Alley Access</b>					
Lot width minimum (ft)	20	60	20	60	
Lot area minimum (sq ft)	2,600	7,800	2,600	7,800	
<b>Lot without Alley Access</b>					
Lot width minimum (ft)	20	70	20	70	
Lot area minimum (sq ft)	2,600	9,100	2,600	9,100	



City of St. Louis Park, Minnesota

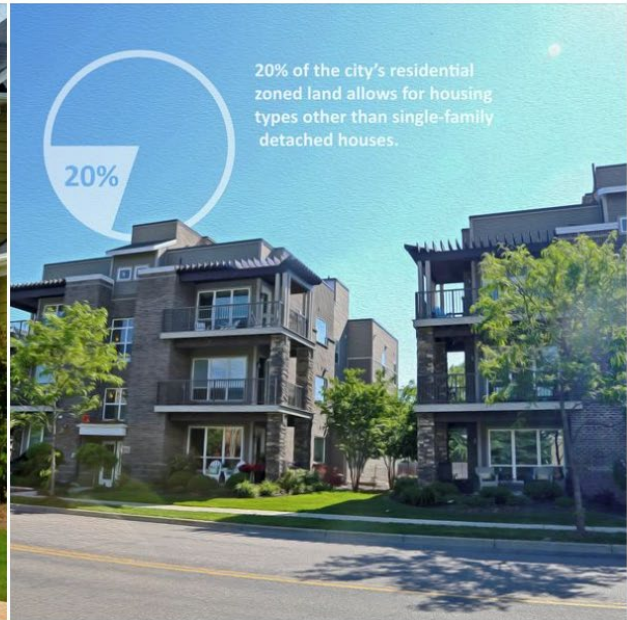
June 6



Did you know that 80% of St. Louis Park's residential zoned land allows only single-family detached houses? That leaves 20% for all other housing types.

In 2022, the city completed a zoning code audit to identify how the current zoning code is a barrier to the development of a variety of housing types. We are now considering updates to our zoning code that will allow us to continue to welcome new residents and be a desirable place to live for community members from all walks of life.

Visit <https://bit.ly/zoning-code-update> to learn more about this initiative, find an open house date to attend and leave your input.



32

19 comments

Like

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Write a comment...



**Mark Lapakko**

No! Enough apartments! Middle class single family homeowners built this city and care about it. Transient residents are only here for the short term and move on. They don't build a community.

7w Like Reply

13



**Mark Lapakko**

Ms Merton is a member of the St Louis Park planning commission and is involved with zoning issues. Recently residents in the vicinity of a planned apartment complex on Cedar Lake Road had their concerns ignored at a meeting regarding the subsequently approved apartment in their neighborhood. Homeowners have rights also and should be allowed a say in their community.

7w Like Reply



**Ben Osa**

**Mark Lapakko** Not sure owning a house that cost \$45K for in 1983 gives one a say what others put on their property. The city is not encased in amber. It's a 1st rung suburb next to the wealthiest portion of Minneapolis. It needs to grow.

As a SLP home owner, I welcome new housing options for others and current residents to age in place. Not everyone wants to live in senior housing, nor are many people able to live in a single family home in their elder years.

As an added bonus to all the current property owners and renters, the city adds to their tax base so property taxes won't increase as quickly in the coming years.

7w Like Reply



**Mark Lapakko**

More congestion. We bought a house on a nice quiet tree lined street. Now there's more sirens and street noise due to more people. Also, the city is already buying water from Golden Valley to support additional residents in west end. We're overusing the resources available already. I feel the 80-20 ratio is good enough.

7w Like Reply



**Mark Lapakko**

Additionally, you just disenfranchised the 45,000 dollar home owner who's been paying taxes all these years. I rest my case. Single family homeowners don't matter in St Louis Park.

7w Like Reply

...



**Ben Osa**

We've got more congestion on our dead end street due to a bike lane going in. You know what's nice? A bike lane going in. Home owners don't own the public right of way and they don't own property that they don't own.

7w Like Reply



**Ben Osa**

I'm going to go with property rights on this one since it's the American way and welcome the new neighbors to the city.

Feel free to do what you see fit within your property lines. There's no disenfranchisement to people who were born at the right time getting a single family home for 10% of what something similar across the street sells for these days.

7w Like Reply



**Mark Lapakko**

We will have to agree to disagree Ben. I dislike the proposed change in zoning.

7w Like Reply Edited



**Ben Osa**

**Mark Lapakko** I'm ok with disagreeing here. Everyone is entitled to their opinion.

7w Like Reply



**Katie Merten**

**Mark Lapakko** I am, and would appreciate you spelling my name correctly. I applied for the commission for these very reasons - to speak up and represent ALL residents of our city, not just ones that own a plot of land.

A reminder that the Planning Commission cannot vote down a proposal because someone doesn't like it. If it meets the requirements lined out in the City Code, we vote to move it forward. It is the City Council that can decide to allow or not allow a development.

You say homeowners have rights and should be allowed a say in their community, so why wouldn't you allow renters the same? US Census data shows that 82% of renters have lived at their address for longer than a year in St Louis Park. That doesn't exactly scream transient to me.

7w Like Reply



**Mark Lapakko**

**Katie Merten** I didn't say renters couldn't have a say. I'm sorry for the misspelling. All I'm saying is I feel the present 80-20 division seems adequate. I'm not denying anyone a say in anything. You're putting words in my mouth.

7w Like Reply





**Katie Merten**

**Mark Lapakko** exactly nowhere in this description does it mention apartments. Way to let your bias show. People rent for a myriad of reasons and none of them mean that "transients" don't deserve affordable housing, or are of less value to a city or community than homeowners.

7w Like Reply



Reply to Mark Lapakko...



**Jan Benson**

Exactly! These rare, small homes no one wants to build anymore are a gateway to generational wealth. We don't need more rentals.

7w Like Reply



**Michele Struss**

Maybe just stop and leave one or two trees!

7w Like Reply



**Josef Silbersee**

Where are these new structures going to go? And did you know that about 850 single-family homes in St. Louis Park are owned by non-occupant investors? And that the city allows companies like RH Residential Renewal to bulldoze homes of \$300K or so in value and replace them with homes that are listed for \$900K? Pathetic.

