

Community Development Committee

Meeting date: January 19, 2021

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of January 27, 2021

Subject: City of St. Louis Park Historic Walker Lake District / Mixed Use Comprehensive Plan Amendment, Review File 22095-6

District(s), Member(s): District 6, Lynnea Atlas-Ingebretson

Policy/Legal Reference: Metropolitan Land Planning Act (Minn. Stat. § 473.175), Minn. Stat. § 473.513

Staff Prepared/Presented: Michael Larson, Planning Analyst (651-602-1407)
Angela R. Torres, Local Planning Assistance Manager (651-602-1566)

Division/Department: Community Development / Regional Planning

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council adopt the attached Advisory Comments and Review Record and take the following actions:

1. Authorize the City of St. Louis Park to place its comprehensive plan amendment into effect.
2. Revise the City's forecasts upward as shown in Table 1 of the Review Record.

Background

The City submitted the Historic Walker Lake District / Mixed Use comprehensive plan amendment on November 20, 2020, with supplemental information received on December 9, 2020. The purpose of the amendment is to provide policy support for implementation of the Historic Walker Lake District Revitalization Plan. The amendment regulates 31.23 acres from a mix of Medium Density Residential, Commercial, and Industrial to Mixed Use. The amendment also proposes a community-wide forecast increase of 100 households assigned to TAZ #1392. Furthermore, the amendment clarifies expectations for the types, location, and orientation of non-residential uses in the City's Mixed Use districts including, but not limited to, the Historic Walker Lake District. This is the City's fifth amendment to its 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

Rationale

The proposed amendment conforms to regional system plans, is consistent with Council policies with the exception of housing policies, and is compatible with the plans of other local communities and school districts.

Thrive Lens Analysis

The proposed amendment is reviewed against the land use policies in *Thrive MSP 2040*. To achieve the outcomes identified in Thrive, the metropolitan development guide defines the Land Use Policy for the region and includes strategies for local governments and the Council to implement. These policies and strategies are interrelated and, taken together, serve to achieve the outcomes identified in Thrive.

Funding

None.

Known Support / Opposition

There is no known opposition.

REVIEW RECORD

City of St. Louis Park

Historic Walker Lake District / Mixed Use Comprehensive Plan Amendment

Review File No. 22095-6, Business Item No. 2021-18

BACKGROUND

The City of St. Louis Park (City) is located in eastern Hennepin County, bordered by Plymouth and Golden Valley to the north, Minnetonka and Hopkins to the west, Edina to the south, and Minneapolis to the east.

Thrive MSP 2040 (Thrive) designates St. Louis Park with an “Urban Center” community designation. The Council currently forecasts from 2020 to 2040 that the City will grow from 49,600 to 54,520 population and 23,600 to 26,230 households. The Council also forecasts that between 2020 and 2040, the City’s employment will increase from 43,400 to 46,850 jobs.

The Metropolitan Council reviewed the City of St. Louis Park 2040 Comprehensive Plan ([Business Item 2019-151](#), Review File No. 22095-1) on July 10, 2019. This is the fifth comprehensive plan amendment since the 2040 Plan was reviewed.

REQUEST SUMMARY

The purpose of the amendment is to provide policy support for implementation of the Historic Walker Lake District Revitalization Plan. The amendment reguides 31.23 acres from a mix of Medium Density Residential, Commercial, and Industrial to Mixed Use. The amendment also proposes a community-wide forecast increase of 100 households assigned to TAZ #1392. Furthermore, the amendment clarifies expectations for the types, location, and orientation of non-residential uses in the City’s Mixed Use districts including, but not limited to, the Historic Walker Lake District.

OVERVIEW

Conformance with Regional Systems

The amendment conforms to the Regional System Plans for Parks, Transportation (including Aviation), and Wastewater, with no substantial impact on, or departure from, these plans.

Consistency with Council Policies

The amendment is consistent with the *Thrive MSP 2040*, with the *Housing Policy Plan*, with water resources management, and is consistent with Council forecasts, as revised.

Compatibility with Plans of Adjacent Jurisdictions

The amendment will not have an impact on adjacent communities, school districts, or watershed districts, and is compatible with the plans of those districts.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTIONS

- The Council acted on the City’s Plan on July 10, 2019 (Review File No. 22095-1).
- The 2019 Land Use amendment was approved by the Council on November 13, 2019 ([Business Item 2019-315](#), Review File No. 22095-2). The amendment reguided 13 acres from

Commercial to Transit Oriented Development to implement recommendations from the Former Sam's Club Land Use Development Study.

