

Candidate Name: Sylvie Hyman	Office: St. Louis Park City Council- Ward 4
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My primary goal in government is to shift St. Louis Park, Minnesota, and the United States, away from car dependency. By showing up at city hall by bus or bicycle for planning commission meetings, I'm already demonstrating to staff and leadership that there are viable alternatives to driving, and constituents are using them. As a council member, I will build stronger relationships with leaders and staff and help them better understand the obstacles faced by non-drivers in St. Louis Park. I will help them see how we can better support non-drivers and people who just want to do better by their neighbors and the environment by driving less. I want to understand what is standing in the way of real change from the city's perspective and work to remove those barriers.

As an advocate for more density and affordable housing, I'm hesitant to implement policies that make it harder for more homes to be built, but I do support incentivizing use of electric appliances, more effective and environmentally friendly insulation, and solar and geothermal installations in the construction of our homes and businesses. Along with incentivizing building owners, we need policies that recognize and incorporate the true costs associated with burning fossil fuels into the costs of the fuel and equipment that burns it. These incentives and costs should motivate owners to proactively take steps that will prepare their buildings for full electrification. The technology required to make winter worthy, fully electrified buildings does exist, but we're still relying on the goodwill of developers to implement them. We need policies that balance our need for infill development with our need for that development to be in the best interests of future generations.

Environmental problems affect us all, but the impacts are felt most by the people contributing the least towards causing them. In St. Louis Park, dense, affordable housing is primarily concentrated close to highways. The people living more sustainably are forced to breathe the most toxic air in our city. These people need a meaningful seat at the table when decisions are being made about how to tackle these inequities. People are always going to vote to move the polluting thing further away from their homes, but marginalized people face the consequences when the pollution has nowhere else to go. Part of my platform is to restructure our neighborhoods and associations so that they better serve and represent the people living in them. When all people in the city see each other as people, they will be on track towards better protecting one another from these harms.

As a planning commissioner, I am paying close attention as we work to update our zoning code for the first time since the 1990s. I joined the planning commission midway through the residential zoning update and, while I'm proud that we eliminated single family zoning, I believe much more work is needed to align our zoning code with the urgency of the climate crisis. This year we are working on updating the non-residential portion of the code and I'm glad that most of the commissioners are on board eliminating parking mandates and allowing more mixed-use development, but I worry that staff and the council are not as aligned as the planning commission is on these items.

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The city of St. Louis Park and the State of Minnesota must eliminate parking mandates. We also need to allow residents to live closer together and closer to the places where they work and play. Zoning updates will only spur infill development if they increase the value proposition enough to entice developers to build it. We need policies that shift the value away from sprawl and towards infill. I am willing and prepared to speak against the LMC on land use reforms.

I have participated in St. Louis Park's recycling champions training, and I spread that knowledge in a friendly and respectful way at every opportunity I get. I see a lot of social media posts coming from our recycling team which gives the vibe that much is being done on that front, but I know that more work is needed to educate residents and businesses and make it easier for them to use less and dispose of waste appropriately. We need knowledgeable people in all the places where waste is collected to help educate people on how to use and dispose of material responsibly.

I am willing to do whatever is required to stop burning trash at the HERC and accelerate its transition to a sorting facility. I testified in front of the Hennepin County Commissioners on August 19th, 2025 demanding that they begin its transition to a sorting facility NOW. It is frustrating that the county commissioners continue to pass blame on to cities, but admittedly they're not all wrong. As council member, I would sign and encourage my fellow council members to sign a resolution to accelerate the transition plans and support initiatives to stop sending St. Louis Park's trash to the HERC.

I strongly support dedicated infrastructure for transit and cycling. St. Louis Park desperately needs more frequent transit service so that residents see transit as a viable alternative to driving. The number 9 bus is the closest route to my home, yet I most often take the 17 because it is far more reliable with 15-minute headways compared to the 9's 30 minute to 1-hour headways. The city should do whatever it takes to increase frequency on existing transit lines and then expand the services metro transit is providing. Giving transit users a voice at city hall is essential to making sure our transit investments are wisely spent.

One of the main reasons I'm running for city council is to address St. Louis Park's failings when it comes to street safety and responsible land use. The city has been working on a safe streets action plan and has countless documents and plans that talk about prioritizing pedestrians and cyclists, but almost every project implemented since I moved to St. Louis Park in 2018 has prioritized maintaining speed and efficiency for drivers while making minor improvements, if any, for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users.

As a council member, I would not allow any more transportation projects to be funded unless they prioritize safety and comfort for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users. To ensure that pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users are prioritized in perpetuity, I will create transportation commission that will oversee the engineering department's decisions about our streets. The commission will have a non-driver majority so that it is equipped to be a voice for community members who've been historically deprioritized.

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St. Louis Park is not safely and easily walkable for most residents and visitors. Services are concentrated in areas that are unsafe for pedestrians and isolated by roads and highways. We need to slow cars down, reduce the amount of parking available, and add features that make walking, cycling, and transit safer and more comfortable for everyone.

The primary action I support to cut down on salt use is to narrow our roadways. Narrower roads reduce the amount of salt needed AND enhance safety by slowing drivers down. Every construction project should include plans for narrowing the drive lanes. We also need to educate residents and businesses on the correct amount of salt to use on their drive and walkways. We also need to eliminate parking mandates and incentivize repurposing parking lots to other uses that don't require as much salt and snow clearing.

As a special ed substitute teacher I've observed and intervened in countless mental health crises. When I first started teaching, I was terrified and timid around students harmlessly, and sometimes harmfully, exhibiting unexpected behaviors. With time, I built relationships with my students, which made me more confident in de-escalating these situations. Law enforcement officers need to be better connected with the communities they serve to build the relationships required to properly de-escalate crisis situations. I believe that one way to achieve this is by getting officers out of their squad cars and out in the community, on foot, on bicycles, and on the bus. Police officers are expected to approach people in crisis with little to no context as to how they got there, and they're armed with deadly weapons. Officers must be armed with proper tools and training for their jobs which means fewer guns and squad cars and more bikes and de-escalation strategies.

Many of the policies and experiences listed above were difficult to sort into sections because they are so interconnected. They will also be complicated to implement because they all depend on one another. I'm determined to learn about and do what it takes to make the most of my position on St. Louis Park's city council. I appreciate the guidance offered by the Sierra Club and partners and hope that we can work together to move in the right direction for our future.