
6:15 p.m. Special city council meeting – Council Chambers

1. **Call to order.**
 - a. Roll call.
 - b. Pledge of Allegiance.
2. **Approve agenda.**
3. **Presentations - none.**
4. **Minutes.**
 - a. Special study session meeting minutes of February 2, 2026
5. **Consent items – none.**
6. **Public hearings – none.**
7. **Regular business.**
 - a. Resolution affirming the city's commitment to safety and to respect for the rights and dignity of all people
8. **Communications and announcements – none.**
9. **Adjournment.**

Members of the public can attend St. Louis Park Economic Development Authority and city council meetings in person. At regular city council meetings, members of the public may comment on any item on the agenda by attending the meeting in-person or by submitting written comments to info@stlouisparkmn.gov by noon the day of the meeting. Official minutes of meetings are available on the city website once approved.

Watch St. Louis Park Economic Development Authority or regular city council meetings live at bit.ly/watchslpcouncil or at www.parktv.org, or on local cable (Comcast SD channel 14/HD channel 798). Recordings of the meetings are available to watch on the city's YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/@slpcable, usually within 24 hours of the meeting's end.

City council study sessions are not broadcast.
Generally, it is not council practice to receive public comment during study sessions.

**The council chambers are equipped with Hearing Loop equipment and headsets are available to borrow.
If you need special accommodations or have questions about the meeting, please call 952.924.2505.**

Unofficial minutes
City council special study session
St. Louis Park, Minnesota
Feb. 2, 2026

The meeting convened at 8:16 p.m.

Council members present: Daniel Bashore, Sue Budd, Tim Brausen, Yolanda Farris, Mayor Nadia Mohamed

Council members absent: Jim Engelking, Paul Baudhuin

Staff present: City manager (Ms. Keller), city attorney (Mr. Mattick), public works director (Mr. Hall), parks and recreation director (Mr. West)

Discussion item

1. Discuss federal actions

Mayor Mohamed explained that the purpose of the special study session was to provide the city council with dedicated time to discuss federal activities and actions and their impact on the community.

Ms. Keller began by outlining the city's recent activities in response to federal immigration enforcement actions. She explained that a coalition of twelve cities had been launched, with more cities expressing interest in joining. The coalition focuses on three main areas: community safety, economic stability and constitutional rights. These cities are working together on advocacy at both federal and state levels.

Ms. Keller reported that the city had signed onto an amicus brief in support of an existing lawsuit filed by the Cities of Minneapolis St. Paul as well as the Minnesota Attorney General against the federal government. The brief specifically asked the court to issue a temporary injunction against aggressive immigration enforcement activity. She noted that unfortunately, the request for immediate relief did not prevail, though the lawsuit continues to move forward.

Ms. Keller described the city's outreach efforts to local businesses, offering support and information about resources. She and the police chief had personally met with businesses that had expressed concerns. The city has been utilizing a trusted messenger network including faith communities, affordable housing providers, schools and other service networks to ensure information reaches those who may not access traditional communication channels.

Ms. Keller explained that the city created a webpage where residents can find the latest information, resources and answers to commonly asked questions. People can sign up to receive news updates as they are posted.

The police chief attended a news conference on Jan. 20, 2026, at the state capitol with other chiefs.

Staff and elected officials have met with state representatives and senators about these issues.

Council Member Budd asked about the possibility of converting the police department's separation policy into a city ordinance, noting she had heard mixed opinions about whether an ordinance would be effective.

Mr. Mattick explained that separation or staging ordinances, which some communities have implemented, essentially say that ICE cannot use city-owned property or public spaces to stage operations. He raised legal concerns about such ordinances. First, there are unresolved questions about whether cities can legally ban the federal government from utilizing public spaces. Second, enforcement poses significant challenges - if federal agents violate the ordinance, sending local police to cite other law enforcement agents could be seen as obstruction. He characterized this as law enforcement trying to police law enforcement, which creates significant dilemmas.

Council Member Budd asked if there would be any legal value in passing such an ordinance without enforcing it.

Mr. Mattick responded that advertising an ordinance - while telling those you intend to police that you will not enforce it - would have no legal value and would be performative.

Ms. Keller added that she and other key staff members, including but not limited to the police chief, the deputy city manager and the communications director, were working almost full-time on this issue. She asked that the city council be judicious in their requests to ensure staff can focus on actions that will effectively help the community stay safe.