- The Parkway Residences amendment was administratively approved by the Council on March 10, 2020 (Review File No. 22095-3). The amendment regulated 1.87 acres from Medium Density Residential to High Density Residential to allow the development of two multifamily residences consisting of 132 units in total.
- The Cedar Place Development amendment was administratively approved by the Council on May 19, 2020 (Review File No. 22095-4). The amendment regulated 0.32 acre from Office to High Density Residential to allow development of a 79-unit apartment building on a 1.05-acre site.
- The Union Park Flats amendment was administratively approved by the Council on July 22, 2020 (Review File No. 22095-5). The amendment regulated 1.19 acres from Civic to High Density Residential to allow a 60-unit affordable housing development.

ISSUES

- I. Does the amendment conform to the regional system plans?
- II. Is the amendment consistent with *Thrive MSP 2040* and other Council policies?
- III. Does the amendment change the City's forecasts?
- IV. Is the amendment compatible with the plans of adjacent local governmental units and affected jurisdictions?

ISSUES ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Conformance with Regional Systems

The amendment conforms to the regional system plan for Regional Parks, Transportation, and Wastewater, with no substantial impact on, or departure from, these system plans. Additional review comments are included below.

Regional Parks

Reviewer: Colin Kelly, Community Development (CD) – Regional Parks (651-602-1361)

The proposed amendment conforms to the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*. The existing Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail is within 0.5 mile of the Historic Walker Lake District, just south of Minnesota Trunk Highway 7. The CP Rail Regional Trail Search Corridor also traverses the area addressed by the amendment. However, as a regional trail search corridor, a specific route alignment has not been selected; and a master plan has not been adopted by the Council. It is unlikely the proposed changes in land use policy will have an adverse impact on the Regional Parks System.

Wastewater Service

*Reviewer: Roger Janzig, Environmental Services (ES) – Engineering Programs
(roger.janzig@metc.state.mn.us)*

The amendment conforms to the *2040 Water Resources Policy Plan*. The amendment is associated with a forecast increase of 100 households in the Historic Walker Lake District. The Metropolitan Disposal System has adequate capacity for the area addressed by the amendment.

Transportation

Reviewer: Russ Owen, Metropolitan Transportation Services (MTS) (651-602-1724)

The proposed amendment conforms to the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP)*. The amendment is unlikely to have an impact on the regional transportation system. As discussed in the Land Use review below, the planning in the Historic Walker Lake District supports policies of the TPP that encourage pedestrian-friendly environments near transit that include a mix of residential, employment, and other destinations that generate activity.

Consistency with Council Policy

The amendment is consistent with Council policies for forecasts, land use, housing, sub-surface sewage treatment systems, and water supply. Additional review comments are detailed below.

Forecasts

Reviewer: Todd Graham, CD – Research (651-602-1322)

The City proposes a forecast adjustment as part of the amendment, as shown in Table 1 below. Council staff agree that the change in guiding land use increases the capacity of the district for housing. The proposed forecast revision reflects 100 additional households by 2040.

The amendment also includes a citywide policy change involving a redefinition of the “Mixed Use” guiding land use. This policy change could positively impact housing capacity in other parts of the City. However, only the limited change in the forecast is needed at this time.

The Historic Walker Lake District is located in part of Transportation Analysis Zone #1390 (north and west of Lake Street) and part of TAZ #1392 (south and east of Lake Street). Council and City staff have agreed that the communitywide forecast for 2040 and the TAZ #1390 allocation be increased by 100 households and 250 population. Council staff recommend no change for forecasts for 2020 and 2030. The Council will approve the revised forecast simultaneous with Council action on the plan amendment.

Table 1. Metropolitan Council Forecasts for the City of St. Louis Park

	Census	Estimate	Current Council Forecasts			Revised Council Forecasts		
	2010	2018	2020	2030	2040	2020	2030	2040
Population	45,250	48,910	49,600	52,350	54,520	49,600	52,350	<u>54,770</u>
Households	21,743	23,414	23,600	25,220	26,230	23,600	25,220	<u>26,330</u>
Employment	40,485	39,428	43,400	45,300	46,850	43,400	45,300	46,850

Note: All of the households and population in St. Louis Park are sewer-serviced.

Land Use

Reviewer: Michael Larson, CD – Local Planning Assistance (651-602-1407)

Thrive MSP 2040 identifies the City as an Urban Center community. The purpose of this amendment is to provide policy support for implementation of the Historic Walker Lake District Revitalization Plan and its design guidelines. Although this document is not part of the amendment per se, the City’s planning efforts in this area address the character and vibrancy of the established business district and accompanying residential and public/institutional uses (e.g., St. Louis Park High School). As a result, and as shown in Figure 3, the amendment reguides 31.23 acres from a mix of Medium Density Residential (2.99 acres), Commercial (21.65 acres), and Industrial (6.59 acres) to Mixed Use. The amendment also changes the language in the Plan regarding Historic Walker Lake District’s “Place Type Framework.”

