

*Members of the city council will be in attendance at this event. No formal actions will be taken.*

### **Feb. 26, 2026 - City Council Retreat – Westwood Hills Nature Center, 8300 W Franklin Ave.**

- 4:00 p.m.** Welcome
- 4:15 p.m.** Facilitated conversation with city staff - True Colors Refresher
- 4:45 p.m.** Facilitated conversation with consultant - Governance and City Council Norms review
- 7:00 p.m.** Facilitated conversation with consultant – Best practices for city council and staff interactions
- 8:00 p.m.** Wrap-up

### **Feb. 27, 2026 - City Council and City Staff Workshop – STEP, 6812 West Lake St.**

- 8:15 a.m.** Welcome
- 8:30 a.m.** Facilitated conversation with consultant – Current and future demography of St. Louis Park community
- 9:45 a.m.** Strategic Priorities discussion
- 11:45 a.m.** Working lunch - finalizing strategic priorities
- 12:30-1 p.m.** Break
- 1:00 p.m.** Facilitated training with consultant – Staying in difficult conversations and Hurt versus Harm
- 2:30 p.m.** Debrief and farewell

The St. Louis Park City Council has an adopted set of standards called Norms and Protocols. These standards establish clear expectations for behavior and interaction between individuals and as a governing body. They serve to create and foster a productive environment by encouraging participation, minimizing conflict, and ensuring everyone feels comfortable speaking. Consistent application of these standards leads to better collaboration and outcomes in service to the city and community.

An agreed upon set of Norms and Protocols provide for clarity and consistency, offer a shared understanding of what is expected from each member, creates a safe and inclusive culture, and reduces confusion and misunderstandings. By following these standards, everyone feels valued and heard.

Norms and Protocols serve to hold individuals and the group accountable for their actions and behaviors, builds trust among colleagues, serves to minimize conflicts, and provides for efficiency and effectiveness in managing the council's business.

The Norms and Protocols are reviewed and updated annually by the council.

## St. Louis Park City Council norms

### DO:

- Assume good intentions.
- Agree to disagree.
- Pay attention to each other; listen.
- Accept the vote once taken and support implementation. (*Suggested response: "I accept the body's decision, even though I didn't vote for it."*)
- Make sure everyone has opportunity to speak.
- Be respectful, open and honest.
- Exercise humility.
- Seek opportunities to make/build connections with each other.
- Address problems with other council members in a timely and constructive manner.
- Accept the decisions of other council members.
- Focus discussions on policy.
- Check self in adherence to norms; practice self-regulation.
- Keep cellphone use to a minimum and use discretion with devices at the dais

### DON'T:

- Have extended side conversations during council meetings and study sessions.
- Personalize policy disagreements or take offense to what someone says as their truth.
- Get stuck when you disagree with an outcome.

## Accountability to norms

- Exercise caution calling each other out in public.
- Identify/own your feelings and needs when speaking up.
- Address issues/concerns one on one or with an intermediary.

## Guidance for council/staff interactions

- **DO** strive to request only information you need to make the decision at hand.
- **DON'T** re-litigate points with staff during implementation.
- **DO** strive to adhere to our governance model – separation of responsibilities, ends/means, big bowl/small bowl, etc.

## Council protocols for key situations

### Titles

- During *council meetings*, council addresses each other using titles (for example, Mayor Mohamed)
- During *study sessions*, council uses first names.
- Staff use council titles in public communications with council; council is free to use first names for staff.

### Public discussions

- Council wants free-flowing discussion; the mayor is responsible for facilitating this.
- Mayor will generally speak last in council meetings but will participate more flexibly in study sessions.
- Mayor will actively create space for at-large members in discussions.

### Ward considerations

- For issues specific to a ward, the impacted ward member speaks first and make(s) the motion unless they decline to do so.

### Agenda items

- In rare situations, there may be multiple council members who wish to have council officially consider an item at a council meeting, even if there is not widespread support for the item. In those situations, council will consider hearing the item so that those council members can go on the record. It is understood that this would be a very unusual situation and staff would not be expected to do additional research or policy development work on the item in order to prepare it for council. It is further understood that, if made available, this opportunity would exist so that council members can be shown to be responsive to their constituency. It is not to be weaponized to undermine other council norms or protocols.

