

IV. Why We Are A Livable Community

D. Housing Plan



Photo: Todd Pernsteiner



Photo: Aryeh Schwartz / SLP Friends of the Arts



Photo: Sherm Stanchfield / SLP Friends of the Arts

Vision for Housing

St. Louis Park is committed to providing a well-maintained and diverse housing stock. In particular, the City's focus will be on the three following strategies:

- Remodeling and expanding move-up, single-family, owner-occupied homes.
- Property maintenance to foster quality housing and community aesthetics.
- Working towards affordable single-family home ownership throughout the city.

“St. Louis Park's diverse housing options enable citizens to remain in the City through all stages of life. Providing living arrangements to accommodate all generations' needs enhances the chances of building a strong community and sense of ownership.”

This Vision for Housing reflects Vision St. Louis Park, the City's Strategic Plan, and the 2003-2005 Housing Summit. During the City's 2006 visioning process, housing was identified as one of eight specific vision areas for the community. The Vision action team for housing, which consisted of 17 citizens and City staff, developed the Vision for Housing based on the information gathered during the extensive interview process that occurred as part of the visioning process.

2003 – 2005 Housing Summit

The City's housing goals, strategies, and initiatives were developed during the 2003-2005 Housing Summit process and originally adopted by the City Council in March 2005. As a means to educate, revisit, and consider any necessary changes to the City's housing policies, strategies, and goals, a series of meetings were held between the City Council, Planning Commission, Housing Authority Board, School Board, County Commissioner, and a business representative. The discussions that were held at these meetings and subsequent changes made to the City's goals, strategies, and initiatives reflect what is best for the collective good of the entire St. Louis Park community.

Goals for Housing

The City's 12 housing goals encompass seven broad categories:

- Housing Production
- Housing Condition and Preservation
- Owner/Rental Ratio
- Affordable, Workforce, and Supportive Housing
- Large Homes for Families
- Senior Housing
- Land Use

The actual goal statements, as well as strategies and initiatives, are contained in the Goals, Strategies & Initiatives section at the end of this chapter.

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Where We Have Been

History of Housing Development

The progression of housing built in St. Louis Park occurred in concentric rings followed by the east to west expansion of Minneapolis into the western suburbs. Some of the earliest houses were constructed by Monitor Works, a manufacturer of grain seeders, for factory workers. A few of these houses still exist today in the Elmwood neighborhood. The oldest single-family homes were built before 1900 near Wooddale Avenue and State Highway 7. It is estimated that over 900 units in the city are more than seventy-five years old (built before 1930).

During the 1920s, St. Louis Park experienced significant growth in the number of housing units. This growth was arrested when the U.S. was thrown into the Great Depression in the 1930s. During the period between 1937 and 1942, growth resumed at a rapid rate to meet the pent-up demand created during the depression. This growth was interrupted again by the U.S. involvement in World War II.

By 1947, growth had resumed once more and by 1950, St. Louis Park was the fastest growing community in the state with 1,068 housing units added in that year alone. From 1940 to 1950, growth averaged the equivalent of 6.9 persons moving into St. Louis Park every day! After the war, returning veterans, easy home financing through the G.I. Bill, and “assembly line” type construction methods spurred the flurry of home construction in St. Louis Park where previous land speculation had already created thousands of building lots. The growth of single-family houses remained strong through the mid-1950s. The construction of duplexes in St. Louis Park generally parallels the timeline of single-family home construction.

A wide variety of housing stock was constructed ranging from cottages and factory-built housing to large contemporary units with Queen Anne, prairie, English Tudor, Cape Cod, colonial, and rambler designs in between. Nonetheless, the most common house type in St. Louis Park is the Cape Cod or small rambler built during the housing explosion which occurred after 1939.

Very few single-family homes have been built since the boom time of the 1950s and 1960s. Most new housing during the past 30 years has been apartments, condominiums and townhouses, both rental and owner-occupied.

In 1949, Donovan Construction Co. received approval for Meadowbrook Manor, a development consisting of 640 townhouse- and apartment-style units in 89 buildings. Constructed in the early 1950s, this was the largest multi-family housing project in the Midwest for its time. With the exception of these townhouse-style rental units, the construction of townhouses began in the 1970s with the largest number of townhouses being built during the 1970s and 1980s.

The condominium market was strong in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s when many buildings were constructed and a number of existing apartment buildings were converted to condominiums. The condominium market was relatively soft during the late 1980s and early 1990s, but the strong real estate market in the last half of the 1990s positively influenced the condominium market as well. Many buildings which were originally designed as rental units converted to owner-occupied condominium units. Since 2000, the growth in condominium housing has been healthy with the construction of approximately 900 new condominium housing units.

The City experienced a building boom for apartments in the 1960s when many of the community’s smaller apartment buildings were constructed. Apartment construction continued through the 1980s, with the newer construction being larger buildings. The 1990s saw only two new apartment buildings constructed during the entire decade. Since 2000, development of apartment buildings has resurged somewhat with the construction of approximately 900 apartment units.

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Housing Authority

The City of St. Louis Park Housing & Redevelopment Authority (HRA) was formed in 1970 by the City Council as an independent governmental entity. In 1988 the HRA became the Housing Authority (HA) when the City Council approved moving redevelopment powers to an Economic Development Authority (EDA). The Housing Authority is governed by a Board of Commissioners that are appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council. Commissioners serve five-year terms, with one Commissioner representing assisted housing program participants.

Over the past four decades, the St. Louis Park Housing Authority has successfully developed and administered housing that has provided affordable rental options for the residents of the City. The Housing Authority has purchased and rehabilitated homes, as well as constructed new homes, as part of its program to provide low-rent housing options in the community. The Housing Authority has also administered affordable/subsidized housing voucher programs as well as project-based affordable housing programs.

The Housing Authority's Mission is to develop, integrate, and operate housing and housing assistance policies and programs to ensure the availability of safe, affordable, and desirable housing options that meet the diverse, lifecycle housing needs of all of the residents of St. Louis Park.

The Housing Authority administers programs that ensure availability of affordable, safe, and desirable housing options in the St. Louis Park community. These programs include the Public Housing program, Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher rental assistance program, Shelter Plus Care rental assistance program, and TRAILS (Training & Resources to Attain Individual Long-Term Success) family self-sufficiency program. In 2008, the Housing Authority provided services for over 500 eligible, low-income households through its housing programs. The Housing Authority also oversees administration of home improvement loans to assist homeowners with renovations, facilitates redevelopment of blighted or vacant properties, and partners with developers to meet affordable housing needs.

