

Community Engagement Plan

Draft: September 22, 2026

St. Louis Park 2050
Comprehensive Plan

St. Louis Park
MINNESOTA
Experience LIFE in the Park

Community Engagement Plan

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1. PURPOSE

The City of St. Louis Park is beginning the process of engaging community members and stakeholders on the future of St. Louis Park through the 2050 Comprehensive Plan Update. This process is following on the heels of extensive community participation in developing a vision through Vision 4.0, and then the City Council interpreting the Vision 4.0 themes into five Strategic Priorities.

The purpose of this community engagement plan is to create a customized engagement strategy that defines timing, strategies, appropriate audiences and responsibilities for each phase of engagement. The engagement process will educate the public and stakeholders on the purpose and importance of a Comprehensive Plan and how it can act as an implementation platform for Vision 4.0 and the Strategic Priorities, and it will give participants a chance to meaningfully participate in shaping the further direction for St. Louis Park over the next 20 years. This Community Engagement Plan is meant to be a working document that will be updated throughout the planning process as the work evolves.

Vision 4.0

Engagement for the Comprehensive Plan builds on recent initiatives to guide the city's future vision and strategic priorities. After extensive community engagement, Vision 4.0 produced the following community vision and themes:

> Vision: Leading with Love: A Vision of Connection for St. Louis Park 4.0

Themes:

1. **Safety** – Creating a community where all people are and feel safe. This includes traffic safety, public safety, mental health response, and inclusive approaches to community well-being.
2. **Infrastructure** – Building and maintaining a connected, reliable, people-first public realm, with emphasis on walking, biking, transit, parks, and public facilities.
3. **Sustainability** – Advancing environmental stewardship, climate action, resilience, and protection of natural resources.
4. **Community & Belonging** – Strengthening social connections, inclusivity, civic participation, cultural vitality, and opportunities for people to gather and feel connected.
5. **Housing & Affordability** – Expanding housing choice, affordability, accessibility, and the ability for residents to remain in the community throughout different life stages.

City Council Strategic Priorities

Adopted on April 6, 2026, the City Council's Strategic Priorities take the input and themes from Vision 4.0 and set an implementation framework that guides budgeting, services, planning, and performance through 2036. The City Council's Strategic Priorities are:

- A welcoming, safe community: An inclusive, equitable and vibrant city where everyone feels safe and experiences a strong sense of belonging.
- Good governance: A city that delivers reliable services, uses city resources responsibly, operates transparently and builds strong relationships with residents.
- Connected, safe infrastructure: Safe, reliable and well-maintained infrastructure and neighborhoods that connect people and places with an emphasis on walking, biking and transit.

- Diverse, affordable and dignified housing: A range of quality, affordable and attainable housing options.
- Climate leadership and natural spaces: Climate leader that cares for the planet and maintains dynamic parks that connect people and nature.

2. GOALS AND INTENDED OUTCOMES

Engagement Goals

The first step in any public engagement process should be to set commonly understood goals for how stakeholders are involved and decisions are made to arrive at a successful outcome for the St. Louis Park Comprehensive Plan. These goals are the backbone of the engagement process and will help to shape the tools we use to connect with stakeholders. In other words, every meeting, survey, interview, or tour will be derived from and contribute to these goals. We propose the process is guided by these engagement goals:

Engage in meaningful and relevant dialogue – The community should feel that the dialogue has been meaningful and relevant to their interests and daily lives and that they understand how their input is furthering implementation of Vision 4.0 and the City Council's Strategic Priorities.

Prioritize inclusive representation – The perspectives and participation of a broad range of community members should be equitably represented in the process and resulting plan.

Provide access to information and opportunities – The public should have the information they need to participate in ways that are appropriate to their experiences and lifestyles.

Make sure contributions have impact – The public should feel their input has been thoughtfully considered and see their contributions reflected in the plan.

Create empowering experiences – Community leadership and capacity should be built through the process.

Outcomes

Goal	Outcome
Meaningful and relevant dialogue	Engagement activities have been designed with 2, 5, and 10-minute interactions in mind. Conversations were focused on how the plan results can positively impact the daily lives of participants. Any activities were facilitated by both Stantec and City staff consistently with facilitation guides, trainings, and other tools.
Inclusive representation	Non-traditional promotion for engagement activities has been used. Exit surveys showed new people joined the process.
Access to information and opportunities	Participants had access to decision-makers throughout the process. Participants know how this engagement builds on Vision 4.0 and other plans. Other City initiatives and events were advertised through the Comprehensive Plan process when feasible.
Contributions with impact	The final plan reflects community feedback. The final plan includes feedback quotes and photo documentation of process.
Empowering experiences	Participants learned how the comprehensive planning process works, and how planning decisions are made. Participants attended more than one event.