The reguiding of land as part of the amendment is not associated with any specific development proposals. The City also does not expect significant housing redevelopment in this area prior to 2040. Consequently, the amendment is accompanied by a recommended forecast adjustment of just 100 household units, and not until after 2030. As a result, the City’s planned residential density, shown in Table 2 below, does not change. The inventory of land that the City has previously identified for potential development is more than sufficient to support its forecasted growth, and at densities that are consistent with its Community Designation of Urban Center.

The amendment also clarifies expectations for the types, location, and orientation of non-residential uses in all areas of the City that are guided as Mixed Use including, but not limited to, the Historic Walker Lake District. Policy language now includes a new reference to light industrial uses. These

overall policy changes support an accompanying effort to enhance and refine the City’s Mixed Use zoning regulations.

Table 2. Planned Residential Density, City of St. Louis Park

Category	2018-2040 Change				
	Density		Net Acres	Min Units	Max Units
	Min	Max			
RM - Medium Density Residential	6	30	18.7	112	561
RH - High Density Residential	30	75	3.01	90	226
MX - Mixed Use *	20	75	6.91	138	518
TOD - Transit Oriented Development*	50	125	48.56	2,428	6,069
COM - Commercial**	20	50	0.68	14	34
OFC - Office**	50	125	3.24	162	404
*75-85% residential **10% residential	TOTALS		81.55	2,944	7,813
	Overall Density			36.30	96.35

The Historic Walker Lake District is served by the future Louisiana Avenue and Wooddale Stations on the METRO Green Line. The City’s station area planning efforts have focused largely on the areas south of Highway 7, where the guiding land use for areas anticipated for redevelopment is Transit Oriented Development (TOD). However, given the proximity of the district to regional transit, the amendment and related planning efforts supports policies of the TPP that encourage pedestrian-friendly environments near transit that include a mix of uses that generate activity.

Housing

Reviewer: Ashleigh Johnson, CD - Housing (651-602-1106)

The amendment is consistent with the Council’s 2040 Housing Policy Plan. The Plan currently identifies enough land to address its share of the region’s 2021-2030 need for affordable housing, which is 593 units. The proposed amendment does not identify any changes to residential development for the 2021-2030 decade, as the City expects that all housing redevelopment of this area will occur after 2030. Should any of this land redevelop before 2030, any affordable housing included will be tracked alongside the community’s need for that decade. This amendment will allow the City to implement its housing element and will not hinder its efforts to address its share of the region’s need for affordable housing in the 2021-2030 decade.

St. Louis Park is a frequent participant in Livable Communities Act (LCA) programs, and was recently awarded \$1,600,000 in Livable Communities Demonstration Account (LCDA) funds in 2020 for the construction of a 120-unit mixed-income development called Rise on 7 that includes 20 units affordable to households earning at or below 30% of area median income.