## Recusals

- Council members should recuse themselves from an issue as soon as a conflict is reasonably apparent or identified, and no later than before a vote.
- Once a council member has recused themselves from an issue, they should not work on the issue with staff or speak on it as a council member.
- When a vote happens, they may elect to sit at or leave the dais and may choose to leave the room during the discussion.
- They also may only speak to staff or other council about the topic on the same basis as any other member of the public.

## Spokesperson

- In general, the mayor represents the council to the media on issues of “why” and staff work with media on the “how.”
- Council may represent themselves on issues they feel strongly about, making it clear they don’t speak for the city council.
- As a general rule, council should always notify staff of media requests and/or appearances to avoid surprises.

## Emails

- For media requests, broadly controversial issues, or social issues, the mayor and staff are to be tied in by “reply all.” Staff are also available to assist with crafting responses.
- For city-wide or general issues:
  - The group will give the mayor 48 hours to respond.
  - For citywide emails, suggestion is for the at-large council members or ward member to “reply all” to say, “Thanks for your message, I’ll reach out separately to avoid any open meeting law conflicts” or “Thank you, I have received this email.”
  - It’s okay for other recipients to reply directly to senders to acknowledge the message.
- Forward-specific issues:
  - The group will give the ward council member 48 hours to respond.
  - When a member of the public sends an email to multiple council or staff, the impacted ward member takes the lead.
  - Suggestion is for the ward member to “reply all” to say, “Thanks for your message, I’ll reach out separately to avoid any open meeting law conflicts” or “Thank you, I have received your email.”
  - It’s okay for other recipients to reply directly to senders to acknowledge the message.

## **Best practices for city council and staff interactions**

The City of St. Louis Park is a City Manager form of government. Created in 1954 with the adoption of the Home Rule Charter, our city is one of the longest tenured local governments in Minnesota to use the city manager form.

The culture of our organization is blessed with a long and rich tradition of effective governance. Characteristics of effective governance include, among other qualities, a respect for and understanding of roles and responsibilities. In the city manager form, the city council focuses on larger issues and outcomes based on policy, strategy and legislative affairs. The city manager – reporting directly to the city council – oversees the staff and executive function, handling the day to day business of the city. We will reflect on this distinction, sharing the Carver Model of Governance system.

A strong and healthy relationship between the elected officials and the appointed staff is essential to the success of the city in the pursuit of our vision and five strategic priorities. With changes on the city council, now is a good time to review the current relationship and discuss how we engage and interact with the city manager and her staff.

To prepare for the conversation, please give thought to the following three questions:

- What is working well with the city council, city manager and staff communication and interactions?
- What opportunities do we have to improve or change the way we interact with our staff?
- How do we sustain and memorialize the strengths in our relationship to ensure we maintain our effective governance tradition and culture?

# St. Louis Park - Strategic Priority-Setting Retreat

Friday, February 27, 2026 | 9:45 AM – 12:30 PM | Pre-Read: Background Content

## RETREAT OUTCOMES

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By the end of our time together, we aim to achieve:

- Council consensus on:
  - The number of strategic priorities
  - The main topic of each priority
  - Core concepts reflected in each priority (including language that feels important, missing, or concerning)
- Staff gain understanding of the strategic planning process, links between Vision 4.0 and strategic priorities, and what's important to Council.
- **If time:** Initial input on what success looks like in 2–3 years

## PART 1: OPENING & PROCESS UPDATE (30 minutes)

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### Welcome & Session Framing

Roles for today:

- **Council:** Informed decision-makers; practice curiosity
- **City Staff:** Subject matter and process experts; practice deep listening and probing

### Norm Reflection (Popcorn Style)

- Reflect on one norm from yesterday that felt particularly important to you.
- What would it look like to embody that norm today?
- Are there any additional norms from last night you'd like to bring forward?

### Process Update

- Overview of the thinking that led to the revised priorities
- Key nuances from community and council input
- How that input shaped the current proposed set of priorities

## PART 2: MOVING TO CONSENSUS ON STRATEGIC PRIORITIES (2 hours, 15 minutes)

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### Reflection & Pulse Check (30 minutes)

- Individual Reflection
- Pair Share
- Full Group Discussion
- Fist-to-Five Pulse Check on the proposed set of five priorities

### Carousel Discussion (5 Rounds – 75 minutes)

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Council members rotate through stations hosted by staff to provide feedback on priorities and guiding principles. Prompts at each station (2–3 minutes):

- What resonates with you? What do you appreciate?
- Are any words or ideas:
  - Missing?
  - Concerning?
  - Essential to retain?
- What, if anything, must change for you to fully support the priority as written?
- What does success look like in 2–3 years? What will the City have achieved if this priority is advanced successfully?

