


Guidelines for a successful vision interview

1. **Enjoy each interview** as an opportunity for a conversation with your neighbor, colleague or friend about what they appreciate about living and/or working in St. Louis Park and about their dreams for the future of our community.
2. **Explain** that
 - The interview will **take about an hour**
 - Key information from the interview will be collected and become a part of the larger conversation about the future of the city
 - Encourage the person to **attend the Community-Wide Summit this winter**
3. **Read or speak all the information** on the first page of the Guide and the introductions to each question – this is important for the process.
Leave the last 3 pages *Community Initiative 1995-2004 with the person*
4. **Ask about one topic at a time and try to limit each to about 10 minutes.**
5. **Listen well and take brief notes** to capture the stories and the key ideas that you hear.
6. As soon as possible after the interview, **fill out the summary sheet** at the end of the interview guide.
 - Send the summary sheet to:
Martha McDonnell, Community Outreach Coordinator
City of St. Louis Park
5005 Minnetonka Blvd.
St. Louis Park, MN 55416
 - **OR** Enter the summary information online (go to www.stlouispark.org, then link to *Vision St. Louis Park* and on the welcome page choose:
 **CLICK** to fill out the Interview Summary Sheet ***online***
 - Keep the Interview Guide with your notes to remind you of the stories and ideas you want to share with others at the *Community-Wide Summit*
7. **Thank the person for their time and ask them if they would like to interview** one or more people. If they would, give them the number of the interview guides they need or suggest that they download guides from the website, www.stlouispark.org, then link to *Vision St. Louis Park*, or call and request guides from, Martha McDonnell, Community Outreach Coordinator **(952) 924-2613**



Vision Interview Guide

Name of person interviewed _____

Email _____ Phone #: _____ - _____ - _____

Address _____

Date _____ - _____ - 2005

Neighborhood, workplace or group: _____

Years spent living in St. Louis Park? _____ Working in St. Louis Park? _____

Will attend the Summit: (*circle one*) Yes No Will bring others: Yes No How many others _____

Interviewer(s): adult _____ youth: _____

Introduction

We/I appreciate this opportunity to interview you about your experiences in St. Louis Park, whether they are long or short, and your dreams for our community. This interview is a part of a community-wide conversation initiated by the St. Louis Park community partnership that includes:

- o City of St. Louis Park
- o St. Louis Park School District
- o TwinWest Chamber of Commerce
- o Park Nicollet Health Services
- o Children First.

We want to include as many of our 44,000 residents, including children and youth, as possible as well as the other 44,000 people who work here but live elsewhere.

Ten years ago, hundreds of citizens of St. Louis Park shared their ideas and dreams for the future. Our new city center, Excelsior & Grand is one of the results of that vision process. The City will continue to direct energy toward the eight goal areas identified in 1995. Here is a handout on those eight existing goal areas and some of the results.

In June, a diverse group of residents and workers met and identified four topics for this inquiry about the future of our community – **connectivity, transportation, health** and how to make St. Louis Park an even more unique and **special urban place**. The purpose of these interviews is to discover what is already working well and how we can build on success. It is also an opportunity for you to say what you appreciate and value about your (neighborhood, workplace, or group) and support its bright future.

This interview will take about an hour. After we finish I will fill out a summary sheet to be collected. We also encourage you to attend the Community Summit this winter when we will all share ideas about the future and shape the direction of our community for the next decade. The city, business partners, citizens, the school district, youth and senior citizen organizations and others in St. Louis Park will begin initiatives after the summit to guide the development of our future together.

www.stlouispark.org

Discover, Dream, Design: Vision St. Louis Park is a community partnership with the City of St. Louis Park, the St. Louis Park School District, TwinWest Chamber of Commerce, Park Nicollet Health Services and Children First. Funding provided from the McKnight Foundation. Organization Development Consulting by Mobius, Inc.

TOPIC: Connectivity

St. Louis Park is a growing, dynamic community that welcomes new neighbors and workers of all ages, faiths, abilities and cultures. 8000 kids and 6000 senior citizens live here. Our school children speak 38 different languages. We live in 7000 apartments, 13,000 houses and have 2000 different businesses. There are 300 crime-watch block clubs and 21 neighborhood associations. We are a community that fosters connections among all ages, races, cultures, abilities and faiths.