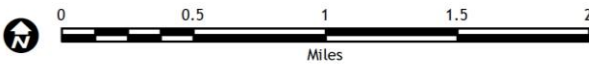
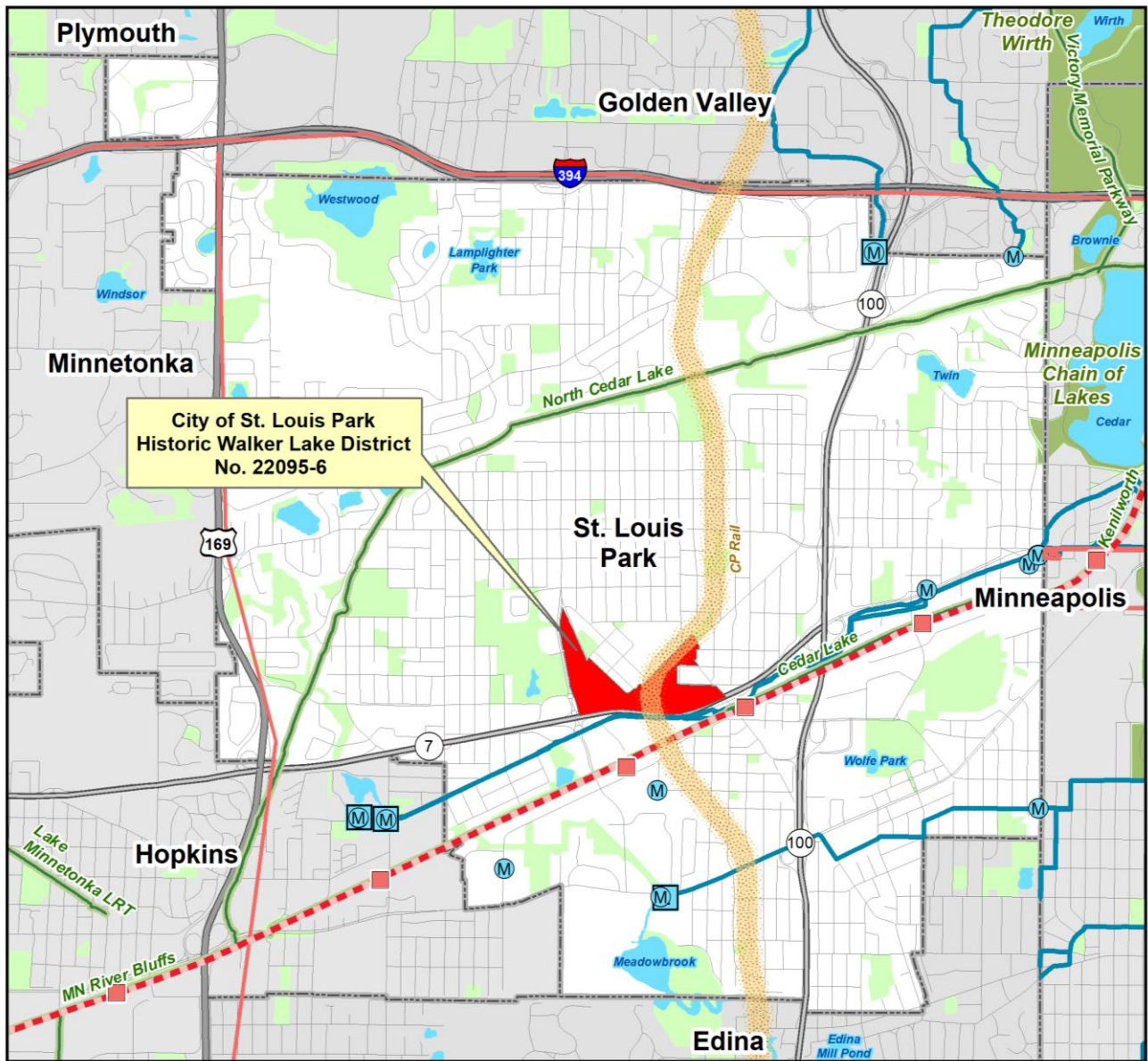
Compatibility with Plans of Adjacent Governmental Units and Plans of Affected Special Districts and School Districts

The proposed amendment is compatible with the plans of adjacent jurisdictions. No compatibility issues with plans of adjacent governmental units and plans of affected special districts and school districts were identified.

ATTACHMENTS

- Figure 1: Location Map Showing Regional Systems
- Figure 2: Location Map Showing Community Designations
- Figure 3: Current and Proposed Land Use Guiding

Figure 1: Location Map Showing Regional Systems



Regional Systems

- Planned Fixed Guideway Stations
- Existing Fixed Guideway Stations

Regional Transitways

2040 Transportation Systems Policy

- Existing
- Planned Current Revenue Scenario
- Planned Current Revenue Scenario - CTIB Phase 1 Projects
- Potential Increased Revenue Scenario

Wastewater Treatment

- Meters
- Lift Stations
- MCES Treatment Plants

Regional Highway System

- Interstates
- US Highways
- State Highways
- County Roads
- Ncompass Street Centerlines

