

**March 5, 2026  
6:30 PM**

The Planning Commission Meeting will be conducted on **March 5, 2026** at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers of City Hall, located at 2400 Margaret St., North St. Paul.

You can watch the meeting on our YouTube channel here: <https://tinyurl.com/NSPYouTube>

**I. Call to Order**

**II. Roll Call**

COMMISSION

Patrick Blee, Chair

Andrew Wise, Vice-Chair

Arthur Alvarez, Jr. Commissioner

Elizabeth Gadbois, Commissioner

Cameron Muhic, Commissioner

Pete Marcaccini, Commissioner

Vito Sauro, Commissioner

STAFF/LIAISONS

Jason Nordby, City Council Liaison

Ken Roberts, Community Development Director

Chris Cherne, Planning Commission Secretary

**III. Adopt Agenda**

**IV. Presentation**

A. Planning Commission Training

**V. Approval of Minutes**

A. Approval of February 5, 2026 Meeting Minutes

**VI. Meeting Open to the Public**

*This Open Forum is an opportunity for persons to address the Planning Commission on items not on the agenda. A completed public comment form should be presented to the staff liaison prior to the meeting. Comments will be limited to 3 minutes per person. While the Commission may ask clarifying questions of the speaker, no formal action by the Commission or discussion will be held on these items.*

**VII. Public Hearings**

**VIII. Commission Business, Action Items & Recommendations**

A. Comprehensive Plan Update

**IX. Reports**

**X. Adjournment**

**The next regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting is April 2, 2026.**



To	Date
Planning Commissioners	March 5, 2026

**Agenda Placement # IV.A**  
Presentation

**Subject**  
Planning Commission Training

**Background/Facts**  
City Attorney Jack Brooksbank will provide general commission training and land use planning training to the Planning Commission.

**Recommended Action**  
N/A

**Attachments**  
1 DOCS-#238345-v1-  
. TRAINING\_MATERIALS\_NSP\_OML\_DPA\_COI\_GIFT\_LAW\_MANAGER\_ROLE\_RULES\_OF\_ORDER\_2026  
2 DOCS-#224331-v3-TRAINING\_MATERIALS\_\_\_PLANNING\_COMMISSION\_\_\_NSP  
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Respectfully submitted,  
Chris Cherne, Community Development Administrative Assistant



Campbell Knutson

# **TRAINING MATERIALS**

**for**

**Open Meeting Law**

**Data Practices**

**Conflicts of Interest**

**Gift Law**

**Role of City Manager**

**Rules of Order**

**for**

# **City of North St. Paul**

**February 2026**

## **I. OPEN MEETING LAW**

**A. OPEN MEETINGS.** Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes § 13D.01 - .07, almost all meetings of public bodies must be open to the public. A meeting exists when a quorum is together to:

1. Make a decision concerning city business; or
2. Discuss city business; or
3. Obtain information on city business.

Be wary of serial communications: do not use the “reply all” function in emails. If a discussion occurs on social media, then that discussion must be open for participation by the public.

A “public body” that is subject to the open meeting law is more board than just the city council. It includes any board, commission, council, or department that conducts public business, or any committee, subcommittee, board, department, or commission constituting part of an entity subject to the law.

**B. OTHER ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION.** Serial communication occurs when one member consults another, who consults another, and so forth. This is not permitted under the Open Meeting Law. One of the main goals of the Open Meeting Law is to ensure that deliberations take place in a public setting.

1. It is not advisable to substantively discuss City matters via text message even with one other member. Text messaging and/or other electronic communication to other members during a meeting about City matters is also not permitted. Be careful about engaging in discussions on your personal devices. Discussions about city matters are generally public data, subject to mandatory retention periods and accessible to the public upon request. Deliberations and discussions must occur in a public forum.
2. Similarly, a quorum of members having a discussion about public business on social media, such as in the comment section of a private Facebook page, could constitute a meeting in violation of the Open Meeting Law. Minn. Stat. §13D.065.

**C. NOTICE REQUIREMENTS.** The City Council must give the following notices:

1. A schedule of the regular meetings shall be kept on file at the Council’s primary offices. Regularly scheduled meetings on your adopted meeting schedule require no additional notice.
2. Special meetings require mailed & posted or published notice at least three days before the day of the meeting.
3. Emergency meetings - as soon as reasonably practicable.

**D. CLOSED MEETINGS.** Notice of the meeting is required stating why the meeting will be closed and the subject of the meeting. The meeting is still recorded. Closed meetings are allowed in limited circumstances:

1. Labor negotiations.
2. Pending litigation.
3. Preliminary consideration of charges against an employee.
4. Evaluation of a person subject to its authority.
5. To determine the asking price of property being sold.
6. To review confidential appraisal data.
7. To develop counteroffers for the purchase or sale of property.
8. To discuss active investigative data.
9. If it would identify victims or reporters of criminal sexual conduct, domestic abuse, or maltreatment of minors.

**E. PENALTIES.** If a court finds that an individual intentionally violated this open meeting law, penalties include:

1. Individual fine of \$300.00 per occurrence for an intentional violation, which may not be paid by the City.
2. Three intentional violations in three separate actions can result in removal from office.
3. Additional costs and attorney's fees may be imposed up to \$13,000.00. The City may pay this amount.

## II. DATA PRACTICES

**A. DATA.** The Data Practices Act (Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 13) presumes that all government data are public. The Data Practices Act obligates all levels of state and local government besides the legislature and the courts to preserve created data and respond to data requests.

1. “Government data” means all data collected, created, received, maintained or disseminated by state or local government, regardless of its physical form, storage media, or conditions of use. Data includes: paper documents, emails, CDs, videotapes, and computer files.
2. Government data is determined by who is creating it and for what purpose—it does not depend on where it is created or stored. Using a personal email address, or personal cell phone, to discuss official business creates government data that is subject to all of the regulations of government data, and is searchable and must be disclosed to the public upon request.

**B. CLASSIFICATION.** To balance the need for transparency with the need to protect individual rights, state and federal law provide for classifications to limit access for private or confidential data.

1. Requests for data can come from the subject of the data (such as an employee) or a member of the public. Responses to data requests depend on how the data is classified.

### **C. THE LIFE CYCLE OF A REQUEST.**

1. A person submits a data request to the Responsible Authority in the City. If the request is for private information, the City may ask for proof of identity. It is impermissible to request for a member of the public’s identity when fulfilling a request for public data.
2. If the request is from the member of the public, the City must respond within a “reasonable amount of time.”
3. If the request is from the data subject, meaning the data is about the requesting individual, then the City is required to respond within ten business days.
4. The City staff then retrieves the data responsive to the request, if there is any.
5. Then the City review the data and determines if there is a justification to deny access to some or all of the data. If responsive data is withheld the City must inform the requestor and cite to the specific law that allows the redaction.
6. The City provides access to the data and collects copy costs, if requested.

### III. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- A. CONTRACTS.** Under Minn. Stat. §471.87, with limited exceptions, a public official may not have a personal financial interest in a sale, lease, or contract with the City. This law applies to all public officers who are "authorized to take part in any manner in making any sale, lease, or contract in official capacity." Exceptions and special approval procedure may be available in a given fact situation. Simply abstaining from voting is not enough. Violation of this prohibition is a crime.
- B. NON-CONTRACTS.** The general rule is that any official who has a personal financial interest in a non-contract action is disqualified from participating in the action. Courts evaluate certain factors to determine when a conflict requires disqualification. These include:
- the nature of the decision being made
  - the nature of the financial interest
  - the number of interested officials
  - the need, if any, for the interested official to make the decision
  - other means available, if any, such as an opportunity for review of the decision, that serves to insure that the officials will not act arbitrarily to further their selfish interests.
- C. BEST PRACTICE.** If you have an actual or potential financial interest in a decision to be made, disclose the conflict, abstain from voting, and do not participate in the discussion. If you have any concerns, discuss them with the city attorney. Avoid even the appearance of a conflict.
- D. ABSTAINING.** Abstaining means to refrain from a vote. In this case, a member of a body would be present at the meeting but would not partake in discussion or voting of the issue before the body.

#### IV. GIFT LAWS

A. Pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 471.895, “An interested person may not give a gift or request another to give a gift to a local official. A local official may not accept a gift from an interested person.”

- “Local Official” means an elected or appointed official of a city.
- “Interested Person” means a person who has a direct financial interest in a decision that a local official is authorized to make.
- “Gift” means money, real or personal property, a service or loan, forgiving a debt or a promise of future employment without the giver being paid equal value.

Exceptions include:

- campaign contributions
- plaques or mementos recognizing service
- trinket or memento of insignificant value
- food if you appear to make a speech
- gifts given because of your membership in a group, a majority of whose members are not local officials
- gifts by a member of your family

When the City receives a gift/donation, it must be accepted by a two-thirds vote of the City Council. Minn. Stat. § 465.03. Gifts must be accepted by the City Council itself, and cannot be accepted by commissions or departments (although donations may be subject to conditions from the donor, such as being earmarked for a specific purpose).

## V. **ROLE OF THE CITY MANAGER**

The City charter establishes North St. Paul as a council-manager system where the council exercises legislative power and determines policy, and the manager is responsible to the council for the proper administration of city affairs. The manager's powers and duties are set by Chapter 6 of the City Charter. Although some city manager actions are subject to council approval, the city council generally may not direct the city manager to take any particular course of action.

- A. **Appointment and Removal.** The City Manager is the chief administrative officer of the city, and is appointed by the city council "solely on the basis of training, experience and executive and administrative qualifications."
- B. **Oversight and Review.** The council must periodically review the manager's performance.
- C. **Control of City Administration.** The manager is responsible for city administration, including the appointment, direction, and removal of all other city officers and employees, except that appointment or removal of the city attorney is subject to the approval of the council. The manager directs the departments and divisions of the city and ensures that the laws and ordinances of the city are enforced.
- D. **Departments.** The city manager creates and organizes all city departments, divisions, and other units of the city administration subject to the approval of the council.
- E. **Purchases and Contracts.** The manager is responsible for all city purchases and contracts. Expenditure of more than \$20,000 still requires prior council approval.

## VI. RULES OF ORDER

**A. Robert's Rules.** Except where other procedures are specified in statute or ordinance, the City Council does business using Robert's Rules of Order.

**B. Motions.** All formal council actions must be by motion.

1. The language to make a motion must be similar to, "I move to \_\_\_\_\_."
2. Motions must be seconded, and the council may consider only one motion at a time.
3. Once a motion is duly made and seconded, the Mayor shall state the question before the council and open the matter for debate.
  - a. The maker of the motion shall be permitted to speak first.
  - b. Everyone who wishes to speak on the motion must be allowed to do so before any member may speak a second time.

**C. Secondary Motions.** While the council considers a motion, members may make secondary motions. Secondary motions do not require a second.

1. Motion to amend the original motion. A motion may be amended only twice before it must be withdrawn and resubmitted,
2. Motion to take a brief recess of no more than 20 minutes,
3. Motion to withdraw the motion by the motion's maker,
4. Motion to divide a complex question,
5. Motion to defer consideration to a later date,
6. Motion to refer an issue to committee,
7. Motion to limit debate,
8. Motion for an immediate vote on the issue, or
9. Motion for a call to order.

Secondary motions do not require a second, and must be resolved before returning to the original motion. Motions for an immediate vote and motions for a call to order are the only motions that may be made interrupting the current speaker. A motion for an immediate vote may only be made after 20 minutes of debate or after every member has been permitted to speak at least once.

**D. Other Motions.** Other specific motions include:

1. Motion to adjourn. Motions to adjourn are made by the Mayor or presiding member, are not subject to debate, and do not require a second or a vote.
2. Motion to go into closed session. Must be made pursuant to the Minnesota Open Meeting Law, using language similar to, "I move to close the meeting in order to

consider \_\_\_\_\_ pursuant to \_\_\_\_\_ of the Minnesota Open Meeting Law.”

3. Motion to leave a closed session. “I move to open the meeting.”
4. Motion to revive an issue. Made to request consideration of an issue tabled, deferred, or referred to committee at a *prior* meeting.
5. Motion to reconsider. Made to request reconsideration of an issue voted upon previously at the *same* meeting. May only be made by a member on the prevailing side of the prior vote.
6. Motion to rescind or repeal. Made to repeal an action taken at a prior meeting.



Campbell Knutson

# **TRAINING MATERIALS**

**for**

# **NORTH ST. PAUL**

**March 2026**

# LAND USE PLANNING

## I. MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY TO PLAN

- A. MUNICIPAL LAND USE PLANNING ACT.** This Act provides the authority and uniform procedures for conducting and implementing municipal planning for all cities. The Act was adopted by the legislature in 1965. Comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances must comply with both the substantive and procedural requirements under the Act.
- B. METROPOLITAN LAND USE PLANNING ACT.** Cities in the seven-county area are also empowered and governed by the Metropolitan Land Use Planning Act. This, unlike the Municipal Land Use Planning Act, requires adoption of a Comprehensive Plan before a zoning ordinance may be adopted or amended. These requirements do not apply outside of the seven-county metro area.
- 1. Policy.** The Metropolitan Land Use Planning Act is based on the following stated policy: coordinated land use plans, controls and programs are necessary to facilitate orderly development and for the general welfare of the public, since metropolitan area local units of government are interdependent, and problems of urbanization and development transcend local boundaries.
  - 2. Comprehensive Municipal Plans Required.** Under the Act, each local unit of government is required to adopt a Comp Plan that must be approved by the Metropolitan Council.
  - 3. Compliance with Met Council Plans.** Comp Plans must comply with various metropolitan systems of the Met Council covering such issues as:
    - a. Transportation;
    - b. Parks;
    - c. Sanitary Sewer Systems;
    - d. Airports.
  - 4. Prohibition Against Adoption of Inconsistent Official Controls.** Once in place, the Met Land Planning Act prohibits cities from adopting official controls that conflict with the Comp Plan. In 1997 the legislature amended the relevant statutes to require conflicting ordinances to be “consistent” with the Comp Plan. State law also requires that when the plan is amended, zoning ordinances and other official controls must be amended within nine months so as not to conflict.

## II. ROLE OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

The Municipal Land Planning Act imposes several duties on a Planning Commission:

- A. PREPARATION AND REVIEW OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.** The planning commission creates the comprehensive plan and coordinates planning activities with other departments, typically with the help of a planning staff, outside planning consultants and the input of the public through neighborhood meetings and/or public hearings.
- B. COORDINATION AND REVIEW WITH OTHER LOCAL UNITS OF GOVERNMENT.** Planning Commissions must consider the planning activities of adjacent units of government and other affected public agencies.
- C. PERIODIC REVIEW.** The Planning Commission must periodically review the Comp Plan and recommend amendments when necessary.
- D. ADOPTION OF THE COMP PLAN.** The Planning Commission recommends adoption of the Comp Plan or amendments after a hearing preceded by 10 days' publication of notice in the official newspaper. The City Council may not act upon a Comp Plan or amendment until receipt of recommendation by the Planning Commission or until 60 days have elapsed from date amendment was submitted to Planning Commission by Council. After approval by the Planning Commission, the Comp Plan is submitted to the Council for final review and approval by 2/3 vote of the Council.
- E. RECOMMENDATION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION.** The Planning Commission must study and propose the means of putting the Comp Plan into effect, including zoning, subdivision regulations, official maps, a program of public improvements and services, city renewal and redevelopment, and a capital improvement program.
- F. REVIEW OF LAND ACQUISITIONS AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS.** Once a Comp Plan is adopted, all proposed land acquisitions and capital improvements of the City must go to the Planning Commission for its review and recommendation to Council. The Planning Commission will then submit a written report describing its findings. However, the Council may dispense with this requirement by a 2/3 vote, if it feels no planning issues are involved.
- G. REVIEW OF LAND USE CONTROL MEASURES.** The Planning Commission is responsible for reviewing land use control measures. The Municipal Land Planning Act requires the Planning Commission to review zoning ordinance amendments, subdivision plats and official maps. Public hearings may be held before the Planning Commission, but the Council will make the final determination.

### III. ZONING: IMPORTANT TOOL TO IMPLEMENT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- A. **PURPOSE.** Zoning establishes a land use pattern and the orderly development of various types of districts according to the best use of particular areas of a community. Zoning ordinances may be enacted for the general purposes of preserving and protecting the public health, safety, morals and general welfare. Zoning is the most commonly used technique in implementing the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. It is the legal means to ensure that the goals of the Comprehensive Plan are carried out.
- B. **AUTHORITY.** M.S. § 462.351-.365.
- C. **WHAT ZONING ORDINANCES MAY REGULATE.** The basic land use controls of the City are found in its zoning ordinance, which regulates among other things:
- The location, height, bulk, number of stories, size of buildings and other structure;
  - The percentage of lot which may be occupied, the size of yards and other open spaces;
  - The density and distribution of population;
  - The uses of buildings and structures for trade, industry, residence, recreation, public activities, or other purposes;
  - The uses of land for trade, industry, residence, recreation, agriculture, forestry, soil conservation, water supply conservation, conservation, conservation of shorelands, access to direct sunlight for solar energy systems, flood control or other purposes, and may establish standards and may establish procedures regulating such uses;

Zoning ordinances are construed by the courts according to their plain meaning and in favor of the property owner. Note that while zoning ordinances require “consistency” with the comprehensive plan, generally only the zoning ordinance is directly enforceable

- D. **ZONING MAP.** Zoning ordinances may divide the city into districts or zones of suitable numbers, shape and area. The zoning map will identify the boundaries of the various zoning use districts.
- E. **UNIFORMITY REQUIRED WITHIN ZONING DISTRICTS.** The zoning regulations may vary across different districts, but within each district the regulations must be uniform for each class or kind of building, structure, land or use.

**F. PROCEDURES FOR ADOPTING AND AMENDING ZONING ORDINANCES.**

- 1. Similar to Amendments of the Comp Plan.** The Planning Commission may submit proposed ordinances to the Council at any time.
- 2. Studies.** After conducting studies to ascertain that the official controls or regulations necessary to implement the Comp Plan, the Planning Commission submits the proposed zoning ordinance to the Council. At this time, the Planning Commission should also consider: a) preparation of a tentative official map; b) proposed subdivision regulations; and c) capital improvement program and any other necessary official controls.
- 3. Notice and Public Hearing Requirements.** After new zoning ordinances or amendments to existing ones have been proposed, the Planning Commission must hold at least 1 public hearing. Notice of the public hearing must be published at least 10 days prior to the hearing date. Mailed notice to affected property owners may also be required.
- 4. Revisions.** Following the public hearing, the Planning Commission reviews the proposed zoning ordinance or amendment in light of information received at the public hearing and makes any appropriate and reasonable revisions.
- 5. Submission to Council.** The Planning Commission then presents the zoning ordinance or amendment in final draft form along with a report to the Council.
- 6. Publication.** After the Council adopts new zoning ordinances or amendments, the Council must publish or summarize them in the official newspaper.

**G. PERMITTED, ACCESSORY AND CONDITIONAL USES**

- 1. Permitted Uses.**
  - a. Defined as uses that property owners have a right to engage in as provided within the zoning district.
  - b. No discretion to deny. It is generally arbitrary and unlawful to deny a building permit for a permitted use, unless the zoning is subsequently changed to prohibit the use.

c. Normally there is no review by either the Planning Commission or the Council. Rather, the applicant merely applies for a building permit with supporting documentation that the use is permitted.

2. **Accessory Uses.** Defined as those uses that cannot stand alone and must be accompanied by a principal, permitted use.

3. **Conditional Uses.** Defined as uses permitted in a zoning district under the zoning ordinance, if certain conditions, designated by the Council or specified in the zoning district, are met.