## Break – Lunch

Staff will compile and write out the revised set of priorities based on feedback.

## Full Group Share-Out & Refinement (1 hour)

Staff present proposed language edits, highlighting key themes and any changes identified as essential. Council then reviews the full revised set of priorities and conducts a Fist-to-Five to gauge support for the complete set.

**If time:** Staff will share a high-level summary of how Council described success in 2–3 years.

## Closing (Round Robin)

One reflection, insight, or appreciation from the day.

# St. Louis Park - Strategic Priority-Setting Retreat

Friday, February 27, 2026 | 9:45 AM – 12:30 PM | Pre-Read: Overview Strategic Priorities (Proposed)

Vision 4.0	Strategic Priorities (Proposed)	Rationale
<b>Community &amp; Belonging</b>	<p><b>A Welcoming Community</b> A welcoming and vibrant city where everyone feels safe and experiences a strong sense of belonging</p>	<p>The Community theme centers on inclusive gathering spaces, connection, and togetherness. Adding <i>vibrant</i> explicitly reflects economic development as a driver of creating and sustaining “third places,” which highlights the connection between community and thriving. Adding <i>safe</i> reflects the importance of psychological safety—feeling included, experiencing a sense of belonging, and being free from the stress and risks associated with crime.</p>
N/A	<p><b>Good Governance</b> A city that delivers reliable services, practices fiscal responsibility, operates transparently, and builds strong relationships with residents.</p>	<p>There is growing community sentiment around the prudent use of financial resources and maintaining affordability—for residents and businesses alike. Establishing a Governance priority reinforces accountability and fiscal responsibility while providing staff with a clear anchor when their work does not align directly with other priorities.</p>
<p><b>Safety</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Infrastructure</b></p>	<p><b>Safe, Connected Infrastructure</b> Safe, walkable, and well-maintained infrastructure and neighborhoods that connect people and places.</p>	<p>Community input also emphasized physical safety, particularly related to traffic, pedestrian infrastructure, and street lighting. Combining safety and infrastructure reflects this feedback and is consistent with themes identified in the Vision 4.0 Report’s Community Pillars section.</p>
<b>Housing + Affordability</b>	<p><b>Diverse, Affordable Housing Options:</b> A range of affordable and attainable housing options for people who choose to live here.</p>	<p>Affordable housing remains important; however, the community vision emphasized diverse housing options, inclusive of affordable housing, rather than affordability alone.</p>
<b>Sustainability &amp; Environmental Stewardship</b>	<p><b>Natural Spaces &amp; Environmental Stewardship</b> Well-maintained parks and natural spaces, supported by sustainable practices that care for people and the planet.</p>	<p>Environmental Stewardship feedback focused primarily on green space, parks, and access to nature, with comparatively less emphasis on sustainability and climate action. Its prioritization aligns with themes identified in the Vision 4.0 Report.</p>

# St. Louis Park - Strategic Priority-Setting Retreat

Friday, February 27, 2026 | 9:45 AM – 12:30 PM | Pre-Read: Background Content

## INTRODUCTION

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Over the past several months, Council and staff have engaged residents, reflected on Vision 4.0, and examined how the City’s strategic direction must evolve to meet current conditions and emerging challenges. Today’s retreat is designed to move from insight to alignment. This is a working session focused on clarity and commitment.

## OUR WORK TODAY

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This retreat is intentionally designed to move us step by step toward consensus:

- Grounding in shared context through opening reflection and a process update
- Individual and small-group reflection to surface perspectives and test assumptions
- Carousel discussions to examine and strengthen each proposed priority
- Fist-to-Five pulse checks to gauge alignment and identify needed refinements
- Full-group review to finalize a clear, supported set of priorities

## PLANNING FRAMEWORK

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Our planning framework provides a clear structure for turning vision into action. It clarifies what decisions belong at the Council level, what work is led by staff, and how long-term direction connects to day-to-day implementation. Each level builds on the one above it — moving from broad priorities to specific, measurable actions.



# St. Louis Park - Strategic Priority-Setting Retreat

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## ***Strategic Priorities (Long-Term Direction)***

- Broad, outcome-focused areas of emphasis that advance the City’s mission.
- Not task-oriented; they define *where* we are headed.
- Set big-picture direction that must be broken into goals and strategies.