Regional Parks

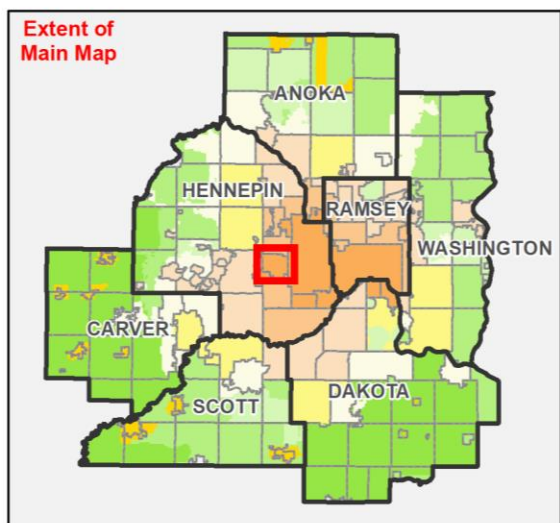
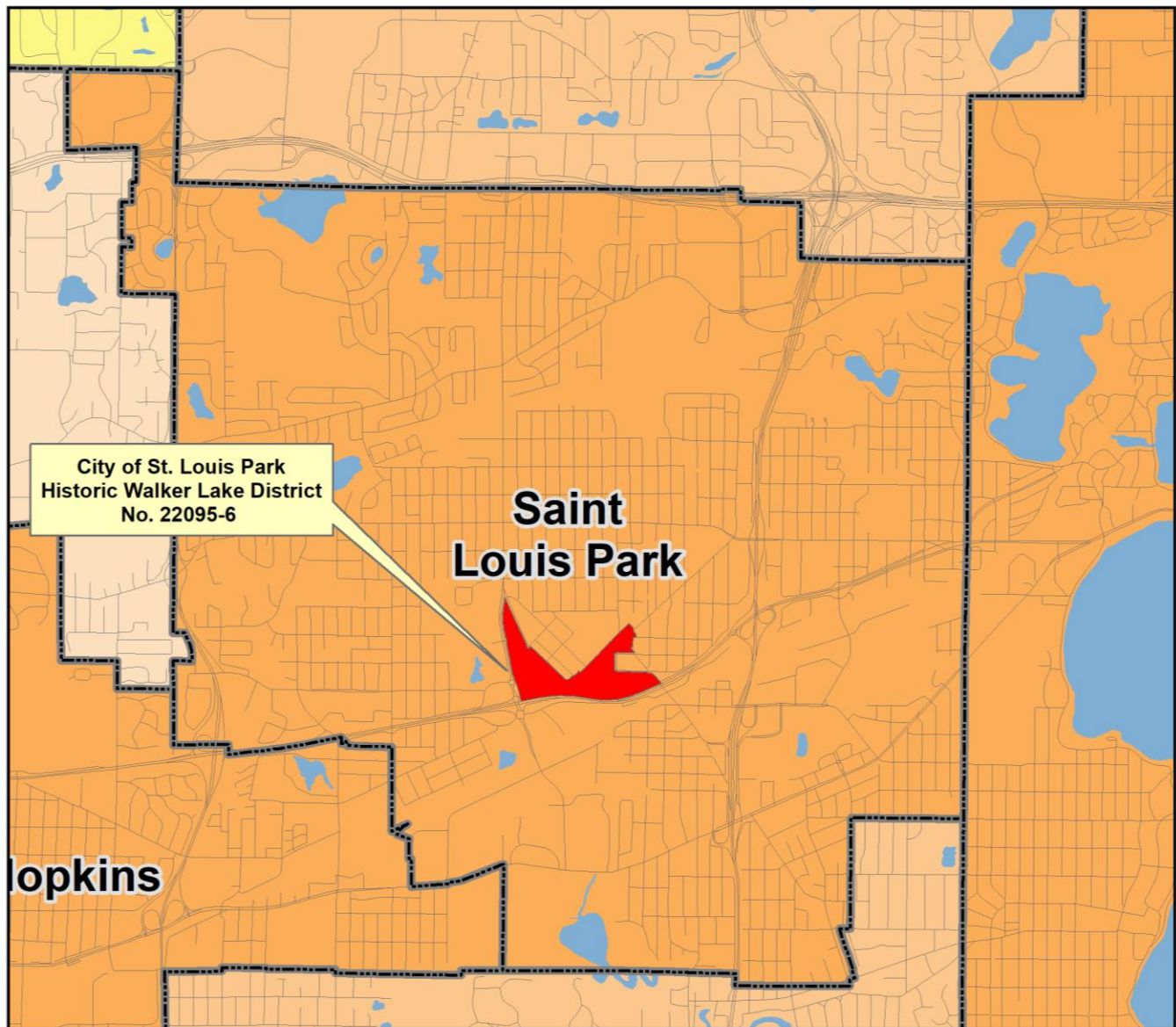
- Existing (Open to Public)
- In Master Plan (Not Open to Public)
- Planned Units
- Airports
- Regional Trail Search Corridors

Regional Trails

STATUS

- Existing (Open to Public)
- Existing (Not Open to Public)
- Planned
- Other Parks, Preserves, Refuges and Natural Areas

Figure 2: Location Map Showing Community Designations



ThriveMSP 2040 Community Designations

- Agricultural
- Rural Residential
- Diversified Rural
- Rural Center
- Emerging Suburban Edge
- Suburban Edge
- Suburban
- Urban
- Urban Center
- Ncompass Street Centerlines

Figure 3: Current and Proposed Land Use Guiding

