

The City of Falcon Heights  
Visioning Committee – Les Bolstad Golf Course Development

**Goals and Guiding Principles**

September 23, 2025

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On June 6, 2025, the City of Falcon Heights was formally notified of the University of Minnesota’s intent to sell the Les Bolstad Golf Course property. The area under consideration is approximately 140 acres, with 124 acres located north of Larpenteur Avenue and 16 acres to the south. The property is currently zoned as Public Land but would revert to Single-Family Residential once it leaves University ownership.

Given the size of the site and its potential impact on Falcon Heights and surrounding communities, it is essential that the City and the University work collaboratively to shape the Request for Proposals (RFP) issued to developers. Redevelopment of the golf course presents a rare opportunity for a first-ring suburb: the ability to design and establish a new neighborhood from the ground up. To prepare for this process, Falcon Heights must first define its goals and guiding principles, which will help ensure that developers respond in ways that reflect the City’s vision and priorities.

In 2024, the City adopted the Larpenteur & Snelling Corridor Development Study, which provided a high-level review of the golf course property. However, the study did not include the driving range or the 16 acres south of Larpenteur Avenue, both now part of the sale. At the time, the University had not yet announced its intent to sell, and the study was intended only as an early framework for potential future planning.

Following the sale announcement, the City established a Visioning Committee in August 2025, composed of two City Council members and three Planning Commission members. While the 2024 study serves as a foundation for discussion, the Visioning Committee’s role is to identify and refine the guiding themes that should shape future development. By incorporating these themes into the RFP, the City will ensure that prospective developers clearly understand the community’s priorities and the expectations for creating a new neighborhood that reflects Falcon Heights’ values and long-term vision.

Following the initial draft of principles developed by the Visioning Committee, a Community Open House was held on September 16, 2025, to gather input on the proposed goals. To ensure broader participation, an online survey was also created to replicate the activities from the Open House for those unable to attend. At the event, the six draft goals and guiding principles were presented on display boards for community feedback. Each participant received four green dot stickers to identify the four (out of six) principles they considered most important. Participants were permitted to place multiple dots on a single principle if they felt strongly about it, though no more than four dots in total could be used. Feedback from both the in-person Open House and the online survey was then reviewed, with goals prioritized as follows:

- **In Person Open House:** 1 - Green Space, 2 - Connectivity, 3 - Sustainability, 4 - Housing Mix, 5 - Self-Sustaining, 6 - Commercial Uses
- **Online Survey:** 1 - Green Space, 2 - Connectivity, 3 - Self-Sustaining, 4 - Sustainability, 5 - Housing Mix, 6 - Commercial Uses

The following guiding principles, selected by the Visioning Committee, will be included in the RFP for the sale of the Les Bolstad Golf Course. The principles are presented without ranking, as the Committee believes each is important to the City of Falcon Heights.

**Connectivity.** The development of the Les Bolstad Golf Course should not result in a neighborhood that feels isolated from the rest of Falcon Heights. Transitions between areas should be seamless, particularly along the borders shared with Lauderdale, Roseville, Saint Paul, and historic Gibbs Farm. Development adjacent to Gibbs Farm must be buffered to preserve its historic character. Pathways and green spaces created within the site should be open and accessible to all city residents, regardless of whether a homeowners' association is established. New buildings should reflect the existing character of Falcon Heights, drawing inspiration from the University Grove neighborhood for areas south of Larpentour Avenue and from Northhome or the Northeast Quadrant for areas to the north. Street layouts should connect with existing streets in Roseville, Lauderdale, and Falcon Heights, with limited use of cul-de-sacs or dead ends. Sidewalks, bike paths, and trails should be incorporated throughout the development and along its borders to enhance walkability and provide strong connections to nearby parks and

trails, including Community Park, Grove Park, Lauderdale Park, Breck Woods, and any trail system affiliated with the Luther Seminary development.

**Green space.** The City of Falcon Heights' Subdivision Ordinance requires that 8%–10% of new developments (depending on zoning district) be dedicated to parkland, or that a fee in lieu be paid to the City. While this is the minimum requirement, the City strongly values the benefits of accessible green space and encourages a future development that exceeds this standard by setting aside additional land for parks, natural areas, and other publicly accessible open spaces.