7w Like Reply



**Emily Barker**

My understanding from solid waste is that single-family includes everything up to and including 4 units. Is that the same in this context?

7w Like Reply



**Katie Merten**

**Emily Barker** sort of. For example, N-1 would be detached homes, up to x feet tall, but these could also include smaller duplexes and triplexes.

7w Like Reply



Reply to Emily Barker...





City of St. Louis Park, Minnesota

June 21

Have you heard the term "Missing Middle Housing"?

"Missing Middle Housing" are homes and buildings with attached or clustered units that can be compatible in scale with single family homes – like courtyard cottages/bungalows, duplexes (pictured here), threeplexes, fourplexes, townhouses and low-rise apartments.

As we reconsider our zoning code, we'd like your feedback on the availability of housing types in St. Louis Park. Visit <https://bit.ly/3zavcXK> to learn more about this initiative.

Also, please attend one of the open houses to learn more and ask questions:

➔ June 24, 1-3pm at the community room at city hall (5005 Minnetonka Blvd)

➔ June 27, 6-8 pm at the Westwood Hills Nature Center (8300 W Franklin Ave)



21

3 comments

Like

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Write a comment...



Jennifer Ortale

I am super interested in this type of housing! I want a duplex but I'd need to leave St. Louis park for Minneapolis (yes I am aware there are some duplexes here. But not many, and not the up-down co figuration I want). I love this reconsideration of zoning code!

5w Like Reply

7



Rosalind Young

How about affordable. 1200 1600 for a little studio. Awful

5w Like Reply

2



**Mel Lo**

How about starting with lowering the cost of water?  
SLP water is nothing fancy but costs more than neighboring cities.

7w Like Reply



**Mark Lapakko**

**Mel Lo** when they built apartments at West End they realized they hadn't the water resources so contracted to buy water from Golden Valley. The city is already over using resources given its environmental footprint.

7w Like Reply

4



Reply to Mel Lo...





City of St. Louis Park, Minnesota

July 9 at 3:27 PM



You have until the end of July to give your feedback regarding our proposed zoning code updates!

As St. Louis Park grows, we are considering updates to our zoning code that will allow us to continue to welcome new residents and be a desirable place to live for community members from all walks of life.

Please use our interactive story map to leave your comments and opinions about the availability of housing types in St. Louis Park: <https://bit.ly/zoning-code-update>.

After we are done collecting public feedback, our next steps will be to review the feedback and see if there are any common themes that suggest any changes that should be made. A summary of the comments received, along with staff recommendations, will be presented to the planning commission and city council in separate study sessions. Sign up for updates for more information about these next steps at the link above.



Like

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Most relevant



Write a comment...



**Kayley Smothers**

Stop building until you figure out how to support the added cars and infrastructure!! We can't support who lives here now. You build TO THE STREET and it's impossible. Can't find a solution? STOP BUILDING! we already pay insane taxes for every single school district, in addition to other taxes for Edina and Hopkins. Just stop it. It used to be so cozy and enjoyable and now we have to have various housing types? No!

3w Like Reply 26



**Cindy Novak Swartout**

**Kayley Smothers** I couldn't agree more! Taking away green space. So sad to see so many apartments being SLP.

3w Like Reply

8



**Mary Lorvick**

**Cindy Novak Swartout** and all of the trees that have been taken down for these buildings too. They wiped them all out on Beltline Blvd.

3w Like Reply



**Cindy Novak Swartout**

**Mary Lorvick** they cut down all beautiful trees in the blvd space along Hwy 25 or Hwy 7 across from Yum! Such a sad site.

3w Like Reply



Reply to Cindy Novak Swartout...



**Elizabeth Mourning-Bakker**

**Kayley Smothers** all the new, huge apartment buildings and fewer single family homes are making SLP less and less desirable, IMO.

3w Like Reply

16



**Marc Peacock**

**Elizabeth Mourning-Bakker** It's so dumb. While apartments and condos maximize space, people that live there are highly transient. People like SLP in large part because of the community, people in single family homes live in the city much longer than those in an apartment.

3w Like Reply

3



**Emily Barker**

**Elizabeth Mourning-Bakker** except the SELA development near France Ave a couple years ago, which recent apartment buildings have you seen go up that caused "fewer single family homes"? Most of the ones I'm aware of have been built on land that wasn't SF in the first place.

Also, did You know the city has been like 40% multifamily for a long time? It's been a huge part of our housing stock for ages.

3w Like Reply



**Torrey Kanne**

Marc PeacockHi Mark. So, when you were younger you were never "transient"? You have never moved to a new city and rented for a year or two to see if you wanted to put down roots? Or went to college in a different state and needed an apartment? Or maybe you bought a home when conditions were more favorable for that- many young people can't afford to buy now. In San Diego, where I am from, the majority of my friends are life long renters because they never could afford to buy, even w 6 figure incomes. They're not transient.

3w Like Reply Edited



**Elizabeth Mourning-Bakker**

My point: more apartments are being built vs single family homes in spaces where housing could be built.

In the last 15-20 years, huge apartment complexes have been built. When I moved here in 98, it was pretty much the couple-few on Excelsior Blvd and Meadowbrook, and there are a lot more, bigger complex's now.

3w Like Reply



**Mary Lorvick**

**Elizabeth Mourning-Bakker** I've counted around 40 since Excelsior and Grand. My concern is strain on our water and power usage-can we handle thousands more people?

3w Like Reply



Reply to Elizabeth Mourning-Bakker...



**Torrey Kanne**

**Kayley Smothers**you sound passionate! Love it! You should join the Planning Commission and share your thoughts on it all- after reading the comp plan and alllllll the proposals that come in for development that get rejected by the city of SLP.

3w Like Reply





Ronald Pump  
Kayley Smothers



3w Like Reply



Reply to Kayley Smothers...



Kim Opitz

Can we just say "no thank you" because we don't want more out-of-state corporations owning the homes in our neighborhoods? Because that's already happening and it's not an entirely pleasant situation.