4. **Uses Which Are Not Permitted In Zoning District.**

a. In order for a use to be allowed in a specific zone or use district, it must be listed as a permitted or conditional use in the zoning ordinance, or must be similar enough to such a listed use so as to be included by City staff, Planning Commission or Council interpretation or by application of common sense. (e.g. medical clinic includes a dental clinic but not a veterinary clinic)

b. No Use Variance May Be Granted, except the temporary use of a one family dwelling as a two family dwelling.

c. Applicant Options. If the use is neither permitted or a conditional use in the zone or use district, the applicant can:

i) apply for a rezoning to a zone or use district in which it is a permitted or conditional use; OR

ii) request that the City amend its zoning ordinance to allow the use as a permitted or conditional use in the zoning or use district where the property is located.

**H. INTERIM USES.** An interim use is a temporary use of property until a certain date or until the use is no longer permitted. The intent is to allow a use for limited period of time that reasonably utilizes the property when the use contemplated under the comprehensive plan is not currently reasonable and to allow a use that while currently acceptable, may be unacceptable in light of future anticipated development. Authority of an interim use must be provided for in the zoning ordinance where conditions for the use are also specified. Often interim uses are used for mining activities or agricultural activities in a developing area.

## IV. CONDITIONAL USE PERMITS

- A. **WHAT IS IT?** A type of land use in a particular district which is presumed to be allowed, but requires special, additional standards and review due to the existence of some aspect of the use which may create a nuisance or place an extraordinary burden on public services. By far, the most commonly litigated zoning matter.
- B. **NEXUS REQUIREMENT.** Courts require that any conditions placed on the conditional use permit to be issued must have a direct connection or a nexus between the problem identified and the condition required as the cure. The need for the conditions must be supported by evidence in the record.
- C. **TIME LIMITS.** Although previously a common practice in many communities, time limits on a conditional use permit are not a permitted condition. A “sunset provision” is not permissible. If a time limit is determined to be necessary, then the use should be identified as an interim use, not a conditional use. A conditional use permit runs with the land forever, regardless of a change in landowner. A CUP need not be “renewed.” CUPs remain in effect for as long as the conditions are observed.
- D. **NOTICE AND HEARING.** State law requires a public hearing preceded by notice.
- E. **LIMITED DISCRETION.** The City's discretion is limited in the case of an application for a conditional use permit. The City **MUST** grant the CUP if the applicant has satisfied all the conditions. **NEIGHBORHOOD OPPOSITION ALONE IS AN INSUFFICIENT BASIS FOR A DENIAL.** CUPs are the most commonly litigated zoning matter and Cities lose challenges to a CUP decision more than any other land use approval.
- F. **QUASI-JUDICIAL DECISIONMAKING.** In denying or approving a CUP, a City is exercising quasi-judicial decision-making, in which it is applying specific standards set by the zoning ordinance. This should be contrasted with City legislative decisions, in which the City is engaged in forming public policy, such as the adoption of a comp plan or zoning ordinance. While the courts tend to give great deference to the City when it is acting in its legislative capacity in crafting public policy, the courts give substantially less deference to the City when it exercises quasi-judicial decision-making, e.g. where the public policy has already been established under the zoning ordinance and the inquiry focuses on whether the proposed use is contrary to the general welfare as established in the Zoning Ordinance. Courts tend to think that they can apply the criteria set forth in the zoning ordinance to a particular use, just as well as the City can.

## V. VARIANCES

- A. DEFINED.** A variance is a request to use property in a way not generally permitted by the zoning ordinance, but which may be allowed by the City in special cases only, e.g., by varying one or more of the performance standards, such as lot area, setbacks, lot width or depth.
- B. PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES.** In 2011, the statutory test for granting a variance was changed from “undue hardship.” An applicant must now demonstrate the existence of “practical difficulties” before a variance may be granted. "Practical difficulties" means the property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by the zoning ordinance, but the use is prohibited by the ordinance, the plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner, and the variance, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the locality. Economic considerations alone do not constitute an undue hardship. Further, variances are only permitted when they are in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the zoning ordinance and when the variances are consistent with the comprehensive plan.

**C. GUIDANCE IN GRANTING OR DENYING A VARIANCE FROM ZONING RESTRICTIONS.**

The Minnesota Supreme Court has identified twelve factors for a county to consider when determining whether a landowner faces “practical difficulties,” including:

1. How substantial the variation is in relation to the requirement;
2. The effect the variance would have on government services;
3. Whether the variance will effect a substantial change in the character of the neighborhood or will be a substantial detriment to neighboring properties;
4. Whether the practical difficulty can be alleviated by a feasible method other than a variance;
5. How the practical difficulty occurred, including whether the landowner created the need for the variance; and
6. Whether, in light of all of the above factors, allowing the variance will serve the interests of justice.

In situations where a party seeks a variance after already violating a provision of a zoning ordinance, the Supreme Court has recommended consideration of the following additional factors:

7. The applicant’s good faith;
8. The applicant’s attempt to comply with the ordinance;
9. The applicant’s investment in the construction;
10. Whether the construction was completed;

11. Whether similar structures existed in the area; and
12. Whether the benefit to the public in denying the variance outweighs the burden on the applicant to comply with the zoning ordinance.

**D. STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS.** Variances may be granted when:

1. The variance is in harmony with general intent and purpose of the Ordinance.
2. The variance is consistent with the comprehensive plan.
3. Applicant establishes that there are practical difficulties with complying with the zoning ordinance. Practical difficulties are:
  - i. Property will be used in a reasonable manner.
  - ii. There are circumstances unique to property not caused by landowner.
  - iii. The variance will not alter essential character of locality.

**E. CITY CODE CONSIDERATIONS.** Section 154.004(E) of the City Code controls variances. The primary considerations for variance review under the City's Ordinance, are as follows:

1. The variance is in harmony and consistent with the general purposes and intent of the Comprehensive Plan and the zoning chapter of the City Code;
2. The variance will not adversely affect the health, safety, or general welfare of the city;
3. The variance is necessary due to special conditions applying to the structures or land in question that are particular to the property and do not apply generally to other land or structures in the district or vicinity in which the land is located;
4. The variance requested is the minimum variance necessary to alleviate the practical difficulty;
5. Practical difficulties are caused from the strict application of the Zoning Code as outlined below:
  - i. The property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by the Zoning Code;
  - ii. The plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner; and
  - iii. The variance, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the locality.
  - iv. Economic considerations alone do not constitute practical difficulties.
  - v. The variance is consistent with officially adopted city plans and overlays.

**F. DISCRETION IN GRANTING OR DENYING A VARIANCE FROM ZONING RESTRICTIONS.**

1. Broad discretion is permitted when denying a request for a variance, but there must be a legally sufficient reason for denial. Written findings of fact should be prepared and adopted concerning the reasons for denial or approval and the facts upon which the decisions is based, based on the statutory requirements.
2. The decision cannot be arbitrary.
3. A variance is typically required only where there has been an unlawful taking of property, demonstrated by the landowner's inability to put the land to any beneficial use unless the variance is granted.
4. Applicants bear the heavy burden to show that a variance is necessary.
5. Variances are not permitted for a use not permitted under the ordinance for property in the zone where the affected land is located (except for temporary use of single-family homes as two-family).

**G. PROBLEMS.** The approval/denial of variances is often considered one of the greatest land use problems faced by local officials. While some cities strictly adhere to their official controls, granting variances in only those situations required by law, some cities are very liberal in granting variances. The problem arises when a city planning commission and council do not agree on the instances appropriate for granting/denial of a variance. If a City has numerous variance applications, it may be that the City is known for granting variances, or that a change in the City's official control on a particular performance standard should be reviewed for modification. Ideally, it is better to change an official control to reflect the standard set by the City, rather than to continually grant variances to a standard that is not adhered to.

**VI. TIME LIMITS**

**A. 60 DAY RULE.** The legislature enacted an ordinance limiting the time in which a local unit of government has to act upon certain land use related applications. Within 60 days of submittal of an application, cities are required to approve or deny the request, or the request is deemed approved. This section does not apply to subdivisions applications, which operate under a separate timeframe of 120 days for approval of a preliminary plat and 60 days to review and approve a final plat (M.S. § 462.358).

- B. INCOMPLETE APPLICATION.** The 60 days does not begin to run until the application is complete, but the determination that an application is incomplete must be made within 15 days of its submission by written notice to the applicant or the 60 day period will begin regardless of the incomplete application.
- C. EXTENSIONS.**
- 1. Automatic 60-Day Extension.** Within the 60-day period, an automatic extension of no more than 60 days can be obtained by providing the applicant written notice of the reason for the extension and specifying the additional time needed.
  - 2. Applicant Approval.** Other extensions are available only with the applicant's written approval.
- D. APPLICATION TO PLANNING COMMISSION.** In light of the 60-day time limit for final council action, it is important for the Planning Commission to act well within the 60 day period to allow ample time for Council review.
- E. DENIALS IN WRITING.** If a City denies a land use request, it must state in writing the reasons for the denial at the time of the denial or at the next meeting (provided it is within the 60 day time-period). It must also state the reasons for denial on the record and provide the applicant a written statement of the reasons for the denial. The written statement must be consistent with the reasons stated in the record. Because of the foregoing requirement, it is helpful for the City Council if the Planning Commission adopts written findings of fact for its decisions, particularly for recommendations of denial that can be reviewed by the City Council and modified for the City Council's decision.

## **VII. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

- A. TYPE OF HEARINGS.**
1. Statutory
  2. Informational
- B. PURPOSE.** The purpose of a hearing is to give public input. In many instances the hearing is not only a statutory requirement, it is an ordinance requirement.
- C. STATUTORY.** An example of public hearings required by statute:
- Amending Zoning Ordinance
  - Amending Comprehensive Plan

- Approving Preliminary Plats
- CUP's
- IUP's

**D. NOTICE.** Each statute specifies the type of notice that is required, who it must be sent to, and when it must be sent. Can't simply be an agenda item.

**E. DUE PROCESS.** The concept of "procedural due process" is a constitutional protection, which constrains the government from depriving an individual of a liberty or property interests without granting that individual notice and an opportunity to be heard "at a meaningful time and in a meaningful manner."

**F. IMPARTIALITY.** To provide a fair hearing, board and commission members should disclose at any hearing prior meetings or contact with applicants, opposition groups, and citizens and also disclose what was learned. It is also important to keep an open mind and not to make any commitment or announce how you will vote.

"The district court found that Councilmember Goodman, who took part in making the council's decision: "took a position in opposition and exhibited a closed mind with regard to [CPG's] proposed project prior to hearing [CPG's] appeal"; "adopted an advocacy role in opposition to [CPG's] proposed project well before she discharged her quasi-judicial duties"; and "was clearly involved in an effort not only to assist to organize and mobilize neighborhood opposition to the project, but also to sway the opinions of her fellow council members." The court also noted that "the opinion of the council member in whose ward a project is proposed is given substantial weight" by other members of the council. We therefore conclude that the city council's decision was arbitrary and capricious ...." *Continental Property Group v. Minneapolis (Mn. Ct. App. 2011)*.

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To	Date
Planning Commissioners	March 5, 2026

**Agenda Placement # V.A**  
Approval of Minutes

**Subject**  
Approval of February 5, 2026 Meeting Minutes

**Background/Facts**  
N/A

**Recommended Action**  
Staff recommend approval of the February 5, 2026 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes.

**Attachments**  
1. PC Minutes 02-05-2026

Respectfully submitted,  
Chris Cherne, Community Development Administrative Assistant



**Planning Commission  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
February 5, 2026  
6:30 PM**

North St. Paul City Hall – Council Chambers  
2400 Margaret Street

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Blee called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

**II. ROLL CALL**

COMMISSION

Patrick Blee, Chair  
Andrew Wise, Vice-Chair  
Arthur Alvarez, Jr., Commissioner  
Elizabeth Gadbois, Commissioner  
Cameron Muhic, Commissioner

STAFF/LIAISONS

Jason Nordby, City Council Member  
Ken Roberts, Community Development Director  
Chris Cherne, Planning Commission Secretary

**III. ADOPT AGENDA**

Blee asked for a motion to adopt the February 5, 2026, meeting agenda.  
M/Muhic, S/Wise.  
Motion carried 5-0.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. Approval of January 8, 2026, Meeting Minutes

Blee asked for a motion to approve the January 8, 2026, Meeting Minutes with a correction under section IV.A indicating that Wise asked for a motion and not Blee.  
M/Wise, S/Muhic.  
Motion carried 5-0.

**V. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

There were no public comments.

**VI. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

- A. Variance Request – 2718 16<sup>th</sup> Ave E  
Cherne presented the Variance Request – 2718 16<sup>th</sup> Ave E staff report to the Planning Commission. Applicant Timothy Taylor is seeking a variance from the residential fence

regulations to install a six foot (6') tall fence along the easternmost lot line of his property within the front yard to provide screening from the lot to the east with a nonresidential use. Cherne provided the Planning Commission with the applicant's statement and analysis of the variance review criteria. Staff find the variance request to be in harmony and consistent with the general purposes and intent of the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance, the proposal will not adversely affect the health, safety, or general welfare of the City, the property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner, the plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property, and that the variance, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the locality. Staff recommended the Planning Commission make a motion to request staff to prepare a resolution with findings of fact consistent with an approval of the variance request.

Chair Blees opened the public hearing at 6:51 PM.

Blees stated that on Friday, January 30, 2026, staff received a phone call from Dan Goetzman, the owner of HIS LAND COMPANY LLC that owns 2730 16<sup>th</sup> Ave E (Dairy Queen lot). The property owner stated that he is in support of this variance application.

There were no further public comments.

Chair Blees closed the public hearing at 6:52 PM.

Chair Blees asked for a motion to recommend to City Council approval of the fence-height variance request at 2718 16<sup>th</sup> Ave E.

M/Alvarez, S/Wise.

Motion carried 5-0.

**B. Zoning Ordinance Text Amendments**

Roberts presented the Zoning Ordinance Text Amendments item to the Planning Commission. At their January 8, 2026, meeting, the Planning Commission reviewed three draft zoning ordinance amendments including a revision to the definition of Limited Production and Processing, revisions to the uses listed in Table 3, and revisions to Section §154.008 Overlay Districts as it relates to the Downtown Overlay District. Based on Planning Commission feedback from the previous meeting, the requested revisions and clarifications have been made in the final draft presented for the public hearing. Staff recommend the Planning Commission recommend to City Council the approval of the ordinance amending various sections of Chapter 154 of the Zoning Ordinance.

The Commission agreed to clarify that the downtown overlay section §154.008(B)(4)(c) indicating that "All publicly visible facades should be 100 percent brick and/or stone veneer..." should be 75 percent. Muhic asked if there should be additional information in section §154.008(B)(4)(h) that would help to limit the burden of requiring building renovations and restoration projects to use at least 50 percent brick material. The Planning Commission agreed to keep the language as presented.

Chair Blees opened the public hearing at 7:07 PM.

There were no public comments.

Chair Blees closed the public hearing at 7:08 PM.

Chair Blees asked for a motion to recommend to City Council the approval of the ordinance amending various sections of Chapter 154 of the Zoning Ordinance with the recommended change in §154.008(B)(4)(c).

M/Muhic, S/Gadbois.

Motion carried 5-0.

## **VII. COMMISSION BUSINESS, ACTION ITEMS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **A. Conditional Use Permit Amendment and Site Plan Review – 2275 Anchor Dr**

Roberts presented the Conditional Use Permit Amendment and Site Plan Review – 2275 Anchor Dr item to the Planning Commission. The applicant Zach Stackhouse, on behalf of Kwik Trip, submitted applications to the City for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) amendment and for site plan approval to facilitate the addition of a second car wash bay on the north side of the existing facility located at 2275 Anchor Dr. Project plans indicate that the addition will have full brick cladding and a standing seam metal roof to match the existing building. There also will be changes to the existing landscaping to accommodate the car wash addition. The CUP for this lot was originally issued by the City in 2019. Due to the proposed addition of a second car wash bay, a CUP amendment is required.

Roberts reviewed the proposed project plan set with the Planning Commission. Roberts noted the proposed landscaping plan. The relocation of the transformer from the west side of the building to the south property line adjacent to a tree is concerning due to potential for tree or infrastructure damage. There also is one existing light pole to the north of the building that is proposed to be removed. The submitted plans do not show a new light pole going in. Staff would recommend that the applicant submit a new lighting plan. The City Engineer reviewed the proposal, and they noted there may be new SAC charges as determined by the Metropolitan Council. The recommendation is that the Planning Commission recommend approval to the City Council of the CUP amendment and the site plan review.

Muhic recommended adding a condition that the developer seeks Minnesota Department of Transportation review and approval of the proposed project.

Chair Blees asked for a motion to recommend to City Council approval of the resolutions approving the conditional use permit amendment and the site plan for the expansion and remodeling of Kwik Trip located at 2275 Anchor Dr.

M/Alvarez, S/Gadbois.

Motion carried 5-0.

## **VIII. REPORTS**

Roberts shared that Stephanie Kane-Burback has resigned from the Planning Commission. There are plans to have two interviews completed and two new members appointed by the next Planning Commission meeting. Roberts also stated that the History Cruiser Car Show event organizers will be dialing back the event this year, holding events every other week in the summer instead of every week.

Nordby thanked the Planning Commission for their hard work. Nordby stated that it would be beneficial to have additional student commissioners and if anyone is interested, they should contact the City. Muhic stated participants in the City's student build project may be interested.

Blees stated that he attended a recent Coffee with the Council event. There were quite a few people attending and it was a friendly, great event. Blees also stated that the Casa Maya bakery has a great selection and is also a great addition to downtown North St. Paul.



## IX. ADJOURNMENT

Blees asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:28 PM.  
M/Gadbois, S/Wise.  
Motion carried 5-0.

**The next regularly scheduled Planning Commission Meeting is Thursday, March 5, 2026, at 6:30 PM.**

Members, please notify any planned absences to:

Chris Cherne  
Planning Commission Secretary  
651-747-2440  
[chris.cherne@northstpaul.org](mailto:chris.cherne@northstpaul.org)

# City of North St. Paul

## Planning Commission Report



From: Ken Roberts, Community Development Director  
Meeting Date: March 5, 2026  
Agenda Item: **Comprehensive Plan Update – Meeting Two**

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### INTRODUCTION

The City of North Saint Paul is required to complete an update of its Comprehensive Plan by September 2028. To start this review process, I have included information about the Comprehensive Plan review process and a copy of Chapter Two of the existing 2040 Comprehensive Plan to start the plan review discussion with the Planning Commission.

### BACKGROUND

On November 6, 2025, City staff provided the Planning Commission information about the upcoming Comprehensive Plan update. This included information about the Comprehensive Plan review process and a copy of Chapter Two of the North Saint Paul 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The intent of providing this information to the Planning Commission was to start the plan review discussion with the Commission. During this meeting staff provided the Planning Commission an overview of all the information. After some discussion, the Commission agreed to table further discussion about the Comprehensive Plan update to a future meeting.

### GENERAL INFORMATION – DISCUSSION

The Comprehensive Plan update process for local governments in the 7-county area starts with the Metropolitan Council. They start the update process by reviewing and adopting a regional development guide. For the 2050 Comprehensive Plan update process, the Metropolitan Council adopted [Imagine 2050](#), the new regional development guide for the seven-county metro region, on February 12, 2025.

#### According to the Met Council:

“One of the biggest responsibilities of the Metropolitan Council is to create a regional development guide every 10 years.”

#### **Our latest guide – Imagine 2050 – envisions the future we collectively want for this region in 30 years.**

It tackles issues that are greater than any one neighborhood, city, township, or county alone can solve or address to reach the regional vision. It includes policies for how we will plan for and interact with land, transportation, water, housing, and parks and trails. Local governments will use it to guide a wide range of plans and actions for shared infrastructure like roads, sewers, regional parks, housing, water supply, and more.”

