



MOVING TO  
THE

*Twin Cities*

YOUR GUIDE TO THE  
SOUTH METRO

  
*Lisa Hansen*  
REAL ESTATE



If you're reading this guide, you're considering one of life's biggest transitions—relocating to a new area. Whether you're moving for a career opportunity, to be closer to family, or simply seeking a better quality of life, I want you to know: you're in the right place, and you don't have to navigate this alone.

I'm Lisa, and I've been helping families find their perfect place to land in all areas of the Twin Cities for years and specialize in the South Metro, where I also call my home. This isn't just about real estate transactions for me—it's about understanding what really matters to you and your family, and matching you with a community where you'll truly thrive.

I bring a unique perspective to the home-finding process. I specialize in what I call "rightsizing"—helping families find homes that fit their current life stage perfectly, whether that means more space for a growing family, a downsized home for empty nesters, or anything in between.

This guide is your starting point. In the following pages, you'll discover:

- What makes the Twin Cities special
- Why clients love the South Metro
- Detailed overviews of seven amazing communities
- How we'll work together to make your relocation smooth
- Things to do and places to explore
- The cultural quirks that make Minnesota unique

Moving to a new state and city is a big deal. But with the right guide and the right information, it becomes an exciting adventure rather than an overwhelming challenge. I'm here to be that guide for you.

Let's find your perfect place to land.

*Lisa Hansen*

# welcome



## Relocating from Out of State? I've Got You Covered

Moving to Minnesota from another state comes with unique challenges. You can't just drive by neighborhoods whenever you want. You don't know the areas. You may be juggling selling your current home while buying in a new market. You need someone who truly understands the relocation process—and that's exactly what I do.

### Why Clients Choose Me for Relocation:

- ✓ **I Listen First** - My counseling background means I truly hear what matters to your family, not just what you say you want in a house
- ✓ **I Educate Thoroughly** - You'll understand neighborhoods, schools, commutes, and lifestyle before making decisions
- ✓ **I Handle the Distance** - Virtual tours, detailed videos, neighborhood insights—I bring Minnesota to you until you can be here
- ✓ **I Coordinate** - Lender connections, timing, inspections, closing—I manage the complexity so you don't have to
- ✓ **I Support Your Whole Family** - This isn't just a transaction; it's your family's next chapter



brokered by:  
**EPIQUE**  
REALTY



# "The Cities"

When you hear Minnesotans talk about "the cities" or "the metro area," they're referring to the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan region—and it's so much more than just two cities.

The Twin Cities Metro is home to approximately 3.7 million people spread across 9 counties (7 in Minnesota, 2 in Wisconsin) and 182 communities. It's the third-largest metropolitan area in the Midwest and consistently ranks among the best places to live in the United States.

## Two Cities, One Thriving Metro

Minneapolis sits on the west bank of the Mississippi River, known for its modern skyline, thriving business district, trendy restaurants, vibrant arts scene, and the famous Chain of Lakes. It's dynamic, contemporary, and always buzzing with activity.

St. Paul, the state capital, sits primarily on the east bank and offers tree-lined neighborhoods, stunning late-Victorian architecture, a rich collection of museums and cultural institutions, and a more laid-back, historic charm. Together, these "fraternal twins" create a metropolitan area that truly offers something for everyone.



## Why People Choose the Twin Cities

### Strong Economy & Major Employers

The metro is home to 18 Fortune 500 companies, including Target, U.S. Bancorp, 3M, General Mills, and Best Buy. The diverse economy spans healthcare, technology, finance, retail, and manufacturing, providing excellent career opportunities.

### Award-Winning Education

From top-rated public school districts to prestigious universities (University of Minnesota, St. Thomas, Macalester, Carleton College), education is a priority here.

### Exceptional Quality of Life

- Parks & Nature: Minneapolis and St. Paul consistently rank among the top cities in the nation for parks and green spaces. There are over 1,200 lakes in the metro area.
- Arts & Culture: World-class theaters (Guthrie Theater, Ordway Center), museums (Minneapolis Institute of Art, Walker Art Center, Science Museum of Minnesota), and a thriving music scene.
- Professional Sports: Home to the Vikings (NFL), Twins (MLB), Timberwolves (NBA), Lynx (WNBA), Wild (NHL), and Minnesota United FC (MLS).
- Food Scene: From James Beard Award semifinalists to diverse international cuisine representing communities from Somalia to Mexico to Hmong culture, the Twin Cities food scene rivals major coastal cities.





