



Imagine
MINNETONKA

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS

CONTENTS

- 2** An Open Letter from the Imagine Minnetonka Facilitator
- 3** Project Rationale: Why this Project? Why Now?
- 6** Key Findings
 - 6** Part One: What do residents want? The Three C's
 - 15** Part Two: 16 trends that will impact Minnetonka's future
- 25** Recommendations – How to Navigate Minnetonka's Future
 - 27** 1. Monitor five signals for Minnetonka's future.
 - 28** 2. Adopt best practices for green infrastructure.
 - 31** 3. Create a visionary goal to connect all residents to Minnetonka's woods and wetlands.
 - 32** 4. Be proactive about Minnetonka's changing demographics.
 - 33** 5. Develop a multimodal transportation plan that will safely connect major pedestrian areas and all bike and hike trails by 2025.
 - 36** 6. Increase housing stock (including retrofitting vacant commercial space) that appeals to young professionals, working families, and the elderly.
 - 38** 7. Proactively engage and communicate with residents using best practices across multiple platforms.
 - 41** 8. Use best practices in suburban redevelopment to strengthen the City's village centers and develop the new Shady Oak Road/light rail transit area.
 - 42** 9. Update the Minnetonka Citizens Academy.
- 44** Methodology – Who Participated, and How?
- 46** Thank Yous

A N OPEN LETTER FROM THE IMAGINE MINNETONKA FACILITATOR

Dear City of Minnetonka Councilors,

When we launched this project together in spring 2016 you encouraged me to “make you uncomfortable.” What you’re about to read is a summary of what your residents are asking for, the trends Minnetonka is facing, and recommendations for moving forward. The following table shows you where to look, for each section:

IMAGINE MINNETONKA AT A GLANCE

What do Residents Want?	What Trends Will Impact Minnetonka?	Recommendations: How can we Navigate the Future?
PAGES 6-14	PAGES 15-24	PAGES 25-43

Most of the resident feedback won’t make you uncomfortable. With a few notable exceptions, residents like things as they are. That makes your job easy, right? Just keep doing what you’ve always done and things will work out.

Unfortunately—and this is where you may get uncomfortable—keeping things the same isn’t really an option. If present trends continue, Minnetonka will become older, more diverse, and more dense. The challenge of leading Minnetonka into the future is balancing residents’ nostalgia with a clear and compelling vision for Minnetonka’s future. As one of our steering committee members noted,

“People are afraid of change because they fear that they’re losing something. But if you help them understand what they’re getting in exchange, they’ll be more open to it.”

This is your leadership challenge—to embrace the future that is coming, you must help people loosen their grip on the past. This document will help you understand the voices in your community, and what’s at stake.

To your leadership,



Rebecca Ryan

NEXT Generation Consulting, Inc.

ROJECT RATIONALE: WHY THIS PROJECT? WHY NOW?

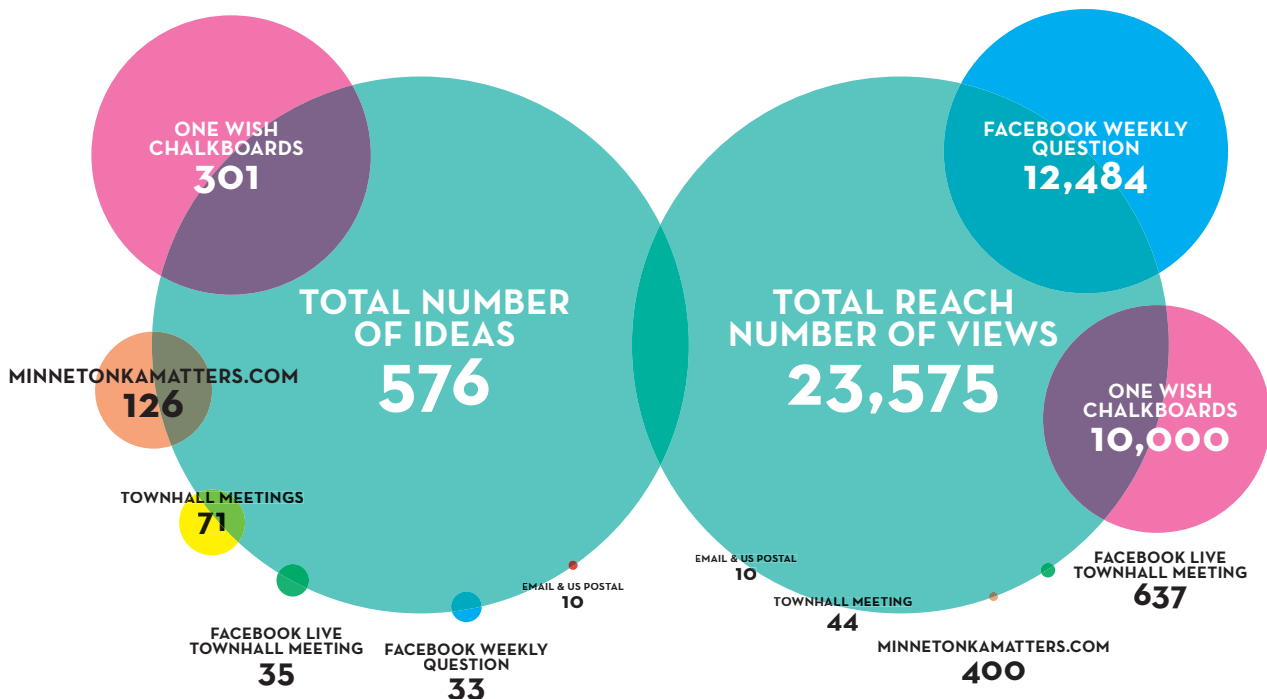
Minnetonka has a reputation as a vibrant and successful “great place to live”. As the community continues to evolve, how do residents want the city to look and feel? And what trends must the city be ready to address to ensure that Minnetonka can continue to fulfill its vision:



**TO BE THE COMMUNITY OF CHOICE WHERE
PEOPLE LIVE, WORK, PLAY AND CONDUCT BUSINESS
IN A NATURALLY BEAUTIFUL ENVIRONMENT.¹**



To answer that question, the City of Minnetonka undertook a community visioning process – Imagine Minnetonka. The following graphic shows the broad level of resident engagement through various Imagine Minnetonka platforms.



¹ 2016 City of Minnetonka Strategic Profile <http://eminnetonka.com/images/government/2016%20Strategic%20Profile%20Report.pdf>

With assistance from NEXT Generation Consulting, Inc. (Madison, WI), hundreds of residents contributed their dreams, fears, and hopes for Minnetonka's 20-year future. In person and online they responded to questions like:

“What one wish do you have for Minnetonka?”

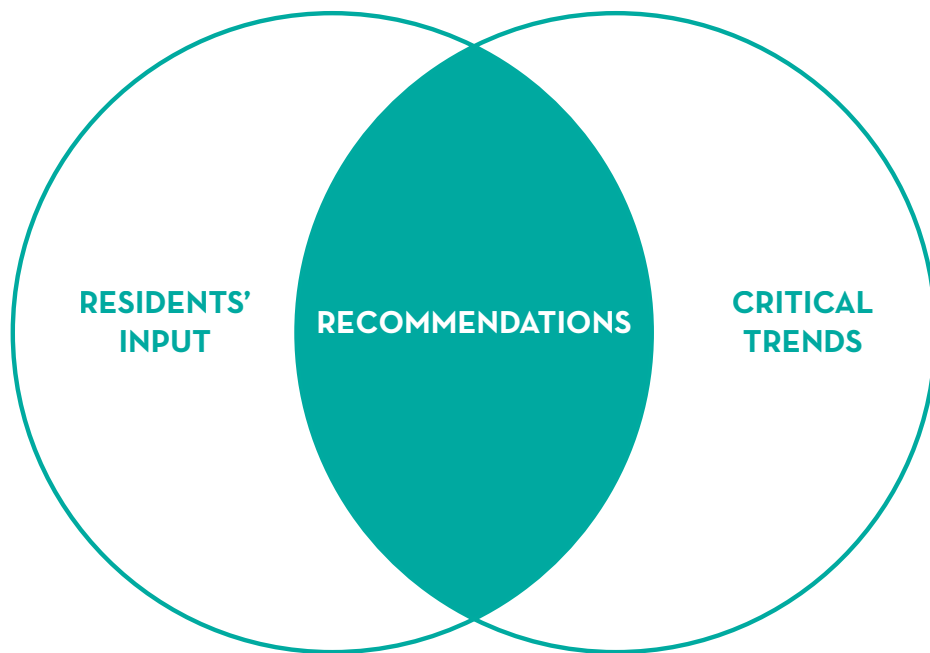
“What should the city start doing, to be a great place for the next generation? What should the city stop doing?”

“What do you want the next generation to say about living, working, and playing in Minnetonka?”

The document you're reading compiles residents' feedback and includes trends that are likely to impact Minnetonka's future. Taken together, city leaders have a set of recommendations that will help them build a community that current and future residents will love.

IMAGINE MINNETONKA AT A GLANCE

What Do Residents Want?	What Trends Will Impact Minnetonka?	Recommendations: How can We Navigate the Future?
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This is not a singular, prescriptive set of recommendations. Conditions change, and Minnetonkans must be resilient. If the goodwill and good ideas offered by residents are any indication, Minnetonka has what it takes to preserve the community’s best characteristics while being proactive to manage coming changes.