The Vision for the 7-County Metropolitan area, according to Imagine 2050, is:

**“A prosperous, equitable and resilient region with abundant opportunities for all to live, work, play and thrive.”**

Imagine 2050 lists the following regional goals:



**Our region is equitable and inclusive**

Racial inequities and injustices experienced by historically marginalized communities have been eliminated; and all people feel welcome, included, and empowered.



**Our communities are healthy and safe**

All our region’s residents live healthy and rewarding lives with a sense of dignity and wellbeing.



**Our region is dynamic and resilient**

Our region meets the opportunities and challenges faced by our communities and economy including issues of choice, access, and affordability.



**We lead on addressing climate change**

We have mitigated greenhouse gas emissions and have adapted to ensure our communities and systems are resilient to climate impacts.



**We protect and restore natural systems**

We protect, integrate, and restore natural systems to protect habitat and ensure a high quality of life for the people of our region.

They also note “The Met Council was created by State Law to coordinate and organize the planning and problem-solving that no one community can do alone. The regional development guide is one way we can coordinate planning across the metro area. By creating the regional development guide, we can provide guidance for development of comprehensive plans that span individual, local governments. It is by state statute (Minn. Stat. 473.145) that we are required to produce a comprehensive development guide for the region.”

**2025 System Statement Review**

As part of Imagine 2050, the Met Council updated several policy plans for the seven-county region including the Transportation Policy Plan, Water Policy Plan, and the Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan to reflect the latest regional goals as stated above. Following the updates to the regional development guides, the Met Council is required by state statute to inform local governments about changes to regional system plans as they may impact the local comprehensive plans. Every city, county, and township within the Met Council’s

jurisdiction receives a “system statement” – a document intended to help communities review and, if necessary, amend their local comprehensive plans.

The Met Council distributed 2025 system statements to local jurisdictions that individually identify how each community is affected by the Metropolitan Council’s policy plans in September 2025. The system statement is a customized document informing each community how it is affected by the Metropolitan Council’s newly adopted policy plans for regional systems – transportation, aviation, water resources, and regional parks and trails. The information provided by the Met Council in the system statements includes crucial statistics such as projected population, households, and employment figures.

## **North Saint Paul System Statement and Comprehensive Plan Elements**

I have attached the 2025 system statement for North Saint Paul as prepared by the Met Council for your review and consideration. The statement includes information about several existing and future conditions and systems the City will need to consider when updating its Comprehensive Plan.

### **Forecasts and Community Designations**

Understanding the future demographics and designations of your community is a foundational step in the planning process. Accurate forecasts can help predict growth patterns, housing needs, and infrastructure demands, which are essential for effective land use planning.

The 2025 system statement has the 2050 population, household and employment forecasts for North Saint Paul on page 3. The forecasts for 2050 for each of these categories are unchanged from the 2040 forecasts. The system statement also has the Affordable Housing Need allocation for North Saint Paul on page 3. The Met Council’s calculations show North Saint Paul’s share of the regional need for affordable housing at 33 new units by the year 2050. I have attached a table to this report that includes the most recent population and housing estimates as assembled by City staff for North Saint Paul for your reference.

Pages 3-6 of the system statement has information about community designations. For North Saint Paul, they show the city designated as “Urban Edge.” This designation appears correct to staff and is similar to designation in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan of “Urban.” The proposed designation of Urban Edge is similar to the designation of Urban which is most fitting for Saint Paul and Minneapolis. It does provide, at least in name, a distinction from the designation of Urban.

### **Existing Land Use**

A thorough analysis of existing land use provides insights into current zoning, development patterns, and community needs. This step lays the groundwork for planning future land use and identifying areas that require attention or change. In North St. Paul, I expect the existing land use plan map to be very similar to the land use plan map in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan – except for changes along 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue East for the recent redevelopment projects.

### **Future Land Use**

Strategic future land use planning ensures that the community evolves in a sustainable and organized manner. This involves designating areas for residential, commercial, industrial, and recreational use, considering factors like population growth and environmental impact.

Most of the future land use plan map will remain as is in the 2050 Comprehensive Plan update. There are a few locations in the city where redevelopment can be expected to occur. This element of the Comprehensive Plan update is where the city should identify the areas or locations that are most likely to be redeveloped in the next 25 years and what the long-range land uses should be for each of those areas.

## **Staged Development Areas**

Planning for staged development areas involves mapping out the phases of future development to ensure orderly growth. This approach prevents overdevelopment and ensures that infrastructure and services are expanded in a manageable and sustainable manner.

This is not applicable to North Saint Paul.

## **Climate and Natural Systems**

City leaders must acknowledge statewide targets for Greenhouse Gas (GHG) reductions, which aim for a 50% reduction by 2030 and net zero by 2050 from a 2005 baseline. These targets are pivotal in shaping policies and initiatives for climate action.

There is more information about this requirement on page four of the System Statement.

## **Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory**

A new requirement for this Comprehensive Planning cycle is the inclusion of a greenhouse gas emissions inventory. This inventory must encompass transportation, energy use, solid waste, and livestock and agriculture, if applicable. It provides a comprehensive view of the community's carbon footprint and informs strategies for reduction.

There is more information about this requirement on page 14 of the System Statement.

## **Water Resources**

This part of the System Statement includes information about surface water management, regional wastewater sewer service, water supply and municipal public water supply systems. An element of this the City should follow carefully is the subregional approach to integrated water planning. The Met Council has formed seven water planning subregions. As City staff has learned,

“The Met Council tested this subregional approach to inform the development of the 2050 Regional Water Supply Plan. Meaningful conversations with water practitioners were held throughout 2023 and 2024. These engagements led to the identification of local approaches for sustainable water supply planning over the next ten years. Feedback from participants demonstrated this approach provided an opportunity to leverage our collective expertise and resources, to achieve shared sustainable and equitable outcomes.

To build on this success we are broadening our focus to host cross-sector, integrated, holistic water planning discussions, with the goal of continuing to better reflect and support each subregion's needs and priorities. We are inviting water suppliers, public works staff, watershed and city planners, climate resilience coordinators, natural resources planners, and anyone who has a vested interest in ensuring an equitable and sustainable water future to join us in shaping this subregional group.”

The goals of the groups are to:

- Build and strengthen your relationships with colleagues, water planners, and practitioners in your subregion
- Hear and inform planning perspectives and implementation approaches
- Identify challenges and prioritize needs for the Central Subregion and its communities
- Work collaboratively with colleagues and neighboring jurisdictions to develop tools and resources to support improved outcomes
- Provide guidance to regional planners about your needs and inform future water policy development at the regional and state levels

- Tell the Central Subregion's water stories

City staff attended the first meeting of the Central Water Planning Subgroup on October 8, 2025. I will provide the Planning Commission more information about the group and its activities as they become available.

## **Transportation**

Transportation planning is integral to comprehensive plans. It includes evaluating current transportation systems, identifying areas for improvement, and planning for future needs. This ensures that the community remains accessible and connected.

There is information about transportation on Pages 7-12 and 16-20 of the System Statement. There does not appear to be any major changes to the transportation systems plan that will affect North Saint Paul. The Statement notes on Page 17 the Highway 36-Highway 120 interchange as a long-range highway improvement project.

## **Regional Parks and Trails**

Pages 33-36 of the System Statement has information about regional parks and trails in the Metropolitan Area. As noted on Page 36:

“There are no Regional Parks or Trails System Components within North St. Paul as identified in the 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan. North St. Paul must state this fact in its comprehensive plan.

State and federal park and open space units that provide outdoor recreation opportunities and natural resource conservation for the public complement the Regional Parks and Trails System and are recognized in the 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan. The following state or federal lands as shown in Figure 2 are within North St. Paul and should be acknowledged in its comprehensive plan:

“The Gateway Trail owned and maintained by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is the only State or Federal park or open space in North Saint Paul.”

## **Summary:**

City staff are asking the Planning Commission to review the various parts of the 2025 System Statement for North Saint Paul and provide staff with feedback as to their accuracy and relevance for North Saint Paul for the 2050 Comprehensive Plan update.

## **Review of Chapter Two – 2040 Comprehensive Plan**

I have attached Chapter Two of the 2040 North Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan. This chapter focuses on Vision, Goals and Decisions. It includes summaries of six Community Café meetings the City held in 2016-2018 as part of the plan update process. The city held these meetings to solicit feedback from community members on what they wanted the 2040 Comprehensive Plan to prioritize. As the plan notes, several themes emerged from this engagement effort. The themes revolved around Development and Redevelopment, Housing and Neighborhoods, Business and the Economy, and Active and Sustainable Living. For more information about the themes, see Pages 1-3 of Chapter Two.

From these and with a review of previous planning documents the City had in place, North Saint Paul adopted the following vision for the City:

## **VISION**

*North St. Paul is your favorite small town. We promote community stewardship through an involved and informed citizenry. We preserve neighborhood value with diverse and maintained housing and active neighbors. The city engages in creative placemaking that fosters an environment of economic and employment opportunity. North St. Paul builds systems that connect people to places and promote active lifestyles.*

The 2040 Plan also includes several goals for the City. These are listed on Pages 7-12 of Chapter Two. The adopted goals include those about Business and Economic development, Downtown, Transportation, Urban Design, Parks, Open Space and Trails and Resilience and the Environment. The Plan includes a series of questions and measures for each of the goals. These are included to provide specific measures the City could or should take to implement each of the goals. I have reviewed each of these goals and find they are all still relevant for North Saint Paul. To date the City has implemented about 50 percent of the measures listed in the plan.

### **Summary:**

Staff are requesting the Planning Commission review the Vision and each of the goals and their respective measures from the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and be prepared to discuss their relevance and importance for the City moving forward through the Comprehensive Plan update process.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

City staff are recommending the Planning Commission review and be prepared to discuss the:

1. 2025 System Statement for its accuracy and relevance for North Saint Paul for the 2050 Comprehensive Plan update; and
2. Vision, goals and measures from the 2040 Comprehensive Plan for their relevance for the City moving forward.

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. 2025 North Saint Paul System Statement
2. North Saint Paul Population and Housing Estimates
3. Chapter Two of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan



**CITY OF  
NORTH ST. PAUL**



**2025  
SYSTEM  
STATEMENT**



**IMAGINE<sup>20</sup><sub>50</sub>**



# 2025 SYSTEMS STATEMENT CITY OF NORTH ST. PAUL

## Regional Development Plan Adoption

On February 12, 2025, the Met Council adopted Imagine 2050 as a comprehensive development guide for the Twin Cities metro region. Imagine 2050 includes regional systems plans, including the 2050 Transportation Policy Plan, the 2050 Water Policy Plan, the 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan, and the 2050 Housing Policy Plan. The development guide also outlines land use policies and community designations important for local comprehensive planning updates.

The Metropolitan Council is now issuing systems statements pursuant to [State statute](#).

## Systems Statements

Metropolitan systems plans are long-range comprehensive plans for the regional systems – transit, highways, and airports; wastewater services; and parks and open space – along with the capital budgets for those systems. Systems statements explain the implications of metropolitan system plans for each community in the region. They are intended to help communities prepare or update their comprehensive plan, as required by the Metropolitan Land Planning Act:

*Within nine months after receiving a system statement for an amendment to a metropolitan system plan, and within three years after receiving a system statement issued in conjunction with the decennial review required under [section 473.864, subdivision 2](#), each affected local governmental unit shall review its comprehensive plan to determine if an amendment is necessary to ensure continued conformity with metropolitan system plans. If an amendment is necessary, the governmental unit shall prepare the amendment and submit it to the council for review.*

The system statement includes information specific to a community, including:

- community designation or designation(s)
- forecasted population, households, and employment through the year 2050
- guidance on appropriate densities to ensure that regional services and costly regional infrastructure can be provided as efficiently as possible
- affordable housing need allocation.

In the following sections, this systems statement contains an overview of key changes and updates to the policies and plans from the previous 2040 regional development guide and specific system changes that affect your community:

- Transportation, including metropolitan highways, aviation, and transit
- Water Resources, including wastewater, surface water, and water supply planning

- Regional parks and trails

## Regional Development Guide

The development guide adopted in February 2025 reflects the vision and plans adopted by communities for a prosperous, equitable, and resilient region with abundant opportunities for all to live, work, play, and thrive.

Regional values are shared core beliefs or principles that guide the work of developing and implementing Imagine 2050. The values build on those identified in Thrive MSP 2040 and incorporate what we've learned over the last ten years as well as the common values expressed by local governments and partners across the region. These values guide the Met Council in building partnerships and developing policies and programs to support Imagine 2050.

The Met Council has endorsed the following goals for our region to achieve through our policies, practices, programs, and partnerships:

- Our region is equitable and inclusive.
- Our communities are healthy and safe.
- Our region is dynamic and resilient.
- We lead on addressing climate change.
- We protect and restore natural systems.

## Dispute Process

If your community disagrees with elements of this systems statement or has any questions about the process, please contact your Sector Representative, Patrick Boylan, at 651-602-1438, to review and discuss potential issues or concerns. The Council and local government units and districts have usually resolved issues relating to the system statement through discussion.

## Request for Hearing

If a local governmental unit and the Met Council are unable to resolve disagreements over the content of a system statement, the unit or district may, by resolution, request that a hearing be conducted by the Met Council's Land Use Advisory Committee or by the State Office of Administrative Hearings to consider amendments to the system statement. According to Minnesota Statutes [section 473.857](#), the request shall be made by the local governmental unit or school district within 60 days after receiving the system statement. If the Met Council does not receive a hearing request within 60 days, the statement becomes final.

## Next Steps in the Regional Planning Cycle

Receipt of this system statement and the metropolitan system plans triggers a community's obligation to review and amend its comprehensive plan by December 2028. Local comprehensive plans and amendments will be reviewed by the Met Council for conformance to

metropolitan system plans, consistency with Met Council policies, and compatibility with adjacent and affected governmental units. Updated local comprehensive plans are due to the Met Council for review by Dec. 31, 2028.

## Forecasts

The Met Council uses the forecasts developed as part of Imagine 2050 to plan for regional systems. Communities should base their planning work on these forecasts. Given the nature of long-range forecasts and the planning timeline undertaken by most communities, the Met Council will maintain on-going dialogue with communities to consider any changes in growth that may have an impact on regional systems.

### *Imagine Forecasts for the City of North St. Paul*

	2020 (actual)	2030	2040	2050
Population	12,364	13,100	13,100	13,000
Households	4,803	5,200	5,300	5,300
Employment	3,063	3,500	3,500	3,500

## Housing Policy

The purpose of the Housing Policy Plan, adopted by the Metropolitan Council in February 2025, is to provide leadership and guidance on regional housing needs and challenges and to support Imagine 2050. The Housing Policy Plan provides an integrated policy framework that unifies our existing roles in housing and identifies opportunities to expand our role in supporting safe, affordable and dignified housing in the region.

Consistent with state statute (Minn. Stat. 473.859, subd. 2(c) and subd. 4), cities and townships must include a housing element and implementation program in their local comprehensive plans that address existing and projected housing needs.

The Met Council has determined the regional need for low-income housing for the decade of 2031-2040 (see Appendix B in the Housing Policy Plan).

Based on regional forecasts, the regional need for future affordable housing units is 39,700. North St. Paul's share of the region's future need for low-income housing is 33 new units of affordable housing. Of these new units, the need is for 21 affordable to households earning at or below 30% of AMI, 10 affordable to households earning 31% to 50% of AMI, and 2 affordable to households earning 51% to 60% of AMI.

### *Affordable Housing Need Allocation for the City of North St. Paul*

	Units
At or below 30% AMI	21
31 to 50% AMI	10
51 to 60% AMI	2
Total Units	33

Future Affordable Housing Need allocations may be updated throughout the decade if local projected sewerage growth changes.

North St. Paul should consult the complete Housing Policy Plan when preparing its local comprehensive plan. In addition, North St. Paul should consult Imagine 2050 and the Local Planning Handbook for specific requirements necessary for the housing element and housing implementation programs of local comprehensive plans.

## Climate Policy

In 2023, the State legislature amended the Metropolitan Land Planning Act ([Minn Stat. § 473.859, subd. 2 and 7](#)) to include new requirements that comprehensive plans address climate mitigation and adaptation. In climate policy, mitigation strategies focus on minimizing contributions to climate change through efficiency measures and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Adaptation strategies focus on how to change policies and practices to adjust to ongoing and future impacts of climate change.

The Met Council will assist communities in addressing climate mitigation and adaptation elements by providing communities with greenhouse gas inventories and technical assistance for identifying appropriate strategies.

## Community Designation

Community designations group jurisdictions with similar characteristics for the application of regional policies. The Council uses community designations to guide regional growth and development; establish land use expectations including overall development densities and patterns; and outline the respective roles of the Council and individual communities, along with strategies for planning for forecasted growth. If there are discrepancies between the Imagine 2050 Community Designations Map and the Community Designation map contained within this systems statement, communities should follow the specific guidance contained in this document. Imagine identifies the City of North St. Paul with the community designation of Urban Edge on the Community Designation map.

Urban Edge cities are characterized by growth that primarily occurred during the period between the end of the Second World War and the economic downturn of 1973-1974. These cities, adjacent to the Urban cities, experienced rapid development fueled by an expanding population and the expanding highway system. Highway accessibility led to many of these cities developing as centers of office, commercial, institutional, and industrial uses, resulting in a high density of jobs. The increased influence of automobiles resulted in a development pattern that reflects an increased emphasis on traffic movement and circulation, which contributes to their transitional character between denser urban cities and more spread-out suburban areas. Similar to Urban areas, the age of their building stock and access to transit, facilitated by their relatively high street connectivity, providing opportunities for redevelopment at high densities. Urban Edge areas face similar urban challenges, such as managing increased surface temperatures and safeguarding drinking water quality, which requires tailored environmental and infrastructure solutions.

Specific strategies for North St. Paul can be found on your [Community Page](#) in the [Local Planning Handbook](#).

# City of North St. Paul Community Designations

Urban Edge



## Urban Service Areas

- Urban
- Urban Edge
- Suburban
- Suburban Edge

## Rural Service Areas

- Rural Center
- Diversified Rural
- Rural Residential
- Agricultural
- Non-Council Community

# 2025 TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM STATEMENT CITY OF NORTH ST PAUL

## Transportation Policy Plan Overview

The 2050 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) is the metropolitan system plan for transportation – including highways, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, freight, aviation, and travel demand management – to which local comprehensive plans must conform. It also includes regional transportation objectives, supporting policies and actions, and regional performance measures. The full TPP can be found at the following url:

<https://imagine2050.metrocouncil.org/chapters/transportation>.

This system statement summarizes the regional systems and any significant changes to them, other important regional transportation considerations, and changes made to the 2050 TPP since the 2040 TPP was adopted in 2015. Additionally, this system statement highlights those elements of the system plan that apply to your community. The TPP incorporates the policy direction and the new 2050 socioeconomic forecasts adopted by the Met Council in the regional development guide, Imagine 2050, and extends the planning horizon from 2040 to 2050.

## Federal and State Requirements

The TPP meets both state requirements outlined in statute for a metropolitan system plan, and federal requirements as a fiscally constrained long-range investment plan for surface transportation. As the region has recently received a significant number of new and increased sources of transportation revenue, the 2050 TPP does not include an increased revenue scenario, but it does include additional opportunities for investment. The plan also continues to assume competitive transportation funding (e.g., state and federal discretionary programs like INFRA and Corridors of Commerce) will be sought and amended into the plan as awarded.

Under the Metropolitan Land Planning Act, local comprehensive plans are expected to conform to the projects currently identified as funded in the fiscally constrained plan, which is the official metropolitan system plan. The additional opportunities for investment may be identified separately in local plans as unfunded proposals.

Federal requirements also call for metropolitan transportation plans to be performance based, so the TPP includes objectives, policies, and actions for the regional transportation system. These objectives, policies, and actions guide the Met Council and regional partners in planning and investment in the surface transportation system.