3w Like Reply 9



Charlie Meyers

**Kim Opitz** The problem of corporate ownership of single family homes is due to lack of political will and regulatory inaction. It's a nationwide disgrace that hardworking Americans who qualify for bank mortgages are locked out of home ownership by investors.

3w Like Reply



Torrey Kanne

**Kim Opitz** Join the crowd of every other single major metropolitan area in the country. That's a completely different discussion. (I hate that also, for the record).

3w Like Reply



Tiki Premo Clayton

**Torrey Kanne** it doesn't have to be. The city can pass regulations prohibiting corporate ownership of condos and townhouses can't they? And then build more owner occupied buildings.

3w Like Reply



Kim Opitz

The house next to us was sold when the owners were too old to live alone. A company in Texas owns it now and we've had a variety of tenants pass through - the partying, vomiting off the deck neighbors were the worst, and the two families with children were each utterly delightful. The families just couldn't afford to stay there because they wanted to own their homes, not rent forever.

3w Like Reply





Reply to Torrey Kanne...



Reply to Kim Opitz...



**Kim Opitz**

I was really discouraged when the city council allowed a private homeowner to turn two homes on Cedar Lake Road into an apartment building -- despite the neighbors who spoke up and said they didn't WANT an apartment building on their residential road. I felt especially bad for the homeowners who live across the street, who said the new apartments will have views into their front room. When people buy homes, they invest time, dreams and energy into them. They don't expect apartments and condos to spring up right next door, 5-10 years later, if ever. Please don't make people fill out a lengthy survey just to take our feedback seriously.

...

3w Like Reply 3



**Mary Lorvick**

**Kim Opitz** in our interactions with our council person over the years-our voices of concern have been totally ignored. They will do what they want to do no matter the push back.

3w Like Reply

View 1 reply



Reply to Kim Opitz...



**William Wells**

St. Louis Park doesn't know what it wants to be, is it an urban neighborhood with apartment buildings, or is it low density single family homes next to MPLS?. ... St. Louis Park is like Minneapolis' little brother, confused and following around the big brother trying not to get beat up .

3w Like Reply 9



**Emily Barker**

**William Wells** I think you're missing pretty big details here. The fact is that for years people were running to the exurbs, and then in the 2010s that reversed and the urban core was growing. A lot of younger people don't want to own a car or they're getting their drivers license much later and they want access to more things without having to drive all the time. But now, it's trending back the other way (in part due to the pandemic). SLP sits in the middle, so it's like being stuck on a yoyo you don't control. And of course, all of this is overlaid with a general trend toward lower birth rates.

City planners have a hell of a job, anticipating the whims of fickle humans. What are your ideas instead?

3w Like Reply Edited

3





**Jennifer Ortale**  
William Wells please fill out the survey

3w Like Reply 2



Reply to William Wells...



**Daniel Mona**  
It's already an overcrowded mess in West End area every weekend. You can look forward to that all over the city once they reach their utopia of more high rises and high density housing everywhere. Rezoning single family neighborhoods is a disaster.

Too bad, SLP will become just another crime ridden dump like Mpls. City Council can only see 2 ft in front of their noses, drooling over the tax money, instead of realizing what this means long term.

3w Like Reply Edited 3



**Charlie Meyers**  
I don't understand all the hand wringing. My folks lived out their later years at Excelsior on Grand, and loved it. SLP still is loaded with nice neighborhoods filled with single family homes. Most of the apts and condos are on busy, high traffic areas or next to freeways. As for the SW lightrail, it's going to be a huge benefit for the entire metro area, SLP included.

3w Like Reply 7



**Kim Opitz**  
**Charlie Meyers** I believe this re-zoning means "nice neighborhoods filled with single family homes" will be open for apartments, bungalows and other multi-unit buildings.

3w Like Reply 3



**Charlie Meyers**  
**Kim Opitz** The devil is always in the details,thank you. My neighborhood in NE Mpls has a mix of single family homes, duplexes, (mine included) and a small number of multi-unit apartments. Fairly typical for many parts of Mpls and St Paul. I would describe it as a very stable, safe neighborhood. The apartments are pretty well managed. The zoning changes can allow for some positives,too. Service sector employees in nursing, education and retail can fill needed employment gaps.

3w Like Reply



Reply to Kim Opitz...



**Torrey Kanne**

**Charlie Meyers** True. People don't know what they don't know, but sure do love to complain from that vantage point. They want the amenities of living in SLP but not the inevitable density that comes with growth. It's an unreasonable and unrealistic thought process. And they forget that St. Louis PARK and green spaces (PARKS) are in every 'hood within like 2 to 3 blocks of all houses. 🙄

3w Like Reply



Reply to Charlie Meyers...



**Torrey Kanne**

I served on the Planning Commission in SLP for 2 years. Came out with such a better understanding of urban planning, and, a deep respect for it. Bottom line is this- if you want less cars/traffic and more green spaces you gotta just move out to 3rd ring suburbs. Population is growing and housing (in many forms) is needed. It is what it is. To make a city like SLP which is only 10 x 10 sq miles function well, it takes a hell of a lot of planning and smart people. I think the changes are mostly for the better.

3w Like Reply 11 🙌



**Jeff Kleinbaum**

**Torrey Kanne** "if you want less cars/traffic and more green spaces".... ...

Is that the resident's desire ... Or city planners?

3w Like Reply



**Torrey Kanne**

**Jeff Kleinbaum** Look, no one loves more traffic, less green spaces, probably myself the most! Not even the city planners- you think they do the job to make people's lives worse? C'mon. It's necessary and imperative. The metro area is growing rapidly and has been for years, it's reality. I try to consider the reality, even when it's not my preference.

3w Like Reply



Reply to Torrey Kanne...



**Caröl Hendersön**

Honestly, this appears to have already been decided. The only vote on it will be the city council. Housing is unaffordable partly because rents are out of control. They might try implementing rent controls first.

3w Like Reply 🙌



**Jack Grayson**

Hello 🙌 how are you doing over there ? Can you text me on your message directly I have a question to ask you it's private

2w Like Reply



Reply to Caröl Hendersön...



**Shaw Sherri Morgan**

With all these extra large apartment complexes and the added crime the light rail will bring in, I'll be moving out.