Council Member Bashore asked Council Member Budd to clarify whether she was suggesting the city pass an ordinance and then announce that the city had no intention of enforcing it, or if she was concerned about the feasibility of enforcement.

Council Member Budd clarified she was considering whether the council would be discussing - and potentially putting resources behind - an unenforceable ordinance for performative reasons.

Council Member Brausen asked whether federal agents had been staging from public spaces in St. Louis Park on a regular basis.

Ms. Keller stated that she had not received reports of ICE using city-owned spaces. Others clarified that ICE has been known to use private property that is open to the public, not city-owned spaces like parks or parking lots.

Mayor Mohamed noted that the question goes back to how the city would stop the federal government from accessing spaces that are open to the public.

Ms. Keller pointed out that if the council passed such an ordinance, the city would receive 911 calls requesting enforcement.

Council Member Bashore asked what would happen if the city passed such an ordinance and the federal government challenged it.

Mr. Mattick explained the ordinance would be presumed valid until struck down by a court, but this would involve unbudgeted legal expenses to defend it and would divert police resources to respond to enforcement calls. Insurance coverage for defending the lawsuit may or may not exist, depending on how the suit was filed.

Council Member Farris shifted the discussion to explain her current primary focus. She has been connecting people with needed services, information, food and helping children get to school safely. She described receiving numerous emails from residents asking her to contact the governor by making a phone call. Though she appreciates receiving communications from the community, she asked residents to consider whether their own accumulated actions could be more impactful than giving a suggestion for her to undertake – such as making a phone call. She reiterated her focus and time is already being spent directly helping people who are being impacted. She expressed that she cares deeply about the community and is working behind the scenes to help while also trying to protect herself and not bring additional harm to those already being targeted.

Mayor Mohamed thanked Council Member Farris for sharing her experience and added her own perspective on doing this work in a predominantly white community. She explained this has been her lived experience long before recent events and that when she makes statements, she becomes a target in ways other mayors do not experience. She described receiving voicemails containing words of racism and hate as a result of her statement that city police do not work with ICE. Mayor Mohamed emphasized that she must be strategic about which battles to choose and ensure any actions taken are impactful rather than performative. She discussed the need to address real problems like helping families pay rent rather than just following what other communities are saying about the situation.

Mayor Mohamed reflected on the importance of considering unintended consequences and ensuring well-intentioned council actions are not performative but instead are responsive to actual needs. She emphasized her commitment to ensuring any decisions made do not inadvertently harm the very communities they are trying to protect.

Council Member Budd brought up the topic of eviction moratoriums, noting that during the COVID-19 pandemic, many people accumulated huge debt because moratoriums only delayed rent payments, rather than providing actual assistance. She suggested rental assistance might be more effective.

Ms. Keller provided an update on rental assistance efforts. The City of St. Louis Park has a contract with STEP to provide rental assistance and had increased funding for 2026 as part of

the normal budget process. While there has been increased need, current funds are still meeting that need. She has instructed staff to monitor the situation and come back if additional funding is needed.

Council Member Budd recalled that STEP had mentioned many people who seek help are ineligible due to requirements like having a job. She asked if someone afraid of going to work might now be disqualified and whether there is room to loosen traditional requirements.

Ms. Keller said she would need to research whether such requirements come from the city or are STEP's best practices. She thanked Council Member Budd for bringing this potential barrier to her attention.

Council Member Brausen addressed the eviction moratorium proposal, emphasizing it would need to be done at the state level due to preemption. He outlined concerns about the financial burden on landlords, especially small and nonprofit property owners who might lose their facilities if unable to make mortgage payments. He noted potential unintended consequences including renters delaying seeking assistance, accumulating debt they cannot pay when a moratorium ends, and property owners potentially contacting ICE about immigrant tenants. He advocated focusing on rental assistance as a more effective approach.

Council Member Brausen also addressed the topic of a separation ordinance, characterizing it as performative and potentially counterproductive to building coalitions with legislators needed to provide assistance to impacted communities.

Mayor Mohamed asked how an eviction moratorium would be implemented, since not everyone is equally affected by current federal actions and communities of color impacted disproportionately. She expressed concern about unintended consequences, such as landlords calling ICE to report undocumented tenants, to circumvent moratoriums.