In addition to reviewing this system statement, consult the TPP to ensure that your community's local comprehensive plan and plan amendments conform to the metropolitan transportation system plan. Communities should also review the Imagine 2050 Land Use Policy for land use considerations near certain transportation infrastructure. The format of this plan is different than past TPPs. The plan is no longer separated by chapter, rather each modal plan is distinguished from each other as individual investment or system plans. If the Met Council has a role in the funding of a regional system, the plan is identified as an

investment plan. If not, then it is identified as a system plan. There is no appendix in the 2050 TPP, supporting documentation is combined directly with the specific investment or system plan and identified as support documentation.

## 2050 Transportation Policy Plan Regional Systems

Adopted by the Met Council in February 2025, the TPP identifies the regional transportation systems, regional transportation objectives and policies, and other regional transportation issues communities should consider when producing their own comprehensive plans. This section will cover descriptions of each system and key changes made to these systems.

### Regional Transportation Policies and Actions

In addition to identifying regional systems and investment needs, the TPP includes a set of policies and related actions to guide investments, planning and priorities for the regional transportation system. The policies and actions cover many topics including safety, highway planning priorities, complete streets, non-motorized transportation, equity, climate, and natural systems. Communities are encouraged to incorporate regional policies in their local plans.

### Regional Highway System

The Metropolitan Highway System is made up of principal arterials, shown in Figure 1 of the Highway Investment Plan and included with this system statement. This system is federally known as the National Highway System. The Metropolitan Highway System is a vital element of the regional transportation system; while minor arterials are lower order roadways that provide connectivity and relieve congestion in the principal arterial system. Principal and minor arterials combined represent the Regional Highway System.

### Key Changes from the 2040 TPP

- A major shift from the previous TPP is that potential new revenues are no longer considered a means to resolve unmet needs on the system. The 2050 TPP does not have a current and increased revenue scenario as a result. Instead, it identifies funded projects in the fiscally constrained plan and additional opportunities beyond what is funded. Multiple studies completed since the 2040 TPP identified additional opportunities for investment, shown in figures 8 and 10.
- The 2050 TPP identifies highway investments in five major categories:
  - Safety: Figure 7 in the Highway Investment Plan shows regionally significant safety investments.
  - Spot mobility: Figure 8 in the Highway Investment Plan shows funded regionally significant spot mobility projects alongside identified additional opportunities for investment.
  - Interchanges: Figure 9 in the Highway Investment Plan shows funded and planned regionally significant interchange investments.
  - Managed lanes: Figure 10 in the Highway Investment Plan shows the existing, under construction, and planned E-ZPass system. It also includes managed lane corridors which are identified as additional opportunities for investment.

- Targeted regional capacity: Figure 11 in the Highway Investment Plan shows funded and planned regionally significant highway capacity investments. It also includes potential future capacity enhancements identified in studies.
- Modifications were made to the 2050 TPP that removed appendix naming found in previous plans and reworks previous chapters. Support documents for the Highway Investment Plan include Functional Classification, Preliminary Interchange Approval Process, and Congestion Management Process. The project list appendix item is now a separate section of the TPP, titled Long Range Highway and Transit Capital Project List. This updated list identifies projects from 2025 to 2050.

## Regional Transit System

The regional transit system comprises the region’s transitways, regular route bus services, demand response services, transit centers and park and rides, and transit advantages. This system is operated by six different service providers in the region. The COVID-19 pandemic upended transit, and some services vary dramatically from pre-pandemic levels. Many routes were suspended in the region and are still in the process of restructuring.

### Key Changes from the 2040 TPP

- A major shift from the previous TPP is from new revenues raised to fill budget gaps in the system. A new source of revenue for transit was created in 2023 to fund operations and maintenance for the region. Similar to highways, the Transit Investment Plan no longer contains a current and increased revenue scenario. The projects shown in the 2050 TPP are those in the fiscally constrained plan. Additional opportunities for investment are also identified in the plan and these may be incorporated into local comprehensive plans.
- Several transitways have been implemented and opened, and additional transitways have been identified in the region. Multiple arterial bus rapid transit (BRT) routes are completed and operational, while more alignments have been identified in studies for future implementation. The Transit Investment Plan identifies investments planned to be implemented in the 2050 TPP:
  - Two light rail extensions (Green Line Extension, Blue Line Extension)
  - Two dedicated BRT routes (Gold Line, Purple Line)
  - Five arterial BRT routes (B Line, E Line, F Line, G Line, H Line)
- Modifications were made to the 2050 TPP that removed appendix naming found in previous plans and reworks previous chapters. Support documents for the Transit Investment Plan include Transit Design and Performance Guidelines.

## Regional Aviation System

The regional aviation system includes Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport, eight publicly owned regional airports, and two privately owned seaplane bases. These regional airports are owned and operated by the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) and local communities.

## Key Changes from the 2040 TPP

- The MAC completed an update to the Long-Term Comprehensive Plan (LTCP) for the Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport in 2024. This update moves the planning horizon to 2040 with new operation forecasts, anticipated noise impacts, and capital project needs.
- The Aviation System Plan now identifies all facilities beyond regional airports with aviation activity. These facilities may be incorporated into and considered in local planning. Aviation appendix items of the TPP are now included as a single support document titled Aviation Supporting Information.

## Regional Bicycle System

The regional bicycle system is identified through the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN). It is made up of alignments and corridors. Corridors are shown where more specific alignments within those corridors have not yet been designated. The process used to develop the RBTN, the general principles and analysis factors used in its development, and studies done to analyze and update the network can be found in the Bicycle Investment Plan. The RBTN was established in the 2040 TPP to achieve the following goals:

- Establish an integrated and seamless network of on-street bikeways and off-road trails.
- Provide the vision for a “backbone” arterial network to serve daily bicycle trips by connecting regional destinations and local bicycle networks.
- Encourage cities, counties, park agencies, and the state to plan and implement future bikeways in support of the network vision.

The RBTN also incorporates regional bicycle barriers which are established in the TPP as the region’s most significant physical barriers to everyday bicycle travel. These barriers include freeways and expressways, railroad corridors, and secondary rivers and streams. They were developed and analyzed through the [Regional Bicycle Barrier Study](#). The barriers are included on the [Regional Bicycle Barriers Map](#).

## Key Changes from 2040 TPP

- The RBTN has been refined and expanded since it was first implemented in the 2040 TPP. Requests from local governments to add and revise RBTN corridors and alignments prompted the [Regional Bicycle Guidelines and Measures Study](#), which developed specific measures to review updates and requests from local agencies.
- The RBTN undergoes a formal update of alignments and corridors about every two years. The next formal update will take place in 2025 prior to the 2026 Regional Solicitation.

## Regional Freight System

The regional freight system includes interconnecting transportation modes, some of which are unique to freight, and some which overlap with passenger travel modes. There are five distinct modes of freight transportation: highway trucks, railroads, river barges, air freight, and pipelines. Combined with intermodal or warehouse/distribution terminals and supporting

infrastructure, these modes of transportation comprise the regional freight system, known as the Metropolitan Freight System.

### Key Changes from 2040 TPP

- E-commerce has become an increasingly important segment of freight movements and deliveries of goods to homes. The [Urban Freight Distribution Study](#) focused on e-commerce trends and impacts or opportunities of last-mile parcel deliveries in regional communities. The study notes that as urban deliveries become more common, local communities are encouraged to create curb management policies, consider delivery needs in their complete streets planning, and identify microhubs for last-mile parcel distribution.

## Pedestrian System

The Met Council coordinates with local partners on pedestrian issues and trends, and aids in funding for pedestrian needs.

### Key Changes from 2040 TPP

- In the previous TPP pedestrian and bicycle travel were combined into one chapter and discussed together. The pedestrian system is now discussed and considered as an independent investment section.
- To address rising pedestrian danger on our streets, the Met Council developed the [Pedestrian Safety Action Plan](#) in 2022. It includes analysis of crash trends in the region, recommended actions to increase pedestrian safety, and a weighted crash score on every road to aid in future safety planning and project prioritization. Communities are encouraged to incorporate the plan's findings into the pedestrian elements of their comprehensive plans.

## Travel Demand Management

Travel demand management (TDM) is the application of strategies, programs, and policies to increase the efficiency of transportation systems by reducing travel demand, or redistributing this demand in space or in time. These initiatives are intended to inspire new travel habits to support infrastructure investments while reducing the demand for personal vehicle trips.

### Key Changes from 2040 TPP

- TDM has its own dedicated investment plan and discussion in the 2050 TPP. The section identifies key regional partners in TDM as well as their roles and responsibilities. Local communities are being asked to discuss how they include travel demand management strategies in their local plans, since some of them have relationships to land use controls and ordinances.
- The Met Council conducted the Regional Travel Demand Management Study in 2023. It concluded with the [Regional Travel Demand Management Action Plan](#). The action plan outlines structure for a regional TDM program to implement strategies, programs, and incentives to change travel behaviors and reduce single-occupant vehicle trips, vehicle-miles traveled, and greenhouse gas emissions. The action plan is summarized in the 2050 TPP Travel Demand Management Investment Plan.

## System Plan Considerations Affecting Your Community

Your community should consult the complete TPP in preparing your local comprehensive plan. In addition, your community should consult Imagine 2050 and the current version of the Met Council's Local Planning Handbook (LPH) for specific comprehensive plan requirements. Specific system plan considerations affecting your community are detailed below.

### Regional Highway System

There is a principal arterial located within your community: Trunk Highway 36.

The 2050 TPP includes the following regional highway mobility improvements in your community as shown in the Highway Investment Plan Figures 8, 9, 10, 11:

- Funded or Planned Interchanges
  - TH-36 at TH-120

### Regional Transit System

Your community is located within the following Transit Market Area: TMA 2.

- TMA 2: Primarily Urban and Urban Edge communities where walkability and density of population and jobs can support higher transit service levels. Transit in these areas provides a dense network of routes with frequent, all-day service that serves a wide variety of trip purposes. Market Area 2 typically has a similar route structure to Market Area 1, but lower levels of service, as demand warrants.

Your community is located within the Transit Capital Levy District.

The TPP includes additional opportunities for investment in transitways in your community that are under study for mode and alignment, which should be acknowledged and considered in planning. The transitways still under study: Highway 36 Corridor.

Your community should also identify potential stations along planned transitways (once identified) and adopt guiding land use policies, station-area plans, and associated zoning, infrastructure, and implementation tools that support future growth around transit stations consistent with Imagine 2050. Communities can find further guidance for station-area planning in the Transportation section of the LPH and the [Transit Oriented Development Guide](#).

### Regional Aviation System

All communities must include an aviation element in the transportation sections of their comprehensive plans. The degree of aviation planning and development considerations that need to be included in the comprehensive plan varies by community. Even those communities not impacted directly by an airport have a responsibility to include airspace protection in their comprehensive plan. The protection element should include potential hazards to air navigation including electronic interference. Local comprehensive plans can also begin to consider other aviation uses which do not take place at airports, like drones.

Local communities should also consider other facilities which may generate aviation activity, such as heliports or private air facilities. To see all aviation facilities in the region including

those that are not defined as a part of the regional aviation system, refer to Figure 6 of the Aviation System Plan.

## **Regional Bicycle Planning**

The RBTN is depicted on Figure 2 of the Bicycle Investment Plan. The network consists of Tier 1 and Tier 2 corridors and alignments. These are not intended to be the only bicycle facilities in the region. Local units should also include local network plans in their communities.

In your community there is one RBTN corridor and two alignments. Your community should incorporate the RBTN map within your local bicycle plan maps and use your comprehensive planning process to identify suitable alignments within and along the RBTN corridors for future incorporation into the TPP. In addition, agencies should plan their local on and off-road bikeway networks to connect to the designated Tier 1 and Tier 2 alignments, as well as any new network alignments within RBTN corridors to be proposed in local comprehensive plans. Bikeway projects that complete segments of, or connect to, the RBTN are given priority for federal transportation funds through the Transportation Advisory Board's biannual regional solicitation.

In your community there are one or more identified bicycle barrier crossings. Please review the [Regional Bicycle Barriers Online Map](#) to determine which regional bicycle barriers and prioritized barrier crossing improvement locations are in your community. The tiered crossing improvement locations are used as one alternative criterion in the Regional Solicitation to distribute federal transportation funds. Communities are encouraged to analyze and address the need for new bicycle barrier crossings or improved bicycle facilities at existing barrier crossings.

## **Regional Freight Planning**

The Met Council encourages all local governments to plan for freight movement in their communities. Trucks are the major mode of freight movement in the region and across the nation to distribute consumer goods as well as move manufactured goods and commodities, and they operate in every community.

The Metropolitan Freight System and the National Highway Freight Network are shown in Figures 1 and 5 of the Freight Investment Plan, respectively. There are no regional freight facilities located within your community. The local plan should plan for compatible adjacent land uses with local freight generators, consider last-mile freight delivery needs and curb management strategies for local deliveries, if applicable. Refer to the Urban Freight Distribution Study for specific guidance on how to consider e-commerce and local deliveries on the local transportation system.

## **Other Transportation Policy Plan Considerations**

### **Pedestrian Planning**

The Met Council encourages local governments to address pedestrian needs for transportation in their local comprehensive plans. An adopted pedestrian, active transportation, or multimodal plan can be included as an addendum to or in addition to the comprehensive plan. This planning should also include ensuring your local community has a current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) self-evaluation that covers the public rights-of-way for transportation.

Agencies with 50 or more employees must also have an adopted ADA transition plan, not just a self-evaluation.

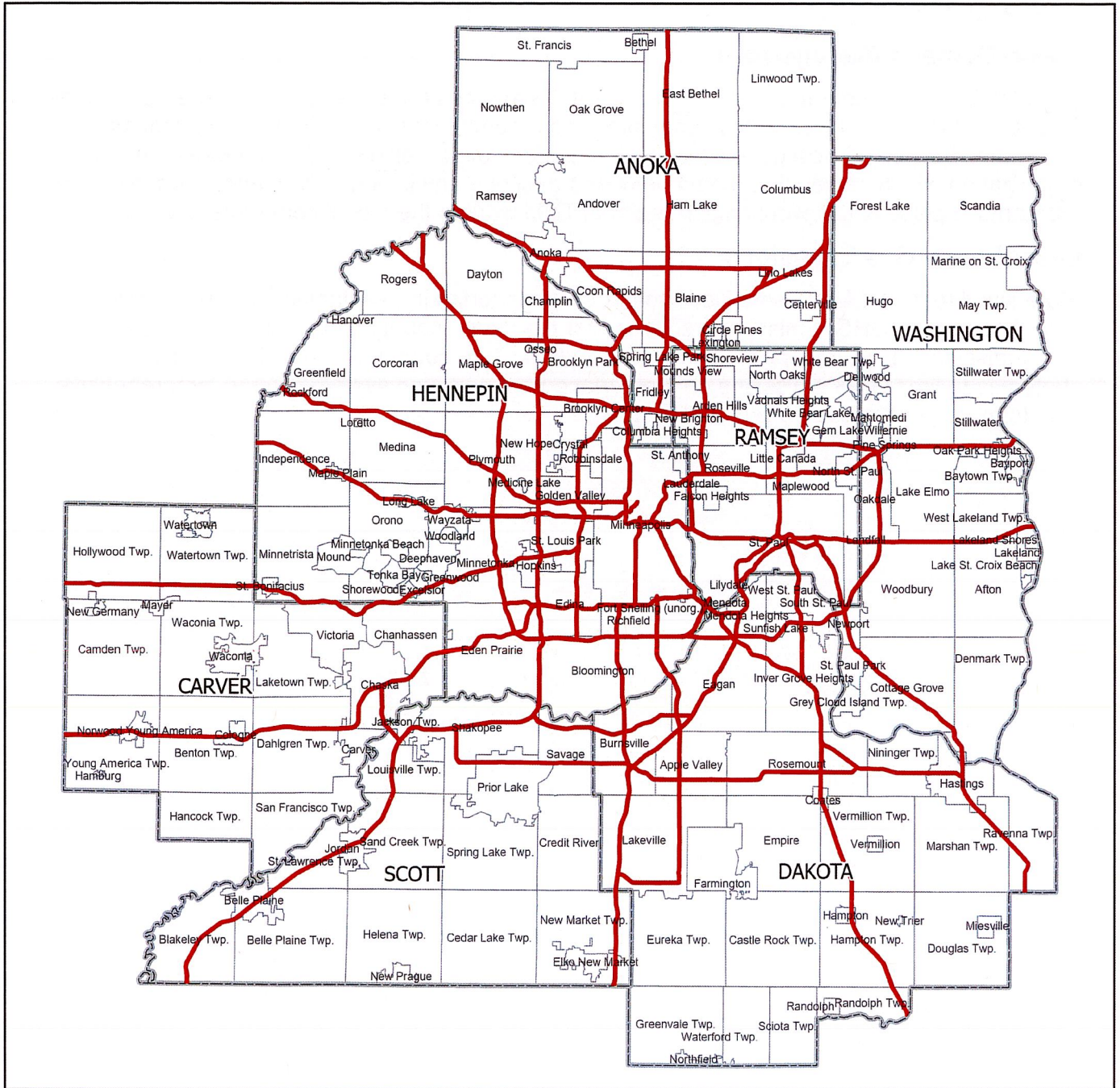
### **Travel Demand Management**

The Met Council encourages local governments to address travel demand management needs for areas which experience traffic congestion. Your community is served by Metro Transit Commuter Services. Local governments should identify the transportation management organization which serves their community and describe any policies, ordinances, practices or programs in place which would aid in regional TDM work in their local comprehensive plans.

### **Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

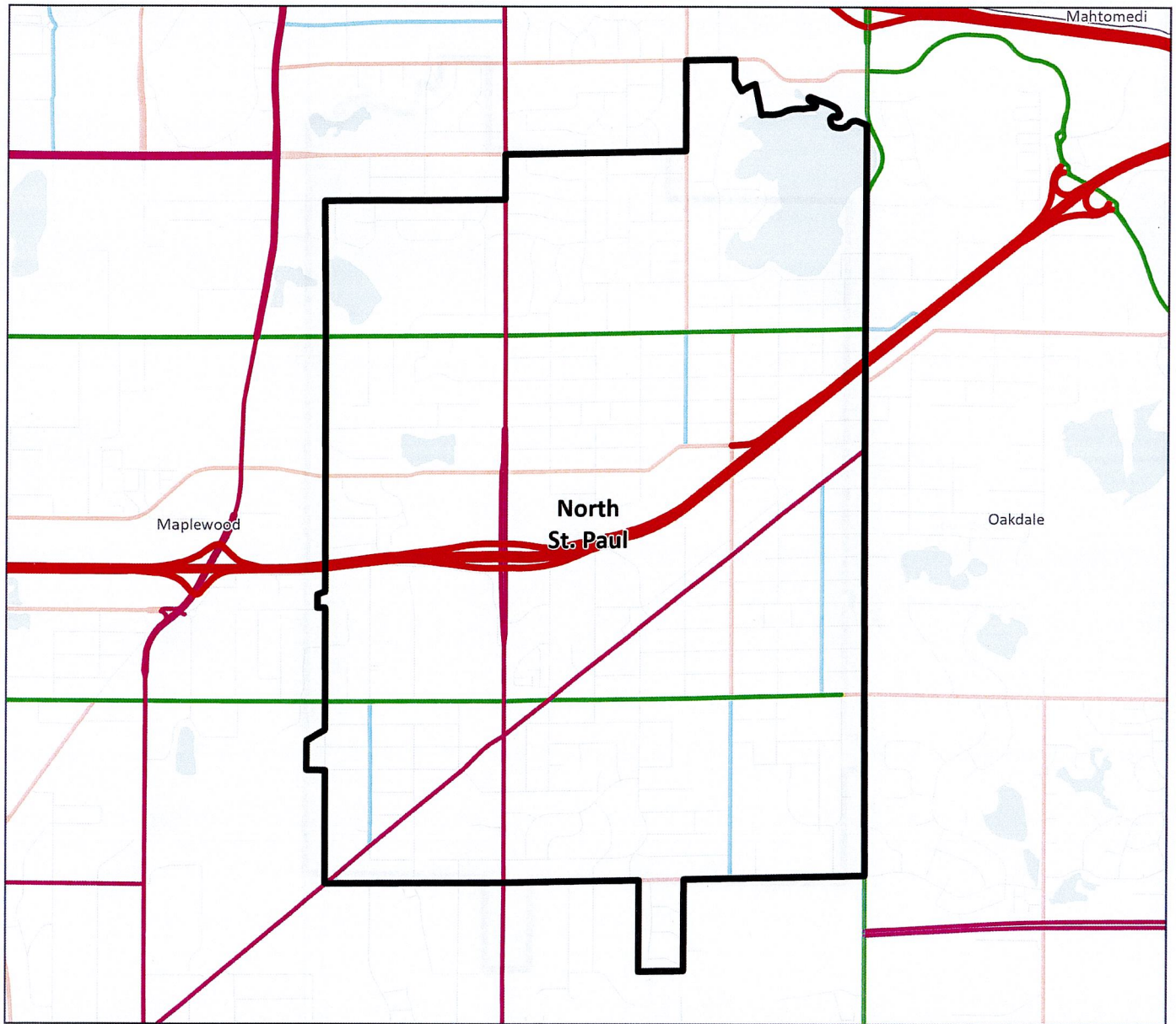
State law directs the Minnesota Department of Transportation to establish targets to meet greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction for the seven-county metro region to reach net-zero emissions in the transportation sector by 2050. Your community must include plans or strategies to limit GHG emissions on the surface transportation system in your comprehensive plan to meet the designated regional targets.