## ***Goals (2–3 Year Outcomes)***

- The key components of each Strategic Priority.
- Describe what successful progress looks like within 2–3 years.
- Clarify intended results, not activities.

## ***Strategies***

- The approaches the City will use to achieve each goal.
- May include major initiatives or function-based efforts (e.g., communications, engagement, operations).
- Require commitment of staff time, funding, and other resources.
- Define the method, but do not list specific tasks.

## ***Tactics (Short-Term Actions)***

- Specific, discrete actions that implement each strategy.
- Measurable, realistic, and time-bound.
- Often operational in nature.

## **COUNCIL ROLE**

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### ***February 27 Strategic Priority-Setting Retreat – Council Objectives***

- Agree on:
  - The number of priorities
  - The core focus of each priority
  - Key words to add, remove, or revise in the draft priorities
- If time allows, provide initial input on what a successful implementation would look like

## **STAFF ROLE**

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### ***February 27 Strategic Priorities Session – Staff Objectives***

- Understand the connections between Vision 4.0 and the draft Strategic Priorities
- Facilitate discussion with Council members to clarify desired changes and priorities
- Listen with curiosity and probe to understand what matters most to the Council

# St. Louis Park - Strategic Priority-Setting Retreat

Friday, February 27, 2026 | 9:45 AM – 12:30 PM | Pre-Read: Background Content

- Reflect on what a successful implementation would look like  
If time allows, gather initial Council input on defining success

## MATERIALS PROVIDED

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The tables that follow include:

- An example commitment statement showing one way the City might communicate the priority once goals are set (for illustration only; not for consensus today)
- Words and phrases drawn directly from community engagement
- A brief data rationale summarizing the themes grouped under each priority

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

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### *Council*

As you review each strategic priority, consider:

- What resonates with you? What do you appreciate?
- Are any words or ideas:
  - Missing?
  - Concerning?
  - Essential to retain?
- What, if anything, must change for you to fully support the priority as written?
- What does success look like in 2–3 years? What will the City have achieved if this priority is advanced successfully?

### *Staff*

As you review each strategic priority, consider:

- What resonates with you in this priority? What do you value or appreciate about it?
- What, if anything, feels unclear, missing, or concerning?  
Are there specific words or concepts that are especially important to retain?
- What changes, if any, would be necessary for you to fully support this priority as written?
- Looking ahead 2–3 years, what would tangible success look like? What outcomes or results would demonstrate meaningful progress?

# St. Louis Park - Strategic Priority-Setting Retreat

Friday, February 27, 2026 | 9:45 AM – 12:30 PM | Pre-Read: Background Content

## A Welcoming Community

A welcoming and vibrant city where everyone feels safe and experiences a strong sense of belonging.

Commitment Statement & Areas of Focus	Rationale
<p><b>Commitment Statement</b> St. Louis Park is committed to fostering safe and welcoming neighborhoods, and gathering spaces and events where everyone feels like they belong.</p> <p><b>Priority Area Option 1A</b> A welcoming, connected and vibrant community where everyone feels safe and like they belong.</p> <p><b>Priority Area Option 1B</b> A place to connect, a place that feels like home.</p> <p><b>Priority Area Option 1C</b> A vibrant, connected, and inclusive community where everyone belongs.</p>	<p><b>Community, Connection &amp; Events:</b> Residents expressed a strong sense of community and a desire for more events, neighborhood gatherings, and opportunities to connect.</p> <p><b>Diversity, Equity &amp; Inclusion:</b> A mid-sized theme. Participants want SLP to be genuinely welcoming to all— including immigrants, communities of color, BIPOC residents, the Jewish community, and Spanish speakers— with equitable access to opportunities.</p> <p><b>Youth &amp; Family Programming:</b> A mid-sized theme closely tied to education. Residents called for more after-school programs, youth sports, teen activities, mentorship opportunities, and better use of park facilities for young people.</p> <p><b>Local Business &amp; Economy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Restaurants, Dining &amp; Food Scene:</b> Frequently and specifically mentioned. Residents want more locally scaled dining options—such as coffee shops, bakeries, breweries, and restaurants—rather than chains.</li> <li>● <b>Small &amp; Local Businesses:</b> Closely related to dining but broader in scope. There is strong preference for locally owned, independent businesses over national chains.</li> </ul> <p><b>Safety:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Psychological &amp; Belonging Safety:</b> The ability to feel welcome, free from discrimination, and comfortable being oneself in public spaces.</li> <li>● <b>Police &amp; Public Safety Services:</b> Feedback was largely positive, with many residents expressing appreciation for and a desire to maintain a trusted police presence.</li> <li>● <b>Crime &amp; Personal Safety:</b> Concerns included car break-ins, crime trends in surrounding areas, and preserving SLP’s low-crime character.</li> </ul>