WHAT IS THE CITY GOING TO DO WITH THE RESULTS?

With the support of city staff, the City Council will determine how to include the findings and recommendations from Imagine Minnetonka into the day-to-day workings of the city. It will also be used to guide city leaders during long-term strategic planning.

KEY FINDINGS

PART ONE: WHAT DO RESIDENTS WANT? THE THREE C'S

Residents submitted 576 ideas for the future they want in Minnetonka. Over fifteen thousand people saw those ideas and/or responded to them, e.g. by “liking” them or commenting on them on Facebook or MinnetonkaMatters.com. The diversity of ideas - and methods to participate - was unprecedented for Minnetonka. Three clear themes (Fig. 1) emerged: Connection, concern for current and future Citizens, and the community’s Character.

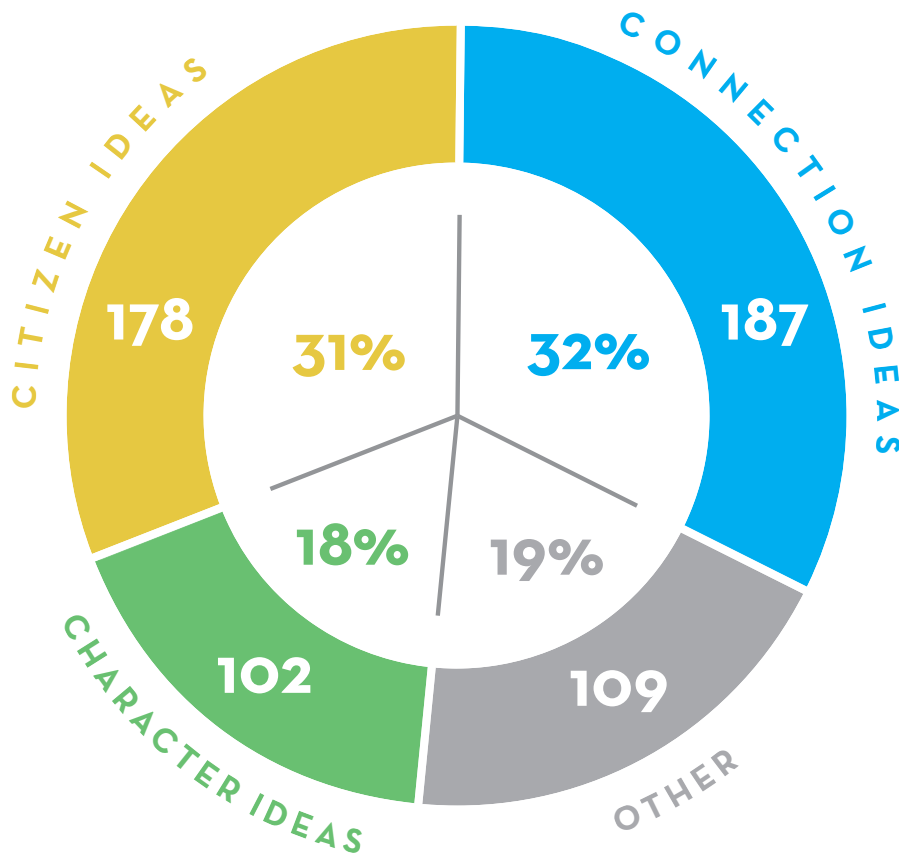


FIGURE 1: PERCENTAGE OF SUBMITTED IDEAS THAT FELL INTO CONNECTION, CHARACTER, OR CITIZENS.

CONNECTION

Faraway the most popular request from residents related to finishing the city’s trail system and making sidewalks and streets more safe for pedestrians (Fig. 2). This request came from the young and their elders, and from active mountain bikers and retirees who want more transportation options.



FIGURE 2: WORD CLOUD OF IDEAS GENERATED FROM MINNETONKAMATTERS.COM. THE LARGER A WORD APPEARS, THE MORE IT WAS MENTIONED.

“Safe sidewalks” and “more bike trails and lanes” were very popular themes.

A representative sample of residents’ comments about why these factors are important include:

“[I]t would be great to see the city support the safety of our kids and the walk-ability of our neighborhood by creating safe paths for anyone who lives northwest of the intersection of Hwy 101 and Hwy 7 (Sparrow Rd area) to walk to the high school on the other side of Hwy 7. We continually see high school students jump the Hwy 7 median barrier across from the school and balance there waiting for traffic to clear on the oncoming, eastbound lane.”

- via [MinnetonkaMatters.com](https://minnetonkamatters.com)

“I see many comments supporting the addition of off-road trails system. What I would like to see are more paved joining pathways to neighborhoods, parks and adjoining neighborhoods. The neighborhood I live in has no access to any of these without walking through the woods, cutting through yards, or along a very limited should of a high traffic roadway system. Right now I have to rack my bikes to the family van to get to a trail system in our community.”

- via [MinnetonkaMatters.com](https://minnetonkamatters.com)

“There are many trails that just come to a stop in random places. Trying to cross Hwy 7 is extremely dangerous. There are many athletes at Minnetonka High School who run/bike around the school with little to no trail system to support their safety. Additionally, many students who could be riding or walking to school are unable to due to the lack of safe conditions. This includes kids who live within a mile or so of the school. [...] Improving trail systems are a priority in so many communities and it’s frustrating that Minnetonka seems behind in these efforts.”

- via [MinnetonkaMatters.com](https://minnetonkamatters.com)

Sidewalks and bike lanes aren't just for kids and young families. When asked about "Aging in Place" and making the community more accessible to aging seniors, sidewalks came up again and again as this resident expressed:

“More transportation for seniors and everyone. More sidewalks and bike lanes for safety, like along Excelsior Blvd.” - via Facebook

Specific ideas for safe walkways included:

- The main streets such as Excelsior Blvd. Making that road walkable will bring the community together
- Continue the existing sidewalk on Williston Road at Hwy 7 all the way to Minnetonka Blvd
- Williston Road at Hwy 7 all the way to Minnetonka Blvd
- Bren Road in-between Shady Oak and Baker and then joining Rowland
- All the way along Minnetonka Blvd from 101 to the Civic Center

Hundreds of votes were cast for ideas that related to the expansion of mountain bike trails. This comment earned 37 up-votes, which made it the most popular comment on MinnetonkaMatters.com:

“It would be fantastic if Minnetonka had sustainable, designated mountain bike trails. Many of us residents are avid off-road bikers and there are no designated trails in close proximity. Minnetonka High School has a mountain bike team and there is no place locally for them to train. There are several potential wooded areas within the city where a network of trails could be built. Let's start the conversation, find a solution, and build some trails!”

Another resident suggested investing in biking as a means of economic development, and cementing Minnetonka's reputation as a biking destination:

“Take a look at the popularity and growth of Tour-de-Tonka...We are a cycling community. This is a chance to build something to highlight all the best of what Minnetonka has to offer. Taking away trails and legal safe off-road cycling opportunities isn't fixing a problem; it's only encouraging local cyclists to spend them time and money in other communities.”

One resident suggested a different kind of connection – internet connection:

“Fiber optic internet[...]is scarcely available in Minnesota, but it offers much faster speeds, is more secure, and can be easily upgraded (compared to what's currently available) over time to increase rate of transfer without having to rebuild the existing infrastructure.”

And some residents called for a more concentrated “downtown” district, which creates opportunities for residents to connect with each other, and keep their dollars local:

“I'd like to see an area purposely turned into such a destination in Minnetonka. It should include interesting restaurants that aren't part of big chains, a theatre and art space, a cozy venue for live music (maybe like Jazz Central which is a non-profit), free parking outside a pedestrian walkable area, and small stores.” - via [MinnetonkaMatters.com](#)

“I live near Minnetonka Middle School East and am surprised by how few restaurants there are in Minnetonka proper. We typically go to Excelsior, Hopkins, Wayzata, and Chanhassen when we eat out.”
- via [MinnetonkaMatters.com](#)

CONCERN FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE CITIZENS

One third of residents' ideas and suggestions were about specific amenities or concerns for current and future residents.

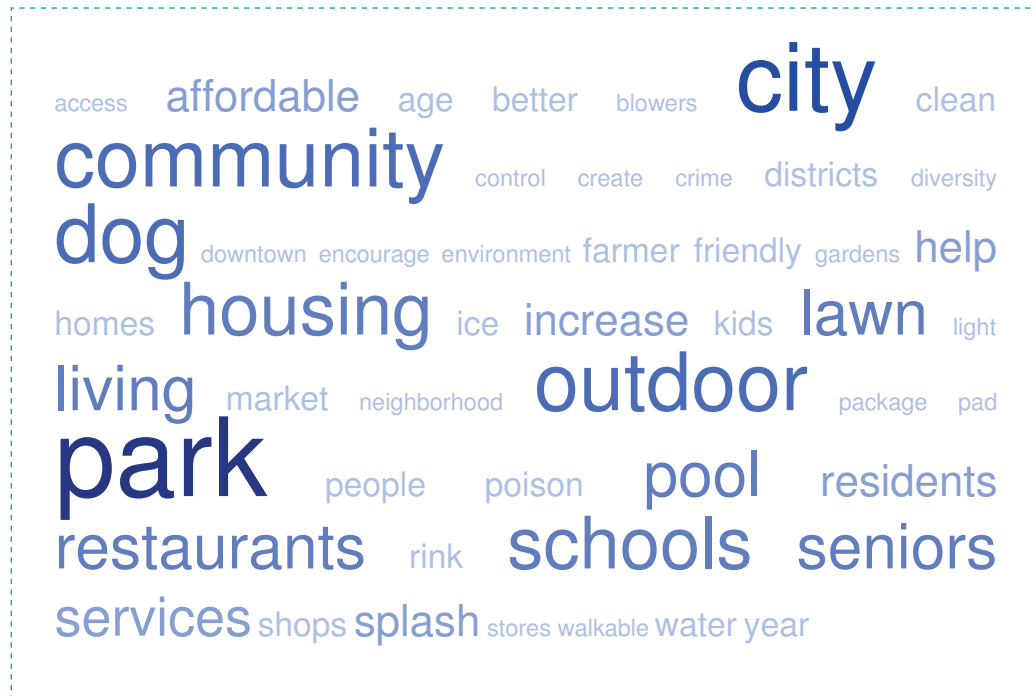


FIGURE 3: WORD CLOUD OF IDEAS GENERATED ABOUT CONCERNS FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE CITIZENS. THE LARGER A WORD APPEARS, THE MORE IT WAS MENTIONED.