# Principal Arterial Highways



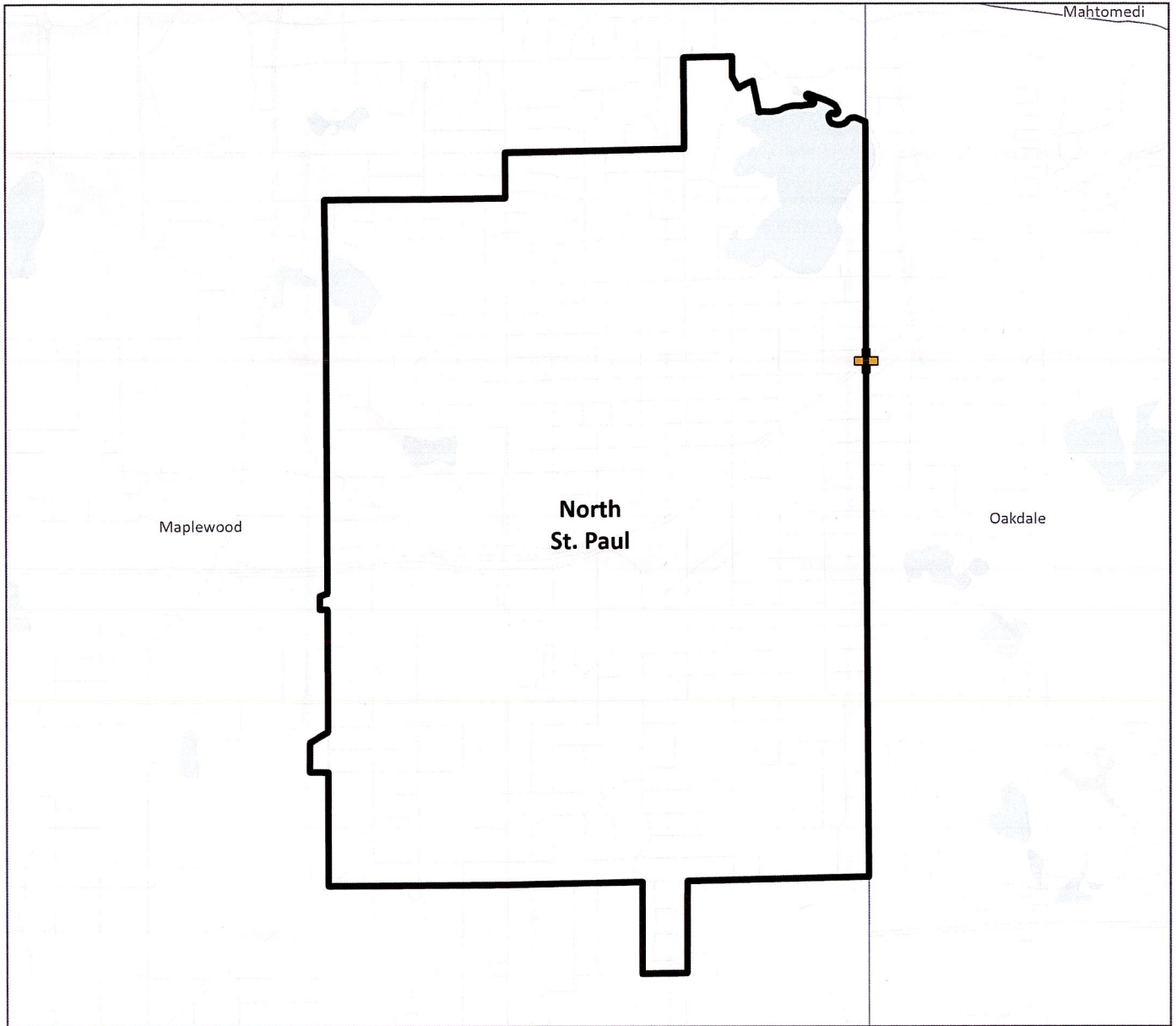
— Principal Arterial Roads

# City of North St. Paul Functional Class - All Roads



- Functional Class**
- Principal Arterial
  - Minor Arterial Augmentor
  - Minor Arterial Reliever
  - Minor Arterial Expander
  - Minor Arterial Connector
  - Major Collector
  - Minor Collector
  - Local Roads

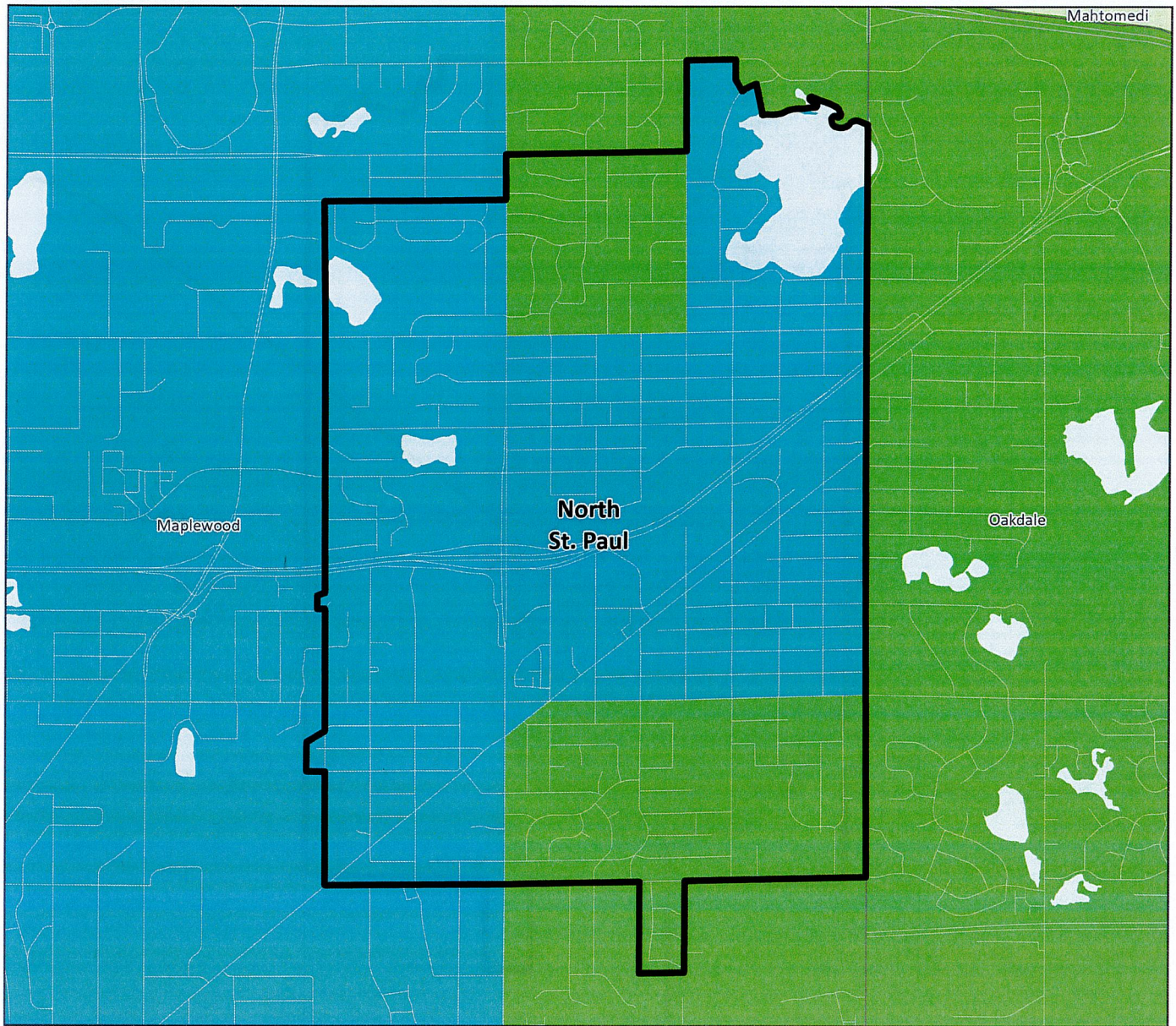
# City of North St. Paul Long Range Highway Projects



- + Interchanges
- ▲ Targeted Regional Capacity
- Safety
- Spot Mobility

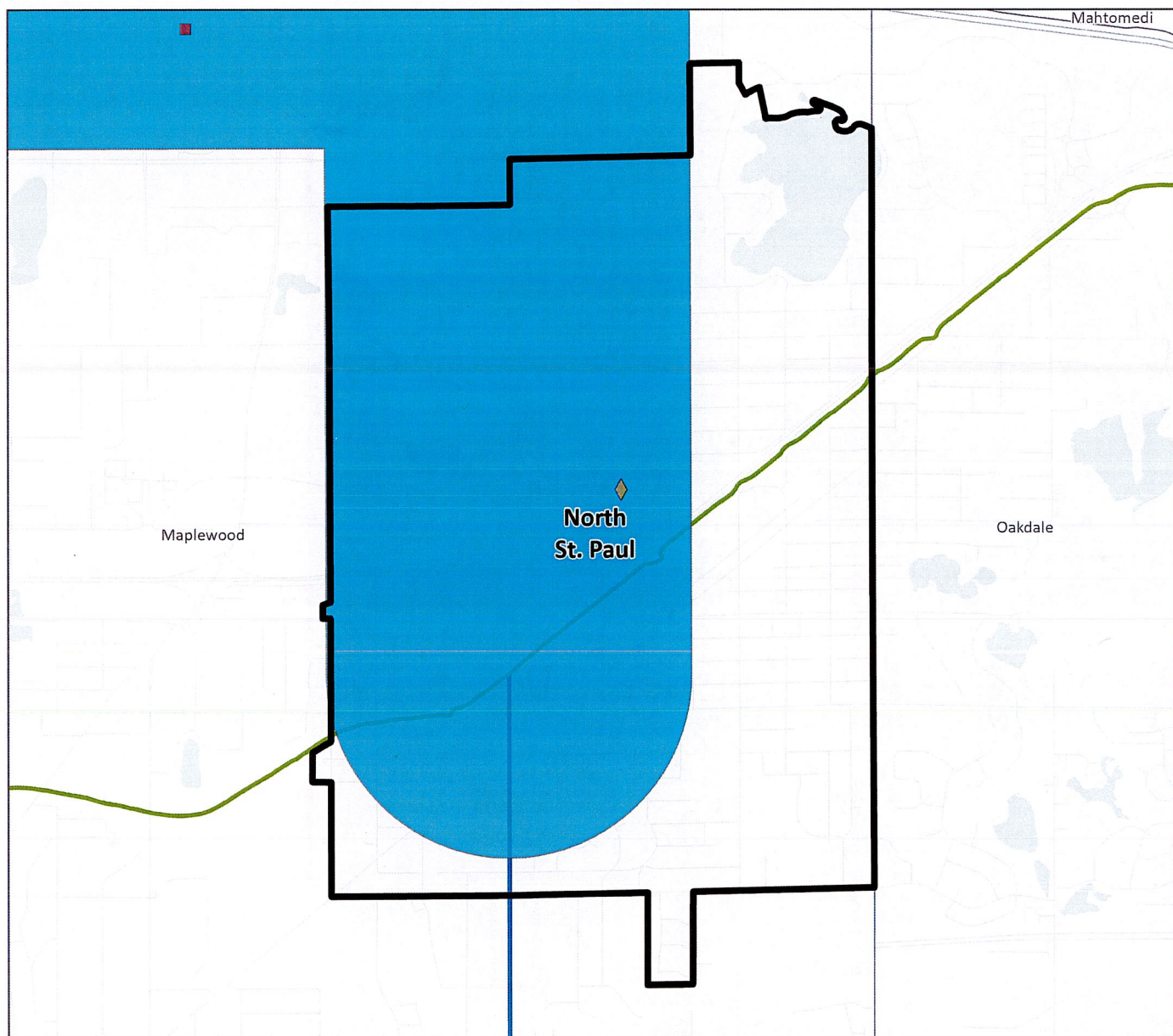
- E-ZPass System**
- Existing E-ZPass System
  - Under Construction E-ZPass
  - Planned Managed Lanes
  - Under Study Managed Lanes
  - Vision Managed Lanes

# City of North St. Paul Transit Market Areas



- Transit Market Areas
- TMA 1
  - TMA 2
  - Emerging TMA 2
  - TMA 3
  - Emerging TMA 3
  - TMA 4
  - TMA 5
- Freestanding Town Center

# City of North St. Paul Regional Bicycle Transportation Network



### Alignments

- Tier 1
- Tier 2

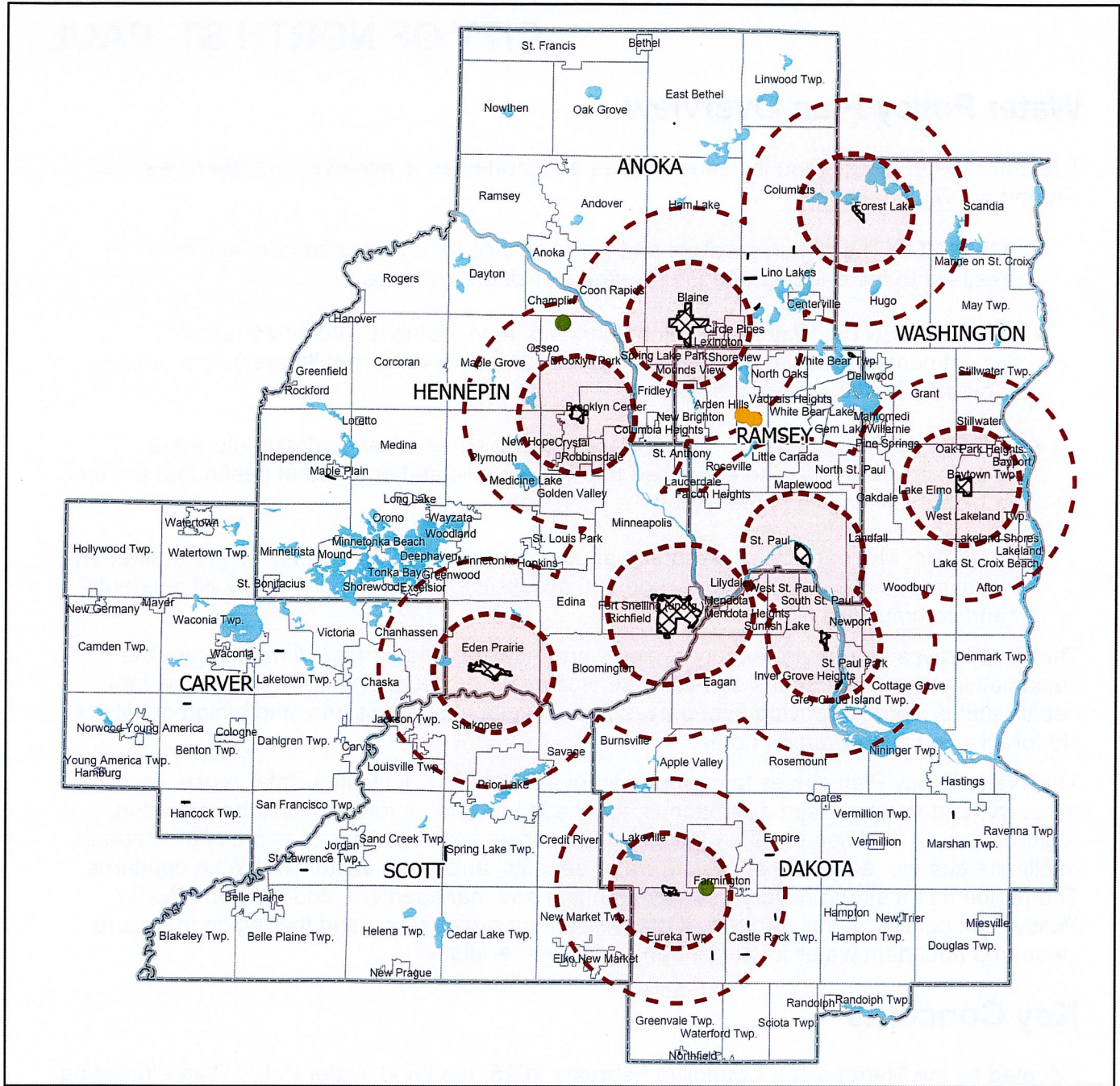
### Corridors

- Tier 1
- Tier 2

### Regional Destination Subgroup

- Metropolitan Job Centers (> 50,000 Jobs)
- Regional Job Centers (15,000 - 50,000 Jobs)
- Subregional Job Centers (7,000 - 15,000 jobs)
- ◆ Colleges & Universities (>2,000 Students)
- ◆ Large High Schools (> 2,000 Students)
- Major Sports & Entertainment Centers
- ▲ Regional Parks (> 400,000 visits/year)

# Regional Aviation System and Airport Influence Areas



- Tall Tower
- VOR
- 3 Mile Airport Influence Area - Noise, Zoning, Infrastructure
- 6 Mile Airport Influence Area - Landfills, Wind Towers
- ⊠ Airport Land Area
- Aircraft Permitted Water

# 2025 WATER RESOURCES SYSTEM STATEMENT CITY OF NORTH ST. PAUL

## Water Policy Plan Overview

The 2050 Water Policy Plan includes policies and strategies to achieve four objectives that support our regional goals:

- **CLIMATE:** The region's waters and water services are protected from and made resilient to the ongoing and future effects of climate change.
- **INVESTMENTS:** Water protection, planning, management, and infrastructure investments are optimized to ensure public and ecosystem health are fully protected now and for future generations.
- **HEALTH:** Natural waters, source waters, water services, and infrastructure are managed, restored, and enhanced to protect public and ecosystem health that ensures a high quality of life in the region.
- **EQUITY:** The benefits of clean and abundant water and water services are defined by local needs and environmental context, accessible, and justly shared by all residents and communities.

These objectives help to protect our region's groundwater and surface water, ensure the sustainability of water sources and utility service providers, support public and ecosystem health, and promote a thriving economy, sound development decisions, and a high quality of life for all who call this region home.

The Water Policy Plan strives to generate innovative actions, including water reuse, resource recovery, and nature-based approaches, that have multiple benefits at both the local and regional scales. Additionally, the plan includes policies and strategies to address the impacts of climate change, equitable access to water benefits, and water sector workforce concerns. The region has a strong history of water planning and management, and the 2050 Water Policy Plan continues this tradition. It progresses our organization and the region to ensure clean and abundant water for current and future generations.