Where We Are Today

Description of Housing Type

In 2008, the City of St. Louis Park had over 22,000 housing units with more than 45,000 residents. The largest component of the City's housing stock is single-family detached homes, accounting for about half of the entire housing stock (see table below). The housing stock also includes apartments (32%), townhomes and condominiums (15%), and duplexes (2%). In 2007, the City's first senior cooperative, Aquila Commons, was constructed providing a new housing option for senior residents.

Current Housing by Type of Dwelling Unit

Type	1998		2005		2008	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Single-Family Detached	11,562	55%	11,556	52%	11,605	51%
Duplex	418	2%	424	2%	410	2%
Condos/Townhomes	2,399	11%	2,698	12%	3,320	15%
Apartments	6,594	31%	7,477	34%	7,328	32%
Total	20,973	100%	22,155	100%	22,663	100%

Source: St. Louis Park Community Development and Assessing

Tenure

In 2008, 60% of St. Louis Park's housing units were owner-occupied and 40% were rental. This proportion of owner-occupied versus renter-occupied has remained steady since 1990. Owner-occupied units are predominantly single-family detached homes, townhomes, condos and cooperative units, while rental units are primarily apartments.

Current Housing by Tenure (Owner/Renter)

Tenure	1990		2000		2008	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Owner-Occupied	12,469	63%	13,187	63%	13,600	60%
Renter-Occupied	7,456	37%	7,592	37%	9,063	40%
Total	19,925	100%	20,779	100%	22,663	100%

Source: 1990 and 2000 Census; St. Louis Park Assessing

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Size

Providing housing in a range of sizes and types is an important factor in attracting a diversity of residents and retaining residents as their living situations change. Size of units can be described in a number of terms, including square feet of living space and number of bedrooms. In general, St. Louis Park's housing is smaller in size than the metro's average housing size. Nearly 90% of its single-family homes have less than 1,800 square feet. Only 4% of the apartment units in St. Louis Park have three bedrooms. While these housing units can be attractive to individuals and smaller households, their size may not be ideal for larger families.

Age of Homes

The age of St. Louis Park's housing units reflect the City's rapid growth during the 1950s and 1960s. Nearly two-thirds of all housing units were constructed between 1940 and 1970. According to the 2000 Census, the median year built for all housing structures in St. Louis Park is 1958. The large percentage of homes built prior to 1970 is an important consideration as the 30-year mark is often referred to as the point where many housing units need major renovations and repairs.

Condition

Most of the housing stock in St. Louis Park is well-maintained. There are only a few pockets of residential deterioration and some isolated cases of deteriorated housing units. The City has traditionally paid a high level of attention to housing maintenance conditions. St. Louis Park has a city-wide point-of-sale program which requires a certificate of property maintenance to ensure code compliance any time a residential or commercial building is sold or the title is transferred. The City also has an evaluation process integrated with its rehabilitation program to systematically verify exterior building maintenance for both residential and commercial properties on a regular basis. Additional information about existing housing programs that have contributed to the maintenance of the City's housing stock is available later in this chapter, in the Existing Housing Implementation Programs section.

Value/Cost

St. Louis Park continues to be an affordable community. In 2008, the average sale price of a single-family home was \$272,984 (qualified sales, which do not include lender mediated sales) while the median price was \$241,650 (qualified sales). The Standard & Poor's/Case-Shiller Index found that in 2008 the median single-family home price for the Twin Cities was \$150,000. However, it is important to note that the index does not distinguish between distressed sales and traditional sales. The Minneapolis Area Association of Realtors 2008 Residential Real Estate Activity Report reported that in 2008 the average sale price was \$236,953 for all single-family, condominiums, twinhomes and townhomes in the 13-county metropolitan area. Apartment rents also have remained reasonable with average rents ranging from \$613 for an efficiency unit to \$1,129 for a three-bedroom unit. The 2008 average rent in the Twin Cities was \$906 according to GVA Marquette Advisor.

Single-Family

Tenure

Ninety-three percent of all the community's 11,605 single-family homes are owner-occupied. As shown in the table below, only seven percent were rented in 2008.

Single-Family Homes by Tenure (Owner/Renter)

Type	Owner-Occupied		Renter-Occupied		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Single-Family Detached	10,804	93.1%	801	6.9%	11,605	100%

Source: 1990 and 2000 Census; St. Louis Park Assessing

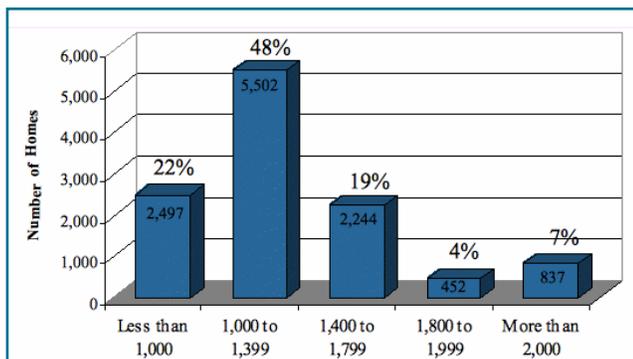
Size

As shown in the chart above, nearly 90% of St. Louis Park's single-family detached homes are less than 1,800 square feet in size. The size of St. Louis Park's homes is reflective of the time they were built. In the last few decades, however, new homes have gotten significantly larger, to a national average of almost 2,200 square feet in 2005 according to the National Association of Home Builders.

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Single-Family Homes Gross Building Area (square feet)

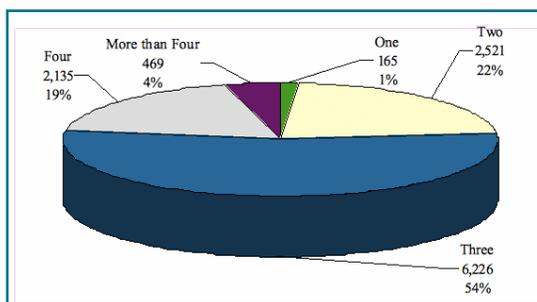


Source: St. Louis Park Community Development and Assessing, 2008

Exit surveys were conducted in 2004 to determine why homeowners move out of the community. Results of these surveys indicate that size of homes is a factor for some families choosing to leave St. Louis Park. Rather than staying and expanding their existing home, some families decide to purchase a larger home in another community. This option is often chosen because it can be less expensive and easier in terms of actual housing costs to buy a new home. However there can be other costs associated with moving, such as the loss of familiar neighborhoods and higher commuting costs.