Understandably, many residents submitted ideas that were related to their own family or life situation as the following list of ideas suggests:

- Maintain the quality of our schools
- More resources for seniors
- Community Pool (splash pad), parks, and dog parks

Some residents reflected on others and wondered aloud how Minnetonka will face increasing ethnic diversity, the needs of Millennials, and how the community can be great for people at all life stages as the following quotes suggest:

“We need to figure out the real barriers to attracting Millennials to our community, and solve those.”
- *Town Hall Meeting*

“Millennials! What will a new generation expect from our city? We need to find them and ask them.” - *Town Hall Meeting*

CHARACTER

“Character” refers to Minnetonka’s look and feel – most popularly its woods and wetlands, and large single-family lots that give the community a suburban feel and help preserve tree canopy. These are the character traits current residents most want to preserve for future generations (Fig 4).



FIGURE 4: WORD CLOUD OF IDEAS GENERATED FROM IMAGINE MINNETONKA. THE LARGER A WORD APPEARS, THE MORE IT WAS MENTIONED.

Minnetonka has a long history of taking care of its natural environment. The name Minnetonka comes from the Dakota Indian “mni tanka,” meaning “great water”. In 1967, some of Minnetonka’s leaders had the foresight to start the Minnehaha Creek Corridor Plan, which enabled the city to purchase over 80% of the riparian edge along the Minnehaha Creek and protect it for current and future generations.

Asked, “What do you love about living in Minnetonka?” one resident talked about Minnetonka’s character:

“The things I love about living in Minnetonka are the large trees, green space, and parks. I also enjoy living in an area that is accessible to highways, but you still feel like you are in nature with the large yards and houses that are appropriate to the size of lot.”

Another resident, commenting on Facebook, said,

“Keep trees a big priority, it’s one of the things (along with the immersion programs in the schools) that attracted us to Minnetonka. We love how there are big trees lining almost every street, giving it a forested feel, as opposed to other suburbs where there are huge swaths of pavement from large streets, intersections, and sidewalks, making it feel like a concrete jungle.”

In addition, residents voiced concerns or ideas about:

- Invasive plants – buckthorn, garlic mustard
- The future water quality of the area’s shallow lakes, e.g. Holiday, Wing and Rose
- Maintaining open space, even with new development and increasing density
- Balancing developers’ interests with citizen interests

PART TWO: 16 TRENDS WILL IMPACT MINNETONKA'S FUTURE

In addition to resident input, Imagine Minnetonka engaged a team of futurists who facilitated a Steering Committee analysis of 44 trends and conducted an independent study of trends that will have an impact on Minnetonka's future.

UNDERSTANDING TRENDS - THE FOUR FORCES

To help organize and prioritize the trends impacting Minnetonka in the next twenty years, we use Minnesota based Cecily Sommers' Four Forces model. In priority order, they are: Resources, Technology, Demographics, and Governance. The top trends that will impact Minnetonka are outlined on the following pages.

THE FOUR FORCES

RESOURCES	TECHNOLOGY	DEMOGRAPHICS	GOVERNANCE
<p>The availability of resources is most closely tied to survival, so it is the most important force. Resources include the food, water, air, habitat, and other material nature offers. Especially important are the resources that enable energy production. Trends and resource drivers related to this force include: climate, ocean, space, energy, minerals, water, land, food, animals and forest.</p>	<p>Technology includes the tools and knowledge we use to extract and transform resources into new products and capacities that make our lives more comfortable and convenient, or to develop capabilities beyond our physical bodies that allow us to go places and discover new realities. Trends and drivers related to this force include: genetics, robotics, information, nanotechnology, health care, education, collaboration, virtual reality, games, telephony, manufacturing, infrastructure, and capital formation.</p>	<p>Demographics are the “who” behind society’s changes. People are producers. We produce through our physical and intellectual labor, so “who” is producing matters, e.g. does your community have enough working people to support your very young and very old; do you have the right ratio of women to men; is there enough social cohesion among groups to ensure the good of the community? Trends and resource drivers related to this force include: population growth, the developing world, industrialization, immigration, multiculturalism, multilingualism, nationalism, and conflict.</p>	<p>Distribution and management of society’s assets—resources, technology and people—are administered through the rule of law and the rule of markets. Of all the forces, governance is the most reactive, i.e. changes in resources, technology and people often run ahead of government’s capability to deal with them. Trends and drivers related to this force include: tribalism, market drivers, values, interests, beliefs, online communities, personalization, polarization, and identity politics.</p>
<p>PAGE 17</p>	<p>PAGES 18-19</p>	<p>PAGES 20-23</p>	<p>PAGE 24</p>



RESOURCE TRENDS



The Imagine Minnetonka futurists predict:

1. **Excess commercial office space** – It is not a lack of resources that will create public policy issues for Minnetonka in the next decade, but an excess capacity of commercial office space. Minnetonka is the location of several high-end corporate offices (i.e. United Health, Cargill and Emerson). Several trends are combining to empty out this type of space:
 - Decline in upper end employment. By some estimates, even traditionally “safe” white collar jobs are requiring twenty percent fewer employees.
 - Decrease in office sizes. The average square feet/person required by companies had decreased due to increased efficiencies², remote work, and work-from-home options for employees.
 - Some employers are choosing to leave the suburbs and move back downtown, closer to the amenities that young professionals value.

Back-of-envelope calculations show that these trends will place between 300,000 and 600,000 square feet of office space on the Minnetonka market with low demand for similar use in-fill.

The Imagine Minnetonka Steering Committee advises:

2. **Climate change** – especially heavier rain and storms and longer and dryer periods between them – will impact Minnetonka’s woods and wetlands. As the climate changes, Minnetonka needs to be vigilant about mitigation, adaptation, and proactive resource management. For example, the Minnehaha Creek Watershed has experienced multiple floods due to extreme rain events. In 2014, the cost was \$1.2M.³

² By 2017, North American offices will average 151 square feet per worker, according to real estate data provider CoreNet Global. That’s down from 176 square feet in 2012 and 225 square feet in 2010. The rule of thumb for creative open space that startup and small technology companies seek has been decreasing from 200 to 250 square feet to as low as 100 to 150 square feet of “usable” office space per person. Source: The Mehigan Company, <http://mehiganco.com/wordpress/?p=684>

³ <http://www.minnehahacreek.org/project/weather-extreme-trends>



TECHNOLOGY TRENDS



The Imagine Minnetonka futurists predict:

- 3. Autonomous transit** will impact more suburban, affluent areas like Minnetonka first. This coupled with the development of Minnetonka's light rail station link could dramatically impact Minnetonka's appeal and its transportation patterns. It could also keep seniors living independently in their homes longer, delaying housing turnover and putting more pressure on Minnetonka's single family housing demand.
- 4. Home health care delivery** – Technology capabilities, aging populations, and a shortage of skilled medical professionals combine to push toward more home care delivery options. Minnetonka's demographics and affluence make it a prime candidate for beta tests of these new systems. This could create additional demand for emergency medical response services. [Caveat: the high level of uncertainty at the time of this project about the future of our national health care policy fogs our prediction of when this will occur. That said, it is safe to assume that major shifts in delivery systems, care levels, and financial support will occur in the near term, i.e. five years, because the current health care system is not economically sustainable.]

The Imagine Minnetonka Steering Committee advises the following technology trends will have a great impact on Minnetonka:

- 5. Digital citizenship** – How can the City adapt to the next generation’s use of technology?
A powerful example of digital citizenship occurred during the Imagine Minnetonka project. For the first time ever, the City of Minnetonka hosted a town hall meeting via video feed on Facebook Live. From his or her homes, anyone with Facebook who followed the city could participate. Thirty-five people attended the online meeting (a higher turnout than similar Town Hall Meetings at the Community Center) and over 1,800 people were exposed to the live feed. All together, Facebook generated 68 ideas and over 14,000 views.
- 6. School quality** – Minnetonka’s three school districts, Minnetonka, Hopkins and Wayzata, have traditionally been a strong attraction for families relocating to Minnetonka. Now and in the future those districts are facing a series of challenges; from an increase in the percentage of students who receive free and reduced price lunch to the number of languages spoken in the schools. For Minnetonka to maintain its reputation as a great place for families to raise and educate their children, the districts and their partners must be ready and able to adapt to these changes.