3w Like Reply 3 🍷

View 1 reply



**Sean Hayford Oleary**

Incredible work, guys!

3w Like Reply



**Mary McChesney-Iverson**

It's even  
More confused now

3w Like Reply



**Marc Peacock**

Mary McChesney-Iverson It feels intentionally confusing, which I suspect means they know the residents aren't going to like it and their changes will be forced upon us. Once light rail is finished and with it the import of even more crime from Minneapolis, the property value is going to plummet. By the time the residents know what's actually going to happen, it will be too late.

3w Like Reply Edited 3 🍷



**Elizabeth Mourning-Bakker**

**Marc Peacock** completely agree with you there. So many people say the light rail is going to be a good thing for the city...until the crime waves hit and they start finding hypodermic needles in their yard.

3w Like Reply 1 🍷



**Marc Peacock**

**Elizabeth Mourning-Bakker** It's already bad now. Provide them transportation to expand their crime area and it's going to be way worse. I would not want to live or have a business within a mile of any of the stops.

3w Like Reply 1 🍷



**Sakariye Xaaji**

**Marc Peacock** Why does greed overcome those that are self-sufficient? It's the same people who put a gag order on multiple transportation entities from even mentioning the Dan Patch Line. You guys are pathetic and can't even realize cars are the biggest transporters of criminals and drugs.

3w Like Reply



**Sakariye Xaaji**

**Elizabeth Mourning-Bakker** Maybe because they're not old senile boomers like you, who think someone with bad intentions will think use light rail for transportation when we already see criminals using cars and transporting drugs with them.

3w Like Reply



**Marc Peacock**

**Sakariye Xaaji** Spend 2 minutes looking at crime reports. Sorry for pointing out the painfully obvious. Serious crime happening in SLP and other burbs isn't being caused by residents. Did I say crime will only happen because of light rail? No, I said it will increase. Check back in a few years and you'll see that we're right.

3w Like Reply



Reply to Marc Peacock...



Reply to Mary McChesney-Iverson...



Most relevant is selected, so some comments may have been filtered out.



City of St. Louis Park, Minnesota

July 27 at 10:00 AM



There is less than one week left to provide feedback on our proposed zoning code updates! 🏡

Did you know that 80% of the residentially zoned land in St Louis Park only allows single-family detached houses? That only leaves 20% of residential land for other housing types such as duplexes, townhomes and apartment buildings of all sizes. The proposed zoning code updates will expand the availability of different housing types to support our growing community.

Learn more and share your comments on our interactive story map by July 31 at <https://bit.ly/zoning-code-update>.

After the survey closes, we will review your feedback for common themes about potential changes to the current proposal. Staff will present a summary of this feedback and the recommended zoning updates to the planning commission and city council for their consideration. If you are interested in receiving updates on this project, the link above will bring you to the project webpage where you can click the "Sign up for updates" box to put your name on our email list.



12

11 comments 6 shares

Like

Comment

Share

Most relevant ▾

Write a comment...



**Daniel Mona**

We all know our feedback is ignored anyway by a city council that just copies whatever Mpls does. I guess we can look forward to SLP following in their footsteps to be a crime ridden hole. All the city council cares about is more tax money to waste.

4d Like Reply Edited 5



**Jacquelyn J. Eckholm**

**Daniel Mona** how does zoning affect crime?

3d Like Reply



**Alex Brose**

Based off the caption we can tell what St. Louis park wants... more money!

4d Like Reply 5



**Corey Lynn**

I say no re zoning.

3d Like Reply



**Cindy Novak Swartout**

Why survey when you've already built too many apartments and cut down perfectly good trees?

How about green space?

4d Like Reply 8



**Mark Lapakko**

I can't find where to comment on zoning code update. I say leave it alone. We moved here to live in a community of predominantly single family housing. We have no problem with the numbers of multi family units as there are now but don't feel we need more.

4d Like Reply Edited 2



**Matthew Mitchell**

**Mark Lapakko** People want the changes to increase the housing supply so there's more affordable housing. I'm curious about what you tell them.

4d Like Reply



**Mark Lapakko**

The city is already buying water from Golden Valley to support the housing in West End. We simply haven't the resources to support more people. Not everybody can cram into St Louis Park. 80% of people in the recent city survey took the position of preferring a single family housing model. We have apartments, duplexes, and multi unit dwellings already. Are all of these full? The new ones constructed near the future light rail station on Wooddale don't appear to be.

4d Like Reply



**Jacquelyn J. Eckholm**

**Mark Lapakko** Water and sewer management is done by the Met Council. If there wasn't enough water to support growth, they wouldn't have approved the comprehensive plan that planned for growth

3d Like Reply



**David Rickheim**

**Mark Lapakko** vacancy rates throughout the twin cities are in the mid-to-low single digits. We need more housing.

3d Like Reply



Reply to Matthew Mitchell...





Reply to Mark Lapakko...




Most relevant is selected, so some comments may have been filtered out.







 stlouispark • Follow

 Did you know that 80% of St. Louis Park's residential zoned land allows only single-family detached houses? That leaves 20% for all other housing types.

In 2022, the city completed a zoning code audit to identify how the current zoning code is a barrier to the development of a variety of housing types. We are now considering updates to our zoning code that will allow us to continue to welcome new residents and be a desirable place to live for community members from all walks of life.

Visit the  in our bio to learn more about this initiative, find an open house date to attend and leave your input.

35 likes  
June 6

Log in to like or comment.

mlkarius's profile picture

Where was this picture taken?

Reply

stlouispark's profile picture

@mlkarius The second photo is in the Browndale neighborhood. The first photo depicts single-family detached homes that are comparable to but not located in St. Louis Park.

Reply

annastauber's profile picture

Yas! 😁

1 likeReply

livrin\_drabk's profile picture

Like how you forced rezoning at Texa-tonka? That was a fun process. For fun, let's go look at the rent cost in there....so inclusive!



ryanol's profile picture

I feel like with the developments around the light rail slp is doing better than most but wherever there is room to improve by all means. Louisiana and mtka blvd could use resurfacing but maybe that's a Hennepin co issue?