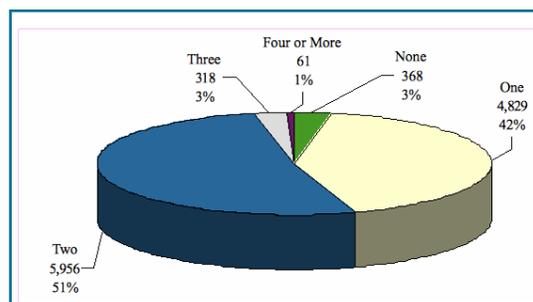
In addition to size, there are other features of a home which can be factors in a family's decision to remain or move. The following charts provide information about the number of bedrooms and garage stalls. While St. Louis Park has modest size homes, over half of all homes have three or more bedrooms. In addition, over half have two or more garage spaces.

Single-Family Homes Number of Bedrooms



Source: St. Louis Park Community Development and Assessing, 2008

Single-Family Homes Number of Garage Stalls

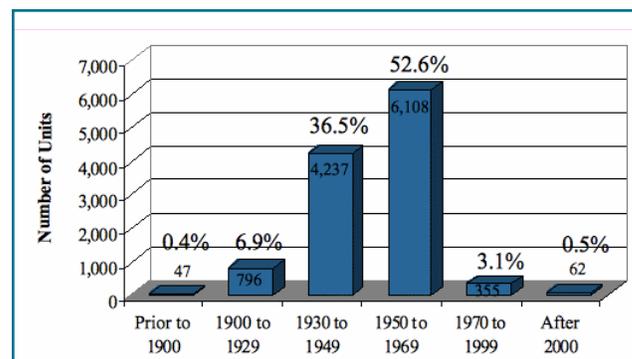


Source: St. Louis Park Community Development and Assessing, 2008

Age of Homes

Eighty-three percent of the City's total single-family housing stock was constructed before 1957. The 10-year period from 1947 to 1956 accounts for 53% of the single-family homes constructed in the City. Many single-family homes constructed in the 1980s and 1990s replaced deteriorated tear-down homes. Often the new homes are larger which addresses the goal of providing housing for larger families.

Single-Family Homes Year Built



Source: St. Louis Park Community Development and Assessing, 2008

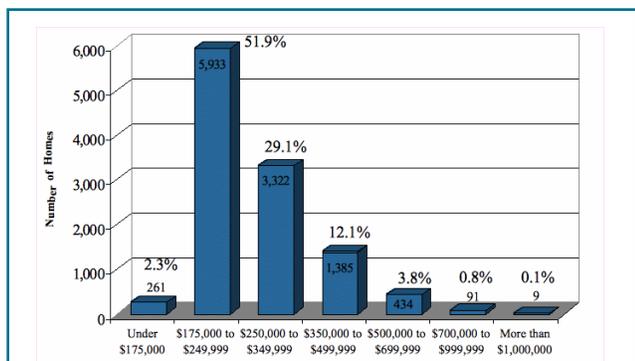
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Value

In addition to providing diversity in housing sizes, the community is focused on ensuring there are housing options across a range of values. Since the City's housing stock was generally built around the same time period, this desire for a range of prices can be challenging. According to the 2008 Assessor's data, over half of the homes in St. Louis Park are valued between \$175,000 and \$250,000. An analysis of 354 single-family homes sold in 2008 indicated that the average sale price was \$272,984, while the median sale price was \$241,650 (qualified sales). This analysis included homes sold as a result of foreclosure actions.

Value of Single-Family Homes



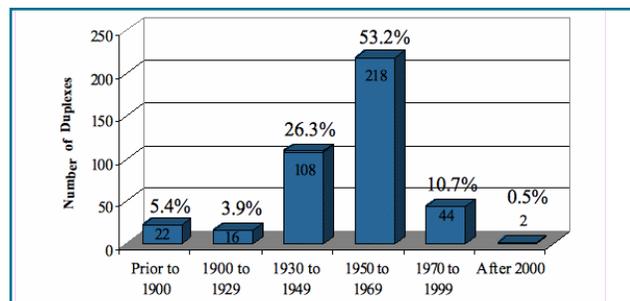
Source: St. Louis Park Community Development and Assessing, 2008



Duplexes

As in most communities, duplexes provide shelter for a small proportion of St. Louis Park's residents. Only two percent, or 410, of all the community's homes are duplexes. In contrast to single-family homes, 62% of duplexes are renter-occupied. The year built of duplexes generally parallels that of single-family detached homes with nearly 80% percent constructed between 1940 and 1970.

Duplexes Year Built



Source: St. Louis Park Community Development and Assessing, 2008



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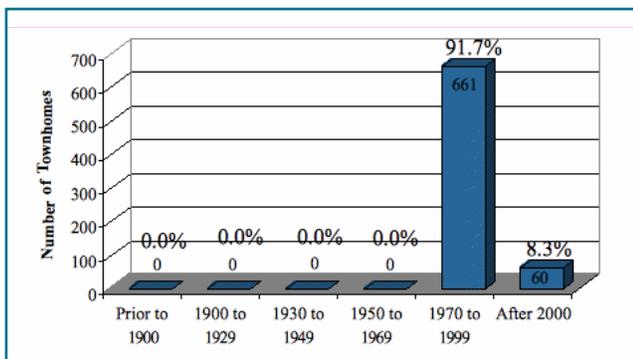
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Townhouses

Townhouses provide another option for St. Louis Park residents. Three percent, or 722 units, of all housing units in St. Louis Park are townhouses. Generally, townhouses are constructed with higher densities than single-family homes but lower densities than condos or apartments. Often they are clustered with multiple units sharing common walls. While 86% of townhouses are owner-occupied, 14% are renter-occupied. For homeowners, townhouses offer homeownership without the traditional maintenance responsibilities. Most townhouse developments have a planned maintenance program which ensures timely upkeep of the property.

The construction of townhouses did not actually begin in St. Louis Park until the 1970s, consequently, townhomes are generally younger in age than the city's single-family and duplex housing units.