3. RACIAL EQUITY IMPACT ANALYSIS

A Racial Equity Impact Analysis (REIA) is a tool used in City of St. Louis Park projects to help decision-makers and staff consider racial equity outcomes as they develop policies, practices, programs, and budgets. It should be used early in the development of a project to make sure its direction aligns with the City's racial equity and inclusion values and goals. A key element for the comprehensive plan is ensuring a broader representation of voices to help guide the policies that affect the daily lives of all residents, employees, and visitors. While broad and effective engagement is a significant component of both the comprehensive plan and a strong racial equity and inclusion process, the comprehensive plan should also evaluate how the policy development and strategy outcomes should improve community disparities.

The REIA is summarized here in the draft Community Engagement Plan due to the strong focus on gaining input and insights from the experiences of traditionally underrepresented populations in St. Louis Park. Additional elements of the comprehensive plan process will evaluate potential policies and strategies through a racial equity lens.

The City of St. Louis Park identifies two types of REIA evaluations:

1. Rapid REIA – This is used when making a minor change to an already established program.
2. Full REIA Analysis – A full REIA will be conducted if City staff are proposing a new policy or program that can have citywide impacts. The comprehensive plan update fits into this category.

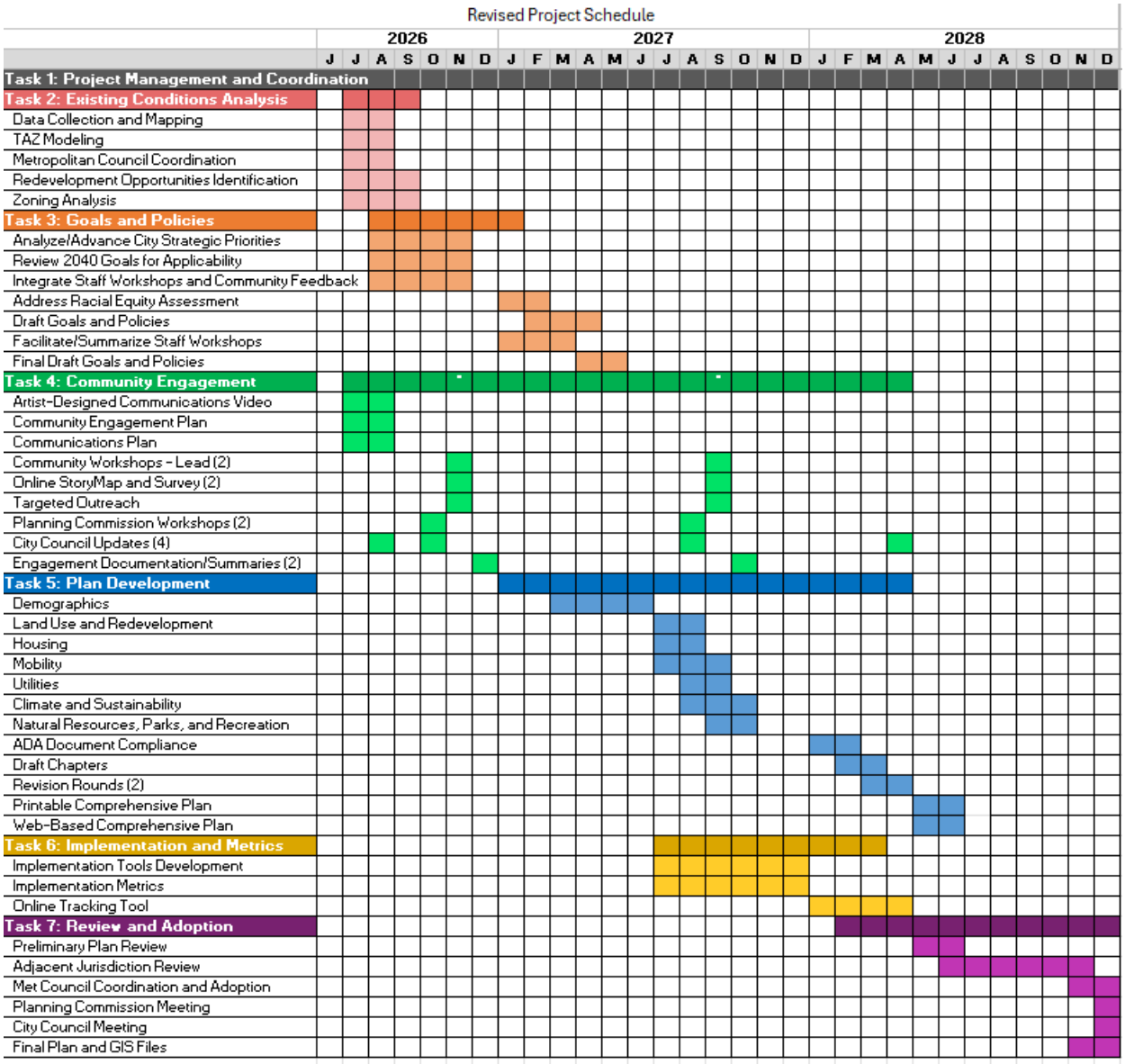
The Full REIA will include:

- Statement of desired project purpose.
- Clear analysis of proposed policy changes in the comprehensive plan update.
- Identification of historical disparities or discrimination the plan can address.
- Summary of participation strategies and resulting input.
- Analysis of how the project outcomes create positive impacts and who will benefit.
- Analysis of potential negative impacts, intentional and unintentional, that could result from the comprehensive plan, and who will be disadvantaged.

4. OUTREACH SCHEDULE

Project Engagement Phases

1. Project Launch Phase (August - September 2026)
2. 1st Engagement Phase (September - December 2026)
3. 2nd Engagement Phase (September - November 2027)



5. STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION

Stantec and City of St. Louis engagement and communications staff identified a variety of stakeholder groups that should receive targeted promotion and engagement because they are either hard to reach or traditionally underrepresented in City planning processes.

Youth and Families

A comprehensive plan is particularly relevant for youth and young families because they are most likely to be the city residents, employees, and visitors of the future. The engagement process could reach them in person through parent/teacher nights at the middle school or high school, pop-up events at apartment complexes, Halloween or other holiday events (e.g. Halloween party at Westwood Hills), fast food restaurants near high school, or online via virtual public engagement on their own time. Determining what will keep them in St. Louis Park will be important.

Aquila Neighborhood

The Aquila neighborhood is part of Ward 3 and located in the western part of the city around Aquila Park and Aquila Elementary School. It is a diverse neighborhood of homeowners and renters while many households speak Spanish. Engaging these residents directly in their neighborhood through pop-up events may be the best way to get meaningful input. The park, in particular, gets busy with families in the evenings and on weekends, playing sports, walking dogs, or at the playground. The Aquila Neighborhood Association may also be an effective partner at promoting attendance at larger comprehensive plan events.

Small Business Owners/Employees

Small business owners include people running bricks-and-mortar businesses or entrepreneurs working from home or a co-working location. Those who own a physical business may be connected to a business group like the Chamber or geographic business associations who represent their interests. There are no official business associations for smaller commercial districts in St. Louis Park. Those who work independently, without a physical storefront, likely have different goals and opinions on the city's future and may choose to get involved during off-hours through an interactive website, but the best proven method is to conduct one-on-one visits.

Places of Worship

St. Louis Park includes a variety of places of worship that draw patrons from across the metro. These stakeholders may attend services on nights and weekends, and they may also come for other large events or day-to-day activities hosted in the building. Because places of worship are destination locations, patrons are unlikely to know about big community events if they are not residents. Comprehensive plan engagement may be able to get input from these audiences through promotion of online engagement at their specific place of worship, or through pop-up events at their locations or nearby where patrons may go for a meal or shopping.

Renters and Young Professionals

Traditionally harder to reach than homeowners, renters and young professionals are becoming a larger subset of the St. Louis Park population with the dense housing continuing to be built throughout the

city. Renters are more mobile but still choose to live in St. Louis Park over other nearby cities, and it is important for the comprehensive plan to identify the features that are a draw to them. They will provide input in a variety of ways that are convenient, so promoting both online and in-person events will be a benefit. They can also be reached through pop-up events in their neighborhoods and where they hang out (e.g. brewery, West End restaurants, open skating at the recreation center, and music in the park events). The St. Louis Park Area Rental Coalition (SPARC) can be a valuable promotion partner, and the City has also worked through property managers in some previous projects to promote engagement activities through local email distribution lists. Families who rent will be reached in other ways as defined under Youth and Families.

Empty Nesters

Empty nesters are usually residents that are either aging in place once their children move out, or they have decided to downsize to an apartment/condo or townhome. The population of empty nesters will continue growing with the aging of the Baby Boomer generation, so the voices and needs of seniors should be drivers in the engagement process. Customized outreach efforts may be required to reach seniors, but a strong focus should be placed on promoting existing in-person events to this audience. Opportunities may be the Lenox Community Center that has many senior groups or existing 55+ age-restricted apartment buildings like Risor.