# St. Louis Park - Strategic Priority-Setting Retreat

Friday, February 27, 2026 | 9:45 AM – 12:30 PM | Pre-Read: Background Content

## Good Governance

A city that delivers reliable services, practices fiscal responsibility, operates transparently, and builds strong relationships with residents.

Commitment Statement & Areas of Focus	Rationale
<p><b>Commitment Statement</b> St. Louis Park is committed to fiscal responsibility and a focus on affordability for residents and local businesses, while continually improving how we engage and communicate.</p> <p><b>Priority Area Option 2A</b> A city government that delivers, communicates clearly, and uses resources wisely.</p> <p><b>Priority Area Option 2B</b> Reliable services, responsible spending, and transparent decision-making.</p> <p><b>Priority Area Option 2C</b> A city government you can trust: responsive, accountable, and transparent.</p>	<p><b>Reliability &amp; Core Services:</b> Staff and residents emphasized the importance of strong fundamentals—consistent service delivery, well-maintained infrastructure, and a responsive city organization.</p> <p><b>Fiscal Responsibility &amp; Affordability:</b> A recurring theme in the community vision and among council members, focused on prudent stewardship of public funds and maintaining affordability for residents and local businesses.</p> <p><b>Transparency:</b> A smaller theme among council members, a call for clearer, more proactive communication and consistent follow-through on commitments.</p> <p><b>Relationship-Building &amp; Inclusive Engagement:</b> A smaller theme among council members, they highlighted the importance of meaningful engagement, particularly with underrepresented communities, and intentionally considering who may be missing from the conversation.</p>

# St. Louis Park - Strategic Priority-Setting Retreat

Friday, February 27, 2026 | 9:45 AM – 12:30 PM | Pre-Read: Background Content

## Safe, Connected Infrastructure

Safe, walkable, and well-maintained infrastructure and neighborhoods that connect people and places.

Commitment Statement & Areas of Focus	Rationale
<p><b>Commitment Statement</b> St. Louis Park is committed to safe, walkable, bikeable neighborhoods, and well-maintained streets and underground infrastructure.</p> <p><b>Priority Area Option 3A</b> Safe, walkable, well-maintained streets, paths, and neighborhoods.</p> <p><b>Priority Area Option 3B</b> Safe, well-connected, people-first streets, paths, and neighborhoods.</p> <p><b>Priority Area Option 3C</b> Safe, walkable, well-maintained neighborhoods, business districts, and public spaces.</p>	<p><b>Walkability, Bikeability &amp; Transportation:</b> Residents called for improved sidewalks, expanded bike lanes, better public transit (including bus routes and light rail access), and a city designed for people rather than cars.</p> <p><b>Infrastructure &amp; City Services:</b> Focused on road maintenance, water systems, quality core services, responsible use of tax dollars, and a responsive city government.</p> <p><b>Walkable Commercial Corridors &amp; Retail:</b> Residents emphasized the physical experience of commercial areas, including walkable streets, active storefronts, mixed-use corridors, and neighborhood-scale retail that creates a vibrant atmosphere.</p> <p><b>Traffic &amp; Pedestrian Safety:</b> Residents identified particular intersections, roads near schools, and speeding as key concerns.</p>

# St. Louis Park - Strategic Priority-Setting Retreat

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## Diverse, Affordable Housing Options

A range of affordable and attainable housing options for people who choose to live here.