The Imagine Minnetonka futurists and the Steering Committee concur on the following trend:

- 7. Infrastructure overhaul** – Minnetonka’s aging infrastructure, coupled with more freeze-and-thaw cycles due to climate change, will have a large impact on road and infrastructure conditions. Replacing this infrastructure is only one part of the cost; ongoing maintenance can be up to 60% of the initial capital costs. The city currently has a sound re-investment plan and vision to support infrastructure improvements, and this will need regular review, as recent research indicates that wealthier suburbs may have a harder time paying for needed infrastructure upgrades.⁴

⁴ “Is the Infrastructure ‘Time Bomb’ Beginning to Blow? Study Finds Low-Density Housing Can’t Pay the Bills” by Mary Glindinning, October 26, 2016, Sustainable City Network

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

The Imagine Minnetonka futurists predict the following demographic trends will impact Minnetonka’s 20-year future:

8. Aging in place – The largest demographic wave impacting Minnetonka is that its residents are getting older. If we assume that Figure 5 is true, the widest age bands are those aged 50 and above. In the future, those residents will continue to age and we can assume that Minnetonka will follow other affluent suburban areas that will increase in the 60-74-year-old cohort by 40% in the next 10 years.

Older residents require more services, especially healthcare. A plausible future scenario for Minnetonka is one in which young professionals and young, well-off families leave Minnetonka—or overlook it—and gravitate to younger, more “hip” metros, exurbs, and suburbs. This would leave Minnetonka with a decreasing tax base and an older, nonworking, and less able population. This would increase the strain on provision of local social services and healthcare.

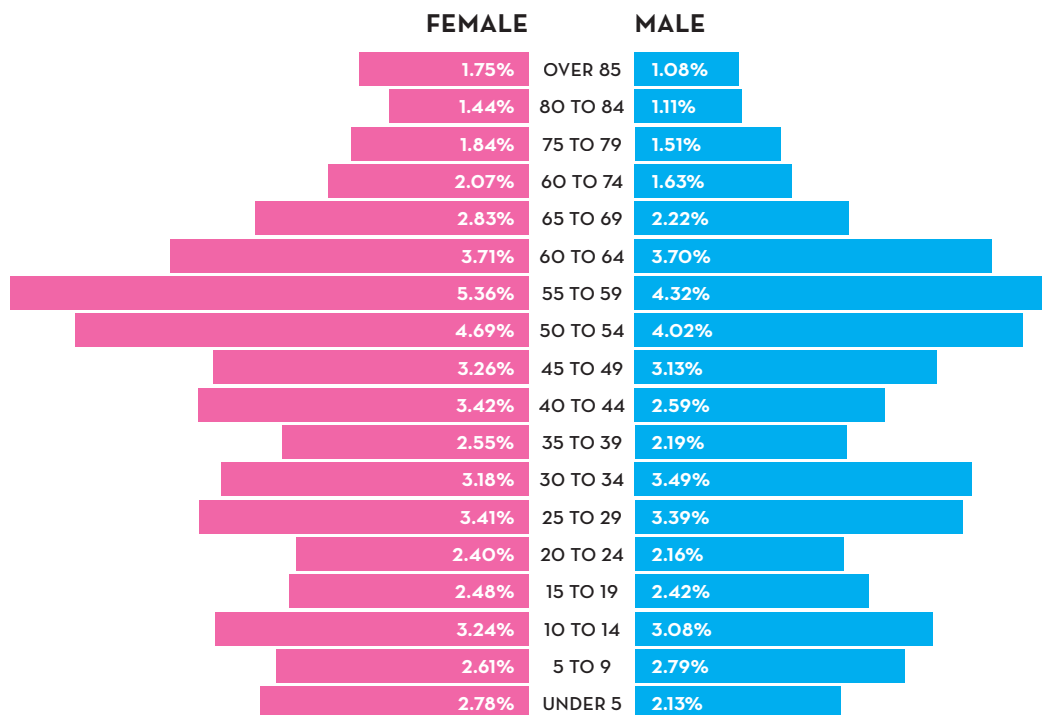


FIGURE 5: AGE BANDS OF MINNETONKA FEMALES AND MALES, 2010-2014. SOURCE: MET COUNCIL VIA THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY.

9. Increasing diversity

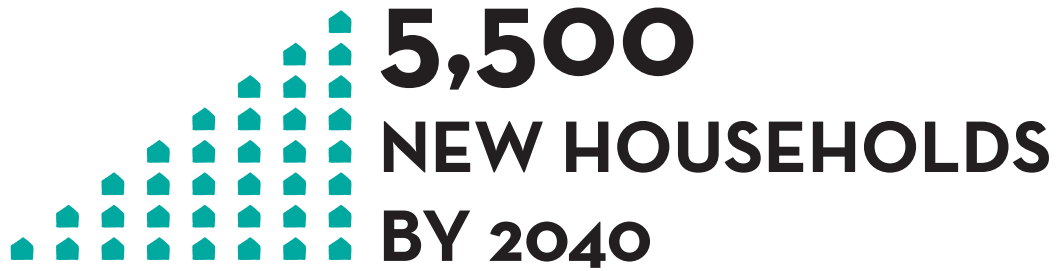
“Demographic shifts in the coming decades will result in a different Twin Cities region than we know today and have known in years past. Our region will grow, age and become more racially and ethnically diverse. These shifts are not just in our future, however; recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau show these changes are well underway, especially when it comes to diversity in the region.”⁵
- *“Growing Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Twin Cities Region Today”*,
Met Council, October 2014

Between 2000 and 2013, Minnetonka attracted 2,300 residents of color.⁶ In the three major Minnetonka school districts, there are between 40 and 42 languages spoken. Approximately 29% of East Africans in the US are located in the greater Minneapolis metro area. This is on par with the Twin Cities metro region where 92% of population growth is from people of color.

⁵ As of the publication date of this document, several national policy changes could impact the region's diversity.

⁶ <https://metro council.org/getattachment/bfc72287-2b88-49e0-96ea-2fa2ee2eb0d2/.aspx>, page 11.

10. Population growth – The Met Council projects that Minnetonka will add 10,000 residents and 5,500 households by 2040.



Even if only half of the projections are true, this is still an additional 5,000 people and 2,750 households, an almost 15% increase in Minnetonka’s population. To make room for new residents, Minnetonka can consider more urban villages and more dense residential housing.

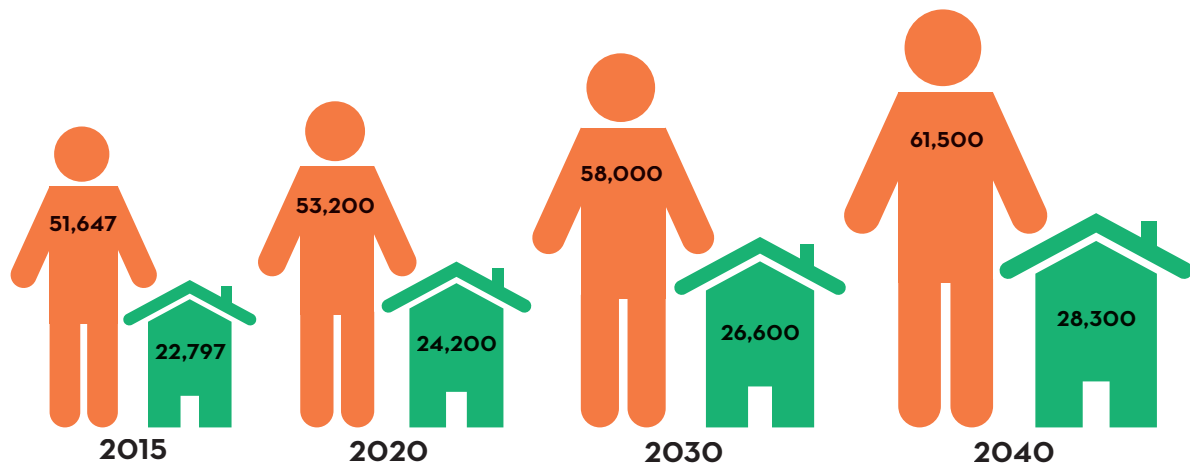


FIGURE 6: ESTIMATED POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD GROWTH THROUGH 2040. SOURCE: MET COUNCIL.

A resident shared her concerns about not making room for new families:

“I agree that the best part of Minnetonka is the green space, park land, trails, etc. If we want to maintain and expand those things, we have to be very careful NOW about how and what we build, and what is re-built on a parcel when a lot is sold and an existing house is torn down. We need BALANCE. Will there be reasonably affordable housing for young couples and families, or will there be only mega-mansions and senior-living condos? A possible consequence of that scenario could be a large population of Minnetonka citizens who are uninterested in the things we are all listing here; people who may vote against using funds to maintain parks, trails, even schools, etc. I’m very concerned when I (over)hear our dedicated teachers and public servants complaining of the difficulty of affording a home here where they serve.”