Workforce

Employees of businesses experience the city in the geography where they work, how they get to and from work, and whether they can get daily needs met through food options and errands. St. Louis Park historically has had a balance of housing and businesses which supports a balanced local economy. The workforce is unlikely to attend an in-person community event, but employees may provide input online or at pop-ups near their businesses.

Visitors

St. Louis Park has a wide variety of destinations for visitors including big-box retailers, movie theaters, bars and restaurants, and recreation activities. The local economy benefits from visitors spending their money locally. While many visitors drive to these destinations, some walk and bike and more will come to St. Louis Park via the bus and light-rail transit in the near future. Pop-up activities at places like Costco, breweries, the pool the Rec Center Aquatic Park, West End Wednesdays, SWLRT opening events in 2027, and other destinations may be the most effective way to get input from this group.

6. PROJECT ADVISORY STRUCTURE

The input gathered through this engagement process will inform major milestones of the comprehensive planning process and how these formal committees review and approve this plan.

Planning Commission

The St. Louis Park Planning Commission advises on land use and the orderly development within the city. Based on that expertise, the Planning Commission will participate in a comprehensive plan workshop before each engagement push to refine public-facing content and questions.

City Council

The St. Louis Park City Council will guide the direction of the comprehensive plan based on their own strategic planning priorities, input from their own constituents, and the broader St. Louis Park community. The City Council will receive up to four check-ins at milestones in the process, including before and after each engagement push, to guide how engagement is framed and also to review engagement summaries to determine how it should impact decisions for the next phase of work.

Metropolitan Council

While the purpose of this 2050 Comprehensive Plan is to represent the unique needs and desires of St. Louis Park, the Metropolitan Council identifies required elements intending to complement and implement Imagine 2050, the regional planning framework. The project team will meet with the Metropolitan Council sector representative early in the process to review requirements and discuss forecast changes. There may be opportunities to meet with Metropolitan Council experts in topics like housing, parks, and other comprehensive plan topics to anticipate and address any potential issues.

7. PROJECT PHASES

Project Launch: Enlighten + Educate

Intent: Establish the foundation for meaningful participation by ensuring community members clearly understand the purpose of the project in relation to Vision 4.0 and the Council's Strategic Priorities, how decisions will be made, and where their voices can create impact.

People feel informed, respected, and invited

Generating awareness + understanding of how we got here – 2040 comprehensive plan goals in action

Building trust + inclusion/access

Contextualize the work that has been done + will be done – Vision 4.0, City Council Strategic Priorities, implementing the HOW

Goal: Public + stakeholders alike understand not just "what" the project is, but "why" it matters as an implementation platform for Vision 4.0 and the Council's Strategic Priorities, and how their voice/participation contributes to their future community/outcome.

Activities/Deliverables

- Introductory content videos for social and website
- Interviews w/ City staff + project stakeholders
- Mayor, Nadia Mohammed
- Man on Street: "getting the word out" at community events & public locations

Engagement Push #1: Excite & Enhance

Intent: Generating high-quality participation, actionable feedback, and collaborative refinement of ideas. This phase shifts engagement from awareness-building into active co-creation.

- Build energy & momentum around project goals
- Creatively engage underrepresented communities
- Remove barriers to participation and create bridges for authentic input
- Targeted conversations, clear decision points, and focused dialogue

Goal: Enhance the quality and depth of dialogue between residents, stakeholders, and decision-makers, while continuing to build on awareness and public investment in this project.

Our first touchpoint will be after our team has gathered and reviewed relevant directions from previous city-wide and neighborhood plans. We will pair those priorities with the outcomes of Vision 4.0 and Council's Strategic Priorities, resulting in a set of comprehensive plan topics that have woven past and current directions. We will conduct targeted engagement to surface any missing topics or ideas, helping diverse audiences see their experiences and aspirations reflected in the comprehensive plan. A possible tool to achieve the goal of this engagement push is to reflect how past visions and comprehensive plans have resulted in valuable community improvements.

Activities/Deliverables

- Up to six pop-up engagement activations at community gathering spaces, including youth-focused outreach activities
- Artist-driven activity in community workshop
- Project website
- Engagement summary media content
- Clear communication of "what we heard" and "how it shaped decisions"
- Creative feedback tools: storytelling walls, visual mapping, interactive surveys/voting
- Community awareness campaigns across digital platforms

Potential pop-up events and locations can include:

- Music in the Park
- Aquila School park and playground
- Westwood Hills Nature Center Annual Halloween Party
- Wolfe Park HOWL-O-WEEN event
- Open skating times at the Rec Center
- McDonald's before/after high school day
- Parent/teacher nights at middle and high school (HS October 8, MS November 17)
- High School Fall Play (November 19-21)
- UGLY Sweater Dash (December 6)

Engagement Push #2: Equip & Empower

Intent: ensures that engagement outcomes are translated into actionable tools, measurable strategies, and long-term civic capacity.