StLouisPark-@ryanol Minnetonka Blvd is a county road, so Hennepin County would be the drivers of all improvement and maintenance to it. That said, Hennepin County is in the process of rebuilding Minnetonka Blvd in Phases. East of Highway 100 will be completed this year. Other phases of Minnetonka Blvd to follow over the next few years. You can contact Jack Sullivan in the St. Louis Park engineering department at JSullivan@stlouisparkmn.gov or 952-924-2691 for more information.

@stlouispark yeah I figured probably in conjunction with water main repair/replacement etc. it's just kind of dicey as a "bikeway" on mtka blvd with the pavement in its current condition

kallenspach's profile picture

Every resident's two least favorite words: affordable housing

1 likeReply

jlsumner's profile picture

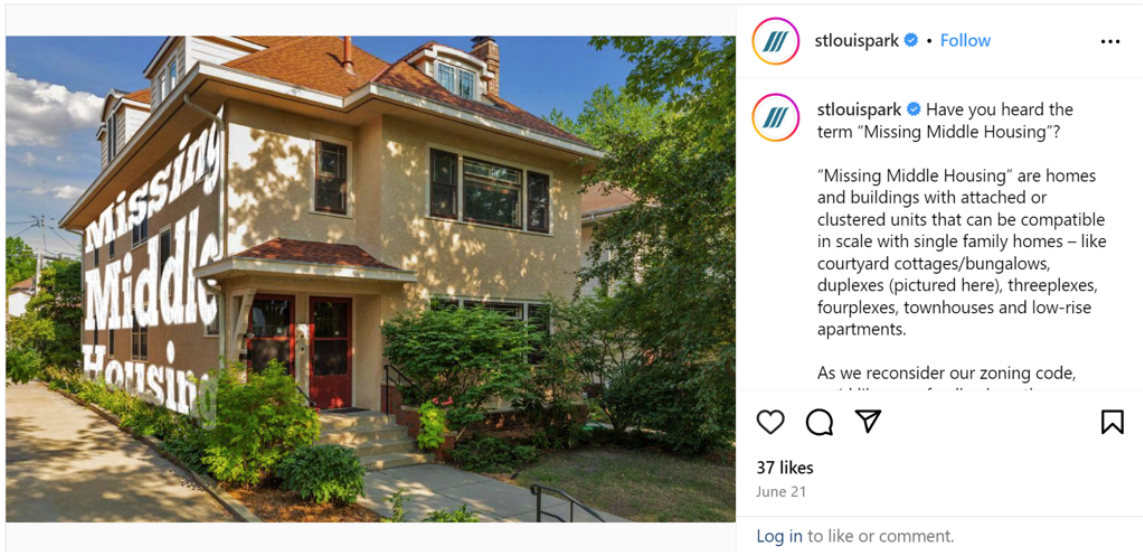
Yes. More of this. 🙄 I know it's an unpopular opinion with the NIMBYs but keep auditing and rolling back the zoning restrictions. Hard enough to see projects built as it is. And I live in the 80%.

1 likeReply

messercol's profile picture

Blackrock has entered the chat

1 likeReply



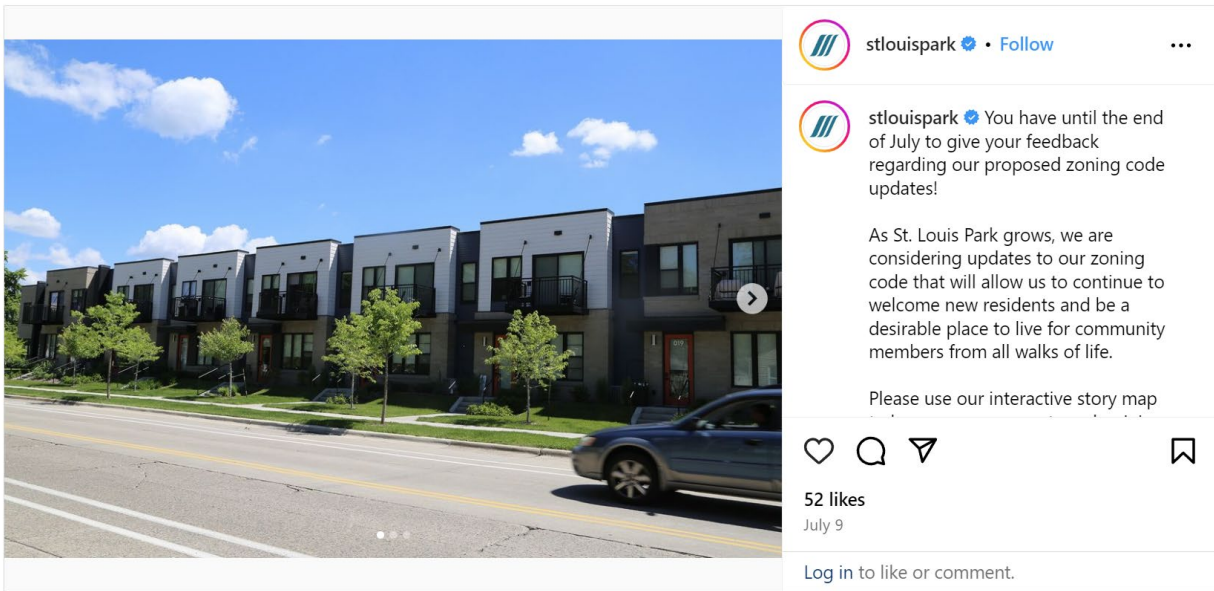
As we reconsider our zoning code, we'd like your feedback on the availability of housing types in St. Louis Park. Visit the [📍](#) in our bio to learn more about this initiative.


Also, please attend one of the open houses to learn more and ask questions:


- 👉 June 24, 1-3pm at the community room at city hall (5005 Minnetonka Blvd)
- 👉 June 27, 6-8 pm at the Westwood Hills Nature Center (8300 W Franklin Ave)

[#missingmiddlehousing](#) [#housing](#) [#communitydevelopment](#) [#stlouisparkmn](#) [#zoning](#)

No comments posted.