The Imagine Minnetonka Steering Committee suggests the following demographic trends will have a large impact on Minnetonka’s future:

11. **Tribalism and identity politics** – Due to demographic changes and a more partisan political atmosphere, many communities, regions and states have a growing number of factions or “tribes”. This has a tendency to divide (versus unite) communities. If ignored, tribalism and identity politics could impact Minnetonka, dividing the community among age, class, racial or other “tribal” lines. One example: throughout the Imagine Minnetonka process, several residents pulled consultants and staff aside to share their concerns privately (v in front of their peers) about “those people” in the community. The implied message was that “those people” are the source of crime and are deflating Minnetonka’s housing values and reputation as a great place to live. Data does not support their claims, but tribalism is often built on not on facts, but on fears. This is one small example of how identity politics can take root in a community.
12. **Urbanization** – Minneapolis-St. Paul will continue to grow, bringing growth pressure to all communities in the MSA. Minnetonka will face choices about whether it wants to evolve into a more vibrant suburb (which usually brings more population, more young professionals and young families, more diverse housing stock, and greater diversity) or whether it wants to maintain its traditional character.



GOVERNANCE TRENDS



The Imagine Minnetonka futurists predict the following governance trends:

13. Rising demand for self-governance – Right now Minnetonka is a progressive community embedded in a larger conservative Congressional district. Assuming current demographic and technology trends continue for the next decade, i.e. Minnetonka becomes older and citizens become more digitally engaged in government, it can be assumed that Minnetonka will become more separated in socio-economic terms from its neighboring communities. This sets the stage for a rising demand in self-governance. Viewed in a positive light, Minnetonka could become an excellent test bed for such systems such as direct voting, remote participation in council meetings and inclusion in advisory meetings through WebEx and such technologies.

The Imagine Minnetonka Steering Committee adds these high impact governance trends:

14. Trust in government – Surveys show that trust in national government is at an all time low, while trust in local government has rebounded to the same levels as before the Great Recession. In Minnetonka, the majority of surveyed residents are very satisfied with Minnetonka's levels of service and performance. To maintain resident satisfaction and trust will require new levels of citizen engagement, reporting and accountability.

15. City-to-city collaboration – Partisan politics at the state and national level make relying on them for funding and directives spotty at best. Instead, cities are turning towards each other. National coalitions like the Bloomberg 40 and the Living Cities Collaborative are forming peer-to-peer networks among cities that are committed to testing innovations and sharing knowledge. The City of Minnetonka already belongs to formal and informal networks of peer cities, and this peer-to-peer collaboration is expected to increase in importance in the next 20 years.

16. Citizen engagement – Regardless of their age or generation, citizens increasingly expect to be engaged in the process of local government. Coupled with Digital Citizenship (Trend #5 in this document), Minnetonka is entering a new era of government and citizen collaboration.

R ECOMMENDATIONS – HOW TO NAVIGATE MINNETONKA’S FUTURE

RECOMMENDATIONS AT A GLANCE

RECOMMENDATION	RESIDENT INPUT ADDRESSED	FORCES AND TRENDS ADDRESSED
<p>1. Monitor five signals for Minnetonka’s future (page 27)</p>	<p>Connection Citizens</p>	<p>Resources • Excess commercial office space Demographics • Increasing diversity • Urbanization • Population growth • Tribalism and identity politics Governance • Trust in government</p>
<p>2. Expand best practices for green infrastructure (page 28)</p>	<p>Character</p>	<p>Resources • Climate change Technology • Infrastructure overhaul</p>
<p>3. Create a visionary goal to connect all residents to woods and wetlands (page 31)</p>	<p>Character</p>	<p>Resources • Climate change Demographics • Increasing population</p>
<p>4. Proactively collaborate with school leaders and other partners to address Minnetonka’s changing demographics (page 32)</p>	<p>Citizens</p>	<p>Technology • Digital Citizenship Demographics • Population growth • Increasing diversity • Tribalism and identity politics Governance • Citizen engagement</p>
<p>5. Develop a multimodal transportation plan that will safely connect major pedestrian areas and all bike + hike trails (page 33)</p>	<p>Citizens</p>	<p>Technology • Infrastructure overhaul Demographics • Aging in place • Urbanization Governance • Citizen engagement</p>



RECOMMENDATION	RESIDENT INPUT ADDRESSED	FORCES AND TRENDS ADDRESSED
<p>6. Diversify and improve housing stock (including retrofitting vacant commercial space) that appeals to young professionals, working families, and the elderly (page 36)</p>	<p>Citizens Character</p>	<p>Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excess commercial office space Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure overhaul Demographics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aging in place • Increasing diversity • Population growth • Urbanization </p>
<p>7. Proactively engage and communicate with residents using best practices across multiple platforms (page 38)</p>	<p>Connection</p>	<p>Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital citizenship Demographics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aging in place • Increasing diversity • Population growth • Tribalism and identity politics Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rising demand for self-government • Trust in government • Citizen engagement </p>
<p>8. Use best practices in suburban redevelopment to strengthen the City’s village centers and develop the new Shady Oak Road and Opus light rail transit area (page 41)</p>	<p>Connection</p>	<p>Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excess commercial office space Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autonomous transit • Home health care delivery • Infrastructure overhaul Demographics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aging in place • Increasing diversity • Population growth • Urbanization Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust in government • City-to-city collaboration • Citizen engagement </p>
<p>9. Update the Minnetonka Citizen Academy (page 42)</p>	<p>Citizens Connection Character</p>	<p>Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education reform Demographics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population growth Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust in government • Citizen engagement </p>



1. MONITOR FIVE SIGNALS FOR MINNETONKA'S FUTURE.

*Rationale: We can't know **exactly** what the future will bring to Minnetonka, but the following five leading indicators will dictate what Minnetonka's future will likely be, and city leaders should monitor them to be prepared.*

SIGNAL	EXPLANATION/IMPLICATION
1. Ratio of incoming-to-departing 25-40-year-olds.	When the ratio of incoming younger residents goes negative it presages an economic downturn and a decrease in stability. Minnetonka's median age is currently 45. If more under-40s leave Minnetonka than move in, it will impact future growth and opportunity.
2. Commercial real estate price fluctuations and vacancy rates.	There is an estimated 300,000-600,000 square feet of corporate office space that could become vacant in the next 5-10 years. This could have an impact on overall tax revenues and could create an additional burden for the city or residents. It could also create an opportunity for more residential and retail infill.
3. Increased diversity.	The United States is undergoing one of the most dramatic demographic shifts since the late 1800s. A community's preparation for increasing diversity can have a large impact on how residents respond and how smoothly newcomers are integrated into the community.
4. Civic mood: does Minnetonka want to be more or less connected to the greater Minneapolis metro area?	As residents age and retire, some feel bothered by things like bikers on the roads. As one resident expressed, "We don't want 'urban'. I enjoy suburban, that is why I live here. If I wanted urban I would move to a city." Leaders must be tuned into residents' civic mood as Minnetonka grows in population.
5. Increase in measures of income inequality across similar communities (i.e., Gini Coefficient ⁷)	Wilson and Pickett (<i>The Spirit Level</i>) have demonstrated that in states or nations with higher levels of income inequality, there are more social and health problems, more crime, and lower levels of public trust. Minnetonka has historically been known as a city with affluent residents, but recently its share of residents needing assistance from the Food Shelf and other social service agencies has increased. This disparity can lead to identity politics and tribalism.

7 The Gini Co-efficient measures the distribution of wealth in a nation, state, or community. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gini_coefficient

Resources and best practices:

- › The Minnesota Dashboard includes 40 indicators reported regularly and openly to the public: <https://mn.gov/mmb/mn-dashboard/>.
- › The Community Indicators Consortium helps communities determine what to measure and how to present it: <http://www.communityindicators.net/home>.
- › The CAN Community Dashboard is used in Austin and Travis County, TX to report on a series of social and economic issues in the community: <http://www.cancommunitydashboard.org/>.

2. EXPAND BEST PRACTICES FOR GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE.

Rationale: Minnetonka has a long history of taking care of its woods and wetlands. Green infrastructure (“GI”) is a natural choice that aligns with the community’s values and saves money in the long term.⁸ We recommend that money saved through green infrastructure projects can be used to offset the costs of other recommendations in this plan, e.g. improving safety and connection of bike + hike trails and expanding workforce housing.

What is green infrastructure?

Also called “low-impact development,” green infrastructure is an approach to wet weather management that is cost-effective, sustainable, and environmentally friendly. Green infrastructure management uses strategies and technologies that help manage stormwater runoff, i.e. solar/solar gardens, rain gardens, buffer strips, green roofs, permeable pavers/porous pavement, tree trenches, rain barrels, and other water reuse systems.

⁸ Seventy percent of green infrastructure projects save money. Source: “Banking on Green: A Look at How Green Infrastructure Can Save Municipalities Money and Provide Economic Benefits Community Wide,” https://www.asla.org/uploadedFiles/CMS/Government_Affairs/Federal_Government_Affairs/Banking%20on%20Green%20HighRes.pdf

The following best practices should be considered by the City Council and in the next comprehensive plan:

- Implement a lawn-watering rule of “Trash Day +1.” This means that all residents may water their lawns on the day their trash is picked up, plus one other day. University of Minnesota research shows that lawns don’t need more than 1/4 inch of water per week.
- Require or incentivize green infrastructure (“GI”) practices on all new development and redevelopment especially if developers are adding impervious surfaces, like paved parking lots.
- Increase the amount of stormwater runoff that developers are required to manage. In most communities, one inch is the norm, but this is insufficient in communities that are growing like Minnetonka is.
- Dedicate resources to work with and train developers how to implement GI.
- Require or incentivize businesses with large paved surfaces to use rain gardens, tree trenches and permeable pavements to reduce runoff.
- Encourage smaller strip malls to install rain gardens and vegetated buffers along sidewalks and parking lots. Vegetated buffers don’t require as much maintenance as rain gardens and can still infiltrate runoff from the parking lot back into the soil.
- Public and private parking areas that are not high use areas could be switched to permeable pavers.
- Install rain gardens on public property throughout the city.
- Replace grass with alternative turfs, or if some grassy areas don’t get pedestrian traffic, consider sedges, fescues, or pollinator meadow turf.