Commitment Statement & Areas of Focus	Rationale
<p><b>Commitment Statement</b> St. Louis Park is committed to a full range of housing options that keep our community accessible to all—protecting renters, opening doors for first-time buyers, supporting long-time residents, and ensuring housing choices that welcome people of every income, background, and stage of life</p> <p><b>Priority Area Option 4A</b> Affordable, attainable homes for everyone who chooses to live here.</p> <p><b>Priority Area Option 4B</b> Housing that works for everyone.</p> <p><b>Priority Area Option 4C</b> A diverse and attainable range of housing options for all.</p>	<p><b>Affordability &amp; Staying in SLP:</b> The desire to remain in the community was framed in personal and emotional terms rather than as a policy request. Residents emphasized access to affordable homes and rentals, mixed-income housing options, and protection against rising housing costs.</p> <p><b>Renters &amp; Rental Housing:</b> Some residents supported more rental options and stronger tenant protections, while others favored fewer apartments and more pathways to homeownership.</p> <p><b>Housing Diversity &amp; “Missing Middle”:</b> Residents expressed interest in alternatives beyond large single-family homes or large apartment complexes – expanding housing choices, including townhomes, condos, duplexes, ADUs, and mixed-income options</p> <p><b>Homeownership &amp; Equity Building:</b> Homeownership as a pathway to stability and wealth-building. Suggestions included fixer-upper programs, home repair assistance, and first-time homebuyer support.</p> <p><b>First-Time Buyers &amp; Young Families:</b> Residents emphasized entry-level pathways, starter homes, and maintaining accessibility for young people and families beginning to establish roots in SLP.</p>

# St. Louis Park - Strategic Priority-Setting Retreat

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**Natural Spaces & Environmental Stewardship:** Well-maintained parks and natural spaces, supported by sustainable practices that care for people and the planet.

Commitment Statement & Areas of Focus	Rationale
<p><b>Commitment Statement</b>            St. Louis Park is committed to expanding and protecting the parks, trails, trees, and natural spaces that make this city beautiful and healthy—creating more places to walk, play, gather, and connect with nature, while taking meaningful action on clean water, clean energy, and climate resilience that keeps both our community and our planet healthy for generations to come.</p> <p><b>Priority Area Option 5A</b>            Parks, green spaces, and practices that keep people and the planet healthy.</p> <p><b>Priority Area Option 5B</b>            A green city that cares for the natural environment</p> <p><b>Priority Area Option 5C</b>            Leading as responsible stewards of our natural environment.</p>	<p><b>Parks, Green Space &amp; Nature, Outdoor Recreation:</b> Residents expressed strong interest in expanding parks, trails, green spaces, playgrounds, community gardens, and natural areas, along with outdoor amenities such as bike lanes, pump tracks, wading pools, shade trees, and nature-based play spaces.</p> <p><b>Climate &amp; Sustainability:</b> Participants called for climate-resilient planning, clean water and energy initiatives, and the integration of environmental justice into city decision-making.</p>

# Staying in Difficult Conversations:

*Exploring Hurt vs. Harm*



Workbook  
St. Louis Park REI Session  
February 27, 2026

Facilitated by Rochelle Younan-Montgomery  
[www.rochelley.com](http://www.rochelley.com)



**Session Purpose:** This session supports Council members and senior leaders in strengthening how accountability functions during difficult conversations, especially when equity-related decisions create discomfort, disagreement, or public pressure.

The focus is not on intent or beliefs, but on **what actually happens between people under stress** and how accountability can be practiced more consistently and equitably.

Grounded in the [RESET Method](#)<sup>™</sup> and participatory [Liberating Structures](#), the session emphasizes regulation, shared language, and concrete accountability practices leaders can continue using beyond the retreat.

## 1:00–1:15 | Welcome, Check-In, Context & Agreements

### Live Polling Check-In

1. **Multiple Choice:** *If your mood was a weather forecast, what would it be?*
2. **Scale (1–10):** *How stretched or pressured does your role feel right now?*
3. **Word Cloud:** *What grounds you during difficult seasons in your work?*
4. **Open Answer:** *When do you feel most supported in your work by your colleagues?*

**Pair Share:** Expand on the last answer you provided and share a story that illustrates this.

### Session Agreements:

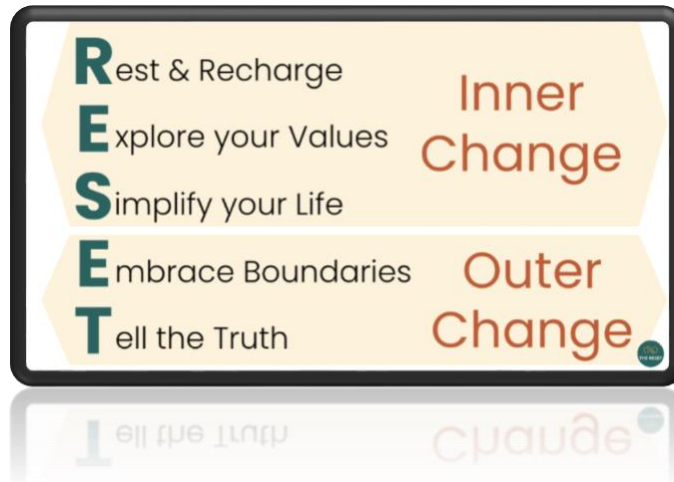
- We prioritize impact over intent.
- We treat accountability as a practice of alignment and repair, not punishment.
- We avoid centering our own discomfort or treating the person raising concerns as the problem.
- We speak from our own experience and stay engaged, even when it's uncomfortable.
- What's shared here stays here; what we learn can leave.