Council Member Brausen noted the bureaucracy and costs involved in implementing moratoriums compared to focusing on helping people who cannot work and pay their bills.

Mayor Mohamed emphasized that St. Louis Park residents' values are clear - they find current federal actions unacceptable. She discussed ongoing work including conversations with legislators about accessing state funds for rental assistance, though this requires bipartisan support. She stressed the importance of framing issues around local authority and public safety to gain bipartisan support while maintaining the city's core values.

Council Member Budd acknowledged that despite different opinions on specific approaches, everyone is working toward the same goal and coming from a place of compassion.

Council Member Brausen pointed out that people might hope the city council's voice carries more weight than individual calls to officials.

Council Member Farris reiterated that everyone should participate and help however they are able, including calling elected officials themselves. She stated hearing from a community of

people is stronger than hearing from one person. She cares about the community and also has practical work to do helping people with immediate needs.

Mayor Mohamed acknowledged that for people of color, exhaustion comes from organizing and doing activist work while also being asked to do more. She suggested the answer is a combination of efforts from everyone.

Council Member Farris highlighted the importance of not forgetting about children who are also affected by these issues.

Council Member Bashore noted the importance of messaging in the city council's actions and finding solutions to help residents pay rent. He stated that the situation was unprecedented and required action rather than inaction due to fear of legal challenges.

Mayor Mohamed emphasized the need to also not fight blindly without strategy. She noted there have been past well-intentioned actions that led to severe backlash affecting people of color disproportionately. She stressed the importance of understanding risks and unintended consequences before acting.

Mayor Mohamed noted that while anyone could get media attention on this issue, she must be strategic because when she speaks, she faces different scrutiny than other mayors. She pointed out that any statement she makes could put herself and others who look like her at risk, so she must ensure any action taken is effective.

Council Member Brausen suggested the messaging is important and the city should be explicit that it wants ICE and federal forces to withdraw and end Operation Metro Surge. He noted the city joined the coalition to advocate for this outcome. He asked if this required a resolution.

Council Member Bashore suggested they could pursue multiple approaches simultaneously.

Mayor Mohamed stated that if the council wants to pass a resolution stating the city's values and stance to build community trust, she could see value in that action. She suggested a resolution would feel less performative if the language also reflected all the substantive work being done.

Council Member Bashore stated he was impressed with the speed of the coalition's formation and gave credit to Ms. Keller and the administrative team.

Mayor Mohamed added that police chiefs were crucial partners and highlighted the significance of a collective statement from this group that current federal actions were not acceptable.

Council Member Bashore requested more clarity about what other council members were experiencing and the work they are doing while acknowledging the role of Minnesota Open Meeting Law. He also offered to help and support Mayor Mohamed given the disproportionate criticism she faces.

Mayor Mohamed thanked him and noted she has felt protected by the city council and the city, saying she would not have lasted in her position without that support.

Ms. Keller clarified that while ordinances require legal research and policy development time, resolutions could be drafted and brought forward more quickly. She explained that the public statements and the communication tools she provides are meant to help council members respond to constituents.

Council Member Brausen asked about notice requirements for a special session to consider a resolution.

Mr. Mattick explained that under Minnesota Open Meeting Law, a special meeting must be posted or noticed three days prior to the meeting, not counting the day of posting, and the meeting must be on a weekday. He reminded the council of their annual meeting with the St. Louis Park School Board planned for Monday, Feb. 9, 2026.

Council Member Brausen asked if they could meet briefly before that meeting to consider a resolution, if one was prepared.

Ms. Keller stated that if the city council wants to expedite a resolution, she would work with staff the next morning to determine how this work would take place. She understood the council wanted to list what the city is doing and reiterate their values.

Mayor Mohamed admitted she had taken for granted that people would know the city's values and agreed that the values are worth reiterating. While it might appear that council or staff are not doing much because their work is not always public-facing, they are actively working on solutions. She noted the importance of regional unity and asked for her fellow council members' support in connecting with other cities and councils to build the coalition.

Council Member Budd brought the discussion back to the amicus brief, asking for clarification about why it had not prevailed.

Mr. Mattick explained that the Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, as well as Attorney General Keith Ellison, had filed the actual lawsuit as plaintiffs. Other cities filed an amicus brief as "friends of the court" to show they were experiencing similar issues and supported the plaintiffs' position. This was done very quickly.