Townhouses Year Built



Source: St. Louis Park Community Development and Assessing, 2008

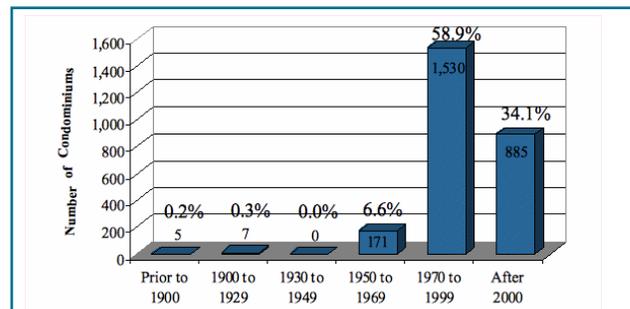
In the last few decades, the condition of the city's townhome units have not been a concern because of their relatively young age. However, the City's townhouse complexes and units are starting to show their age. Since maintenance and routine upgrades, such as a new roof, are handled by the association rather than individual homeowners, there is evidence that underfunding of some townhome associations may result in future maintenance issues.

Condominiums

Condominiums provide the third most prevalent housing option for St. Louis Park residents. With nearly 2,600 units, condos represent nearly 12% of all units.

The condominium market was especially strong in the 1970s when many buildings were constructed and a number of existing apartment buildings were converted to condominiums. The condominium market was relatively soft during the 1980s and early 1990s, but the strong real estate market in the last half of the 1990s positively influenced the condominium market as well. Some apartment buildings which were originally designed as rental units converted to owner-occupied condominium units. Since 2000, the growth in condominium housing has been healthy with the construction of approximately 900 new condominium housing units.

Condominiums Year Built



Source: St. Louis Park Community Development and Assessing, 2008

Nearly sixty percent of condominiums were built 20 to 30 years ago. As with townhouses, condominiums are still in relatively good condition because of their age. However, St. Louis Park is starting to see increased maintenance and rehabilitation needs on aging buildings. In addition, there is a challenge in ensuring condo associations have sufficient funding for shared maintenance and routine upgrades (such as roofs) that are required as properties age. A particular issue for condominiums that have been converted from apartments is that buildings with multiple condominium units are served by one central heating and air conditioning system. Since inspections of condominiums occur only at the point-of-sale of an individual unit, there is some concern that health and safety issues could result in older buildings because the mechanical systems are not regularly inspected.

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Apartments

At 32% of all housing units, the community's 7,300 apartment units are a significant contributor to the stability and desirability of St. Louis Park as a place to live. A unique challenge in St. Louis Park is that the apartment units are dispersed among more than 160 different properties. As shown below, over half of all properties have only 3 to 15 units. However, nearly 60% of all units are on properties with more than 100 units. Nearly all of the City's apartment units are occupied by renters.

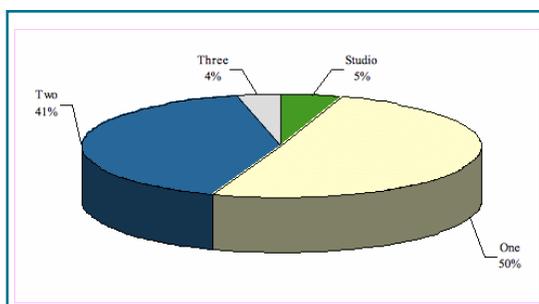
Apartments by Size of Property

Units in Property	Properties		Units	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
3 to 15	87	52%	795	11%
16 to 25	17	10%	347	5%
26 to 50	22	13%	857	12%
50 to 100	14	8%	1,035	14%
Over 100	28	17%	4,294	59%
Total	168	100%	7,328	100%

Size

Nearly all apartments have one or two bedrooms. While these smaller units provide good options for individuals and couples, they may limit options for families.

Apartment Number of Bedrooms

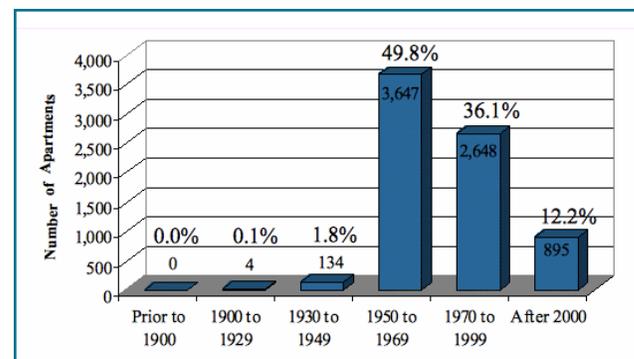


Source: St. Louis Park Community Development and Assessing, 2008

Age of Buildings

The apartment building boom occurred in the 1960s when many of the community's smaller apartment buildings were constructed. Apartment building construction continued through the 1980s with the newer construction being larger buildings. The 1990s saw only two new apartment buildings constructed during the entire decade. Since 2000, development of apartment buildings has resurged somewhat with the construction of approximately 900 apartment units. In 2008, half of the apartment units existing in St. Louis Park were built prior to 1970, with 36% built between 1970 and 2000, and 12% built since 2000.

Apartments Year Built



Source: St. Louis Park Community Development and Assessing, 2008

Condition

Good structural maintenance and responsible management are factors that determine whether the City's apartments will continue to provide desirable housing options. As with the aging single-family housing, nearly 60% of the City's apartment stock is between 30-50 years old. Many of these aging structures are small, individually owned buildings. Maintaining safe and attractive buildings is of concern as these smaller property owners tend to have fewer financial and management resources to address the needs of an aging housing stock than do large corporate owners of developments with 100 or more units. The City helps to ensure these properties are well-maintained through its rental licensing and inspection programs. The City has also assisted with financing for capital improvements on affordable multi-family projects.

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Rental Rates

According to the 2008 Rental Study completed by the Housing Authority of St. Louis Park, average rents in the City range from \$613 per month for an efficiency to \$1,129 per month for a three-bedroom apartment. The average and median rental rates for efficiency units and one-bedroom fall within the Metropolitan Council's targets for affordability, while the two- and three-bedroom rates are slightly higher.

Apartment 2008 Rents

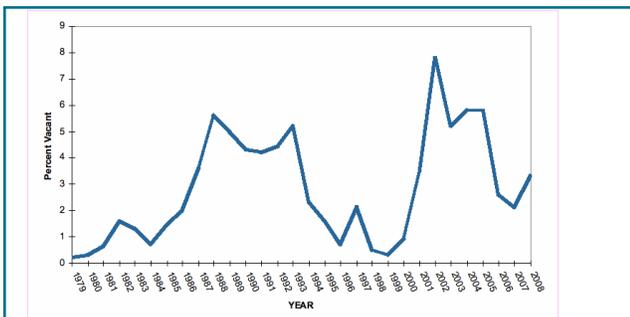
	Efficiency	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom
Average	\$612	\$738	\$929	\$1,129
Median	\$565	\$660	\$770	\$1,108

Source: St. Louis Park Community Development and Assessing, 2008

Availability

The chart below shows rental vacancy rates in St. Louis Park from 1979-2008, as collected through the Housing Authority of St. Louis Park Rental Study, which is an annual survey of property owners throughout the City. In St. Louis Park, the low vacancy rate in the 1990s largely mirrored that of the larger metro area. Vacancy rates climbed significantly in the early 2000s due to low interest rates that made home buying attractive to population groups who typically rented previously. More recently vacancy rates have lowered and stabilized. Recent declining home values have brought new condo construction to a halt and developers are turning to the construction of rental properties once again.