Please use our interactive story map to leave your comments and opinions about the availability of housing types in St. Louis Park using the  in our bio.

After we are done collecting public feedback, our next steps will be to review the feedback and see if there are any common themes that suggest any changes that should be made. A summary of the comments received, along with staff recommendations, will be presented to the planning commission and city council in separate study sessions. Sign up for updates for more information about these next steps at the link in bio . #housing #zoning #stlouisparkmn

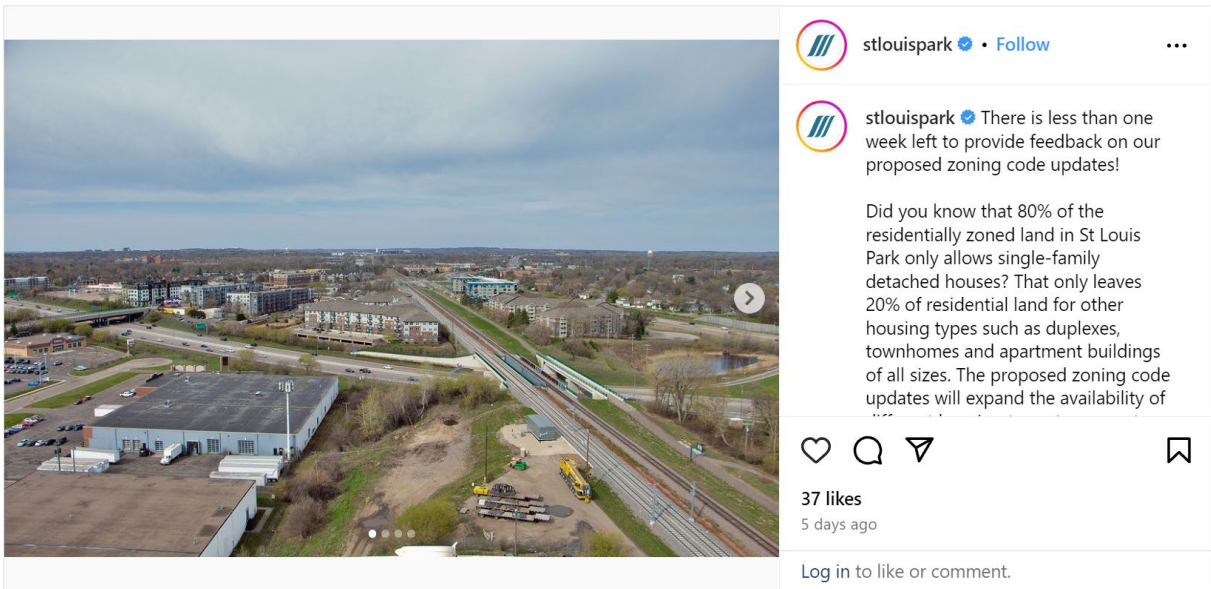
bennettmyhran's profile picture

I've given my feedback but would like to emphasize the importance of limiting land disturbance. I believe density should come from building vertically as to retain what little soil space we have left. Housing is important. Trees, water, and wildlife are more important.

1 likeReply

david.mn.mills's profile picture

I'm in support of this. I do hope that there will be provisions added to promote home ownership and prevent large corporations from owning all of the new development that will result from these changes.



different housing types to support our growing community.

Learn more and share your comments on our interactive story map by July 31 using the link in our bio 📍

After the survey closes, we will review your feedback for common themes about potential changes to the current proposal. Staff will present a summary of this feedback and the recommended zoning updates to the planning commission and city council for their consideration. If you are interested in receiving updates on this project, the link in our bio will bring you to the project webpage where you can click the “Sign up for updates” box to put your name on our email list.

bigbossed\_'s profile picture

Keep overloading the communities with high density units and low income subsidies! You all won't be happy until what makes STLP great is fully destroyed. Let's hope the investments in police is keeping up with the influx because it's going to be needed. 🙏

5 likesReply

messercol's profile picture

@bigbossed\_ vote to keep it the same!

1 likeReply

aaronserrano00's profile picture

Bro build better soccer pitches 🏈🏈

1 likeReply

## City of St. Louis Park's Post



**City of St. Louis Park**  
1,937 followers  
1mo



Did you know that 80% of St. Louis Park's residential zoned land allows only single-family detached houses? That leaves 20% for all other housing types.

In 2022, the city completed a zoning code audit to identify how the current zoning code is a barrier to the development of a variety of housing types. We are now considering updates to our zoning code that will allow us to continue to welcome new residents and be a desirable place to live for community members from all walks of life.

Visit [https://lnkd.in/ga\\_s7bbN](https://lnkd.in/ga_s7bbN) to learn more about this initiative, find an open house date to attend and leave your input.



🌐❤️ 13

👍 Like

💬 Comment

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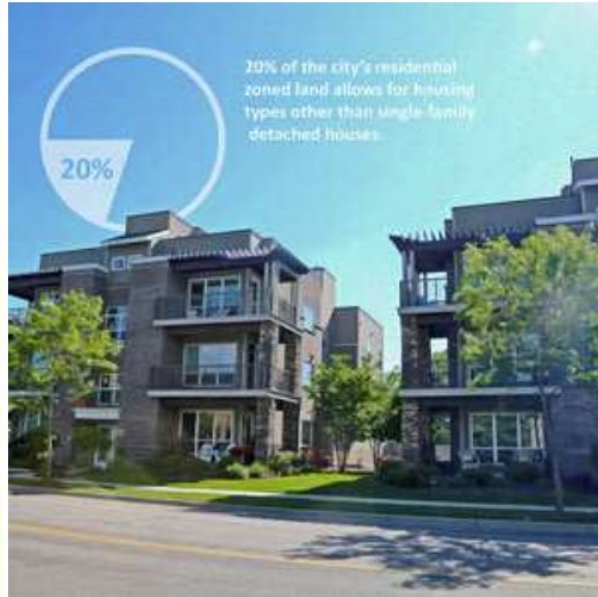


City of St. Louis Park ✓

Social Media Specialist Savannah Byers • 13 Jun



Did you know that 80% of St. Louis Park's residential zoned land allows only single-family detached houses? That leaves 20% for all other housing types. ... [See more](#)



8 10



[Joan H.](#)

•Oak Hill Park•6w • Edited

🙄 hmmm to the 80%. And the...there's not enough options and space for all...theory is interesting since 95% of the multi unit complexes have balloons and or enticing signs with rental discounts with lots of vacancies. 🙄 There's no going back most of these complexes are massive and here to stay.