Preserving and enhancing green space is viewed not only as a recreational amenity, but also as an essential contributor to environmental health, neighborhood character, and community well-being. The City also places a high priority on the protection of mature tree stock, requesting that as many existing trees as possible be preserved during development. Where tree removal is unavoidable, the City expects replacement at a one-to-one ratio, with replanting occurring promptly to ensure the long-term vitality and beauty of the site.

**Self-sustaining.** The development should be financially self-sustaining, meaning that the property taxes and related revenues generated from the site must be sufficient to cover the full cost of City services associated with it. This includes, but is not limited to, policing, infrastructure maintenance, utilities, schools, and other public services required to support the development. The intent is to ensure that the project contributes positively to the City's fiscal health and does not create an additional financial burden for existing Falcon Heights residents. In short, the development should be planned and executed in a way that it pays for itself over the long term, maintaining fairness and stability in the City's overall tax structure.

**Housing mix.** The City of Falcon Heights places a strong value on providing a diverse and balanced mix of housing types, with an emphasis on quality and thoughtful design that responds to the regional housing crisis and expands the supply of “missing middle” housing within the community. A variety of housing forms should be considered, including townhomes, duplexes, apartments, single-family homes, and patio homes, ensuring options that meet the needs of residents at different life stages and income levels. Higher-density, transit-oriented housing is encouraged along Larpenteur Avenue, where existing bus service provides convenient access to

the broader region. At the same time, single-family homes should be designed with smaller lot sizes, less than 10,000 square feet, and sited to reflect the grid pattern of surrounding neighborhoods in Lauderdale and the Falcon Heights neighborhoods east of Snelling Avenue. This approach promotes efficient land use, supports transit, and helps maintain continuity with the character of adjacent communities.

**Sustainability.** The City of Falcon Heights has long been a leader in climate action and is committed to ensuring that future development strengthens this legacy by prioritizing sustainability in all aspects of design, construction, and long-term operations. Developments should incorporate renewable energy technologies such as rooftop solar, geothermal systems, and wind energy where feasible, and buildings should be designed to meet or exceed recognized energy efficiency standards, including SB2030, LEED Gold, Enterprise Green Communities, or ICC/ASHRAE 700. Site design should minimize dark, impervious surfaces that contribute to heat gain and runoff, instead favoring reflective materials, permeable pavements, shading, and natural ventilation strategies. Where parking areas are needed, they should include tree cover, landscaped planting islands, stormwater management features, and electric vehicle charging stations. Together, these measures will ensure the project supports Falcon Heights' environmental goals while creating a resilient, healthy, and livable neighborhood.

**Commercial uses.** The City of Falcon Heights is open to incorporating a mix of commercial uses, such as retail, office space, and light industrial, into the redevelopment of the Les Bolstad Golf Course, provided they are designed to complement the surrounding community. Higher-intensity commercial uses should be concentrated along existing higher-traffic corridors, including Larpenteur Avenue and Cleveland Avenue, where access and visibility are strongest. Smaller-scale neighborhood businesses, such as cafés, local shops, or service providers, may be thoughtfully integrated throughout the development to create walkable amenities that serve both new residents and the broader community. Commercial areas should be designed with pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly access, landscaping, and sustainable site features, ensuring they enhance the overall character of the neighborhood while contributing to the City's economic vitality.

**Development funding.** The City of Falcon Heights is open to considering assistance with grant applications to help support the development; however, it is expected that the developer will assume primary responsibility for funding all associated costs. This includes environmental mitigation, the construction of new streets, installation of water lines, upgrades to public utilities, and any other infrastructure improvements required to complete the project.

These guiding principles are intended to establish a clear framework for the redevelopment of the Les Bolstad Golf Course site and to ensure alignment between the City of Falcon Heights and prospective developers. By setting forth expectations related to connectivity, green space, sustainability, housing diversity, fiscal responsibility, and appropriate commercial uses, the City seeks to promote a development that is responsive to community priorities, consistent with long-term policy objectives, and minimizes construction impacts through proactive management. Inclusion of these principles in the RFP will provide a transparent foundation for evaluation, ensuring that proposals advance the City's vision for a well-integrated, financially sound, and future-oriented neighborhood.