Apartment Vacancy Rate



Source: St. Louis Park Community Development and Assessing, 2008

Senior Housing

St. Louis Park currently has over 900 units in eight developments which provide housing options for seniors. This includes 568 market rate units and 350 subsidized units. The range of services offered at these developments differs. For example, Menorah Place, Roitenberg Residence, Parkshore Place, and Parkwood Shores provide assisted living services. Aquila Commons offers an affordable cooperative homeownership option. Knollwood Place offers home health services.

Senior Housing

Development	Units
Hamilton House*	110
Menorah Plaza	151
Menorah West	45
Knollwood Place	152
Roitenberg Residence	52
Parkshore Place	207
Parkwood Shores	91
Aquila Commons**	110
Total	918

*Not exclusive to seniors, but provides housing preference to seniors

** Cooperative



Photo: Debbie Blake / SLP Friends of the Arts

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Publicly Subsidized Housing

Approximately 3.6% of the city housing stock (862 units) is categorized as subsidized housing, which means that affordability is guaranteed to eligible low-, very low-, or extremely low-income households. The Housing Authority of St. Louis Park owns 147 public housing units, subsidizes an additional 12 units of public housing, and administers an additional 268 tenant-based Section 8 rental assistance vouchers. Under the Section 8 program, tenants locate housing in privately-owned market-rate apartments and their rent payments are supplemented with program assistance. Currently, about 100 private landlords house tenants receiving rental assistance.

In addition, a total of 328 units are privately administered and receive a direct subsidy from HUD without the involvement of the Housing Authority. There are seven apartment buildings in the City which are exclusively occupied by participants in supportive housing programs, either transitional or permanent housing.

Publicly Subsidized Housing Units

Program	Family/ Individual	Elderly/Disabled Single	Total Units
Public Housing	49	110	159
Project Based Section 8	132	196	328
Tenant Based Section 8	268	0	268
Shelter Plus Care Units	38	0	38
Supportive Housing: HUD Funded	69	0	69
Total	538	306	862

Source: St. Louis Park Community Development and Assessing, 2008

Housing Programs

St. Louis Park has a number of programs addressing housing in the city, and they are summarized as follows:

Home Improvement Loan Programs

- **Deferred Loan** - Working with Hennepin County, the City funds loans up to a maximum of \$20,000 to pay for basic safety and/or maintenance improvements. The funds are available to very low income homeowners and are deferred until the home is sold or forgiven after 15 years.
- **Discount Loan Program** - Provides interest rate discounts for Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) home improvement loans.
- **Emergency Loan Program** - Working with CAPSH, the City funds grants up to \$4,000 to address immediate emergency repairs such as furnace replacement, roof repair, etc.
- **Energy-Related Rehabilitation Loans** - Public and private grants and loans for energy-related improvements including furnaces, insulation, windows, etc.
- **Move-up in the Park Housing Programs** - A group of loan programs and educational/building assistance programs designed to encourage and help residents to expand existing City homes.
 - Move-up Transformation Loans
 - Architectural Design Service
 - Remodeling/Rehab Advisor
 - Discount Loan Program
 - Home Remodeling Tour
 - Excess land for move-up homes land sales
 - Home renewal Program and small home acquisition with expansion
 - Home Remodeling Fair - Annual four-city event to disseminate information and educate residents about remodeling.
 - Green Remodeling Program - Programs that “piggy-back” on existing housing program to encourage green remodeling through technical advice and rebates.

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Multifamily Renovation Programs

- Housing Improvement Areas (HIA) - A loan program which makes it possible for condo and townhome associations to borrow money at affordable rates with help from the City.
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program - The city receives about \$200,000 annually in HUD grants that can be used by the city itself or given to affordable housing providers for purposes that benefit low-moderate income households.
- St. Louis Park Rental Coalition (SPARC). The Coalition promotes efficient, quality rental property management practices.
- St. Louis Park Housing Authority Assisted Housing Programs:
 - Federally Funded Public Housing - Own, maintain, manage and operate 157 publicly owned housing units for low-moderate income residents including administration of 12 Metropolitan Housing Opportunity (MHOP) units owned and managed by Project for Pride in Living.
 - Federally Funded Public Housing Elderly and Persons with Disabilities Program - Administer a program to provide and coordinate supportive services to assist elderly and disabled residents at Hamilton House to continue to live independently.
 - Federally Funded Section 8 Housing Vouchers Program - Manage 268+ HUD rental housing vouchers. This program enables 268+ city residents of modest means to rent quality housing and pay no more than 30% of their income for rent and utilities.
 - Federally Funded Shelter Plus Care Program - Administer 38 rental vouchers that are linked with supportive services for hard-to-reach homeless people with disabilities and their families. Grants are provided to be used for permanent housing, which must be matched with supportive services that are equal in value to the amount of rental assistance and appropriate to the needs of population to be served. St. Louis Park is the grant recipient and we partner with three sponsor organizations that administer supportive housing programs.
 - Federal Grant Funded TRAILS Program - Training and Resources to Attain Individual Long-Term Success (TRAILS) is a HUD family self sufficiency program that operates in conjunction with HUD Section 8 Voucher program and Public Housing program, designed to enable families to improve their educational and employment status.

Affordable Homeownership

- Habitat for Humanity Partnership Program - In partnership with Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity, the city facilitates the purchase of homes in need of substantial rehabilitation and transfers ownership to Habitat for Humanity for the development of owner-occupied housing for low- and very low-income households.
- Housing Land Trust Affordable Homeownership – The city partners with West Hennepin Affordable Housing Land Trust (WHALT) to acquire, renovate, sell and maintain affordable homes and duplexes for qualifying buyers utilizing the land trust model.
- Live Where you Work Homeownership Program – The city works with City businesses to provide financial incentives for employees to buy homes in the City.