Mr. Mattick clarified that while the initial request for a temporary restraining order was not granted because the judge felt there was not enough precedent for the unprecedented tenth amendment issues involved, the lawsuit continues to proceed. The city's brief remains part of the case record.

Mayor Mohamed thanked everyone for participating in the discussion.

The meeting adjourned at 9:18 p.m.

Melissa Kennedy, city clerk

Nadia Mohamed, mayor

These minutes were created with the assistance of a generative AI transcript service, then edited and finalized by a city staff person.

Executive summary

Title: Resolution affirming the city's commitment to safety and to respect for the rights and dignity of all people

Recommended action: Motion to adopt resolution affirming the city's commitment to safety and to respect for the rights and dignity of all people.

Policy consideration: Does the resolution reflect the city's values and commitment to preserve safety, protect constitutional rights and restore peace in the community?

Summary: On Feb. 2, 2026, the city council discussed recent federal actions in Minnesota, their impact on the St. Louis Park community and the city's response to date. The city council directed staff to schedule a special meeting and to prepare a resolution for their consideration that affirms the city's values and commitment to upholding them and outlines the city's strategic actions in response to federal actions to support those most impacted in St. Louis Park.

The city developed resources for the public to stay informed about current federal actions and how the City of St. Louis Park is responding. Members of the public can learn more on the [Federal Action Updates](#) page on the city's website to stay informed on current events, read FAQs or find support resources and service providers for help on a variety of topics, including immigration.

Financial or budget considerations: None at this time. The city is tracking unbudgeted spending related to federal immigration enforcement actions in Minnesota since Jan. 1, 2026.

Strategic priority consideration: St. Louis Park is committed to being a leader in racial equity and inclusion in order to create a more just and inclusive community for all.

Supporting documents: Resolution

Prepared by: Jacque Smith, communications and technology director
Melissa Kennedy, city clerk
Pa Dao Yang, racial equity and inclusion director

Reviewed by: Cindy Walsh, deputy city manager

Approved by: Kim Keller, city manager

Resolution No. 26 - __

Affirming the city's commitment to safety and to respect for the rights and dignity of all people

Whereas, the Preamble of the City of St. Louis Park's Home Rule Charter states, "Human freedom and human rights are indivisible and the recognition of equality of all people is indispensable in the administration of a just government," and

Whereas, as local officials we are held accountable for upholding the rule of law; for protecting our residents; and for preserving safety and peace in our community; and

Whereas, we are witnessing with our own eyes violations of multiple constitutional protections of at least the first, second, fourth and fifth amendments, in addition to the Title VI Civil Rights Act and ADA law; and

Whereas, the tactics employed in "Operation Metro Surge" are actively harming the residents we vowed to serve, creating chaos in our community; disrupting daily lives, businesses and learning; eroding trust between residents and local government; and causing significant economic damage; and

Whereas, a statement issued by the city on January 16, 2026, stated that we are a welcoming community for all and that we will remain focused on our strategic priorities, which reflect a shared commitment to service, community voice, safety and respect for the dignity of all people; and

Whereas, the city is taking multiple actions to preserve safety, protect constitutional rights and restore the peace our community deserves, including participating in formation of Cities for Safe and Stable Communities: a grassroots, local-government-led coalition dedicated to restoring stability and trust in government; supporting a lawsuit brought by the State of Minnesota and by the Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul requesting that federal immigration operations be limited to acceptable constitutional operations; providing updated information and resources to residents and to a "trusted messenger" network to carry critical information to the people who need it most; and speaking publicly where our voice matters most; and

Whereas, we believe in the resilience of St. Louis Park, its residents and in the care they have for one another. While federal agencies must answer for the damage they have caused, St. Louis Park will build back. We call on our residents to continue their work of contributing individually to the community and to making their voices heard to their state and federal representatives, while the city council pursues actions available to it within the bounds of law and policy,

Now therefore be it resolved that the St. Louis Park City Council supports and stands with all members of the St. Louis Park community and stands against the tactics of "Operation Metro Surge." The city council rejects the politics of division, bigotry, hatred and fear. The city council will fight for the rights, freedoms and interests of all members of the community.

Reviewed for administration:

Adopted by the city council February 10, 2026:

Kim Keller, city manager

Nadia Mohamed, mayor

Attest:

Melissa Kennedy, city clerk