## Four-Season Living

Yes, winters are cold (embrace it with skiing, skating, and hockey!), but you'll also experience spectacular falls with brilliant foliage, vibrant springs, and beautiful summers perfect for lakes, festivals, and outdoor adventures. The Minnesota State Fair (one of the largest in the nation and basically a must tradition for true Minnesotans) and countless community festivals celebrate every season throughout the year!

## Minnesota Nice Is Real

The people here genuinely are friendly, welcoming, and community-oriented. Newcomers consistently comment on how easy it is to make connections and feel at home.

## The Metro's Layout

The Mississippi River essentially divides the metro area, with suburbs radiating out in all directions:

- North Metro: Blaine, Coon Rapids, Andover
- West Metro: Eden Prairie, Minnetonka, Wayzata
- East Metro: Woodbury, Maplewood, Stillwater
- South Metro: Lakeville, Rosemount, Farmington, Eagan, Apple Valley

Each area has its own character and appeal, but the South Metro—our focus—offers a special combination of excellent schools, family-friendly communities, natural beauty, and ideal location.

# Life South Of The River

## THE SOUTH METRO:

Why Clients Love the South Metro

When locals talk about living "south of the river," they're referring to the thriving suburban communities in Dakota and Scott Counties that have become some of the most sought-after addresses in Minnesota.

Here's what makes the South Metro special:

### Award-Winning School Districts

Education is the #1 priority for most relocating families, and the South Metro delivers:

### Abundant Parks & Recreation

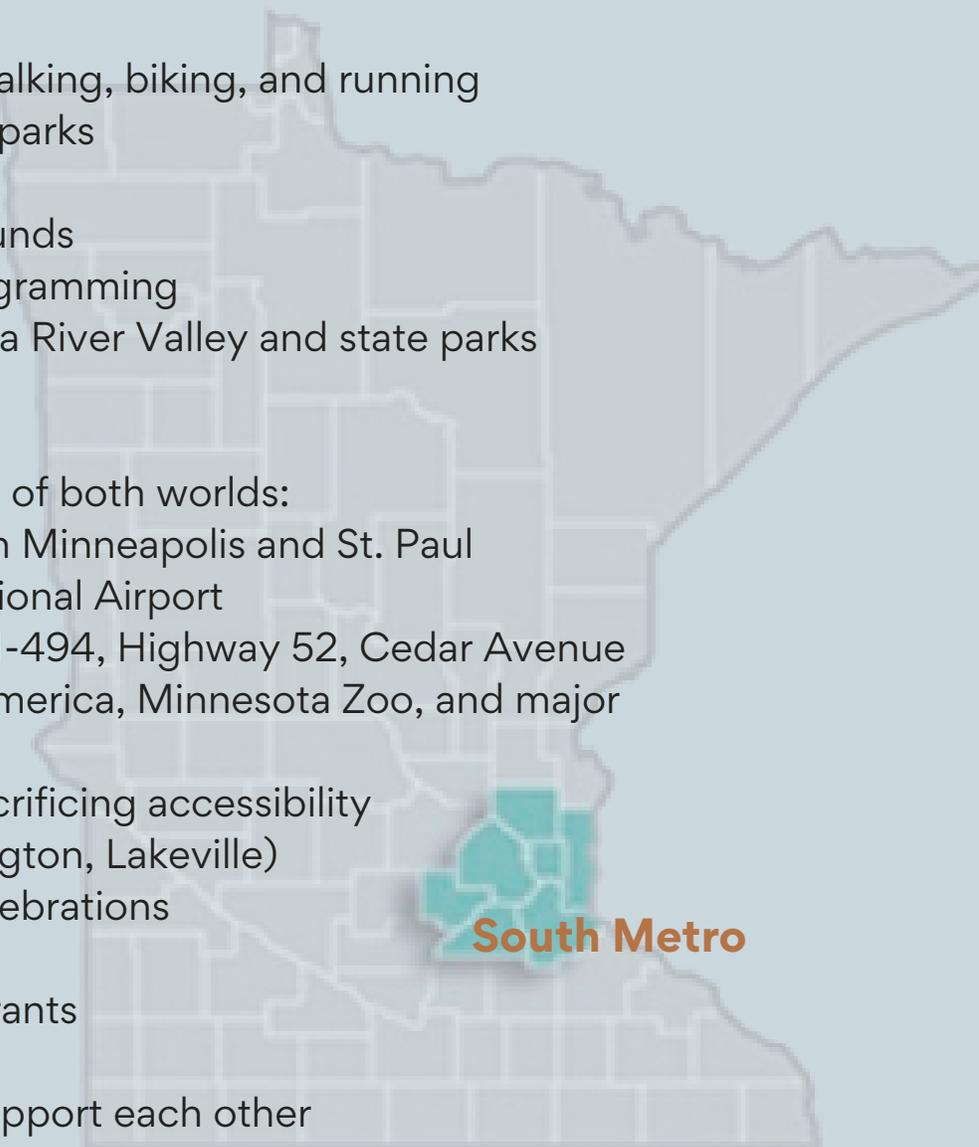
Every community features:

- Extensive trail systems for walking, biking, and running
- Neighborhood and regional parks
- Lakes and natural areas
- Sports facilities and playgrounds
- Year-round recreational programming
- Easy access to the Minnesota River Valley and state parks

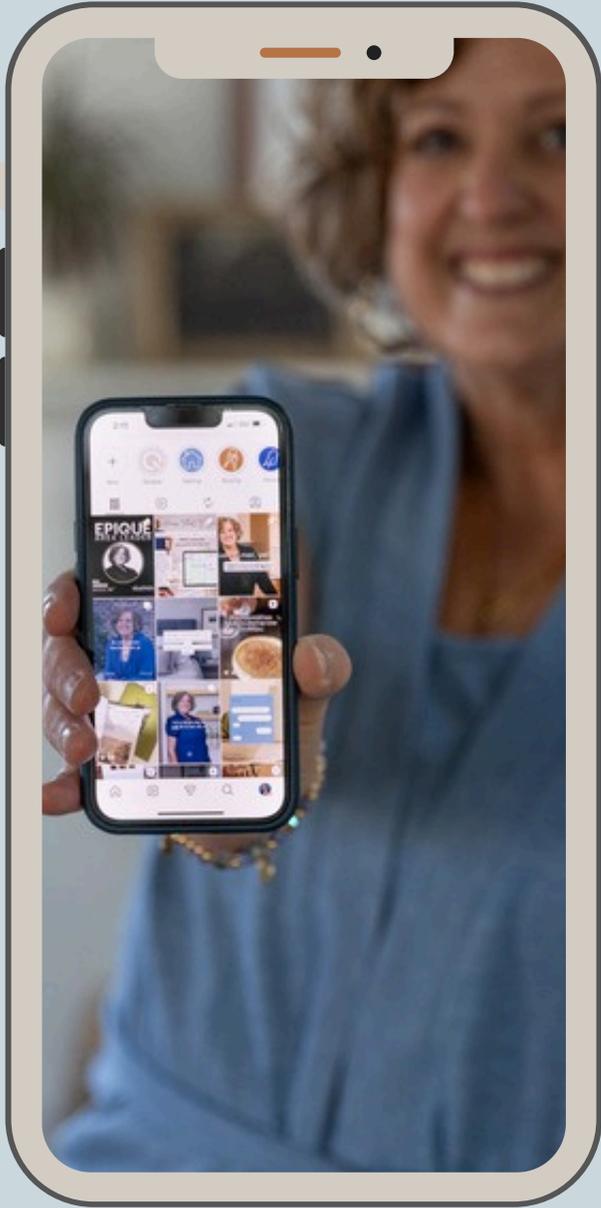
### Ideal Location

The South Metro offers the best of both worlds:

- 20-30 minutes to downtown Minneapolis and St. Paul
- Easy access to MSP International Airport
- Convenient highways: I-35, I-494, Highway 52, Cedar Avenue
- Close proximity to Mall of America, Minnesota Zoo, and major employment centers
- Room to breathe without sacrificing accessibility
- Historic downtowns (Farmington, Lakeville)
- Community festivals and celebrations
- Farmer's markets
- Local businesses and restaurants
- Active civic engagement
- Neighbors who know and support each other



# How We'll Work *Together*



## **STEP 1: Let's Talk (Virtual Coffee Chat)**

We'll spend 30-45 minutes discussing what's bringing you to Minnesota, what you need in a home and community, your timeline, and your questions. No pressure —just getting to know each other and your needs.

## **STEP 2: Get Your Finances Ready**

I'll connect you with excellent local lenders I trust who specialize in relocation. Getting pre-approved gives you confidence in your budget and strengthens your offer when you find the right home.

## **STEP 3: Explore Virtually**

Can't visit yet? No problem. I'll provide:

- Live virtual home tours via video call
- Detailed neighborhood videos
- School information and commute insights
- Local market updates
- Answers to all your questions about Minnesota living



# How We'll Work *Together*

## **STEP 4: Visit in Person (When You're Ready)**

When you fly in, I'll maximize your time:

- Pre-scheduled home showings
- Neighborhood tours at different times of day
- School and amenity visits
- Restaurant recommendations and help planning your trip
- Coffee or lunch to discuss what you're seeing

## **STEP 5: Find Your Perfect Home**

Whether you find it on your first visit or through virtual tours, I'll help you write a strong offer and negotiate on your behalf.