Best practices examples in the Twin Cities area:

- › Capital Region Watershed District has many best practice approaches: <http://www.capitolregionwd.org/our-work/water-resource-improvement-projects/>.
- › The Green Line Light Rail Path includes rain gardens, tree trenches, stormwater planters, and infiltration trenches: http://www.capitolregionwd.org/our-work/watershed-planning/cclrt_wq/.
- › Maplewood Mall in the Ramsey-Washington Watershed District treated runoff and used it as an education outreach initiative: https://www.rwmwd.org/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC=%7BDB475310-069F-4230-9E97-01E92FD50527%7D.
- › The Saint Paul Saints' CHS Field was considered the "greenest ballpark in the world" at its grand opening, in part because of its excellent water reuse system: <https://metro council.org/News-Events/Wastewater-Water/Newsletters/Innovative-system-will-capture-rainwater-to-keep-n.aspx>.
- › Waconia has a water reuse system that captures runoff from a residential area, treats it, and then uses it to water the high school football field. Water reuse reduces stormwater runoff pollution AND doesn't waste treated drinking water.
- › On a small scale, Nine Mile Creek Watershed District's facility in Eden Prairie uses GI: <https://www.ninemilecreek.org/9-mile-creek-discovery-point/around-discovery-point/>.
- › The City of Victoria is not experiencing flooding or water quality problems because of their use of open space planning: http://www.victoria.ca/assets/Departments/Planning~Development/Community~Planning/OCP/OCP_Section-9_Parks-and-Recreation.pdf.

3. CREATE A VISIONARY GOAL TO CONNECT ALL RESIDENTS TO MINNETONKA'S WOODS AND WETLANDS.

Rationale: All Minnetonka residents value its “character” especially its tree canopy and waterways. As Minnetonka grows, it must continue to preserve residents’ access to these valuable natural amenities. Even if a new resident cannot afford a tree-lined property, they should have easy access to Minnetonka’s natural beauty.

Here are two examples of cities that –while growing –made strong commitments to connect residents and the natural environment:

- In Nashville, the Mayor promised to put every resident within a ten-minute walk of a park, trail, or recreation area.
- In Portland, elected officials and civic leaders promised that every resident would have a view of Mount Hood.

It is possible to balance growth with resident access to parks and their natural environment. The City Council and the next comprehensive plan should hold fast to a commitment that connects every resident to Minnetonka’s woods and wetlands.

Resources:

- How Great Leaders Inspire Action by Simon Sinek: https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action.
- Vancouver’s 2020 goals include strategies to put every resident within a five-minute walk of a park, greenway, or other green space by 2020: <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/gc2020-goal6.pdf>.

4. PROACTIVELY COLLABORATE WITH SCHOOL LEADERS AND OTHER PARTNERS TO ADDRESS MINNETONKA'S CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS.

Rationale: The racial, ethnic, and class makeup of Minnetonka is changing and it's making some residents uncomfortable. Addressed early, openly and with sensitivity, Minnetonka can sidestep some of the uglier side effects of a changing population.

We recommend that a trusted community partner—like a local church or interfaith alliance—spearhead a diversity and inclusion initiative to ensure that Minnetonka is a welcoming community. Business leaders, school district leaders, nonprofit leaders, and other community leaders should be encouraged to participate and encourage their constituencies to participate, too.

Best practices:

- › Willmar, MN hosted a series of community education events to help residents understand their growing immigrant Somali population: <http://www.adcminnesota.org/page/video/understanding-somali-culture-meeting-willmar>.
- › The Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) is a national network of governments working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all. Cities including Bloomington, Hopkins, Minneapolis, Maplewood, Woodbury, Brooklyn Center and Brooklyn Park are using GARE to: make commitments to achieving racial equity; focus on the power and influence of their own institutions; and work in partnership with others. Learn more: <http://www.racialequityalliance.org/>.
- › The YWCA of Minneapolis offers racial justice training: https://www.ywcampls.org/racial_justice/.
- › The City staff has embarked on three Strategic Doing initiatives to better connect residents and businesses to centers of activity. The projects are responsive to Minnetonka's changing demographics and the Strategic Doing process can be replicated to activate other projects throughout the community.

5. DEVELOP A MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN THAT WILL SAFELY CONNECT MAJOR PEDESTRIAN AREAS AND ALL BIKE AND HIKE TRAILS.

Rationale: Residents who participated in Imagine Minnetonka were adamant about the need to improve pedestrian safety at key intersections and their desire for more connected bike and hike paths.⁹ The city already has a comprehensive trail plan; this recommendation supports the completion of that plan.

A safe and connected multimodal transportation system offers enhanced quality of life to seniors, boomers, empty nesters, young families, young professionals, K-12 students, and bike enthusiasts from the region. Connected bike trails have these additional benefits for Minnetonka:

- Bike paths help maintain or increase housing values for those who live adjacent to them, according to a study of Minneapolis suburbs and cities.¹⁰ The National Association of Realtors concludes that: “[H]omes near trails often have higher property value, with a price premium ranging from five to ten percent in most studies.”¹¹
- An excellent bike system is good for economic development. Although no studies have been done in Minnesota, a 2010 study in Wisconsin concluded that: “Bicycle recreation supports more than \$924 million in economic activity in Wisconsin, of which nearly \$533 million is direct impact occurring annually. Of the combined impacts, more than \$535 million is attributable to bicyclists from other states, representing an infusion of outside dollars into the state economy. Increasing non-resident bicycling by 20% has the potential to increase economic activity by more than \$107 million dollars and create 1,528 full-time equivalent jobs.”¹²

⁹ “Bike paths” include a mix of paved paths and paths more suitable to the mountain bike community.

¹⁰ “Do Bike Lanes Impact Housing Values” by Walker Angell, Street.MN, <https://streets.mn/2013/06/10/do-bike-lanes-impact-housing-values/>

¹¹ “Measuring Trail Benefits: Property Value”, Headwaters Economics, Spring 2016: <https://headwaterseconomics.org/wphw/wp-content/uploads/trails-library-property-value-overview.pdf>

¹² “Valuing Bicycling Economic and Health Impacts in Wisconsin” by M. Grabhow, M. Hahn and M. Whited, January 2010: https://www.adventurecycling.org/default/assets/File/USBRS/Research/Wisconsin_bicycling_Final_Report.pdf

› Biking has been a favorite intergenerational pastime for over 100 years:

“Bicycling was a favorite activity for all ages. Riders were required to have a license attached to the front fork of the bicycle. A popular route for bicyclists was constructed by the county in the 1890s along the south side of Minnetonka Boulevard from Lake Calhoun in Minneapolis to Deephaven on Lake Minnetonka. The graveled path was four to five feet wide and six inches above the road’s surface. The path is still there though Minnetonka Mills, now paved with asphalt. On Sundays and holidays, thirty cyclists often stopped at Frear’s pop stand, located on the porch of the general store at Bridge Street, west of today’s Dairy Queen where Bennis Feed and Fuel station now stands, to pump a tin cup full of cold, clear well water.”

- *Minnetonka Mills: A Historic Profile in Pictures and Stories of a Community in Minnetonka, Minnesota*, written by Betty Johnson and published by the City of Minnetonka Historical Society

In addition, as Minnetonka residents age (requiring greater accessibility) and new forms of transportation (light rail, autonomous vehicles) become popular, the city will upgrade its transportation plan. As this happens, Minnetonka has a unique opportunity to program its transit plan for increased bikeability, changing demographics, greater safety, and more connectivity.

Best practices and resources:

- › Feet First offers “Safe Routes to School,” an educational and planning process that ensures kids get to and from school safely: <http://www.feetfirst.org/feet-first-safe-routes-to-school-programs>.
- › The National Center for Transit Research offers best practice training on multimodal transportation planning, tied to workforce and economic development: <http://www.nctr.usf.edu/>.
- › The National Association of Realtors offers education and impact analysis of trails, complete streets, and more: <https://www.nar.realtor/field-guides/field-guide-to-effects-of-trails-and-greenways-on-property-values>.
- › A transportation hierarchy can be helpful in deciding what features receive funding priority. The Green Transportation Hierarchy¹³ favors more affordable and efficient modes for users in this order:
 1. Pedestrians
 2. Bicycles
 3. Public transportation
 4. Service and freight vehicles
 5. Taxis
 6. Multiple occupant vehicles (carpools)
 7. Single occupant vehicles
- › The National Trails Training Partnership provides economic impact studies and sources for planning, building, designing, funding, managing, enhancing, and supporting trails, greenways, and blueways: www.AmericanTrails.org.