- Translating insights from the first two phases into accessible resources
- Synthesize engagement findings into actionable metrics and frameworks
- Empower residents and decision-makers with the information, context, and tools to move from engagement into implementation

Goal: Communities can see how their input shaped the project outcomes and understand how to continue participating in implementation and accountability.

City staff have indicated a priority to engage the public on actionable implementation and metrics which we agree is critical for buy-in. Our team will translate complex planning policies into engagement questions that are relatable and values based. Public input in this phase will guide a set of implementation metrics that support measurable accountability, transparency, and alignment with comprehensive plan priorities. We may ask: How can we tell St. Louis Park is getting better . . . versus . . . did we do a thing?

Activities/Deliverables

- Up to six pop-up engagement activations at community gathering spaces
- Artist-driven activity in community workshop

- Engagement summary media content
- Clear communication of “what we heard” and “how it shaped decisions”
- Public-facing implementation graphics and visuals
- Informed metrics and frameworks that are tied to community priorities

8. OUTREACH TECHNIQUES

Community Workshops

Public meetings should be fun, interactive, and accessible. Most stakeholders that attend a community meeting are those with a strong interest in the Comprehensive Plan and who lack barriers to attending such as time, childcare, and language barriers. The project team will design public meetings that eliminate as many barriers to participation as possible by providing refreshments, formatting the meetings to be family-friendly, designing creative engagement tools, offering interpretation and translation if needed, and offering many ways to provide feedback.

Project Website

Many people use the web to stay up to date on current events, including what is happening in their own backyard. The project web page will be hosted on the City's website and will be used as an information portal for project updates, promotion and summarizing of outreach activities, and information on the decision-making process. Interactive online engagement will live on the project webpage (like Storymaps and surveys). The project website will have up-to-date information about outreach activities, including whether they will be held in-person or virtually.

Social Media

People are busy but want to stay connected in a way that works best for them. We will work with City staff to use social media to promote input opportunities and solicit feedback. The goal for the project's social media presence is to promote attendance at outreach events and participation in virtual engagement tools.

Interactive Online Mapping

This tool encourages key audiences to submit comments about location- specific planning policies. Participants will be invited to place markers on a St. Louis Park map and add comments as well as see feedback from other users and then add on to existing comments. Interactive maps will be available via Storymaps. Story Maps will be a critical part of engagement during this project, regardless of whether outreach events are held virtually or in-person. Information shared at outreach events will be supplemented and reinforced by the online Story Maps.

Online Engagement Survey

An online survey will be encompassed within a Story map to ask more detailed questions in reaction to work done so far or in preparation for decisions to come.

Targeted Outreach

Targeted outreach will be geared toward the audiences listed in the Stakeholder Identification above with an emphasis on audiences that further achieve racial equity and inclusion. This level of outreach is most effective if it goes to where people are comfortable and naturally gather. Modern Day Me will work with City staff prior to each engagement push on a list of communitywide events, local gathering places, busy businesses or areas, and other locations that will garner successful input.

9. PROMOTION AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

The City of St. Louis Park has extensive experience in proactive communication and promotion of City programs, events, and decisions. Modern Day Me and Stantec will be collaborative partners with the City Communications team and supplement promotion and communications of engagement events as needed. MDM will lead the effort of developing a communications video to launch the comprehensive plan process. The communications plan for this video is attached to this Community Engagement Plan with a summary below.

Communications Video

See Appendix A

Social Media and Notifications

The City and its partners will utilize this list (and maybe more) to promote the activities associated with each engagement push. Stantec will support these efforts by writing or designing the communications material.

- Facebook (currently limited use)
- Instagram
- TikTok
- Nextdoor (standard practice is to identify by neighborhood)
- ParkTV YouTube channel

Traditional Sources

Some St. Louis Park residents, particularly those who have lived in the city longer term, may rely on more traditional methods to find out what community events are happening. The items listed below will be valuable to supplement social media promotion.

- City email and text notifications (standard practice is to identify by neighborhood)
- ParkAlert notifications
- Park Perspective newsletter (issued seasonally with details completed in February, April, July, and October)
- Utility bills
- Press releases
- City calendar
- Mayor and City Council communications (newsletter, e-blasts, etc.)

10. APPENDIX

More details to come