

## **Planning commission meeting**

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 and watch the meeting in person.

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### **Agenda**

1. Statutory boards and commissions meeting preparation
2. Discussion of Zoning Code update

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

November 6, 2024 - planning commission regular meeting  
November 20, 2024 - planning commission regular meeting  
December 4, 2024 - planning commission regular meeting  
December 18, 2024 - planning commission regular meeting

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## 1 Statutory boards and commissions meeting preparation

**Recommended action:** No action needed at this time. Discuss the questions that will be posed at the upcoming city council study session to help the chair and staff liaison(s) prepare for the meeting to represent the commission.

**Background:** The city council expressed a desire to play a more significant role with boards and commissions. In response, staff organized conversations with boards and commissions as the start of new opportunities and interactions between the council and boards and commissions.

The goal of this conversation is for the council to hear from boards and commissions what they are working on and how they might work together better with council going forward. The insights gathered will help council members set future priorities for them.

The council met with the chairs and staff liaisons of the five advisory boards and commissions on September 16, 2024. A second conversation with the same purpose is scheduled to take place October 28, 2024 with the city's statutory boards. The council will meet with the chairs and commission liaisons from the city's statutory boards and commissions, which include planning commission and board of zoning appeals, housing authority, charter commission and fire civil service.

More specifically, the council will discuss the following questions with representatives of the city's statutory board and commissions:

1. What has your board/commission been working on in 2024?
2. How can the council best support your commission in the future?

Additionally, staff anticipate some discussion regarding the scope of work for each board/commission. A week prior to this meeting the council will be provided with background information on the powers of each board and commission, as well as procedures and limitations for changing the scope of work.

**Attachments:** Planning commission and board of zoning appeals descriptions, 2023 accomplishments and work plan summary, 2023-2024 work plan

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

### **Planning commission and board of zoning appeals descriptions**

The planning commission is responsible for reviewing and making recommendations on land use, site plans, conditional use permits, variances, and land subdivisions. The commission is also responsible for playing a key role in shaping the city's comprehensive plan and ensuring orderly development.

The board of zoning appeals is responsible for hearing and deciding appeals related to zoning decisions made by the Zoning Administrator. This includes granting variances, reviewing orders, requirements, permits, decisions, or refusals made under the Zoning Code. The board also ensures that zoning regulations are applied fairly and consistently.

Their powers derive from Chapter 462 of the Minnesota Statutes, which provides the legal framework for the commission's establishment and operation, granting them advisory authority to the city council in all matters wherein powers are assigned to the city council by state law or city Charter concerning land use, comprehensive planning, zoning, plating, changes in streets, other matters of a general planning nature and for the board of zoning appeals to hear appeals and make decisions on zoning matters.

## **2023 accomplishments**

### *Key duties:*

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

### *2023 activities:*

- Board of zoning appeals reviewed and approved one variance request amending a variance previously granted in 1981.
- Planning commission reviewed 10 applications in 2023, including floodplain related requests for Risor and Corsa developments, a new school district data center, Park Place East commercial addition, and added uses at The Shops at West End.
- Planning commission review of planning studies and reports for comprehensive plan and zoning map amendments, and zoning code updates. Highlights included a zoning code audit, and early stages of the Arrive + Thrive gateways planning, and floodplain ordinance amendment.

## **2023-2024 work plan**

*Review development applications:* Conduct public hearings and make informed recommendations to the city council.

- Highlights include reviewing applications for Zelia on Seven, Achromatic 6013, Central Community Center, Aquila School, Groves Academy and Wells Roadside

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

- Update light rail transit station area plans (Arrive + Thrive).

### *Zoning code studies:*

- Update zoning code – expanding neighborhood housing options
  - Review residential zoning districts, including allowing two-family dwellings in low density residential areas.
  - Increase density and housing options on high frequency transit routes and near rail stations
- Temporary use regulations.
- Heritage tree preservation.

### *Racial equity and inclusion:*

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

### *Opportunities for collaboration:*

Include other bodies (e.g., environment and sustainability and police advisory commissions) when conducting commissioner training.