Like

ReplyShare

[Eve White](#)

•Birchwood•6w

There are lots of apartment vacancies right now. Single family homes are selling. What is the market telling us? If you change zoning, does that mean single family homes will get torn down?

Like

ReplyShare

[Ann L.](#)

•Fern Hill Neighborhood•6w • Edited

Via Sol (now Zelia on 7) is a recent rezoning and multifamily, mixed-income misfire that was built for 407k per unit in 2022 that sold less than two years after opening for \$153k per unit. Maybe that's why the call for public input? A 55 million dollar loss. During the planning phase, 152 of the 217 studio-to-four-bedrooms were to be affordable at 50% to 80% Average Median Income (AMI). Only 60 percent occupancy one year after opening. Complaints about not enough parking. LEED, wind, green and solar plans scuttled in 2023. 88M to build, sold for 33.25M.

**Like**

ReplyShare

### [Joan H.](#)

•Oak Hill Park•6w

#### [Ann](#)

the plan a I understand is already in place...our input is not what they want. We have vacancies everywhere and yet massive complexes continue to be built everywhere. Leave no space unturned. A housing shortage?...is suspect at best. Money speaks very loud and it's sad. When was the last time we voted for planning commissioner and those on the committee?

**Like**

ReplyShare

### [Dan S.](#)

•Minikahda Vista•6w

Please leave my property value alone

**Like**

ReplyShare

### [Marc Petrik](#)

•Wolfe Park•6w

St Louis Park is so saturated with oversized Apartments and Condominiums. The City has completely ruined the landscape of these once charming and quant neighborhoods. Enough already! More green space!

**Like**

ReplyShare

### [Wendylee R.](#)

•Creekside•6w

In years the SLP City Council or whomever makes zoning decisions has not said NO to any type of apartment or condo proposal, as far as I can tell. I drive past all the massive buildings, just ready to take on renters or purchasers and wonder how may hundreds (thousands?) more people will be crammed into our little city. But I'm sure they will all be riding bikes, walking, and taking the light rail (HA!) so at least the vehicle traffic won't be outrageous...

**Like**



ReplyShare

[Lex Ell](#)

•Fern Hill Neighborhood•6w

2 of the City Council members are involved with real estate and/or developers. I'm sure that has nothing to do with their decisions to continue saturating SLP with apartments that are not needed, because of the vacancies in existing apartment complexes that are SUBSIDIZED WITH OUR TAX DOLLARS. Why do you think SLP property taxes are so high? Because the City Council keeps promoting buildings that don't pay taxes for 20 or more years (tax increment financing) but the residents need services that the rest of us have to pay for with high property taxes.

Like

ReplyShare

[Joan H.](#)

•Oak Hill Park•6w

[Lex](#)

And they're just getting started.

Like

ReplyShare

[Suzanne S.](#)

•Pennsylvania Park•6w

I'm curious when me and my husband sell our corner house and a developer buys it...builds a duplex. How much will those cost. We have put in a lot of \$ into our home to make it nice for us and to make it nice for the next buyer. When that time comes we will have to sell it ourselves to hopefully insure that the buyer wants a nice home in a nice neighborhood. We will see.

Like

ReplyShare

## City of St. Louis Park's Post



City of St. Louis Park

1,937 followers  
1mo · Edited



Have you heard the term "Missing Middle Housing"?

"Missing Middle Housing" are homes and buildings with attached or clustered units that can be compatible in scale with single family homes – like courtyard cottages/bungalows, duplexes (pictured here), threeplexes, fourplexes, townhouses and low-rise apartments.

As we reconsider our zoning code, we'd like your feedback on the availability of housing types in St. Louis Park. Visit <https://bit.ly/3zavcXK> to learn more about this initiative.

Also, please attend one of the open houses to learn more and ask questions:

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- June 27, 6-8 pm at the Westwood Hills Nature Center (8300 W Franklin Ave)



11

Like Comment Share

## City of St. Louis Park's Post



City of St. Louis Park

1,937 followers  
3w



You have until the end of July to give your feedback regarding our proposed zoning code updates!

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Please use our interactive story map to leave your comments and opinions about the availability of housing types in St. Louis Park: [https://lnkd.in/ga\\_s7bbN](https://lnkd.in/ga_s7bbN).

After we are done collecting public feedback, our next steps will be to review the feedback and see if there are any common themes that suggest any changes that should be made. A summary of the comments received, along with staff recommendations, will be presented to the planning commission and city council in separate study sessions. Sign up for updates for more information about these next steps at [https://lnkd.in/ga\\_s7bbN](https://lnkd.in/ga_s7bbN).



6

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City of St. Louis Park

Social Media Specialist Savannah Byers • 21 Jun • Edited



Have you heard the term "Missing Middle Housing"?

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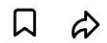


Expanding Neighborhood Housing Options

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4



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## 2 Cannabis zoning

### Executive summary

**Title:** Cannabis zoning

**Recommended action:** No action requested.

**Summary:** In 2023, the State of Minnesota passed legislation to legalize adult use of cannabis which included the creation of the Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) to oversee the regulation of commercial production and sale of cannabis and related products. Municipalities have been granted authority to enact regulations related to the zoning, local registration, and enforcement of cannabis sales, although OCM will not finalize some regulations until 2025.

In November 2023, city council discussed zoning regulations related to cannabis sales for on- and off-site consumption. Additional uses related to growing and manufacturing cannabis were not discussed. The legislation allows local governments to enact buffers for cannabis dispensaries up to 1,000 feet from schools and 500 feet from residential treatment facilities, athletic facilities, playgrounds and childcare facilities.