¹³ “Introduction to Multi-Modal Transportation Planning Principles and Practices, Todd Litman, Victoria Transport Policy Institute, May 2014: http://www.vtppi.org/multimodal_planning.pdf

6. DIVERSIFY & IMPROVE HOUSING STOCK (INCLUDING RETROFITTING VACANT COMMERCIAL SPACE) THAT APPEALS TO YOUNG PROFESSIONALS, WORKING FAMILIES, AND THE ELDERLY.

Rationale: Minnetonka's housing prices prevent those who are on fixed incomes (the elderly), those who are early in their careers (young professionals), and working class families (teachers, police officers, fire fighters and those who work in service, sales, restaurants and retail) from moving to Minnetonka.

A mix of factors are increasing demand for housing at multiple price points.

These include:

- Seniors citizens who would like to sell their single-family homes and stay in Minnetonka, but don't feel they can afford to. Their incomes are fixed, and they don't feel they have other housing options.
- By 2040, Minnetonka's senior population is expected to grow by 40% (Trend 8). This trend, coupled with the previous point, creates a ceiling on the number of potentially affordable "fixer upper" single-family homes that would go on the market and appeal to young families looking for an entry level home.
- Many Minnetonka area residents are paying so much for housing and other monthly expenses that they are having difficulty affording food. The ICA Food Shelf has expanded from serving 268 families (in 2004) to serving over 900 families in 2016. In their 2015 funding application to the City of Minnetonka, the ICA Food Shelf reported serving 5,832 families, of which 1,941 lived in Minnetonka.
- Workforce housing would help attract young families, young professionals, and working class families.

These trends are largely invisible to residents, because they take place in the shadows or out of view. Some residents worry that building more affordable housing for seniors, Millennials or working class families will increase crime or decrease their own housing values. Their fears are real to them, but to move forward and address Minnetonka's expected growth, we must break the cycle. *It is possible to build beautiful senior and workforce housing that contributes to Minnetonka's character.* This requires enlightened and creative developers, courageous public officials, clear zoning regulations and guidelines, and community trust.

Recommendations and resources:

- › Share and monitor vacancy rate in office uses in the city. Enable city staff to consider multiple different uses for future vacant office spaces and ensure that these options are included in future comprehensive plans and economic development plans.
- › Policy Tools and Best Practices for Workforce Housing, Michelle Winters, Terwilliger Center for Housing: <http://www.townofchapelhill.org/home/showdocument?id=26819>.
- › Award winning examples of workforce housing that's affordable and well designed: <https://bdmag.com/quality-design-takes-important-role-affordable-housing/>.
- › Dominion, a Minneapolis based developer with a track record of balancing aesthetics and cost for multi family homes: <http://www.dominiumapartments.com/about-us/development-and-acquisition.html>.

7. PROACTIVELY ENGAGE AND COMMUNICATE WITH RESIDENTS USING BEST PRACTICES ACROSS MULTIPLE PLATFORMS.

Rationale: Imagine Minnetonka proved that residents want to engage with the city—and with each other—on issues of importance to the community. In a digital age, city staff, elected officials, and residents will need to use a variety of communication tools and protocols to constructively design the next comprehensive plan and move forward as partners and allies.

At the Imagine Minnetonka town hall meetings, some vocal residents expressed concern that Minnetonka's future will be less bright than its past and that their elected officials aren't listening to their concerns. In times of change, concerns like these are common. And they must be addressed.

As one Imagine Minnetonka Steering Committee member wisely noted,

“People are afraid of change because they fear that they're losing something. But if you help them understand what they're getting in return, they'll be more open to it.”

Listening to residents is the responsibility of all elected officials and city staff, but a community of Minnetonka's size should also have dedicated resources to engage the community on matters of importance.

Currently, the City is understaffed in its communications department. Ideally, additional resources would be directed to use and experiment with tools like Facebook Live, Beehives, resident programming, Minnetonka Matters, and other online and traditional platforms to engage with residents and provide input and direction to city staff and council.


The following resources and best practices can help Minnetonka move forward, City and citizens together:

- The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) offers training on how to effectively engage and partner with citizens. All city staff and council should take this training: <http://www.iap2.org/?page=training>.
- IAP2's one page "Public Participation Spectrum" helps define the public's role in all public participation processes. This resource is available on the following page of this report, or at http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/Foundations_Course/IAP2_P2_Spectrum.pdf.
- A Local Officials' Guide to Online Public Engagement is a playbook for how a communication specialist can prioritize public messages, inform the public, consult with citizens, and engage online: http://www.ca-ilg.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/a_local_officials_guide_to_online_public_engagement_0.pdf.
- One easy, early "win" for the City is to publicize its environmental commitment and impact. Through the Imagine Minnetonka process, residents and the Steering Committee learned that the city is already doing a lot to mitigate climate change, invest in renewables, and protect its woods and wetlands. This is an important message to share with an eager public.
- Code for America is a national network dedicated to making government work better in the 21st century. They publish community engagement best practices: <https://www.codeforamerica.org/resources/providing-access/community-engagement>.

IAP2'S PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SPECTRUM



The IAP2 Federation has developed the Spectrum to help groups define the public's role in any public participation process. The IAP2 Spectrum is quickly becoming an international standard.

		INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION 				
		INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL		To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
	PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

8. USE BEST PRACTICES IN SUBURBAN REDEVELOPMENT TO STRENGTHEN THE CITY'S VILLAGE CENTERS AND DEVELOP THE NEW SHADY OAK ROAD AND OPUS LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT AREA.

Rationale: Minnetonka, like many of the Twin Cities' suburbs, is in its redevelopment stage when it must retrofit buildings, land uses, and other physical assets for changing needs and preferences, e.g., seniors who want to age in place or Millennials who don't want to own a home or be car dependent.

Minnetonka has a strong history of being responsive to residents and forward looking in its approach.

The following insights and best practices can help Minnetonka navigate its future redevelopment:

- › A University of Minnesota study (2013) found that Minnetonka does not have a centralized downtown. Rather, it is a “beehive” community, where people leave their homes and drive to various centers of activity (“beehives”) where they build community and interact with others, e.g. Big Willow is a gathering place for parents of children who play baseball; churches are gathering places for those who share the same faith.¹⁴ For the community to remain socially connected, the beehives must be strong because they give residents a sense of belonging.
- › Some of Minnetonka’s “beehives” are its village centers or retail districts, like the one at Hwy 101 and Minnetonka Boulevard. These centers are at major intersections, have a mix of retail (hardware stores, grocery stores, restaurants, etc.), are immediately accessible from the major roads, and are surrounded by residential housing. The village centers play an important role in connecting residents to each other, and keeping the area’s economy strong and accessible. The next comprehensive plan should include elements to maintain or strengthen the village centers.
- › Minnetonka’s shortage of good, inexpensive, undeveloped sites, the expansion of the light rail system, and its predicted increase in vacant commercial space make it a prime candidate for “Urban Villages,” a concept made popular by Ellen Dunham-Jones in her TED talk, “Retrofitting Suburbia,” https://www.ted.com/talks/ellen_dunham_jones_retrofitting_suburbia/transcript?language=en.
- › Belmar and Lakewood, Colorado offer inspiring examples of suburban redevelopment that assists seniors age in place, has multimodal transit options, “fits” within a traditional single family suburban environment, and adds a retail dimension that suburban residents value.¹⁵
- › The American Planning Association’s “Guide on Public Redevelopment” offers ideas and tools that the public sector can take to stimulate activity when the private market is not providing sufficient capital and economic activity to achieve the desired level of improvement: <https://planning.org/policy/guides/adopted/redevelopment.htm>.

¹⁴ Resilient Communities Project, City of Minnetonka and University of Minnesota, <http://rcp.umn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/LWV-1-12-13-Final.pdf>

¹⁵ “Retrofitting Suburbia,” Urban Land Interest, <http://uli.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/10/Sustainable-Suburbs-Retrofitting-Suburbia.pdf>

9. UPDATE THE MINNETONKA CITIZENS ACADEMY.

Rationale: Minnetonka's population will continue to change. To proactively engage residents and field new pools of informed citizens to serve on boards and commissions, the Minnetonka Citizens Academy should be refreshed.

Historically, citizen academies were six or seven week experiences that featured a lecture a week. In Minnetonka, they featured presentations from city historians, and various city departments. Most citizen academies are passive, “anyone is welcome” affairs whose participation and results have been diminishing over time.

Recently, many cities have re-imagined their citizen academies to be more dynamic, to appeal more to Millennials and retirees who want to play a more active role in their communities.

Best practices and resources:

- > “Decatur 101” in Decatur, Georgia is a six-week program with morning and evening options. Training includes dynamic presentations (no boring department heads) and active, hands-on learning, i.e. a Smart Growth Walking Tour and a 100 pennies budgeting game. The morning class is 10 a.m.–noon and the evening class is 7-9 p.m. The program is free and open to the first 40 applicants. The program typically has waiting lists, and past graduates have run for office, served on boards and commissions, volunteered to help with community festivals, activated neighborhood organizations, and more. Here’s what Decatur 101 graduates say about their experiences in the program: “The most fun I have had in a learning environment since my second year of law school.” . . . “Every city should have this kind of program.” . . . “Decatur 101 exceeded my expectations. I will include it on my resume.” . . . “It was awesome. It makes it a lot easier to write that tax check.” Learn more: <http://www.decaturga.com/city-government/city-departments/community-development-quality-of-life/decaturo1#outline>.
- > Leadership Omaha is a nine-month program that focuses on community trusteeship, leadership styles and community awareness. It culminates in a class project intended to benefit the Omaha community: <https://www.omahachamber.org/talent-and-workforce/leadership-development/leadership-omaha.cfm>.
- > UNC-Chapel Hill has a directory of citizen academies for further research: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/110XXWIFeoEqKcsUHN5vlfplN_yOEXswm8hfXr77h2WA/pub?hl=en_US&hl=en_US&single=true&gid=0&range=c1:ba120&output=html.

