

## City of St. Louis Park Request for Proposals

Strategic Planning Consultant

Issued: December 1, 2025

**Submission deadline: December 15, 2025**

### Questions and answers

Questions submitted regarding the request for proposals for a strategic planning consultant have been collected between Dec. 1, 2025 and today. The full list of questions and their answers are listed below, sorted by topic.

#### a. **Timeline and scope of the RFP**

**Q:** I just want to confirm which is the correct alternate date for the initial council discussion, Jan 19 or 20?

**A:** The dates provided in the RFP for the initial council study session discussion are correct: Jan. 12 or Jan. 20, 2026. The city council routinely holds special study sessions, when their regular meeting agendas allow, to reduce the number of evenings they have meetings in the year. Also, city hall is closed on Jan. 19, so council will meet on Tuesday due to the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday.

**Q:** When will the Vision 4.0 Report be ready to review?

**A:** The Vision 4.0 report was made available on the city website on Dec. 5, 2025. It is posted under legal notices as [Vision 4.0 Report](#) and in the city council study session agenda [full packet](#) for Dec. 8, 2025.

**Q:** Can you provide an estimate of the number of potential strategic priorities Vision 4.0 has generated?

**A:** The Vision 4.0 process resulted in recommendations organized around five core themes: Safety, Infrastructure, Sustainability, Community & Belonging, and Housing & Affordability. These themes are further translated into twenty Directional Recommendations (four per theme) that further articulate the community's vision. The consultant's role in Phase I is to facilitate the council conversation to set the final strategic priorities with the Vision 4.0 initiative as an important input into that process.

**a. Timeline and scope of the RFP**

**Q:** The RFP notes that Vision 3.0 informed the 2040 comprehensive plan. Why is a new strategic planning exercise being undertaken now, prior to 2040?

**A:** The current Vision 4.0 initiative represents the fourth iteration of the city's comprehensive strategic visioning process, which began over 30 years ago. This effort is designed to set the strategic priorities for the next decade. The strategic priorities resulting from Vision 4.0 will also inform the city's 2050 comprehensive plan. State law requires metropolitan area counties and municipalities to update their 20-year comprehensive plans every ten years. And from a practical standpoint, we have found that the city's strategic priorities do tend to evolve over time and having the feedback loop is useful to calibrating our organization's response. It is also important for local leadership to be involved in the process and to influence the city's re-commit or re-focus in these areas.

**b. Vision 4.0 context and sensitivity**

**Q:** Are there elements of the Vision 4.0 findings that council or staff expect to be especially sensitive, complex, or high-stakes and may require additional time or care during facilitation?

**A:** Yes, the Vision 4.0 findings highlight several complex areas:

- Housing and Affordability was the most-discussed topic, and conversations must balance the strong push for more housing and more diversity of housing options with concerns about maintaining neighborhood character and tax impacts on current homeowners.
- Safety discussions require care, as BIPOC residents and renters expressed a complex view, linking safety to representation, trust and addressing systemic inequities in public safety systems.
- Community and Belonging is tied to representation, with BIPOC residents being more than three times as likely as white residents to name "Diverse City Staff" as a priority, demonstrating a clear link between connection and seeing oneself reflected in city leadership.

**Q:** Will the consultant have full access to all supporting data and community input from the Vision 4.0 process, or only the final report?

**A:** The consultant will have access to all supporting data and community input (raw data) from the engagement process. The Vision 4.0 engagement process generated extensive data, including quantitative and qualitative input from over 2,000 community interactions via mobile pop-ups, a community survey (633 responses) and community conversations (96 residents).

**b. Vision 4.0 context and sensitivity**

**Q:** Are there specific community groups or demographics the city expects to be represented in engagement activities beyond council and staff?

**A:** The Vision 4.0 community engagement strategy focused on gathering input from a diverse range of people, specifically prioritizing underrepresented and emerging voices, youth, and renters. The resulting recommendations strongly emphasize addressing the unique concerns and systemic barriers faced by BIPOC residents and renters across themes like safety, equity, and affordability. Staff does not expect that there will need to be a large or extensive engagement process with community to develop the final strategic plan.

**c. Existing plans and frameworks**

**Q:** The new strategic plan will inform the 2050 Comp Plan, but are there any existing plans (e.g., equity, climate, housing, or transportation) that must be integrated into the new strategic plan?

**A:** Yes. The new strategic plan must align with the city's ongoing equity and inclusion work. The city's core values and strategic priorities include commitments to:

- Being a leader in racial equity and inclusion.
- Continued leadership in environmental stewardship.
- Providing a broad range of housing and neighborhood-oriented development.
- Providing a variety of options for safe and reliable mobility/transportation.

The Vision 4.0 report also references existing initiatives such as the Climate Action Plan, previous successes in mobility (Connect the Park) and housing.

**Q:** Does the Vision 4.0 report include an evaluation of the previous strategic plan? If not, will this evaluation be part of the consultant's scope?