## Key Concepts

Adopted by the Metropolitan Council in February 2025, the 2050 Water Policy Plan - including the regional water policies, Wastewater System Plan, and the Metro Area Water Supply Plan - outline the conditions for regional wastewater service, surface water management, and water supply planning. Local comprehensive plans shall conform to these conditions. The Policy Plan incorporates the following changes:

## **Integrated Planning (next steps)**

The Water Policy Plan is a guide for managing wastewater, water supply, surface waters, and groundwater. It takes an integrated approach to water planning and management from local to federal and Tribal levels, which helps to ensure a clean and plentiful water future. Water planning organizations need to work together to address issues that transcend political boundaries to achieve holistic water management.

## **Subregional Approach to Planning**

The Met Council is committed to continuing and broadening the subregional approach to integrated water planning. Subregional groups will be expanded to include stakeholders from Tribal Nations, state agencies, county planning staff, municipal public works and planning staff, watershed organizations, non-governmental organizations, and others who want to participate in discussions about localized, integrated water concerns.

## **Water Equity**

The Water Policy Plan prioritizes equitable access to clean water and water services, especially for historically marginalized communities. Reaching these outcomes requires initiatives such as prioritizing investments in overburdened communities, addressing historical harms, creating accessible information and communications, and including diverse perspectives of community members in water planning and management decisions.

## **Climate and Natural Systems**

The Water Policy Plan includes climate and natural systems objectives, policies, and actions, which guide the Met Council and communities to employ approaches that lead to sustainable water and water services. This includes building water resiliency, limiting risks, and benefiting a growing and a thriving economy through convening partners, new tools and technologies, water conservation and protection efforts, and water planning and technical assistance.

## **Considerations Affecting Your Community**

### **Regional Sewer Service**

The treatment of wastewater is foundational to ensure public health and protect the region's natural environments. Reclamation of water and byproducts from the wastewater treatment process can help our region meet sustainability and climate goals. To operate and steward the regional wastewater system, it is essential for the Met Council to understand local conditions, identify current and future needs, and take innovative approaches to address the region's water sustainability challenges.

Local governments are required to submit both a wastewater plan element to their comprehensive plan and a comprehensive sewer plan describing service needs from the Met Council (Minnesota Statutes 473.513). A complete list of requirements for the comprehensive sewer plan, depending on wastewater service methods in your community, can be found in the Water Resources section of the [Local Planning Handbook](#).

## Forecasts

The forecasts of population, households, employment, and wastewater flows for North St. Paul can be found on your Community Page in the Local Planning Handbook. These forecasts are for sewer development. The sewer forecasts were estimated using Met Council's census block forecast data, individual and communal sewage treatment system data, Sewer Availability Charge (SAC) data, annual city reports, current trends, existing and future local wastewater service areas and other municipal information. The wastewater flows are based on historical wastewater flow data, future wastewater generation rates, and the sewer population and employment forecast data.

The Met Council will use these growth and wastewater flow forecasts to plan future regional wastewater conveyance and treatment system improvements needed to serve your community.

North St. Paul, through its comprehensive planning process, must decide the location and staging of development, and then plan and design its local wastewater collection system to serve this development.

## Wastewater Service

Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (Environmental Services) designs, constructs, and operates the regional wastewater system (Metropolitan Disposal System): a publicly owned system of regional sanitary sewers and water resource recovery facilities (wastewater treatment plants), for the conveyance, treatment and disposal of domestic waste, industrial waste and other waste from residential, commercial, institutional, and industrial users in the metropolitan area. The regional wastewater system currently serves 111 communities and through its work it protects public health, protects the environment, and fosters the economic growth of the seven-county Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.

A Regional Sanitary Sewer System map is provided to assist in the completion of your community's comprehensive sewer plan. The map shows Environmental Services' wastewater infrastructure located within your community's boundaries, if your community is provided regional wastewater service.

A complete list of items required for inclusion in your community's comprehensive sewer plan, depending on wastewater service methods in your community, can be found in the Local Planning Handbook. A comprehensive plan will be found incomplete for review if all submittal requirements are not met.

If your community has multiple methods of wastewater service (including regional service, local (municipal) wastewater treatment system, private communal systems, and/or subsurface sewage treatment systems), review the information in each corresponding section and refer to the Local Planning Handbook for a complete list of requirements that must be included in the comprehensive sewer plan for these systems. We strongly encourage you to include this information in a water chapter of your comprehensive plan.

## **Areas Served by the Regional System**

Current wastewater treatment services are provided to the City by Environmental Services. The majority of wastewater generated within the City is conveyed through Met Council Interceptor 1-MW-413. In addition, small areas of the City are provided service through Met Council Interceptors 1-SP-217 and 1-WO-501 by indirect connections through neighboring communities. All wastewater is treated at the Metropolitan Water Resource Recovery Facility in St. Paul.

## **Regional Inflow and Infiltration Program**

The Met Council is continuing implementation of its inflow and infiltration (I/I) reduction program and will continue to establish I/I goals for all communities discharging wastewater to the regional wastewater system. Communities that have excessive I/I in their sanitary sewer systems will be required to eliminate the excessive I/I. Those communities will be required to submit a work plan that details work activities to identify and eliminate I/I sources from both municipal and private sources. The Met Council will not design future regional sanitary sewer improvements or water resource recovery facilities to handle peak hourly flows in excess of the allowable rate for your community. Increases in service may be limited in communities that do not demonstrate progress in reducing excess I/I.

Two grant programs are currently available for communities with excessive I/I in their sanitary sewer systems: The Municipal Inflow and Infiltration Grant Program and the Private Property Inflow and Infiltration Grant Program. It is recommended that communities review these programs and determine if participation fits into their I/I work plan. The Municipal Inflow and Infiltration Grant Program is based on annual legislative action and funding amount and availability may vary year to year.

## **Areas Served by Local Wastewater Treatment System**

The requirements of this element do not apply because North St. Paul does not have a local wastewater treatment system.

## **Areas Served by Private Communal Treatment Systems and/or Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems**

The Met Council's position is that private communal wastewater treatment systems should only be permitted in areas not programmed for regional sewer service in the foreseeable future and they are provided for in a community's comprehensive plan. The community is responsible for permitting all private communal or cluster wastewater treatment systems consistent with current Minnesota Pollution Control Agency standards (Minnesota Rules Chapter 7080-7083). The Met Council will not provide financial support to assist communities if these systems fail.

Communities with individual subsurface sewage treatment systems (SSTS), commonly known as septic systems, must adopt a management program consistent with current Minnesota Pollution Control Agency regulations (Minnesota Rules Chapter 7080-7083). A description of the management plan and current SSTS ordinance must be included in the community's comprehensive sewer plan.

## Surface Water Management

The metro region consists of hundreds of miles of rivers, streams, thousands of acres of wetlands, and nearly a thousand lakes. These surface waters define our region. They are where we play, exercise, find peace, and celebrate with friends and family. They support the region's ecosystems and biodiversity. They provide drinking water for the region's residents and energy for industry. They are critical transportation corridors and places to recreate, fueling local economies. Yet these waters are threatened by complex issues like ongoing pollution stress, climate change, and unsustainable development pressures. Comprehensive community planning includes surface water planning to ensure the region's residents, businesses, and ecosystems can benefit from clean and abundant water.

In 1995, Minnesota Statutes Section 473.859, subd. 2 was amended to make the local water plan (often referred to as local surface water management plans) required by Section 103B.235 a part of the land use plan of the local comprehensive plan. Minnesota Rules Chapter 8410, updated in July of 2015, includes the requirements for local water management plans. All communities in the metro region must update their local water plan between Jan. 1, 2027 and Dec. 31, 2028. This means that North St. Paul must update its local water plan as part of the comprehensive plan update. The community's updated local water plan should be submitted to the Met Council for its review concurrent with the review by the local watershed management organizations.

The Surface Water Features map shows the watershed management organizations, Ramsey-Washington Metro WD and Valley Branch WD, that have jurisdiction in North St. Paul.

Failure to have an updated local water plan approved by your watershed management organizations will result in the comprehensive plan being incomplete for review. Local water plans shall be submitted to the Met Council for review in the timeframe described above, comments are sent from the Met Council to the appropriate watersheds for inclusion in their review and approval of the plan, and finally the plan is approved by the appropriate watersheds.

Local water plans must meet the requirements for local water plans in Minnesota Statutes, section 103B.235 and Minnesota Rules Chapter 8410. In general, local water plans need to include a summary of the priorities and problems in the community; structural, nonstructural and programmatic actions to take to address the priorities and problems; and clearly identified funding mechanisms to fix the problems.

More detailed guidance for the local water plans can be found in Appendix A of the [2050 Water Policy Plan](#) and in the Met Council's current Local Planning Handbook.

### Priority Waters List

The Met Council updated its Priority Waters List (formerly Priority Lakes List) in July 2022. This new version includes rivers, lakes, and streams. With more than 950 lakes and hundreds of miles of rivers and streams in the region, waterbodies needed to be prioritized to adequately dedicate staff and financial resources. The Met Council uses the Priority Waters List to focus

its limited resources. The list is also used in the environmental review process. The Surface Water Features map and Priority Waters List table show the priority waters for North St. Paul.

When using this Priority Waters List, for projects near a specific waterbody, we recommend you connect with local residents to understand how they value and interact with the waterbody. The Twin Cities region is home to many diverse communities with different cultural and personal relationships to water, so it's important to incorporate those perspectives in addition to the Priority Waters List when working on local-scale projects. Communities should identify the Priority Waters and the projects and/or programs that will protect or restore these waters.

The Water Contamination and Impaired Waters map includes any water bodies that are on the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's 303d Impaired Waters List.

*Table of Priority Waters for the City of North St. Paul*

Waterbody Type	Name	DNR Lake ID	DNR Kittle Number
Lake	Silver	62000100	---
River/stream	Kohlman Creek	---	M-053.5-003

## Water Supply

Water supply is not a regional system. However, water supply information is required for local comprehensive plan updates to meet statutory requirements and for consistency with regional policy.

To ensure that there is a safe and plentiful supply of water—for a wide range of residential, commercial, institutional, industrial, recreational, and other purposes—it is important to make sure local water supply sources, infrastructure, and planned investments are aligned with planned land use changes.

The Met Council recognizes the local responsibility and authority for water supply planning. However, a regional perspective is also valuable, because the effects of local water supply decisions do not stop at community boundaries. The Met Council provides regional planning, guidance, and resources to support communities and help safeguard our shared water resources.

Water supply plan-related requirements generally include:

- Clearly identifying the locations of water sources and amount of water that is currently used and is planned to be used for things like agriculture, homes, businesses, industries, and other public and private purposes. This includes areas that affect those water sources, such as source water protection areas.
- Creating a program for how to implement local rules and regulations about water supply, including when and how these rules will be developed, adopted, and administered.

Communities served by a municipal community public water supply system must fulfill part of these requirements by attaching a local water supply plan approved by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources as an appendix to the comprehensive plan.

The Water Supply Considerations map illustrates some key content for your community, including Drinking Water Supply Management Areas, Special Well and Boring Construction Areas, and Priority Waters qualifying as drinking water sources.

We strongly encourage you to include any required information that isn't in the local water supply plan—such as source water protection and privately-owned wells—in a water chapter of your comprehensive plan.

A customized checklist of minimum requirements for your community is included in the Local Planning Handbook, along with resources to help you meet and go beyond minimum requirements.

## **Source Water Protection**

Your comprehensive plan should consider water use (including water supply sources) as part of land use planning, to promote land use practices and development decisions that protect public health for your community and the region. Include information about the location of both groundwater and surface water source water protection areas and their vulnerability for all community public drinking water source(s) within your community's borders and associated contaminant threats. Also include a commitment to collaborate with neighbors on source water protection, when applicable.

## **Privately-Owned Wells and Nonmunicipal Public Water Supply Systems**

Your comprehensive plan should include information about the current and planned use and management strategies for privately-owned wells and nonmunicipal public water supply systems, because people, institutions, and businesses in your community use those sources for a wide range of agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial and/or other nonmunicipal purposes.

If a new municipal community public water supply system is planned by 2050, a water chapter of the updated comprehensive plan should include details about the planned system.

## **Municipal Community Public Water Supply Systems**

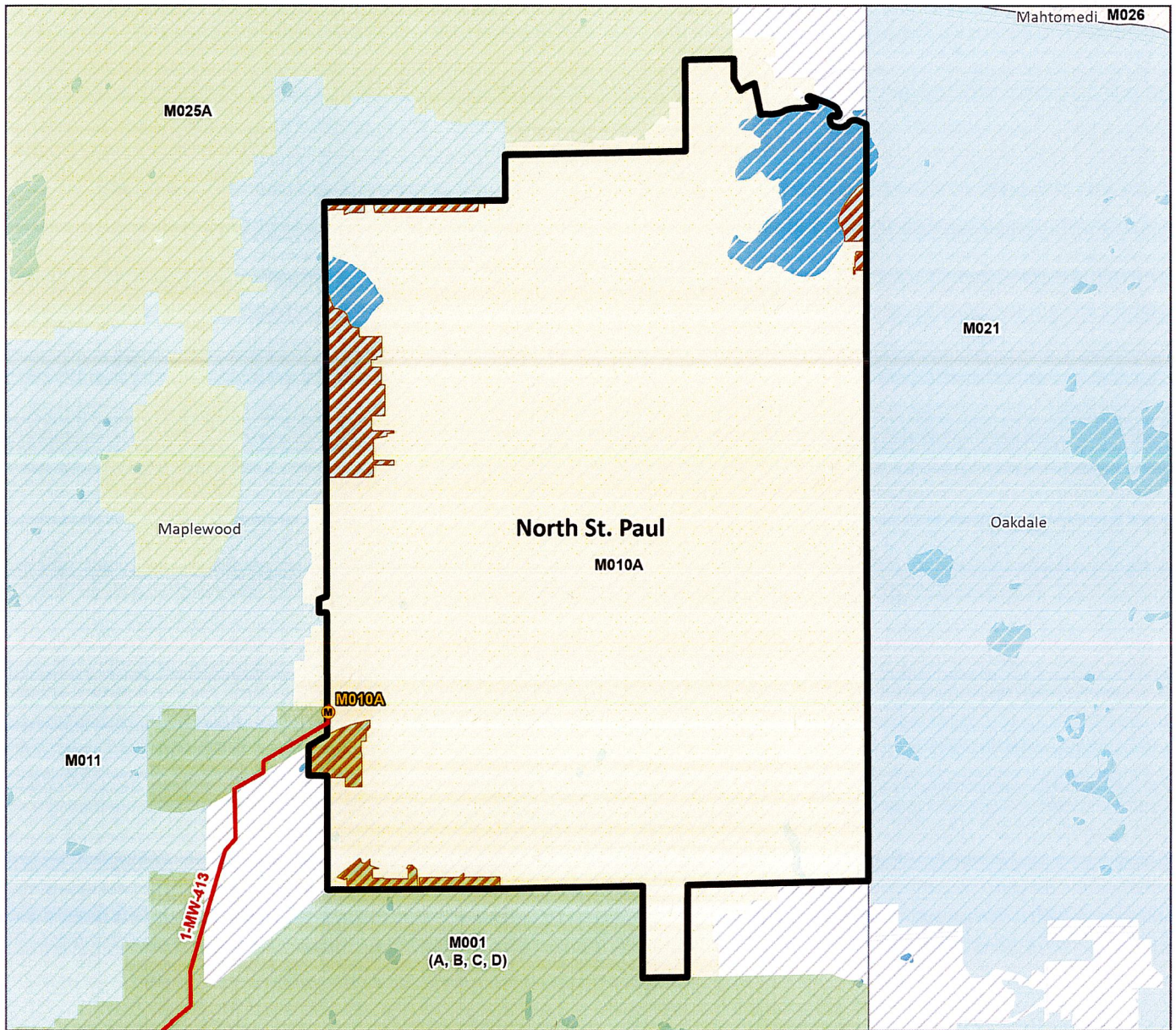
### **Water Supply System Information**

Because people, institutions, and businesses in your community get water through a municipal community public water supply system, you must include information about that system and an implementation program in your comprehensive plans, to demonstrate the availability of clean, safe drinking water to meet projected water demand consistent with the Met Council's forecasts.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR)-approved local water supply plan for the municipal public water supplier providing service to your community must be attached as an appendix to the comprehensive plan. To ensure that the DNR-approved local water supply plan is consistent with regional policies and is compatible with adjacent and affected governmental units, you should provide the Met Council and adjacent and affected jurisdictions with the opportunity to review and comment on your draft local water supply plan update.

Failure to include an updated local water supply plan approved by the DNR will result in the comprehensive plan being incomplete for review until the required plan is submitted to the Met Council.