- A. Tell me about a time when you felt most engaged, energized and happy with your connection to people in St. Louis Park.
- B. Tell me about a time when you felt most connected and appreciative of people in St. Louis Park who are different from you.
- What did you and others do to make it a memorable experience?

(If you haven't had this experience in St. Louis Park, tell about a time when you had a similar experience in another community.)

- C. What is already happening in St. Louis Park that makes it possible for us to enjoy and benefit from the rich diversity of our community?
- D. If you had three wishes to make it possible for people in St. Louis Park to be more connected, what would you wish for?

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TOPIC: Transportation

In 2000, residents said that the location was the thing they liked best about living in St. Louis Park. We have three major highways that cut through our city allowing easy access to downtown and surrounding areas. Busses provide service on major streets and the Cedar Lake trail and Southwest trail are available for off-road biking. Easy, convenient transportation is important to everyone who lives and works in our city.

A. What ways do you use for getting around?

- Which way do you enjoy most?
- Have you or your family been in another community where the transportation system was wonderful? If so, what did you like about it?

B. What do we already have in the way of transportations systems that you would like to see more of in our city?

- If we asked children, youth and senior citizens the same question, what do you think they would say?

C. If you left and returned in 10 years and found St. Louis Park to be a leading edge community for ease of mobility, what new things would you see?

- What do you imagine was the most important first step in becoming a community renowned for its transportation system?

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TOPIC: Health

Research shows that our overall health as individuals and as a community depends on many factors:

- A healthy lifestyle
- Clean water, air, land
- A safe environment
- Feeling good about our neighbors
- Getting help and care when we need it

St. Louis Park has recreational facilities, parks and trails. We have excellent medical facilities including Methodist Hospital and a variety of clinics. We receive care and support from firefighters and other City services, as well as from neighbors, volunteers and nonprofit organizations, to name just a few.

A. Has living or working in St. Louis Park contributed to your health and vitality? If so how?

B. If you had three wishes to support health for you, your family and everyone (all ages, economic levels, abilities, cultures) in St. Louis Park, what would they be?

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TOPIC: Special Urban Place

Our city is 10 square miles with many places to enjoy the outdoors: 50 parks, 10 miles of trails, Minnehaha Creek and Westwood Nature center. We also have places for recreation including Excelsior & Grand, the Rec Center and school facilities. Studies indicate that inviting, stimulating, well-designed public spaces enrich community life, promote health and help us connect with each other.

A. Tell me about a time when you found yourself describing St. Louis Park as a great place to live.

- What did you say?
- When you spend free time in St. Louis Park, where do you go?
- What do you like most about each place?

B. What are three wishes to make this an even more pleasing and vibrant urban place?

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C. Imagine your wishes are fulfilled, what is the most distinguishing feature of St. Louis Park?

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TOPIC: (Optional) Your Workplace, Group or Neighborhood

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A. I'd like to learn about your first experience with (your neighborhood, workplace, group)

- What attracted you to (your neighborhood, group, workplace) ?

B. Looking at your entire experience with (your neighborhood, group, workplace), tell me about a time when you felt most involved or excited.

- What about (your neighborhood, group, workplace) helped make this a peak experience? (It might be leadership, structures, rewards, systems, skills, strategies, and/or relationships).

C. What are some things you value most about what you do at/in (your workplace, group, neighborhood)?

D. Without being humble, what do you value most about yourself, as a friend, parent, or citizen?

E. (optional question here from your group, neighborhood or organization)

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3. What was the most compelling story you heard?

4. What do you think was the best idea, thought, or phrase that came out of this interview- something you would want to pass on to other people?

Name of person interviewed _____

Email _____ Phone #: _____ - _____ - _____

Address _____

Date _____ - _____ - 2005 Resident, lives in St. Louis Park Works in St. Louis Park Young person living in St. Louis Park

Neighborhood, workplace or group: _____

Years spent living in St. Louis Park? _____ Working in St. Louis Park? _____

Will attend the Summit: (circle one) Yes No Will bring others: Yes No How many others__

Interviewer(s) adult: _____ youth: _____

Recommends that _____ be interviewed. Phone _____ - _____ - _____

Thank you again for your efforts in helping to make St. Louis Park a stronger, safer, and healthier community!

Please return completed interview guides to City Hall, 5005 Minnetonka Blvd, 55416 during regular business hours, or place them in the after-hours drop box located in the parking lot.