**A:** The Vision 4.0 report provides detailed historical context regarding the evolution of the city's visioning processes (Vision 1.0, 2.0, 3.0), noting their outcomes and how they form a baseline for the current effort. The current scope requires the consultant to facilitate priority setting based on Vision 4.0 findings and develop a strategic plan. There is no current city-wide strategic plan to develop.

**Q:** Are there existing equity definitions, frameworks, or metrics that you want the consultant to use so the plan is consistent with current city practice?

**A:** The plan must align with the city's ongoing equity and inclusion work, which calls for systematically embedding the principles of racial equity and inclusion into all city operations. Vision 3.0 resulted in a specific mandate to become a "Leader in Racial Equity and Inclusion". Any formal definitions, frameworks, or performance metrics currently used by the city for its' racial equity work will be shared with the selected consultant.

**c. Existing plans and frameworks**

**Q:** What planning frameworks does the city currently use for goals, objectives, action items, cross-departmental coordination, or performance tracking?

**A:** The city is beginning to utilize performance indicators in our budgeting process, and several departments have reporting tools (maps, dashboards, metrics) and other tools they have developed for aspects of their work relating to the current strategic priorities.

The new strategic plan must include: clear goals and objectives, specific, measurable action items/strategies, identified responsible parties (staff/departments), and performance metrics and reporting structure.

**d. Council and staff engagement (Phase I and II)**

**Q:** Who will serve as the primary liaison between the consultant and the council during Phase I to ensure clarity, alignment, and smooth communication?

**A:** Cheyenne Brodeen, administrative services director, will be the direct point of contact and will have complete authority to transmit instructions, receive information, and define the city's policy and decisions related to the agreement. All proposals and correspondence should be directed to [cbrodeen@stlouisparkmn.gov](mailto:cbrodeen@stlouisparkmn.gov).

**Q:** Which staff teams, department leaders, or subject-matter experts will serve as primary points of contact during Phase I?

**A:** The consultant is expected to facilitate discussions with staff leadership (directors and/or deputy directors), including the city manager and deputy city manager, as needed to gather input and coordinate the planning process. The consultant must also consult with staff (as necessary) to understand the Vision 4.0 process and final report.

**Q:** What is the city's vision for the two study sessions in Phase I? What format and outcomes are expected?

**A:** The Phase I initial study session (Jan. 12 or Jan. 20, 2026) is intended to recap the Vision 4.0 process for all council members (including new members) and begin the initial discussion on setting strategic priorities. An additional study session is available if further discussion is needed prior to the retreat. The city would look to the consultant to provide possible examples of format for these conversations in their proposals.

**d. Council and staff engagement (Phase I and II)**

**Q:** Who do you anticipate participating in the retreat besides the City Council (e.g., city manager, department directors, equity staff), and would staff participate as observers, presenters, or full participants?

**A:** The council is the main audience and decision-maker for Phase I, which includes the retreat. Leadership staff (directors, including the REI director), along with the city manager and deputy city manager, will participate in discussions as needed to gather input and coordinate the planning process.

**Q:** How has the council historically approached strategic priority-setting conversations and retreats (e.g., structured facilitation, informal discussion, consensus-building exercises, voting)?

**A:** Historically, there has not been a specific or standard way in which the council has determined the final strategic priorities. There is no specific information detailing the council's historical approach to strategic priority-setting conversations, successful decision-making methods, or common sticking points that can be provided. Proposers must, however, include a clear, detailed approach and work plan for Phase I, including how consensus will be achieved with a diverse council.

**Q:** Are there known dynamics among current or incoming council members that should inform how we design the facilitation structure?

**A:** At a high level, there will be only one current council member who was on the council when the strategic priorities from Vision 3.0 were chosen, so in general this process will feel new to most of them. The council is used to operating on a consensus basis for regular study session conversations and do it well. There will be two new council members joining the council in 2026, they both have been following the Vision 4.0 process.

**e. Deliverables and budget**

**Q:** The RFP states a budget not to exceed \$50,000. Does this amount include all consultant expenses such as travel, materials, and facilitation costs, or will any city-provided resources offset costs?

**A:** Yes. The city has allocated a total budget not to exceed \$50,000 for all services related to Phase I (facilitation) and Phase II (strategic plan development). The fee proposal must include a cost breakdown for both phases, including all anticipated expenses, and full disclosure of direct and indirect fees.

**e. Deliverables and budget**

**Q:** For Phase II, will the final strategic plan require formal council adoption, or is staff approval sufficient?

**A:** The council determines and adopts the final strategic priorities in Phase I. The development of the comprehensive plan in Phase II is primarily staff-led, and the council will be kept informed and provide feedback on the plan.

**Q:** Will the city cover the consultant's food and related costs for the retreat, or should those be included in the consultant's budget?

**A:** Proposers should include all anticipated costs related to the retreat in their initial budget submission. Lunches and other food related costs for consultants are not reimbursable expenses.

**Q:** Will the city invest internal resources in the design and communication of a public-facing strategic plan, or should the consultant plan to manage these design elements?

**A:** The consultant is responsible for producing a final, presentation-ready strategic plan document. The city will manage any necessary final communications regarding its completion.