THESE 9 RECOMMENDATIONS, completed individually or together, will result in a more resilient, vibrant and future ready community.

The following partners and resources can help:

- › The MSP Regional Indicators can be used to track the five items in Recommendation #1: <https://www.greatersp.org/regional-indicators>.
- › VANTAGE is a community based innovation project of Minnetonka High School. Students work with a project team to solve real-world problems and learn about the challenges of project-driven work. Under the direction of a licensed teacher and in partnership with professionals, these project teams strive to contribute to a partner-defined project while gaining invaluable experience in today's marketplace: <https://www.minnetonkaschools.org/academics/mhs/vantage/about-vantage>.
- › The University of Minnesota Humphrey School of Public Affairs has nine policy research and outreach centers in the areas of leadership and management, politics and governance, urban and regional planning, gender policy, and science, technology and environmental policy: <http://www.hhh.umn.edu/people-research/research-centers>.
- › The League of Minnesota Cities (<https://www.lmc.org/>) and the National League of Cities (<http://www.nlc.org/>) primarily serve elected officials and offer training and best practices across a range of municipal issues.
- › The Alliance for Innovation primarily serves city managers and staff. They offer best practices for innovative cities and are responsive to member requests for best practices in a range of areas: www.TransformGov.org.
- › Living Cities works with cross-sector leaders in cities to build a new type of urban practice aimed at dramatically improving the economic well-being of low-income people: <https://www.livingcities.org/>.
- › Governing Magazine (<http://www.governing.com>) and the Governing Institute (<http://www.governing.com/gov-institute>) publish and train on best practices and innovation.

METHODOLOGY: WHO PARTICIPATED, AND HOW?

Residents took advantage of 12 weeks of opportunities to have their say in Imagine Minnetonka: online, through social media (City of Minnetonka’s Facebook, Twitter and Instagram with #imagineMTKA), at various meetings around town, and more. “One Wish” chalkboards were the most popular method of collecting residents’ ideas and were also seen by the most people:

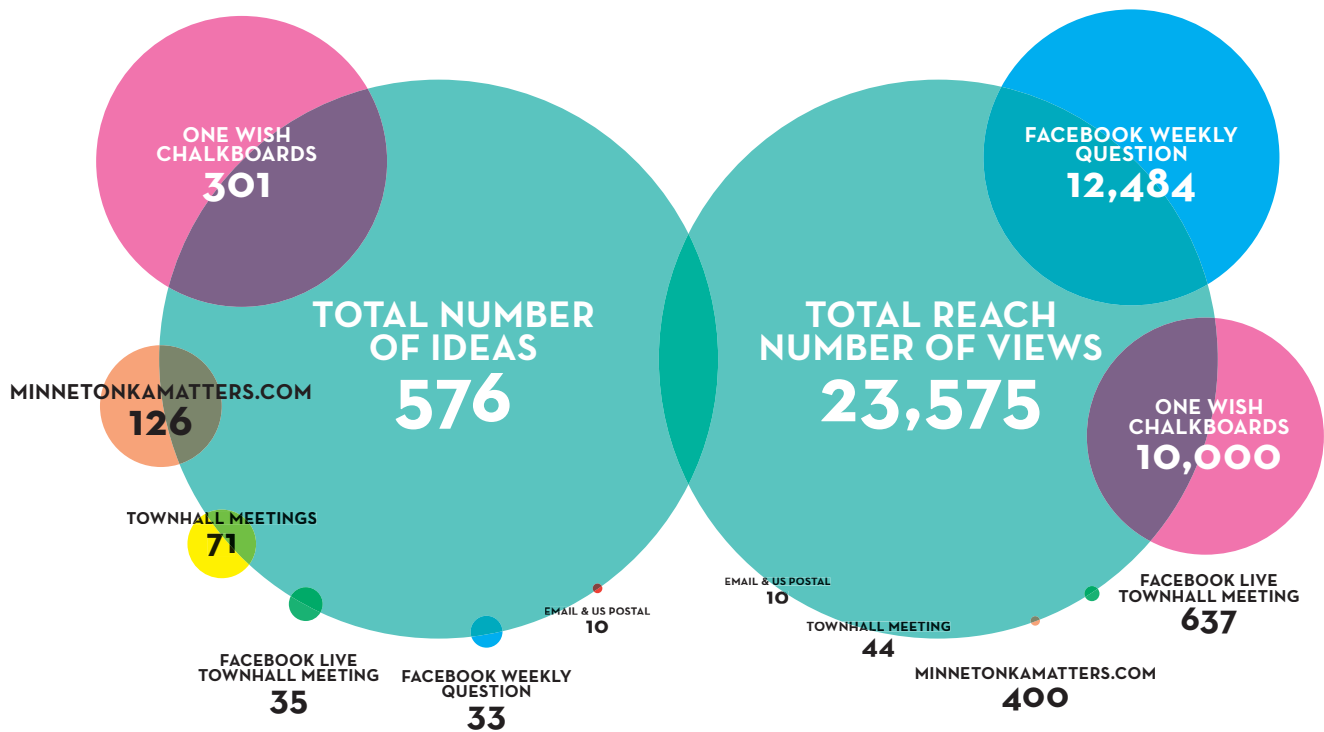


FIGURE 7: NUMBER OF IDEAS AND REACH GENERATED BY VARIOUS FORMS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT.

“ONE WISH CHALKBOARDS” WERE AVAILABLE TO RESIDENTS OF ALL AGES AT THESE 2016 VENUES:

- Saturday, June 25: Minnetonka Summer Festival (4–8 p.m.)
- Tuesday, July 19: Farmers Market and Music in the Park (3–8 p.m.)
- Wednesday, July 20: Williston Fitness Center (7–11 a.m.)
- Wednesday, July 27: Minnetonka Ice Arena Public Skating (3–5 p.m.)
- Thursday, July 28: Senior Center (8 a.m.–noon)
- Friday, August 5: Tour De Tonka packet pickup at Minnetonka High School (8:30 a.m.–2 p.m.)
- Wednesday, Aug. 10: Purgatory Park (8–11 a.m.)
- Wednesday, Aug. 24: Town Hall Meeting at Minnetonka Community Center (7 p.m.)
- Thursday, Aug. 25: Tanglen Elementary Back to School Open House (5–7 p.m.)
- Sunday, Sept. 18: Minnetonka United Methodist (10 a.m.–noon)
- Tuesday, Oct. 4: Fire Department and City Open House (5–7 p.m.)
- Wednesday, Oct. 12: Town Hall Meeting at Minnetonka Community Center (7 p.m.)

T HANK YOUs

So much energy and so many hours went into this project.

We owe the following residents and stewards of Minnetonka our thanks:

The Minnetonka City Council gave a word of advice to the consultants who spearheaded the project, “Don’t be afraid to make us uncomfortable.” Those brave folks include:

- Terry Schneider, Mayor
- Dick Allendorf, At Large, Seat A
- Patty Acomb, At Large, Seat B
- Bob Ellingson, Ward 1
- Tony Wagner, Ward 2
- Brad Wiersum, Ward 3
- Tim Bergstedt, Ward 4



The Imagine Minnetonka Steering Committee was appointed by the City Council to make sure the project stayed on track, was responsive to community needs, and resulted in actionable recommendations. Thank you to:

- | | | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| Betty Johnson | Cari Lindberg | Jason Moeckel | Madeline Seveland | Ron Kamps | Steve Adams,
Chairman |
| Brian Kirk | Colbert Boyd | Joan Suko | Margaret Bauer | Scott Coolong | |



Geralyn Barone, Minnetonka’s City Manager, challenged us to ask the tough questions and seek out those who’ve been traditionally disengaged. She stayed late listening to residents’ concerns about the future. We were privileged to work with her.

Perry Vetter, the Assistant City Manager, was the City’s liaison for this effort and did a lot of the heavy lifting. He coordinated all the One Wish Chalkboard locations, organized all the steering committee meetings, and was the main contact for the City Council and to the City staff.

In addition to Perry, the following **City of Minnetonka staff members** provided energy and ideas to this project, which will bring it to life for all residents now and in the future:

Ann Davy	Jim Malone	Sara Kronmiller	Julie Wischnack
Dave Johnson	Shelley Peterson	John Vance	Alicia Gray
Kelly Odea	Scott Boerboom	Kevin Fox	Colin Schmidt
Sara Woeste	Loren Gordon	Merrill King	David Maeda
Darrin Ellingson	Susan Thomas	Will Manchester	Kari Spreeman
Jo Colleran	Drew Ingvalson	Jeremy Koenen	Patty Latham
Brian Wagstrom	Corrine Heine	Phil Olson	Moranda Zimmer

Special thanks to Betty Johnson, Madeline Seveland, and Cari Lindberg for providing additional research assistance related to Minnetonka’s history, green infrastructure best practices, and school district data respectively.

The team at NEXT Generation Consulting was privileged to work with your community on Imagine Minnetonka. Reach out anytime.

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