

A photograph of a football game in progress. Players in maroon and purple jerseys are lined up on the field. A large white number '1' is overlaid on the left side of the image.

1. INTRODUCTION

The City of South St. Paul values long-range, strategic planning as a way to ensure that the community of today evolves to meet the needs of tomorrow. Successful planning and implementation requires community input and involvement; evaluation and analysis of current conditions, trends, and future needs; forward-thinking goal and policy setting; strategic action prioritization; the dedication of staffing and funding; and the ability to follow-through when faced with competing interests. The update of the City of South St. Paul's Comprehensive Plan provides the opportunity to review and calibrate the community's strategic direction through the year 2040. South St. Paul's Comprehensive Plan focuses on more than just land use; the plan is comprised of several interrelated elements addressing sustainability, housing, economic development, transportation, parks, trails, infrastructure, and the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area.

Purpose

The purpose of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan is to help the public and private sector in planning for physical, social, and economic development of the community. The 2040 Comprehensive Plan is intended to:

- » Guide future growth and development.
- » Define the relationship between different types of land uses.
- » Help coordinate public and private sector decisions and investment.
- » Shape the appearance of the community.
- » Encourage orderliness and efficiency in city government.
- » Provide a means for balancing competing private and public interests.
- » Support a sense of community and neighborhood identity.

THRIVE MSP 2040 Urban Center Policies:

South St. Paul has been designated as an Urban Center community. The following are examples of the policies Urban Center communities similar to South St. Paul are expected to incorporate into their plans:

- » Plan for new growth and redevelopment to occur at a density of at least 20 units per acre.
- » Target opportunities for more intensive development around regional transit investments.
- » Identify areas for redevelopment, particularly areas that are well-served by transportation options and amenities.
- » Plan for a mix of housing affordability in station areas along transitways.
- » Plan for affordable housing that meets the needs of multigenerational households.
- » Preserve and support areas for employment.
- » Identify opportunities to improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation.
- » Identify lands for reclamation, including contaminated land, for redevelopment and the restoration of natural features and functions.
- » Implement best management practices to control and treat stormwater.
- » Identify and address community resiliency.
- » Identify appropriate areas for business and industrial expansion, considering access by rail, truck, plane, and barge.

2040 Regional Plans

The City of South St. Paul has initiated an update of its Comprehensive Plan in accordance with Minnesota Statutes 473.864, Subd. 2. In addition to addressing community issues and opportunities, the 2040 Comprehensive Plan also responds to the regional policy plans adopted by the Metropolitan Council, including Thrive MSP 2040, the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan, 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan, 2040 Water Resources Policy Plan, and the 2040 Housing Policy Plan.

To assist local governments in this effort, the Metropolitan Council issues a "System Statement" to each community that describes the specific areas that must be addressed as part of the local comprehensive plan. In addition to identifying the specific planning and infrastructure areas to include, the System Statement identifies population, household, and employment forecasts for the years 2020, 2030, and 2040. These forecasts were amended in December 2019 to reflect current development trends and are shown in Table 1.1 below:

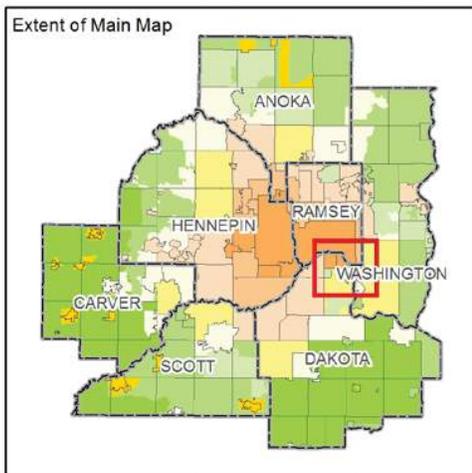
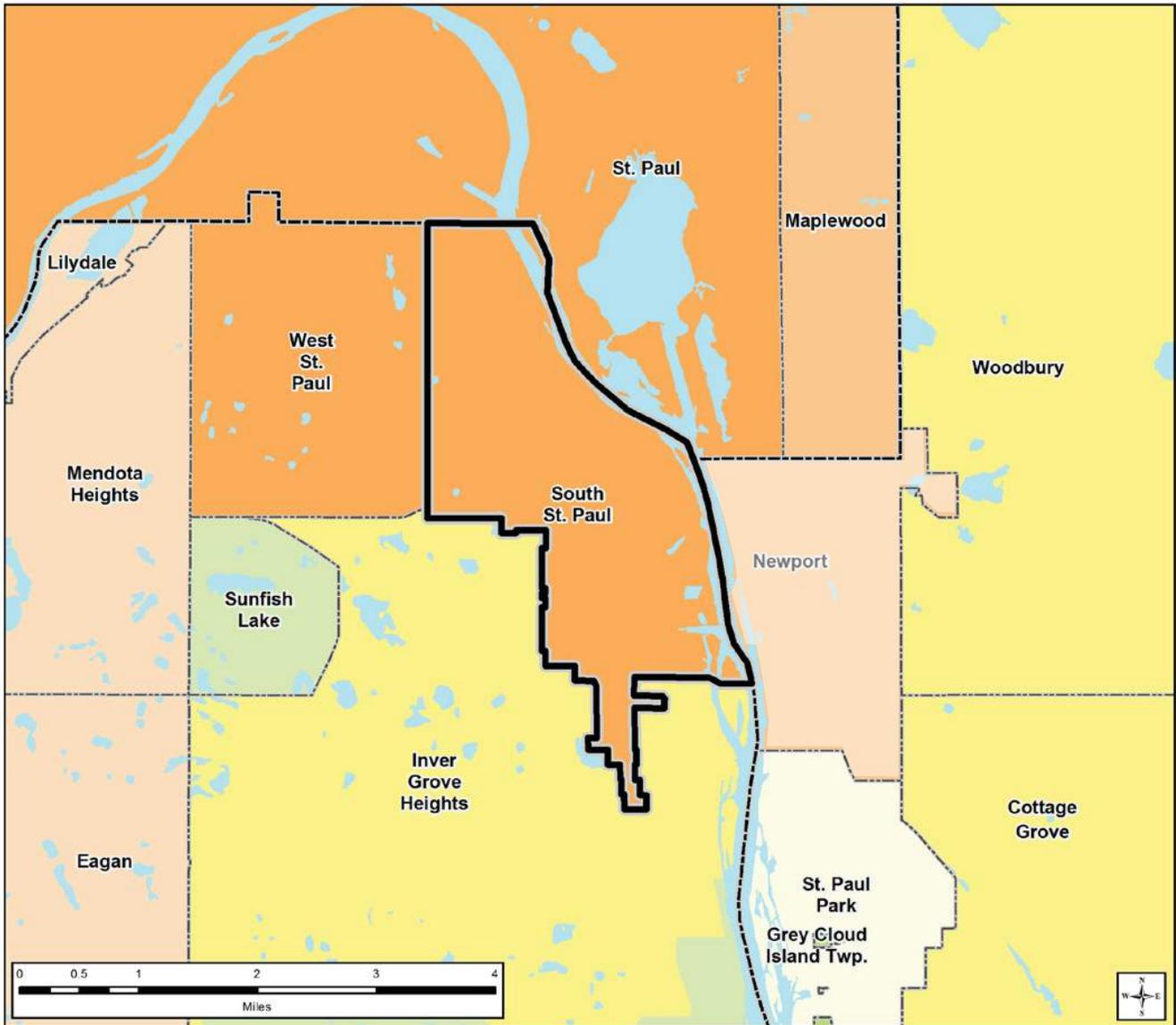
Table 1.1: Forecasts

Forecast Year	Population	Households	Employment
2010	20,160	8,186	8,557
2020	20,800	8,400	5,900
2030	21,600	8,850	7,000
2040	22,000	9,100	7,500

Source: HkGi, Metropolitan Council, South St. Paul (Dec. 2021). This table was updated in 2022 due to the Grand/Exchange Mixed Use Area Comprehensive Plan Amendment.