Home Maintenance

- Certificate of Property Maintenance Permitting and Inspections - The Point of Sale program issues a Certificate of Property Maintenance for all buildings to ensure property maintenance code compliance anytime a residential or commercial building is sold or title transferred.
- Rental Licensing and Inspections - This program includes annual licensing of all non-owner occupied properties. An inspection occurs once every two years to ensure compliance with Property Maintenance Code and, when required, by tenants experiencing problems with their rental properties. A component of the program coordinated with the Police Department is the Crime Free/Drug Free requirement for training, leases and behavior compliance.
- Property Condition Evaluation - Systematically evaluating residential and commercial property conditions throughout the City to verify exterior building maintenance. The program has been integrated with the rehab program on a city-wide scale and during other years has concentrated on smaller localized neighborhoods and commercial areas.

Neighborhood Revitalization Grants

- Grants are made by the City to organized neighborhoods for activities and projects to build community and neighborhood cohesion.

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Where We Are Headed

St. Louis Park is projected to grow from its 2007 population of 45,216 to 49,300 by the year 2020, and to 51,500 by the year 2030 (see table below). Nearly 2,000 new housing units are needed to accommodate this expanding population by the year 2030, as the City grows from approximately 22,000 households in 2007 to 24,000 households in 2030.

Growth of Population, Households, and Housing Units

	1990 Census	2000 Census	2007 Estimate	2010 Projected	2020 Projected	2030 Projected
Population	43,787	44,102	45,216	47,000	49,300	51,500
Households	19,925	20,773	22,032	22,000	23,000	24,000

Since St. Louis Park is not an isolated community, the City’s housing stock influences the demographic composition of the community rather than the other way around. For example, the large number of smaller “starter” homes attracts single persons and young families to St. Louis Park. This results in a different demographic mix in terms of household size and age than other communities. If St. Louis Park wants to enable residents to remain in the community throughout their entire lives, it needs to offer a diverse range of housing options as well.

Household Size

The housing needs of the region during the next 30 years will be influenced largely by the needs of a growing number of smaller households and the increasing number of elderly households. The metropolitan area is projected to have its number of persons per household drop in the next twenty years. However, St. Louis Park’s average household size is expected to remain relatively steady at around 2.15 people per household on average, which most likely reflects the City’s current lower household size and higher age demographics.

Age Composition of Population

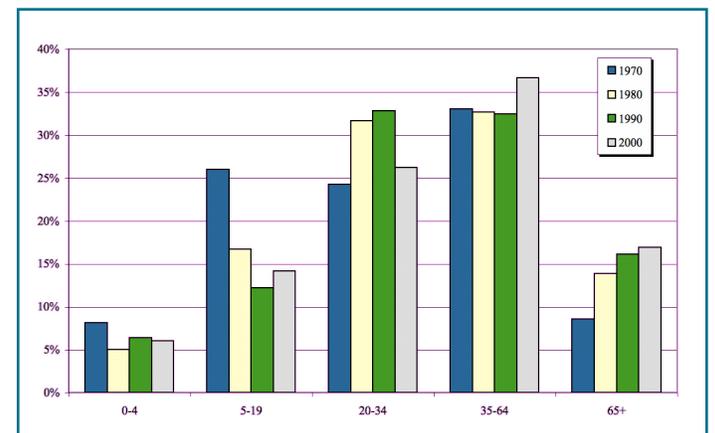
St. Louis Park has experienced an increase in the average age of its population over the last 30 years. The median age rose from 28.6 in 1970 to 35.7 in 2000. In that time there has been a decrease in the number of children and an increase in the number of persons over age 65. Part of this change is the aging of residents in place who originally came to the community when housing construction was strong.

Population by Age Group

Age Group	1970		1980		1990		2000	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
0-4	4,002	8%	2,174	5%	2,800	6%	2,657	6%
5-19	12,702	26%	7,188	17%	5,346	12%	6,259	14%
20-34	11,846	24%	13,578	32%	14,376	33%	11,561	26%
35-64	16,137	33%	14,026	33%	14,199	32%	16,171	37%
65+	4,196	9%	5,965	14%	7,068	16%	7,478	17%
Total	48,883	100%	42,931	100%	48,883	100%	44,126	100%
Median Age	28.6		32.9		34.3		35.7	

Source: U.S. Census

1970-2000 Percent of Population by Age Group



Source: U.S. Census

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Households by Current Age of Head of Household

Age of Householder	1980		1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
15-24	1,603	9%	1,144	6%	1,370	7%
25-34	4,453	25%	5,668	28%	5,207	25%
35-44	2,565	15%	4,044	20%	4,483	22%
45-54	2,450	14%	2,301	11%	3,569	17%
55-64	2,975	17%	2,135	11%	1,969	9%
65-74	2,222	13%	2,498	12%	1,688	8%
75+	1,401	8%	2,232	11%	2,496	12%
Total	17,669	100%	20,022	100%	20,782	100%

Source: U.S. Census

Life-Cycle Housing

In addition to planning for additional affordable units, St. Louis Park continues to explore opportunities to diversify the housing stock. Often termed “life-cycle” housing, the intent is to provide housing options for all points in a person’s life. The spectrum of life-cycle housing typically includes:

- Rental housing for young adults without the interest or financial capacity for home ownership.
- Smaller homes for first-time home buyers.
- “Move-up” housing that allows growing families to expand or move to a larger home.
- Maintenance free housing for empty nesters.
- Housing with supporting services for the elderly.

Housing needs typically expressed in St. Louis Park include “move-up” housing and new housing choices for empty-nesters and seniors. The creation of these additional options will enable families to remain in the community. With limited vacant land available to create new housing options, one of the City’s highest priorities is to create larger homes through the expansion of existing homes or the redevelopment of blighted properties and brownfields.

Senior Housing

There is also a continued interest in ensuring adequate housing choices are provided to allow seniors to remain in the community as their needs and lifestyle desires change. As in the rest of the nation, the aging of the baby boom population is expected to increase demand for senior housing over the next few decades. According to Maxfield Research Inc.’s 2008 Senior Housing Update, the Twin Cities senior population is expected to more than double in size over the next 30 years. Growth is expected to accelerate after 2010 as the leading edge of the baby boom generation reaches their mid-60s. The demand between 2010 and 2020 is anticipated to be for active adult ownership housing. After 2020, the demand for housing with some level of services is expected to increase as baby boomers reach their late 70s.

As in previous decades, the aging of the baby boomers is anticipated to recreate the market for senior housing. New types of development are expected that will cater to the active and healthy lifestyles of the young baby boomers. It is important for communities to explore and support the diversification of housing choices to meet seniors varying needs, whether it is housing style (townhome versus high-rise apartment), ownership preference (owner- versus renter-occupied, including senior cooperative ownership housing) or lifestyle needs (services available or not available). In addition, St. Louis Park should also pursue locating senior housing near transit services and in walking distance of parks & recreation, shopping and services that cater to their needs to help support seniors’ independence.

