

# Discover St. Louis Park to become Westopolis



Excelsior and Grand was one major development in St. Louis Park.

Discover St. Louis Park/Westopolis



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The destination-marketing organization for St. Louis Park and Golden Valley will rebrand in an effort to capitalize on the current – and growing – vibrancy of the Twin Cities' west metro.

Discover St. Louis Park will be renamed Westopolis, an “official merger of west of Minneapolis,” President and CEO Becky Bakken said in an interview. The rebranding is intended to create a unique identity and bring new energy to the St. Louis Park and Golden Valley area, while also highlighting its close proximity to downtown Minneapolis.

"It gives us the opportunity to market and promote this as a place," Bakken said. "... We believe that this name gives us an edge."



Westopolis' new logo. Courtesy Westopolis.

Discover St. Louis Park formed in 2011 after the city of St. Louis Park voted to create the destination-marketing organization (DMO) to help boost the city's economy by promoting the area to potential visitors and tourists. Golden Valley was later added under the DMO. The nonprofit receives funding from a lodging tax paid by those who stay overnight at hotels in those cities.

Around the time of the DMO's creation, city officials had taken an active role in planning development in areas around the city, like the West End commercial district at Interstate 394 and Highway 100, Bakken explained.

Just two years earlier, the West End's urban-style retail center, called the Shops at West End, opened. Since then, the West End area in general has seen more than \$400 million in investment across different types of developments, like office and multifamily, [KSTP reported in 2022](#). ([The 10 West End office building](#) is one such development.)

St. Louis Park has continued to see investment activity, especially around West End. In late 2022, Eden Prairie-based Hempel Real Estate [announced it had purchased the Shops](#) for nearly \$65 million and has since brought [in several new tenants](#). It also has plans for a [mixed-use building with apartments nearby](#).

Meanwhile, Eagle Ridge Partners and BLG Capital Advisors purchased the Colonnade office building, located in Golden Valley near the border of St. Louis Park, [for \\$79 million in late 2022](#) and have since conducted extensive renovations to modernize the building.

St. Louis Park and Golden Valley are largely split at I-394, which serves as a key commercial corridor in and out of the west metro.

These pieces together can help encourage more people to visit, Bakken said.

"They're coming here because we do have a pretty vibrant scene here," she said. "We do have restaurants, we have a walkability aspect, [and] we have trails for running and biking."

Bakken said St. Louis Park and Golden Valley currently attract visitors for a variety of purposes, including leisure, sports and corporate events.



Becky Bakken is president and CEO of Westopolis, formerly Discover St. Louis Park. Jackie Adelman Photography

The year-year process of choosing a new name included engagement with community stakeholders, like city officials and residents. The nonprofit also worked with Minneapolis-based naming and branding firm Pollywog Inc. on the rebrand.

The organization chose Westopolis for a few reasons. For one, the organization felt its proximity to downtown Minneapolis was an important selling point, Bakken said. "We understand Minneapolis is one of our biggest assets."

On top of that, the “-polis” suffix, which means “city” in Greek, also provided the organization with a more cosmopolitan vibe, reflecting the more urban feel of St. Louis Park and Golden Valley compared to other suburbs. The name also offers the area a distinct identity; plus, it helps avoid confusion with St. Louis, Missouri, Bakken explained.

A new name reflecting the vitality of the area is important for when the organization markets Westopolis to other regions, encouraging others to consider the cities a destination. The nonprofit's leadership will measure success with the new name in part by tracking the number of visitors to the area annually and the number of deals they are able to land on overnight stays in the area.

The new name is slated to take effect early October.