For more information, questions, or concerns about the visioning process, please contact:
Bridget Gothberg, Organizational Development, at 952-924-2684 or bgothberg@stlouispark.org
Martha McDonell, Outreach Coordinator, at 952-924-2613 or mmcdonell@stlouispark.org
Brent Smith, Community Vision Assistant, at 952-924-2681 or bsmith@stlouispark.org



Vision 1995 Progress Notes: Initiatives 1995 through 2004

Diversity

- A Hate Crimes Response Plan was developed in cooperation with the Police Department and the Human Rights Commission to assist bias crime victims.
- A community human rights survey is near completion. It will serve to identify additional areas for diversity education.
- Welcome packets are extended to new renters moving into the city.
- A new immigrant's guide in 4 languages was developed by the local League of Women Voters and distributed with support from the city.

Responsive Government

- A community wide vision survey measures citizens' faith in their local government leaders and departments every five years.
- City council meetings were reorganized so that issues with citizen attendance are given priority at the beginning of each meeting.
- The city added funding to organized neighborhood associations as a means to support grass roots citizen involvement.
- A new city website was created.
- City directors receive SDIC (systematic development of informed consent) training, a process teaching comprehensive measures for involving the public in development decisions.
- A community outreach staff position was created to support neighborhoods and act as liaison to nonprofits seeking governmental cooperation.

Safe Community

- The crime free multi housing program has grown to include the participation of 20% of the city's large apartment buildings.
- The St. Louis Park area Rental Coalition, SPARC, offers monthly networking for building owners and develops relationships with the police department and city officials.
- Community orienting policing has become a cornerstone of the city policing services.
- The newly formed citizen police advisory commission works to improve community police relations.
- The city funds local nonprofit mediation programs so the services are available free to residents.
- Neighborhood cop shops were created at Excelsior & Grand and in the Meadowbrook rental housing area.

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Lifelong Learning

- The community education department developed a comprehensive adult learning strategic plan and a youth development plan.
- A senior summit is hosted annually to educate and solicit input from seniors.
- Youth homework help centers are established at the Meadowbrook rental housing area and at the Jr. High school.
- A two year NORC (Nurturing Our Retired Citizens) grant from the federal government serves to promote community involvement and keep seniors living in their homes.
- The newly established school foundation is working to revitalize the St. Louis Park alumni association.
- A citizen's academy was developed in cooperation with the city and school district as a means to educate residents about government services.

Children First

- Youth leaders offer training for coaches to teach them how to support the developmental assets of their team's youth.
- A "Day One" back-to-school welcome program is coordinated by parents & youth groups.
- A free youth medical clinic operates at central community center in partnership with Park Nicollet.
- An annual Children First Ice Cream Social is sponsored each year.
- Youth serve as appointed commissioners on the Park & Rec, Human Rights and Community Education boards.
- The recreation department built a skate park in response to requests that came out of the annual youth summit.

Housing

- A comprehensive housing summit process is underway as a means to assess current and future demographic needs.
- McKnight support from the family housing fund aided efforts by the city and PPL to stabilize the Louisiana Court low income apartment housing neighborhood.
- A city sweep identified 200 blighted properties which were then assisted with a rehab state loan program to bring them into code compliance.
- Home fix up programs have provided over 500 loans to motivate the preservation of older housing stock in the city.
- The Cedar Tails moderate income condo housing area was assisted with a loan of 1.3 million to progress with common area improvements.



Business

- An economic development strategic plan for business and housing was created.
- A commercial rehabilitation loan program is offered to assist expanding small business.
- An economic development staff coordinator position was added.
- A business line newsletter is mailed quarterly to 4000 businesses in our city.
- A local Business Council was created with continued involvement by the city manager.
- Brownfield sites were cleaned for redevelopment including two Riley Tar sites and the Edgewood Industrial Park.

Community Connections

- The Park Commons/Excelsior & Grand area was developed as a new downtown for the city. It includes a town green, retail and residential housing and an amphitheatre in Wolfe Park.
- A comprehensive sidewalk & trail system is now complete connecting recreation public gathering places throughout the city.
- City entrance signs and neighborhood identification signs promote community identity.
- City beautification efforts include new streetscaping and art in public places.
- A city and school volunteer office operates with joint funding for a volunteer coordinator.
- City officials worked with Metro Transit for the addition of circulators bus routes which serve residents within city boundaries.
- The City supported organizing efforts for the creation of a new community foundation.