Affordable Housing

St. Louis Park continues to be an affordable place to live. The Metropolitan Council’s “Determining Affordable Housing Needs in the Twin Cities 2011-2020” report found that 26% of St. Louis Park’s housing is affordable, making it only 4 percentage points off from the region’s target of 30%. The table below compares the city’s percentage to other nearby communities in Hennepin County.

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Percent of Units Affordable

City	Percent of Units Affordable in 2000
Minneapolis	47%
Hopkins	43%
New Hope	31%
Richfield	29%
Robbinsdale	29%
Crystal	26%
St. Louis Park	26%
Bloomington	21%
Edina	20%
Golden Valley	18%
Plymouth	14%

Source: Metropolitan Council, 2001

Housing is considered affordable when it consumes no more than 30% of gross household income. The Metropolitan Council has guided every community in the Twin Cities to strive to make a portion of its housing affordable to those who earn 60% of the Twin Cities Median Income of \$80,900. For a family of four, 60% of the Twin Cities Median Income was \$48,540 in 2008. It is estimated that a family of four earning \$48,540 would be able to afford a home that is approximately \$158,000.

Home Ownership

While the community is affordable, until the recent downturn in the housing market home values had been on the rise over the last decade. An analysis of 354 single-family homes sold in 2008 indicated that the average sale price was \$272,984, while the median sale price was \$241,650 (qualified sales). Approximately 25% of all homes sold were sold for under \$214,900, the Metropolitan Council's affordable home price for households at 80% of the median income. Eleven percent sold for under \$158,000, the Metropolitan Council's affordable home price for households at 60% of area median income. This included homes sold as a result of foreclosure actions.

Rental Housing

Affordability targets are different for renters than home owners. The Metropolitan Council directs communities to strive to make a portion of its housing affordable to families earning 50% of the Twin Cities Median Income. For a family of four, this was \$40,450 in 2008. Based on the 2008 Annual Rental Survey, the average rents for multi-family units in St. Louis Park were as follows:

Average 2008 Rents

Unit Type	Efficiency	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom	4 Bedroom
Single-Family	NA	\$889	\$1,056	\$1,313	\$1,532
Duplex	NA	\$683	\$954	\$1,159	\$1,476
Townhouse	NA	NA	\$1,143	\$1,288	NA
Condominiums	NA	\$863	\$1,024	\$1,569	NA
Apartments	\$613	\$738	\$929	\$1,129	NA
Combined	\$613	\$743	\$933	\$1,202	\$1,523
Metropolitan Council 2008 Affordability Limits	\$707	\$758	\$910	\$1,051	\$1,172

Source: St. Louis Park Community Development and Assessing, 2008

Although it is a developed community, St. Louis Park is expected to grow over the next two decades. Bordered and intersected by major transportation corridors and located just minutes from downtown Minneapolis, the community will continue to be a desirable place to live. St. Louis Park is required to plan for its fair share of the regional need for housing, including newly-constructed affordable housing units. The allocation for St. Louis Park of the regional need begins with a percentage of the community's new units that should be targeted as affordable and is then adjusted by the following factors identified by the Metropolitan Council:

- Additional units are required because there are projected to be a greater number of low-wage jobs (paying less than \$40,800) within ten miles of the center of St. Louis Park than there are affordable housing opportunities. The report found that the ratio of low wage jobs to low wage residents was 1.86:1. This means that there are people working in or near St. Louis Park that could be living in the community if housing was available.

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- As 26% of St. Louis Park's housing stock is considered affordable at 60% of median income, a small amount of affordable units were added to achieve the target of 30%.
- As a community with level 2 transit service, St. Louis Park's allocation was increased by 20%.

The Metropolitan Council has identified a need of 501 new affordable housing units for St. Louis Park between 2011 and 2020. The small supply of vacant land for housing development will limit the opportunities for St. Louis Park to create additional affordable housing. Most of the affordable housing that will be created is likely to be created through private redevelopment. The City's currently planned redevelopment areas have a sufficient amount of land designated for medium and high density residential to accommodate a minimum of 650 housing units, with the potential of more than 1,600 housing units, depending upon the density at which these sites are developed. These future housing units provide adequate opportunities to develop affordable housing that would meet the community's share of the region's future projected affordable housing needs.

Preservation and Rehabilitation

Preservation and improvement of the City's housing is a high priority focus. Several City programs which are listed in the Existing Housing Implementation Programs section are currently in place to assist with preservation and rehabilitation projects. Continued efforts to develop and implement new programs that address current needs will be a high priority for the City in the next 5-10 years. One example is the development of Home Improvement Areas (HIAs), a loan program which makes it possible for condo and townhome associations to borrow money at affordable rates with help from the City for major improvements and upgrades. Another example is the City's green remodeling program, which encourages green design and environmentally friendly rehabilitation.

Future Housing Growth

St. Louis Park had 22,032 households in 2007 and is projected to grow to 24,000 households by 2030, which means growth of approximately 2,000 households over the next 20 years. As a developed community, the City's future housing growth will come from redevelopment activities, which will be the result of many different factors. As part of the City's land use, economic development, and redevelopment planning, the City identifies potential and planned redevelopment sites. Some of these sites are or will be guided for redevelopment with new housing. In general, future housing growth is currently planned for the following redevelopment areas:

- Elmwood neighborhood, within the future Wooddale Transit Station Area
- Park Commons area
- East Excelsior Boulevard corridor
- Texa-Tonka neighborhood commercial node
- Shelard Park neighborhood
- East Excelsior Boulevard corridor

Other potential redevelopment areas that will be considered for future housing development include the following:

- Walker-Lake area
- Beltline Transit Station Area
- Louisiana Transit Station Area
- Wayzata Boulevard corridor (I-394 frontage road), east and west of Louisiana Avenue
- West Excelsior Boulevard corridor
- Neighborhood commercial nodes

The majority of these future housing developments will be in the form of high density, medium density, or mixed-use housing types, and located convenient to community amenities, such as public transit, retail/service businesses, parks, etc.

Since growth in housing units also has implications on transportation infrastructure, areas where housing growth is likely to occur have been identified by Transportation Analysis Zone (TAZ).

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Goals and Strategies

St. Louis Park reviewed and updated its housing goals and strategies during the 2004-2005 Housing Summit. The Housing Summit involved a broad base of stakeholders that evaluated how existing policies meet the needs of current residents and neighborhoods. As a result of this process, the following housing goals and strategies were developed and approved by the City Council.