## 2023-2024 planning commission and board of zoning appeals work plan

Time Frame	Initiative		Strategic Priorities	Purpose (see last page for definitions)
Ongoing	Review development applications; hold study sessions and hearings in order to make informed decisions and recommendations to city council.	<input type="checkbox"/> New Initiative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continued Initiative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ongoing Responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> Commission Initiated Project <input type="checkbox"/> Council Initiated Project <input type="checkbox"/> Report Findings (council requested) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Formal Recommendation (council requested)
Ongoing	Identify strategies to broaden participation and reduce barriers to public participation.	<input type="checkbox"/> New Initiative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continued Initiative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ongoing Responsibility	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> Commission Initiated Project <input type="checkbox"/> Council Initiated Project <input type="checkbox"/> Report Findings (council requested) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Formal Recommendation (council requested)
Q1 2023 – Q4 2024	Update light rail station area plans (Arrive + Thrive)	<input type="checkbox"/> New Initiative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continued Initiative <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing Responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> Commission Initiated Project <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council Initiated Project <input type="checkbox"/> Report Findings (council requested)

				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Formal Recommendation (council requested)
<b>Q2 2022 – Q1 2025</b>	Review residential districts, including two-family dwelling units (twin homes and duplexes) on appropriately sized lots in low density residential areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Initiative <input type="checkbox"/> Continued Initiative <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing Responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> Commission Initiated Project <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council Initiated Project <input type="checkbox"/> Report Findings (council requested) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Formal Recommendation (council requested)
<b>Q2 2022 – Q1 2025</b>	Increase densities and housing options on high frequency transit routes and near rail stations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Initiative <input type="checkbox"/> Continued Initiative <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing Responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> Commission Initiated Project <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council Initiated Project <input type="checkbox"/> Report Findings (council requested) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Formal Recommendation (council requested)
<b>Q4 2022 – Q1 2023</b>	Review temporary use regulations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Initiative <input type="checkbox"/> Continued Initiative <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing Responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commission Initiated Project <input type="checkbox"/> Council Initiated Project <input type="checkbox"/> Report Findings (council requested) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Formal Recommendation (council requested)

<b>Q2 2025 - Q2 2026</b>	Transit oriented development zoning regulations (Arrive + Thrive implementation)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Initiative <input type="checkbox"/> Continued Initiative <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing Responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> Commission Initiated Project <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council Initiated Project <input type="checkbox"/> Report Findings (council requested) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Formal Recommendation (council requested)
<b>Q2-Q3 2024</b>	Hold a planning commission meeting at an off-site location to foster community relationships.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Initiative <input type="checkbox"/> Continued Initiative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ongoing Responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commission Initiated Project <input type="checkbox"/> Council Initiated Project <input type="checkbox"/> Report Findings (council requested) <input type="checkbox"/> Formal Recommendation (council requested)
<b>Q3-Q4 2024</b>	Racial equity and inclusion training. Possibly joint training with other boards and commissions like ESC and police advisory commission. Alternatively, staff will share information or resources regarding the latest city policies and activities that intersect with the planning commission's work plan.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Initiative <input type="checkbox"/> Continued Initiative <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing Responsibility	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> Commission Initiated Project <input type="checkbox"/> Council Initiated Project <input type="checkbox"/> Report Findings (council requested) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Formal Recommendation (council requested)



## Parking Lot

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

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

### City of St. Louis Park Strategic Priorities

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

### Purpose: definitions

#### Commission Initiated Project

- Project initiated by the board or commission

#### Council Initiated Project

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

#### Report Findings

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

#### Formal Recommendation

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

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

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

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## 2 Discussion of Zoning Code Update

**Recommended Action:** No action is requested at this time. Staff will review the next steps of the process leading to council consideration, and review procedures for the public hearing.

**Background:** Staff presented the draft zoning ordinance and draft zoning map to the city council on September 9, 2024. The council made the comments below, and authorized staff to initiate the process to adopt the ordinance. Staff will review these comments with the planning commission.

1. Allowing commercial daycares in the N-1 district was raised as a concern.
2. A council member expressed concern about the number of group homes.
3. Request that staff consider policies that can be put into place to avoid corporate ownership of properties.
4. The council would like to see information about how this change impacts property values to adjacent properties and the neighborhood.
5. The council would like to see more illustrations showing how the proposed changes will fit into typical city blocks.

**Next steps:** Staff prepared the following schedule leading up to formal city council consideration:

- December 10-13, 2024. Park Perspectives will be mailed citywide. The publication will feature an article about the proposed zoning amendment and will announce one more informational meeting to be conducted on December 19, 2024.
- December 19, 2024 - Public informational meeting.
- December 11-25, 2024 – Announcement of the public hearing for the ordinance will be published three times in the legal notices of the Sun Sailor newspaper.
- January 8, 2025 – Public hearing conducted by the planning commission.
- January 15, 2025 – Reserved for the planning commission if additional time is desired.
- February 3, 2025 – First reading of the ordinance conducted by the city council.
- February 18, 2025 – Second reading of the ordinance conducted by the city council.

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

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