Staff propose regulating the sale of cannabis edibles and beverages for on-site consumption in the same manner as the city currently regulates on-site consumption of low potency Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) edibles. For off-sale cannabis dispensaries, staff propose the use to be permitted with conditions in the C-2 general commercial, MX-1 vertical mixed use, and MX-2 mixed use districts along with existing planned unit developments (PUD) that permit liquor stores. For cannabis producers, staff propose allowing this as a use permitted with conditions in the I-G general industrial district only.

**Supporting documents:** [November 20, 2023, city council special study session minutes](#)

**Prepared by:** Katelyn Champoux, associate planner

**Reviewed by:** Sean Walther, planning manager/deputy community development director

## Discussion

### Background

In 2023, the State of Minnesota passed legislation to legalize adult use of cannabis which included the creation of the Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) to oversee the regulation of commercial production and sale of cannabis and related products. Municipalities have been granted authority to enact regulations related to the zoning, local registration, and enforcement of cannabis sales, although the finalization of some regulations by the OCM will not occur until 2025. The city enacted a moratorium on cannabis-related businesses to protect the planning process as the city researches and considers zoning controls for cannabis products and related activities.

Cities may impose reasonable restrictions on land use activities. The restrictions typically include:

1. The places (e.g. zoning districts) the use is permitted.
2. The approval process such as, permitted by right, permitted with conditions, or permitted by conditional use permit.
3. The specific standards and conditions that would mitigate potential nuisances, and health and safety concerns that may accompany the use.
4. The manner such uses may operate, such as limited hours of operation and or distance separation requirements from other uses.

Local governments may limit the number of cannabis retailers allowed within their jurisdiction, but they must allow for at least one retail location per 12,500 residents. This equates to a minimum of four retail locations for St. Louis Park.

### Previous considerations

In November 2023, city council discussed zoning regulations related to cannabis sales for on- and off-site consumption. Additional uses related to growing and manufacturing cannabis were not discussed.

All council members in attendance provided policy direction to regulate the sale of cannabis edibles and beverages for on-site consumption in the zoning code in a similar manner as the city currently licenses on-site consumption of low potency Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) edibles.

City council members also seemed to support regulating the sale of cannabis for off-site consumption (dispensaries) in the zoning code in a similar manner as the city currently regulates liquor stores. City code allows liquor stores as a use permitted with conditions in the C-2 general commercial, MX-1 vertical mixed use, MX-2 neighborhood mixed use and some planned unit development (PUD) zoning districts. The city also requires liquor stores to be 300 feet away from schools and places of worship and 1,000 feet from pawnshops, currency exchanges, payday loan agencies, firearms sales and sexually oriented businesses.

Council members discussed appropriate buffers for cannabis dispensaries from various uses including schools, liquor stores, residential treatment facilities, athletic facilities, playgrounds and childcare facilities. Minnesota Statute allows local governments to require buffers for cannabis dispensaries up to 1,000 feet from schools and 500 feet from residential treatment

facilities, athletic facilities, playgrounds and childcare facilities. There was interest in considering a buffer larger than 300 feet between schools and dispensaries, although there was no consensus on the appropriate distance. Some council members also questioned the need for a buffer between liquor stores and dispensaries. Again, there was no consensus on the appropriate regulation.

Staff indicated they would review this feedback, conduct additional analysis, and return with staff recommendations in 2024.

**Present considerations**

***Recommendation for regulation of cannabis dispensaries***

Cannabis dispensary means a retailer that sells packaged cannabis products to the general public and medical patients. Dispensaries can buy cannabis (including plants and seedlings) and lower-potency hemp products from other cannabis businesses and sell them to customers. Staff recommend allowing cannabis dispensaries as a use permitted with conditions in the C-2 general commercial, MX-1 vertical mixed use, and MX-2 neighborhood mixed use districts, along with the planned unit developments (PUD) that permit liquor stores.

The proposed conditions for cannabis dispensaries include buffers from various uses such as schools, firearm sales, sexually oriented businesses, pawn shops, currency exchanges, payday loan agencies and other dispensaries.

Type of business	Permitted with conditions	Separation requirements
<b>Cannabis dispensary</b>	C-2, MX-1, MX-2, PUD 2, PUD 10, PUD 22, PUD 24	1,000 feet from schools
		1,000 feet from a pawn shop, currency exchange, payday loan agency, firearm sale or sexually oriented business
		1,000 feet from other cannabis dispensaries

Additionally, staff propose conditions limiting the hours of operation, prohibiting in-vehicle sales or service, prohibiting on-site consumption of low potency THC and cannabis edibles and beverages, and requiring all uses to be contained within a completely enclosed building.

Staff also propose permitting cannabis dispensaries as an accessory use to cannabis producers within the I-G general industrial district if they meet certain conditions.

Staff find these regulations will allow the city to meet the requirement to allow for one cannabis retail location per 12,500 residents and promote an equitable distribution of these businesses throughout the city.

**Recommendation for regulation of cannabis producers**

Cannabis producer means a facility where cannabis is grown or manufactured into various products such as edibles, concentrates, wax, oils and tinctures. Staff recommend allowing cannabis producers as a use permitted with conditions in the I-G general industrial district.

Type of business	Permitted with conditions	Separation requirements
<b>Cannabis producer</b>	I-G	1,000 feet from schools  1,000 feet from another cannabis producer

Staff acknowledge that cannabis producers may generate odors and noise and we have considered potential mitigation measures. Staff find the existing nuisance ordinances, general provisions for industrial restrictions and performance standards, district and use specific provisions, and architectural design standards in the city code will help mitigate impacts and provide regulatory tools to address nuisances caused by any of these activities. Existing provisions limit noise, odor, vibration, glare, heat, and waste material; limit hours of operation when abutting residential property; requiring noise-producing portions of a development to locate away from adjacent residential areas; and prohibit interior and exterior bars, grills, mesh or similar obstructions on doors and windows.

**Next steps**

Staff will present and facilitate a discussion on the proposed cannabis zoning regulations at the September 23, 2024, city council study session. Following this discussion, the planning commission will conduct a public hearing and make formal recommendations to city council. The council must take final action on the proposed ordinance by December 2, 2024 to ensure the regulations go into effect by January 1, 2025 and prior to the city’s moratorium on cannabis-related businesses expiring.