# City of North St. Paul Regional Sanitary Sewer System



Meters

**Regional Sewer**

Gravity

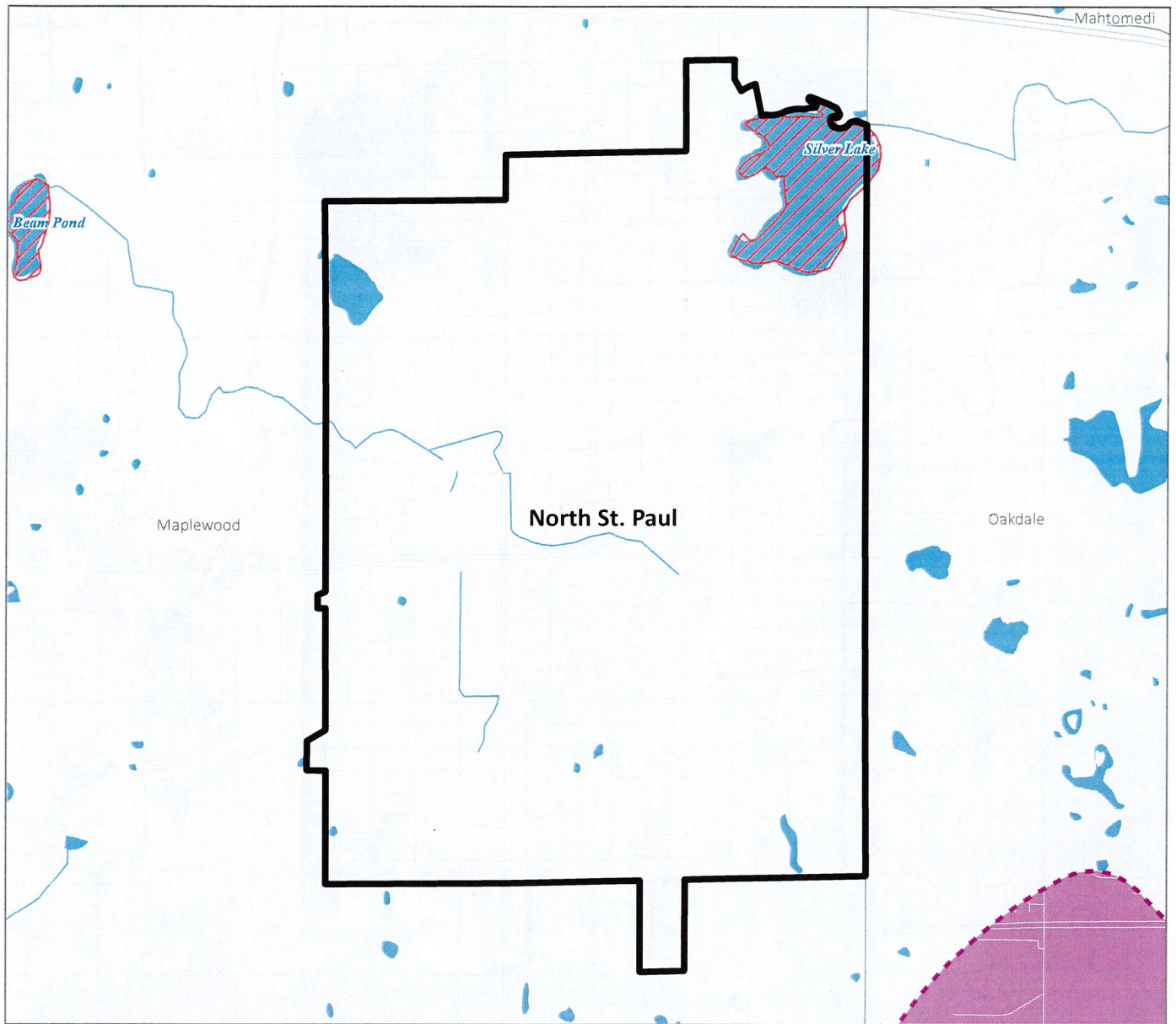
Areas of Unmetered Flow from the Community

2050 MUSA




**Sewer Service Areas**

To Meter M### Not Served

# City of North St. Paul Water Contamination and Impaired Waters



### Minnesota Groundwater Contamination Atlas

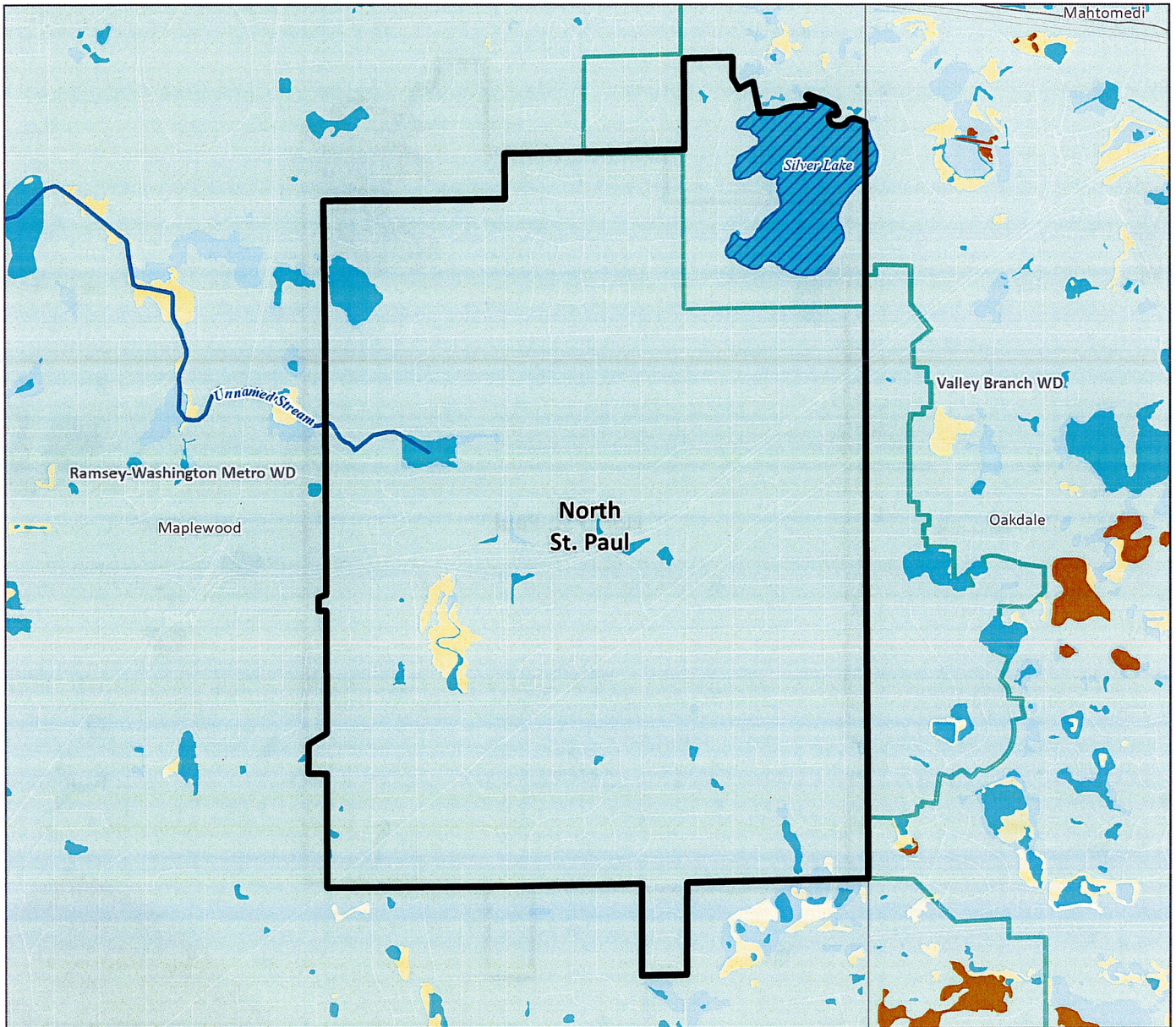
-  High Confidence Boundary
-  Low Confidence Boundary
-  Groundwater area of concern \*

### Minnesota's 2024 Impaired Waters List

-  Impaired Rivers or Streams
-  Impaired Lake

\* darker shades of purple represent multiple overlapping areas of concern

# City of North St. Paul Surface Water Features





### Watershed Management Type

-  County Administered Planning
-  Watershed District (WD)
-  Watershed Management Organization (WMO)

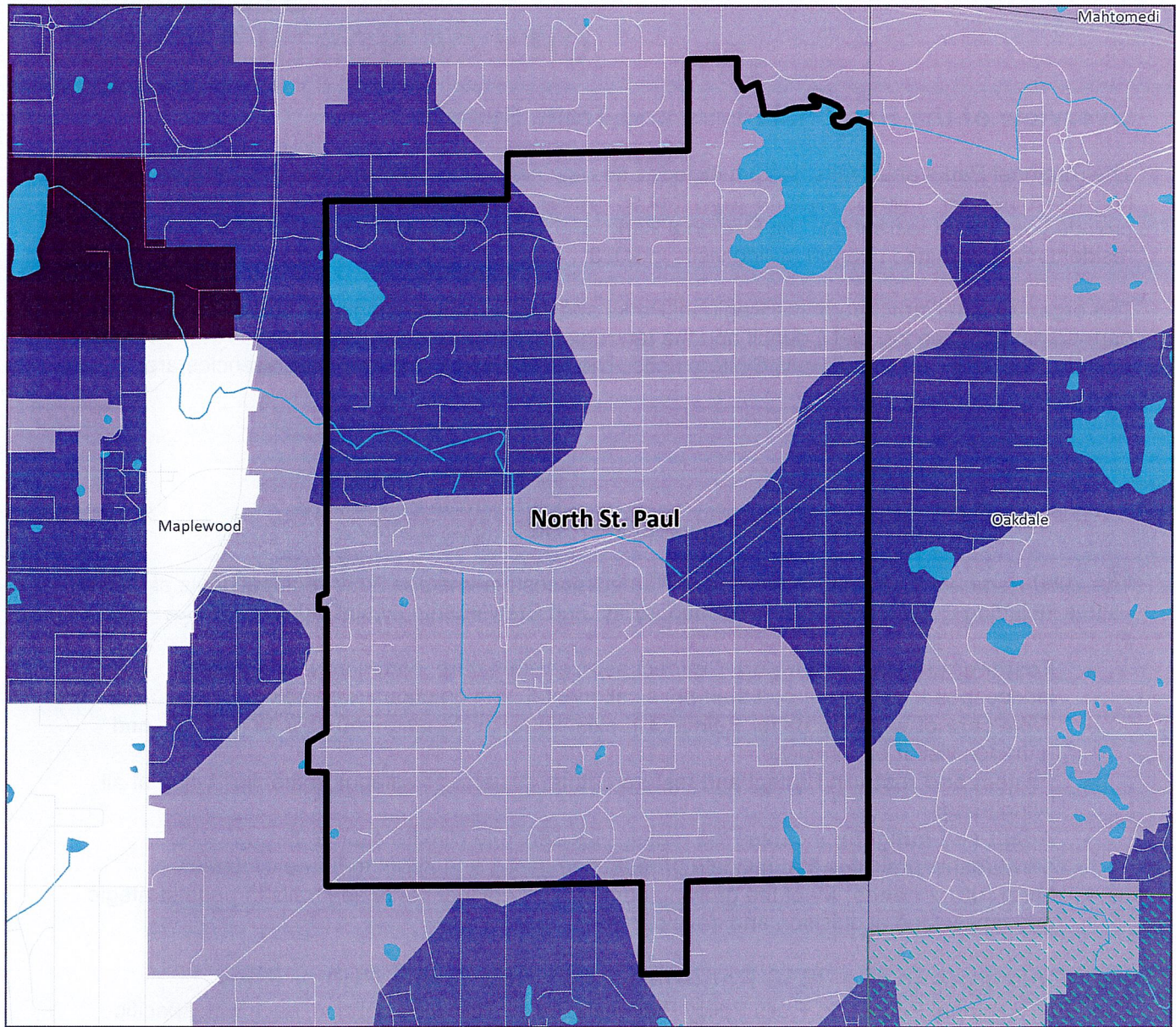
### Wetland Type

-  Seasonally Flooded Basin or Flat
-  Wet Meadow
-  Shallow Marsh
-  Deep Marsh
-  Shallow Open Water
-  Shrub Swamp
-  Wooded Swamp
-  Bog

### Priority Water

-  Priority River or Stream
-  Priority Lake

# City of North St. Paul Water Supply Considerations



## Drinking Water Supply Management Areas for Groundwater (DWSMA)

- High Vulnerability
- Moderate Vulnerability
- Low Vulnerability

## Drinking Water Supply Management Areas for Surface Water (DWSMA)

- Surface Water DWSMA Priority Area A
- Special Well and Boring Construction Area
- Priority river or stream qualifying as a drinking water source
- Priority lake qualifying as a drinking water source

# REGIONAL PARKS AND TRAILS SYSTEM STATEMENT CITY OF NORTH ST. PAUL

## Overview of the Regional Parks and Trails System

The Regional Parks and Trails System includes 66 regional parks, park reserves, and special features, plus more than 487 miles of regional trails that showcase the unique landscapes of the region and provide year-round recreation. The Regional Parks and Trails System is well-loved by our region's residents and attracted over 69 million visits in 2023.

The organizational structure of the Regional Parks and Trails System is unique, built upon a strong partnership between the Met Council and the ten regional park implementing agencies that own and operate Regional Parks and Trails System units. The regional park implementing agencies are:

Anoka County	Ramsey County
City of Bloomington	City of Saint Paul
Carver County	Scott County
Dakota County	Three Rivers Park District
Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	Washington County

The 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan advances the Imagine 2050 regional goals and core values including Equity, Leadership, Accountability, and Stewardship by striving to:

- **Foster equity and belonging:** Connect people with nature, community, and cultural landscapes to better support their physical, mental, and emotional well-being
- **Take care of what we have:** Reinvest in existing regional parks and trails to maintain and enhance visitor experiences
- **Protect and restore:** Protect and restore natural systems to safeguard the well-being of all living things
- **Adapt and mitigate:** Increase the region's resilience to climate change through land stewardship practices that mitigate greenhouse gases and adapt to future climates
- **Meet future needs:** Meet the growing demand for regional parks and trails through strategic and timely land acquisition and development.

## Key Concepts in the 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan

The 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan includes the following policies, each with specific associated strategies:

- **System Plan policy:** Maintain a robust and current set of data, maps, plans, processes, and applications to support regional parks and trails planning.
- **Natural Systems policy:** Identify lands with high-quality natural features and/or with high restoration potential that are desirable for Regional Parks and Trails System activities and put these lands in a protected status so they will be available for recreational uses and preservation purposes in perpetuity.
- **Climate Resilience policy:** Adapt and enhance the Regional Parks and Trails System to promote resilience to climate change, including the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions.

- **Planning policy:** Promote long-range planning and help provide integrated resource planning across jurisdictions in order to create a seamless system that connects everyone to the outdoors.
- **System Protection policy:** Protect public investments in acquisition and development by assuring that every component in the system is able to fully carry out its designated role.
- **Recreation, Facilities, and Programming policy:** Foster a sense of belonging by providing a wide spectrum of leisure and play opportunities while connecting people, places, and the natural world.
- **Finance policy:** The Met Council administers, provides financial oversight, and collaborates with a range of partners to fund the ten regional park implementing agencies in support of the Regional Parks and Trails System.

The 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan is the metropolitan system plan for regional recreation open space with which local comprehensive plans must conform. This system statement highlights the elements of the system plan which apply specifically to your community. Find the complete text of the 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan at the following url:

<https://imagine2050.metrocouncil.org/chapters/regional-parks-and-trails>.

## Key Changes in the 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan

Adopted by the Met Council in February 2025, the 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan incorporates the following changes:

- Unit name changes
  - Anoka County
    - “Northwest Search Area” changed to “Sugar Hills Search Area”
  - Dakota County
    - “Lebanon Hills-Big Rivers Greenway Trail Search Corridor” changed to “Lebanon Hills-Minnesota River Greenway Trail Search Corridor”
    - “Lebanon Hills-Mendota Greenway Regional Trail, Highway 62 segment” changed to “Lebanon Hills Greenway Regional Trail”
  - Scott County
    - “Scott West Regional Trail” changed to “Big Woods Regional Trail”
    - “Minnesota River Bluffs Extension and Scott County Connection Regional Trail” changed to “Merriam Junction Regional Trail”
    - “Louisville Trail Search Corridor” changed to “Merriam Junction Regional Trail”
    - Portion of “Southern Scott Trail Search Corridor” changed to “Shallow Waters Regional Trail”
- Trail refinements
  - Three Rivers Park District’s Dakota Rail Regional Trail Search Corridor Extension moving the trail terminus from Highway 494 to Minnetonka City Hall
  - Three Rivers Park District is transferring a portion of the Lake Minnetonka Regional Trail to Carver County
- Future 2028/2029 system additions process candidates
  - Ramsey County’s Rice Creek North Regional Trail Boundary Adjustment adding 2,407 acres to the current 792 acres at the former Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant
  - Three Rivers Park District’s 5.5-mile West Minnehaha Creek Trail Corridor Study Area
  - Dakota County’s 58-acre Thompson County Park Study Area in West St. Paul serving the outdoor recreational needs of the more than 50,000 residents who live in the northern portion of Dakota County

The 2050 Regional Parks and Trails System Plan Map is depicted in Figure 1. City of North St. Paul should consult the complete 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan in preparing its local comprehensive plan. In addition, your community should consult Imagine 2050 and the current version of the Met Council's Local Planning Handbook for specific comprehensive plan requirements.

## 2050 Regional Parks and Trails System Units

The Regional Parks and Trails System comprises four main types of units: regional parks, park reserves, special features and regional trails.

- **Regional parks** contain a diversity of natural features, either naturally occurring or restored, and are typically 200-500 acres in size. Regional parks accommodate a variety of outdoor recreation activities. In 2024, a total of 46 regional parks are open to the public.
- **Park reserves**, like regional parks, provide for a diversity of outdoor recreation activities. One major distinguishing feature is that the minimum size for a park reserve is 1,000 acres. Additionally, regional park implementing agencies are required to manage at least 80% of the park reserve as natural lands that protect the ecological functions of the native landscape. As of 2024, a total of 12 park reserves were open to the public.
- **Special features** provide opportunities not generally found in the regional parks, park reserves, or trail corridors. Special features often require a unique managing or programming effort. As of 2024, there are eight special features open to the public.
- **Regional trails:** The Met Council has defined two major types of trails to serve the region: destination or greenway trails and linking trails. Destination or greenway trails typically follow along corridors with high-quality natural features that make the trail itself a destination. Linking trails are predominately intended to provide connections between various Regional Parks and Trails System units. As of 2024, 56 regional trails totaling approximately 487 miles were open for public use.

## 2050 Regional Parks and Trails System Components

The 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan identifies five components which together comprise the vision for the Regional Parks and Trails System in 2050, as described below.

- **Existing Regional Parks and Trails System facilities** are open for public use and include land that is owned by regional park implementing agencies. They may include inholding parcels within the boundaries of these parks and trail corridors that have not yet been acquired. Existing regional trails may include planned segments that will be developed in the future.
- **Planned Regional Parks and Trails System facilities (not yet open to the public)** have a Council-approved long-range plan and may be in stages of acquisition and development but are not yet open for public use.
- **Regional Parks and Trails System boundary adjustments** include general areas identified as potential additions to existing Regional Parks and Trails System facilities to add recreational opportunities or protect natural resources. Specific adjustments to park or trail corridor boundaries have not yet been planned.
- **Regional Park and Special Feature search areas** include general areas for future regional parks and special features to meet the recreational needs of the region by 2050 where the regional park boundary has not yet been planned.
- **Regional trail search corridors** include proposed regional trails to provide connections between Regional Parks and Trails System facilities where the trail alignment has not yet been planned.

## System Plan Considerations Affecting Your Community

There are no Regional Parks or Trails System Components within North St. Paul as identified in the 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan. North St. Paul must state this fact in its comprehensive plan.

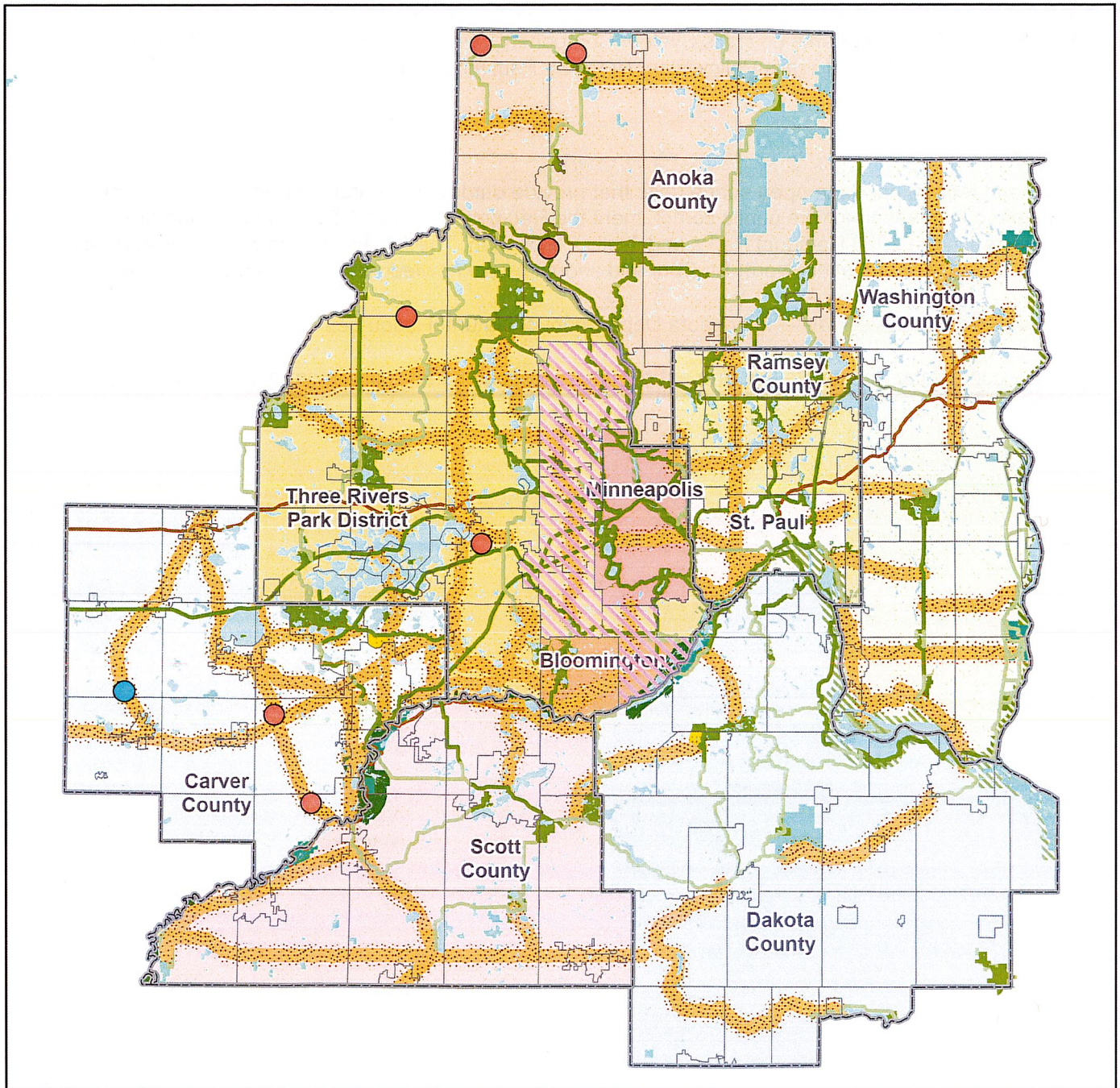
### *State or Federal Lands in Your Community*

State and federal park and open space units that provide outdoor recreation opportunities and natural resource conservation for the public complement the Regional Parks and Trails System and are recognized in the 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan. The following state or federal lands as shown in Figure 2 are within North St. Paul and should be acknowledged in its comprehensive plan.