Thrive MSP 2040 designates South St. Paul as an Urban Center community. The Urban Center includes the largest, most centrally located, and most economically diverse cities of the region. The street grids in these communities were planned before World War II and the rise of the automobile, and therefore, these communities are more conducive to transit use and walking for daily needs. Urban Center communities are experiencing redevelopment, reinvestment, and intensification stemming from their vitality and amenities. However, they face many challenges including pollution cleanup costs, land availability, congestion, and the costs of retrofitting, replacing, or new infrastructure. Thrive 2040 notes that Urban Center communities are focused on growing vitality in the region's core. As shown in Figure 1.1, other Urban Center communities near South St. Paul include St. Paul and West St. Paul, while the City of Newport is identified as Suburban and the City of Inver Grove Heights is identified as Suburban Edge.

Figure 1.1: Community Designation



Community Designations

- Outside Council planning authority
- Agricultural
- Rural Residential
- Diversified Rural
- Rural Center
- Emerging Suburban Edge
- Suburban Edge
- Suburban
- Urban
- Urban Center

- County Boundaries
- City and Township Boundaries
- Lakes and Major Rivers

Source: Metropolitan Council

Planning Process

The 2040 Comprehensive Plan was developed through an extensive planning process that sought to engage a wide range of community members through six community engagement events and a community survey. The purpose of this engagement process was to gain input from the community surrounding the following topics:

- » Citywide place-based input (key locations, missing amenities, trouble spots)
- » Evaluation of health and well-being features of the community
- » Economic Development
- » Priority strategies for community enhancement and improvement

Throughout the planning process, the City received feedback from more than 330 members of the community. The input gathered from these community engagement efforts, together with direction and oversight by the Planning Commission, the Economic Development Advisory Board (EDAB), and the City Council/Economic Development Authority led to the formulation of the goals and policies found throughout this Comprehensive Plan update.

Plan Organization

The 2040 Comprehensive Plan is organized with a focus on ease of implementation for City Staff, the City Council, and the respective boards/commissions. In addition to providing introductory context, each chapter contains a set of goals, policies, and actions that are intended to guide the plan's implementation. Goals, policies, and actions for this plan are defined as follows:

- » **Goals** are broad statements that describe what the City will have in 2040 as a result of the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.
- » **Policies** are statements intended to guide City Staff and Council decision-making to achieve the goals. Policies often also describe ongoing activities.
- » **Actions** are the specific steps that are needed to achieve the goals.

In the planning process it was determined that a theme of sustainability should be woven throughout the Comprehensive Plan. In addition to providing a brief introduction to the theme, the following section also includes a list of sustainability components discussed in the Plan by chapter.

Sustainability

Sustainability is defined as practices or developments that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. As an approach to planning for the next 20 years in South St. Paul, sustainability touches on changing resources, how we direct investments, and technical, economical, and institutional development. Balanced considerations of the future of the environmental, economic, and social health of the city form the organizing principles of sustainability.

Local governments have the unique opportunity to pursue sustainable practices and achievements through energy use and fossil fuel reductions in building and facilities management, land use and transportation planning, environmental management, and through economic and community development. The City of South St. Paul has identified five different aspects of sustainability that the community is focused on: Energy, Maintenance, Land Use/Buildings, Budget/Economy, and Environment.

Previous and ongoing efforts and initiatives in South St. Paul that demonstrate and exemplify sustainable practices include the following:

- Participation in a joint Request for Proposals for "Solar Possible." The City obtained estimates for a project to outfit public facilities with solar panels. The City has chosen not to move forward with this project at this time but may consider these or other solar projects at another time.