Housing Production Goals

Goal 1

Promote and facilitate a balanced and sustainable housing stock to meet diverse needs both today and in the future.

Goal 2

Establish target numbers of units for each housing type needed to ensure life-cycle housing options are available for residents, with housing types disbursed throughout the city.

Goal 3

The City acknowledges that there is demand for different types and sizes of housing units, but due to limitations of available space and other resources, all demands cannot be fully satisfied. At the present time, the greatest deficit and need is for the creation and maintenance of detached, owner-occupied single-family housing which are large enough to accommodate families. City housing efforts and resources should primarily address this need.

Strategy A

Develop matrix of existing housing types including detached/attached, owner/rental, family/senior; and affordable/market rate with production goals for each. Use this matrix as guide to evaluate future housing development proposals.

Strategy B

Develop public/private partnerships and create incentives for the development of a variety of new housing stock.

Strategy C

Identify unused public land and explore selling these properties for new housing.

Housing Condition and Preservation Goals

Goal 4

Ensure housing is safe and well maintained.

Goal 5

Preserve and enhance housing quality through proactive promotional and educational activities and housing programs related to home rehabilitation, code, design and safety issues.

Strategy A

Continue implementation of Property Maintenance Code, i.e. inspections, licensing requirements and enforcement to encourage well-maintained housing.

Continue regular cycle of citywide identification of deteriorated homes and implement effective programs to motivate compliance.

Strategy B

Strengthen the City's single- and multi-family home maintenance and rehabilitation programs.

- a. Implement promotional and education activities on building maintenance for owners of single-family homes and multi-family buildings. For example:
 - City and Community Education offer housing maintenance and code requirement information and provide effective city code education,
 - Provide technical and design assistance for single-family home maintenance improvements, and
 - Create and distribute a list of the top ten things cited by Point of Sale Inspections.
- b. Encourage public/private partnerships for home maintenance to develop financial incentives or to facilitate private reinvestment in the City's private housing stock, both single and multifamily.
 - Continue the partnership with the rental coalition to promote quality multifamily housing in St. Louis Park.
 - Partner with neighborhood associations to identify target neighborhoods for improvements and to encourage and promote housing preservation.
- c. Develop and implement a strategy for using the Housing Rehabilitation Fund and other financial resources.
- d. Strengthen neighborhoods and neighborhood amenities to encourage residents to stay and reinvest in St. Louis Park.

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Owner/Rental Ratio Goals

Goal 6

The ratio of owner/rental housing should be approximately 60% owner-occupied and 40% rental.

Goal 7

Explore traditional and non-traditional owner-occupied housing options such as, but not limited to: row houses, courtyard housing, alternative housing, cluster housing, high-rises, 3-story homes, multi-generational housing, etc.

Strategy A

Continue promoting first time home buyer, homeownership counseling and down payment assistance programs.

Strategy B

Promote affordable ownership opportunities:

- a. Explore a partnership with Land Trust
- b. Consider Section 8 homeownership program

Strategy C

Continue using and analyzing the data collected in the “Move-Out Survey” to determine why homeowners move out. Develop an application for data gathered.

Affordable, Workforce and Supportive Housing Goals

Goal 8

Promote and facilitate a mix of housing types, prices and rents that maintains a balance of affordable housing for low and moderate income households. Future affordability goals negotiated with the Metropolitan Council should reflect the average percentages of other first ring suburbs in Hennepin County.

Goal 9

Mixed income units should be disbursed throughout the City and not concentrated in any one area of the City or any one development.

Strategy A

Explore partnerships to encourage the private development of housing for employment growth related to expansions such as Park Nicollet and Methodist Hospital.

Strategy B

Continue acceptance and limited financial support of transitional and supportive housing programs for specialized groups and affordable multifamily housing providers.

Large Homes for Families Goals

Goal 10

Promote and facilitate the expansion of existing homes through remodeling projects which add more bedrooms and more bathrooms, 2+ car garages and other amenities.

Goal 11

Promote and facilitate construction of large family-size homes with more bedrooms and more bathrooms, (e.g. minimum 3+ bedrooms and 2+ bathrooms, 2+ car garage and additional amenities such as den/fourth bedroom or porch or superior architecture) suitable for families with children.

Strategy A

Create new large family housing with more bedrooms and baths.

- a. Promote opportunities for new construction of large family homes where feasible and appropriate.
- b. Identify and acquire blighted and vacant properties for housing redevelopment and or rehabilitation.

Strategy B

Develop a strategy to create more large family housing by expanding existing homes.

- a. Implement ordinance amendments to allow home remodeling or housing redevelopment on smaller lots.
- b. Encourage quality remodeling and home additions through technical and design assistance programs, etc.
- c. Explore tools to incorporate major remodel project costs into the primary mortgage for new buyers at all income levels and promote refinancing options for existing owners who remodel.



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Senior Housing Goals

Goal 12

Promote and facilitate more housing options for seniors.

Strategy A

Develop alternative housing options (both affordable and market rate) for seniors/empty nesters within St. Louis Park that provide lateral financial movement to increase existing single-family home supply for families with children.

Land Use Goals

Goal 13

Planning Goals:

- Use infill and redevelopment opportunities to help meet housing goals.
- Promote higher density housing near transit corridors & employment centers.
- Encourage housing density in commercial mixed use districts.



Photo: Adjo Habia / SLP Friends of the Arts

Goal 14

Explore and, if appropriate, promote ordinances to allow development of non-traditional housing types and increased density in single family neighborhood that is compatible with surrounding neighborhood.

Goal 15

Explore and promote reclassification of non-residential properties and designate for housing and other purposes.

Strategy A

Explore how zoning modifications can allow development of non-traditional owner-occupied housing options such as, but not limited to: row houses, courtyard housing, alternative housing, cluster housing, hi-rises, three-story homes etc. Revisit height restrictions for multi-family buildings.

Strategy B

Explore how zoning requirements for setbacks, lot coverage, and building height can be made more flexible to allow expansions of existing single family homes. Explore allowing three-story and mother-in-law apartments in single-family homes.

Continue the discussion regarding useable open space requirements as a means to allow expansion of single-family homes in residential districts

Strategy C

Educate residents about land use issues, especially those involving increased density in single-family neighborhoods.

Strategy D

Explore re-use of non-residential properties for housing redevelopment.

Strategy E

Assess infrastructure and traffic impacts of new development proposals.