- Gateway State Trail — Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Please contact the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for more information about State lands.

# Regional Parks and Trails System

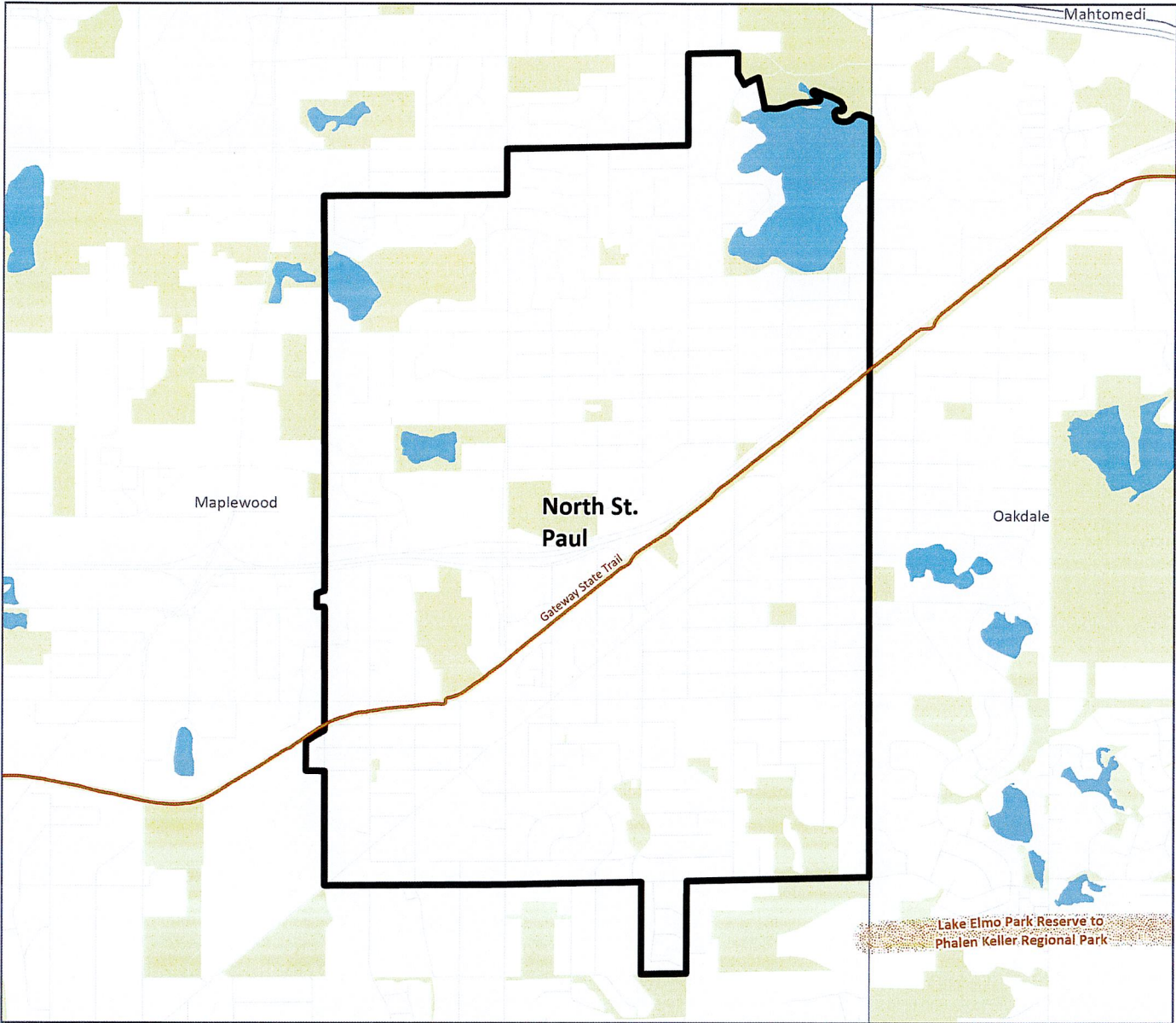


## Long-Range Plan Boundary Adjustments and Search Areas

- Boundary Adjustment
- Park Search Area
- Special Feature Search Area
- Regional Trail Search Corridor
- Regional Trail (Open to the Public)
- Planned Regional Trail (Not Open to the Public)
- State Trails

- Regional Park (Open to the Public)
- Planned Regional Park (Not Open to the Public)
- Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway
- Mississippi National River & Recreation Area
- State Wildlife Management Areas
- State Parks and Recreation Areas
- MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge
- Special State Recreation Features

# City of North St. Paul Regional Parks and Trails System



### Regional Parks and Trails Systems

### Other State and National Features

- |                                |   |                                   |   |
|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|---|
| Boundary Adjustment            | Regional Trail (Open to the Public)             | State Trails                      | Other Parks, Preserves, Refuges and Natural Areas |
| Search Area                    | Planned Regional Trail (Not Open to the Public) | State Parks and Recreation Areas  | Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway          |
| Special Feature Search Area    | Regional Park (Open to the Public)              | State Wildlife Management Areas   | Mississippi National River & Recreation Area      |
| Regional Trail Search Corridor | Planned Regional Park (Not Open to the Public)  | Special State Recreation Features | MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge                |

<b>New Residential Units 2020-2025</b>	<b>Single Family Detached</b>	<b>Single Family Attached (Townhouses)</b>	<b>Two Family (Duplexes)</b>	<b>Three or More Family Buildings (Apartments)</b>	<b>Total per Year</b>	<b>Population</b>
<b>2020</b>	1	32	0	0	33	12,364
<b>2021</b>	1	32	0	217	250	12,397
<b>2022</b>	3	2	0	0	5	12,486
<b>2023</b>	3	8	0	0	11	13,015
<b>2024</b>	0	0	0	84	84	13,001
<b>2025</b>	1	6	0	0	7	12,986
<b>Total (2020-2025)</b>	9	80	0	301	390	622 (Pop. growth)

Sources:

**Housing Units:**  
**Internal city permit reports**  
 Population Data:  
 2021: 12,397  
<https://www.reve>

## Chapter 2

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# Vision, Goals, and Decisions



## CHAPTER 2: VISION, GOALS AND DECISIONS

### GUIDING DECISION MAKING

The City of North St. Paul's elected and appointed officials use this Plan as a guide when making decisions about not only land use, but housing, transportation, infrastructure and overall quality of life. More than just a Comprehensive Plan, the vision, goals and measurable outcomes presented here lead the overarching policy for the City.

The vision, goals and objectives described in this Chapter are based on previous planning efforts, input from the general public through the Community Cafés held during the Planning Process, online forums, as well as guidance from City officials.

### WHAT WE HEARD

#### Community Cafés and Online Surveys

Six community café events were held to solicit feedback from community members on what they wanted the Plan to prioritize. Survey questions were also posted online with the mySidewalk website. Some citizens chose to respond to these online posts. While feedback was solicited through various methods, common themes emerged from the engagement effort and those themes are summarized below.

#### **Community Café 1: Development and Redevelopment**

- Preserve and invest in **existing recreational spaces**, parks and lakes.
- North St. Paul needs new **multifamily housing within walking distance** of popular destinations to support commercial activity.
- **Commercial activity** itself should be **clustered** so that the businesses can feed off each other.
- **Transit** is important. The City should focus on accessibility and explore new modes. Easy transit to both Minneapolis and St. Paul downtowns is desired.

### **Community Café 2: Housing and Neighborhoods**

- **Parks, open spaces and trails** draw people to neighborhoods. Parks should include **quality community spaces** while bike infrastructure and racks should be increased to spur an increase in trail usage
- Residents appreciate the character of the city and its **small-town feel**. How can this character be leveraged to attract young families?
- There should be **different types of housing, including town homes and new rental buildings**, to cater to seniors looking to downsize, and young people looking to live small.
- Focus on **high quality infrastructure**. The city should balance its investments and also focus on things like schools, public transportation and commercial development.

### **Community Café 3: Housing and Neighborhoods**

- **Sidewalks** need to be more prevalent and connected to each other. Walking trails around the parks and lakes are a great idea.
- Housing is not available at all price points or styles.
- **Older houses** are showing signs of age, while new housing is not being constructed in styles that are appealing to younger people.
- There should be a purposeful vision for how to house and transport **seniors** who may not be able to drive. They are currently isolated.

### **Community Café 4: Business and the Economy**

- The **downtown area needs a variety** of business types, including family-friendly restaurants and activities.
- The city should capitalize off its proximity to **Century College**, drawing students into the area.
- North St. Paul should **brand** itself by promoting the historic walking tour, supporting volunteerism and exploring public art. Overall marketing of the city should be a priority.
- The **car show** is a beloved staple of the community and should be continued.

### Community Café 5: Active and Sustainable Living

- Key destinations within the City, like schools, churches, parks and the downtown should be connected with sidewalks or trails. That includes creating **connections** from the Gateway Trail.
- A **park** or activity space is needed **downtown**.
- The City should be more **walkable**. Overall the City should focus on creating better walking and biking connections between destinations; there are too many places where sidewalks end abruptly.
- **Water quality** (including Silver Lake), keeping the water source local and encouraging **solar energy** are important sustainability priorities.

### Online Responses

- The downtown needs a better variety of businesses, including more restaurant destinations.
- Both young and old people need to be provided for.
- Future development should be purposeful and promote economic growth.

## VISION

The North St. Paul *Strategic Plan: 2015-2020* developed a vision for the City, building from the foundation laid by the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. The primary objective of the North St. Paul City Council and staff is to establish a consensus-based direction for the City and then actively pursue implementation of strategies to achieve that direction. The Strategic Plan and Comprehensive Plan will work together to support that initiative. They are both tools for city leaders to identify priorities, programs and services, and assimilate them into common elements (strategies and goals) by organizing them into one document that serves as a valuable resource and guide for the future. These plans are a means for the City Council to ensure that resources are applied in an optimal manner.

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*VISION*

*North St. Paul is your favorite small town. We promote community stewardship through an involved and informed citizenry. We preserve neighborhood value with diverse and maintained housing and active neighbors. The city engages in creative placemaking that fosters an environment of economic and employment opportunity. North St. Paul builds systems that connect people to places and promote active lifestyles.*

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**GOALS**

The following goals will inform the Comprehensive Plan. North St. Paul strives to take a fair and balanced approach to planning, while being cognizant of the needs and desires of its citizens. These goals show that the City acknowledges the diverse aspects that make North St. Paul a desirable place to live and work, and that the City is committed to building on its strengths and identifying areas with more room for growth. Note that additional detail on strategies and implementation of these goals will be developed in the following chapters of the Plan.

When making decisions, North St. Paul leaders will ask if the option chosen furthers at least one, if not several, of the goals below, while not damaging the others. Measures are also included here so that the City can determine if progress is being made toward these goals.

Goal	Questions	Measures
<p><u>Community engagement &amp; communication:</u> Promote community stewardship through an involved and informed citizenry</p>	<p>Does this action help communicate with everyone in the community?</p> <p>Were all members of the community told about deliberation of this action in an accessible way?</p> <p>How will the results of this action be shared with the community in an accessible way?</p> <p>Is communication infrastructure maintained and enhanced?</p> <p>Is the City maintaining relationships to communicate to groups throughout the City?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Number and diversity of attendees at City and community events to improve interaction with the community.</li> <li>o Continued change in demographics of community, supporting and enhancing cultural differences.</li> <li>o Integration of cultural diversity into community events</li> <li>o Increase in the quality and accessibility of information made available to the community.</li> <li>o Community awards programs and volunteer appreciation events.</li> <li>o Number of community-based educational programs for youth, students and adults</li> <li>o Citizen feedback regarding level and quality of services delivered</li> </ul>

Goal	Questions	Measures
<p><u>Residential Character &amp; Neighborhoods:</u>            Enhance neighborhood value with quality housing options and types at all price points.            Improve the quality and mix of the City's housing so that there is a wide variety of housing available for people of all incomes, ages, cultures and abilities. Consider new forms of housing where redevelopment is necessary.            Revitalize and enhance the quality of the housing stock so that it is attractive and appropriate for new buyers.</p>	<p>Does this action preserve, improve and/or create viable, safe, affordable homes?</p> <p>Does this action preserve/create variety in housing products in terms of size (square footage and/or # of bedrooms) and ownership/rental type?</p> <p>Will this action result in the continued maintenance and care of existing residences?</p> <p>Do residents, especially young adults and seniors, have the ability and/or resources to maintain their homes?</p> <p>Will this action preserve or create housing that is needed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Participation in education, engagement and home preservation initiatives.</li> <li>o Number of permits issued for housing repair and renovation</li> <li>o Number of permits issued for the construction of townhomes, multifamily homes and apartment buildings.</li> <li>o Continuance of the City's GreenStep Cities designation.</li> <li>o Ordinance amendments to allow new types of housing and/or a mix of housing densities.</li> <li>o Number of blighted, aging or outdated homes removed or renovated.</li> </ul>

Goal	Questions	Measures
<p><u>Business &amp; Economic Development:</u></p> <p>Possess a progressive image for redevelopment while maintaining a sense of the community heritage.</p> <p>Engage in creative placemaking that fosters an environment of economic and employment opportunity so that residents can work, shop and play near their homes.</p> <p>Foster a strong and diverse business base with planned and organized growth, timely allocation of resources and investment of public dollars.</p>	<p>Does this action welcome new business to the City?</p> <p>Will this action contribute to the unique sense of place that is North St. Paul?</p> <p>Does this action allow for or encourage a new type of business or development to occur that is different or complimentary to what the City has already?</p> <p>Will this action create employment opportunities for “good jobs” (i.e. jobs with livable wages, benefits and steady hours) for North St. Paul residents?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Creation of a community marketing strategy.</li> <li>o An increase in density/intensity for residential, office, commercial, entertainment and industrial uses in areas identified in the future land use plan.</li> <li>o Growth in and diversity of the city’s tax base.</li> <li>o Redevelopment of the Anchor Block site, the Commerce Park site and other key sites identified in the Redevelopment Master Plan</li> <li>o Reduction in unemployment</li> <li>o Increase in average wages</li> </ul>

Goal	Questions	Measures
<p><u>Downtown:</u> Establish and implement a Downtown Improvement Plan that enhances the character of the downtown as a distinctive place that embodies the heritage of the community.</p>	<p>Does this action increase the diversity in the business mix of the downtown?</p> <p>Does this action compliment or enhance the historic character of the downtown?</p> <p>Will this action create places for people to gather downtown?</p> <p>Will this action increase activity downtown?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Completion and implementation of the Downtown Master Plan</li> <li>o Adoption of revised Downtown Design Manual</li> <li>o Creation of a downtown marketing strategy</li> <li>o An increase in the mix of uses in downtown</li> <li>o Increase in residential density adjacent to downtown</li> <li>o Improvement of public gathering spaces downtown</li> <li>o Connections between downtown and the Gateway Trail</li> </ul>

Goal	Questions	Measures
<p><u>Transportation:</u> Achieve a functional, aesthetic and balanced system which includes pedestrian friendly sidewalks and trails, local streets, collectors, arterials, a freeway and transit.</p>	<p>Does this action increase non-motorized connections?</p> <p>Will this action make key destinations more accessible for residents and visitors?</p> <p>Will this action increase transportation options for those who live, work, visit or do business in North St. Paul?</p> <p>Does this action enhance the walkability of the City?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Reduction in sidewalk gaps throughout the city</li> <li>o Incorporation of pedestrian and bicycle amenities in street reconstruction projects</li> <li>o Measurement of stormwater runoff rate from roads and yards</li> <li>o Transit ridership statistics for trips originating or ending in North St. Paul</li> <li>o Number of upgraded transit shelters constructed</li> <li>o Commute mode share for trips originating or ending in North St. Paul</li> <li>o New connections to the Gateway Trail</li> <li>o Increase in ADA compliant pedestrian routes</li> </ul>

Goal	Questions	Measures
<p><u>Urban Design:</u>            Enhance community character through visual design and functionality of the public realm.            Develop themes, prepare plans and implement plans which will enhance and improve the image and livability of the City in Downtown, Highway 36 Corridor and in each of the City's residential neighborhoods.</p>	<p>Does this action contribute to North St. Paul's sense of place?</p> <p>Does this action improve North St. Paul's image?</p> <p>Does this action improve the appearance and condition of North St. Paul's neighborhoods?</p> <p>Do the plantings enhance the urban forest and native pollinator habitat?</p> <p>Do the open spaces protect or improve groundwater or water quality in downstream lakes and rivers?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Incorporation of design standards and enhancements at key entry points into the city</li> <li>o Use of innovative and creative street design</li> <li>o Use of cohesive street design throughout the community</li> <li>o Feet of utilities moved underground</li> <li>o Implementation of design standards for downtown development and residential development</li> </ul>

Goal	Questions	Measures
<p><u>Parks, Open Space and Trails:</u> Enhance and expand the parks, trails and open space system to ensure that all have access to quality community facilities.</p>	<p>Will this action preserve important natural features?</p> <p>Will this action connect existing parks and open spaces?</p> <p>Does this action improve or preserve access to North St. Paul's parks and open spaces?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Usage of parks and trails by community members of all ages, income levels, abilities, races and national origins</li> <li>○ Number of new parks created</li> <li>○ Amount of open space and trail in the Highway 36 Corridor</li> <li>○ Establishment of new trails connect schools, parks, commercial areas and downtown</li> <li>○ Connections to the Gateway Trail</li> <li>○ Number of facilities in compliance with ADA requirements</li> <li>○ Number of acres of restored or enhanced native plant communities in open spaces</li> </ul>

Goal	Questions	Measures
<p><u>Resilience and the Environment:</u>                      Protect and enhance the lakes, wetlands, woods and wildlife and promote actions, practices and developments which will sustain the environment.                       Become more resilient to climate change through climate change mitigation and adaptation.</p>	<p>Does this action preserve significant natural resources or habitats?</p> <p>Will this action reward or encourage alternative energy?</p> <p>Will this action improve or preserve surface water quality?</p> <p>Does this action help protect North St. Paul residents against the effects of climate change?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o City solar and wind energy capacity</li> <li>o Measurements of pollutants in natural drainageways</li> <li>o City recycling rate</li> <li>o Percentage of total impervious surface in the City</li> <li>o Trends in greenhouse gas emissions</li> <li>o Implementation of an emergency preparedness plan for severe weather events including prolonged heatwaves, with particular attention to vulnerable populations.</li> <li>o Acres of natural areas enhanced</li> </ul>