SSP Plan Engagement - Map Dot Exercise Responses



- » Investment in electric charging stations for electric vehicles. One electric charging station to be located at Central Square has received grant funding.
- » Conducting Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Tree Inventory
- » Utilizing pavement management software to reduce pavement widths and decrease the urban heat island effect in South St. Paul
- » Restoring native habitat in parks and open spaces
- » Developing community gardens
- » Establishing South St. Paul as a pollinator-friendly city
- » Developing a comprehensive vision for asset management of city facilities
- » Providing matching grant funds for residents to upgrade to water-saving fixtures
- » Conducting a water audit and addressing water main leaks to save water
- » Seeking funds to reduce total suspended solids (TSS) and address erosion along the Mississippi River
- » Providing and expanding multi-modal options for residents

The list above is not exhaustive, and touches on some of the larger initiatives undertaken.

Minnesota GreenStep Cities

Minnesota GreenStep Cities is a voluntary challenge, assistance and recognition program to help cities achieve their sustainability and quality-of-life goals. The program outlines 29 best practices that correspond to implementable actions that are tailored to Minnesota cities. The focus of Minnesota GreenStep Cities is to promote cost savings and energy use reduction while encouraging civic innovation.

In 2016, the City Council of South St. Paul passed a resolution authorizing the City of South St. Paul to participate in the Minnesota GreenStep Cities Program, as a first step towards creating an inventory of sustainable practices in the city. As of 2018, South St. Paul has implemented five best practices and are working towards recognition as a Step 2 GreenStep City.

Sustainability in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan

Consideration of sustainability within every chapter of the Comprehensive Plan builds a foundation for a prosperous, equitable, livable and resilient future in South St. Paul. Sustainable systems in the community will foster growth and recovery during times of ordinary and extraordinary circumstances related to our changing climate, severe weather events, changes in the economy as well as changes in demographics and lifestyles of residents.

Chapters

1. Introduction
2. Background
3. Policy Plan
4. Economic Development
5. Housing
6. Land Use
7. Transportation
8. Community Infrastructure
9. Parks, Trails & Recreation
10. Critical Area Plan
11. Implementation



Minnesota
GreenStep Cities

Sustainability Icon

This sustainability icon has been placed throughout the 2040 Comprehensive Plan to show where plans meet one or more of South St. Paul's aspects of sustainability:

- » Energy
- » Maintenance
- » Land Use/Buildings
- » Budget/Economy
- » Environment



The chapters listed below address the following sustainability components:

- » Land Use
 - › Solar Access
 - › Redevelopment of the former MCES site while preserving the riverfront levee
 - › Sustainable land use practices
- » Parks, Trails, and Recreation
 - › Addressing natural resources/climate change in parks
 - › Pollinator-friendly city policy
 - › Active living and bicycle/pedestrian connections
 - › Tree Inventory
- » Community Services and Facilities
- » Transportation
 - › Future bicycle/pedestrian connections
 - › Multi-modal transportation opportunities
 - › Safe Routes to School
 - › Pavement reduction
- » Stormwater/Solid Waste

Future Amendments

Over the next decade there may be a need to amend the 2040 Comprehensive Plan text and/or maps associated with it due to:

- » Changes resulting from follow-up planning activities such as master plans, redevelopment plans, or transit station area plans.
- » Property owner request to change land use designation to allow a proposed development or redevelopment.
- » An interim update to incorporate new information or reflect facility plans such as park or water plans
- » A text amendment to revise context or policies.

The Comprehensive Amendment process follows the same City identified public hearing process as the major update process used to develop the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Amendments are required to submit and gain approval from the Metropolitan Council. The City will follow the current procedural requirements of the Metropolitan Council at the time of the amendment. Following the City Council conditional approval, the request will be submitted to the Metropolitan Council for review and approval. Following Metropolitan Council, the City Council will put the amendment into effect.