## 1:15–1:35 | RESET Method™: Rest & Truth-Telling

### RESET Method Overview

The RESET Method™ helps you get unstuck by combining mindful rest, deep reflection, and practical steps to realign your life with your core values. Grounded in psychology, mindfulness, and evidence-based practices, it brings clarity, balance, and meaningful change.



### Guided Meditation and Box Breathing Technique

#### Journal & Table Reflection

At tables:

- *When I'm challenged or criticized, what do I usually do first?*
- *Which responses help accountability, and which sometimes get in the way?*
- Optional whole group share-out.



## 1:35–2:30 | Main Activity: Mapping Accountability + Practicing Repair

### Step 1: Quiet Post-it Reflection

Four flip charts are posted around the room.  
Move around individually and write **one idea per Post-it**.

#### Chart A: When Accountability Gets Hard

**What actually happens in meetings or conversations when accountability breaks down?**  
*(e.g., people go quiet, defend intent, change the topic, follow up offline)*

#### Chart B: Hurt vs. Harm

Two columns:

- **Hurt**  
*What does hurt usually sound like or show up as here?*  
*(e.g., frustration, feeling criticized, loss of status or comfort)*
- **Harm**  
*What does harm usually sound like or show up as here?*  
*(e.g., exclusion, being dismissed, repeated impact on the same groups)*

#### Chart C: Accountability We Want

**When accountability is working well on this Council / team, what do we see or hear people doing or saying?**  
*(e.g., “I hear the impact,” “What would repair look like?”)*

### Step 2: Individual Gallery Walk + Star Voting

Silently walk the room and read what’s been posted.

Instructions:

- Each person gets a marker
- Place a star next to:
  - patterns that feel **most familiar**, or
  - practices that feel **most important to strengthen**



### Step 3: Journal & Large-Group Sense-Making

- *What patterns received the most stars?*
- *What does that tell us about where accountability breaks down?*
- *Which of these feels within our control to change?*

### Step 4: Introducing the Restorative Tool: Open the Front Door (OTFD)

**O: Observe:** Pause. Stay present. Notice what's being said without reacting.

- *"Let me slow down and really hear this."*
- *"I want to make sure I'm understanding."*

**T: Think:** Reflect back what you understand about the impact or meaning, not your intent.

- *"What I'm hearing is that this landed as \_\_\_\_."*
- *"It sounds like the impact was \_\_\_\_."*

**F: Feel:** Acknowledge the emotional experience of the other person.

- *"I hear that this felt frustrating / dismissive / harmful."*
- *"It sounds like this left you feeling unheard."*

**D: Desire:** Ask what accountability, repair, or change would be helpful going forward.

- *"What would accountability look like here?"*



- *“What would you want to see happen next?”*

OTFD helps us stay in the conversation without defending our goodness, collapsing into shame, or asking the other person to manage our emotions.

### **Step 5: Writing Our Own Restorative Language**

**Individual reflection (written):** Choose **one starred pattern** from the wall and complete these prompts:

- *When harm is named, instead of reacting, I could say...* (draft an OTFD-aligned sentence)

Examples:

- *“Let me pause and take this in.”*
- *“I’m hearing that this had \_\_\_ impact.”*
- *“I can see how my actions contributed.”*
- *“What would repair look like moving forward?”*

Write **1–2 sentences** you could realistically use in Council or leadership spaces.

#### **Pair share for feedback:**

- Share one of your sentences from the above section with a partner.
- Partner reflects: Eg., *“That keeps the focus on impact / that slips into intent.”*

#### **Close: Commitments & Checkout**

#### **Closing Live Poll:**

- **Open-ended:** *One thing I commit to practicing over the next 3–6 months.*
- *Optional large-group sharing*