

# Community Engagement Summary

---



## 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: 403

## 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: 70

Unique Stakeholders (number of people responding with like, dislike, or other comments:  
15

Number of Comments: 32

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
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

Comment	Up Votes	Down Votes
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
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

## 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 2.9 (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: 33

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

The average level of support for the N-2 district was 4.2 (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: 6

### **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