## **STEP 6: Navigate the Process From inspection to closing:**

I coordinate everything—working around your out-of-state schedule, managing timelines, and keeping you informed every step of the way. (If you want all the details on the buying process, I have a comprehensive buyer's guide I'm happy to share!)

## **STEP 7: Welcome Home!**

At closing, you'll receive your keys and we'll celebrate that you've found your perfect place to land.



# What Makes Relocation With Me *different*

## **Dual Licensed (MN & WI)**

Flexibility across the entire metro area

## **Area Leader with Epique**

**Realty** Deep knowledge of markets, communities, and industry best practices

## **Trained Educator &**

**Counselor** I understand family transitions and what really matters during big life changes

## **Rightsizing Specialist**

I help you find what fits your life RIGHT NOW, not just what checks boxes

## **Relocation Experience**

I've guided families from Colorado, Idaho, Illinois and beyond.

## **Community Expert**

I don't just sell houses in the South Metro—I live in this community and love sharing it with my clients.

## **TIMING & PLANNING YOUR MOVE**

Thinking About Visiting? Let me know! I'll help you plan:

- Best times to visit based on weather and your needs
- Where to stay in different communities
- What to see and do
- How to structure your home search efficiently

Not Ready to Buy Yet? That's perfectly fine! Many of my relocation clients start our relationship 6-12 months before they're ready to purchase. I'm here to:

- Answer questions as they come up
- Send market updates
- Keep you informed about communities
- Be your Minnesota resource whenever you need one

Need to Sell First? I understand the complexity of coordinating two transactions. We'll talk through:

- Timing strategies
- Financing options (bridge loans, contingencies, etc.)
- How to manage offers in both markets
- Reducing stress during the overlap
- Referral partners in your area

# Living in *Lakeville*

Character: Lakeville blends historic downtown charm with modern suburban convenience. Once known as the "Onion Capital," this thriving community has grown by 80% since 2000 while maintaining its small-town atmosphere with easy access to the Twin Cities metro.

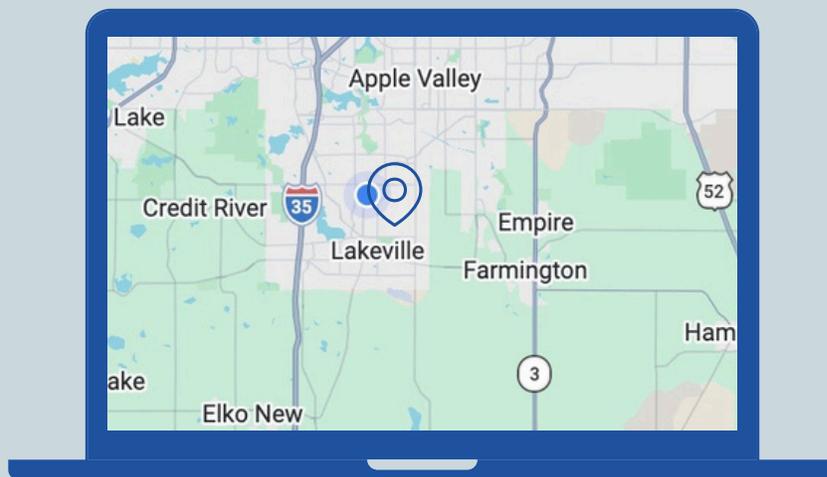
## Key Features:

- Location: 20 miles south of downtown Minneapolis and St. Paul along I-35
- Education: Award-winning Lakeville Area Schools (ISD 194) with two comprehensive high schools - Lakeville North and South
- Parks & Recreation: 1,300+ acres of city parkland, extensive trail systems, Airlake for outdoor recreation
- Historic Downtown: Charming downtown district preserves the city's agricultural heritage
- Employment Hub: Home to Airlake Industrial Park with major employers and easy access to Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport

**Housing:** Lakeville has a vast range of housing prices and options. There is a North Lakeville and a South Lakeville that has its own unique characteristics.

**Why Clients Choose Lakeville:** Top-rated schools, abundant recreational opportunities, and the perfect balance of growth and community character. The city offers modern amenities while maintaining a welcoming, established feel.

Don't miss a visit to Antler's Park in the summer for a swim, or a stop at one of the downtown restaurants and coffee shops. Lakeville is worth a visit!



# Living in *Rosemount*

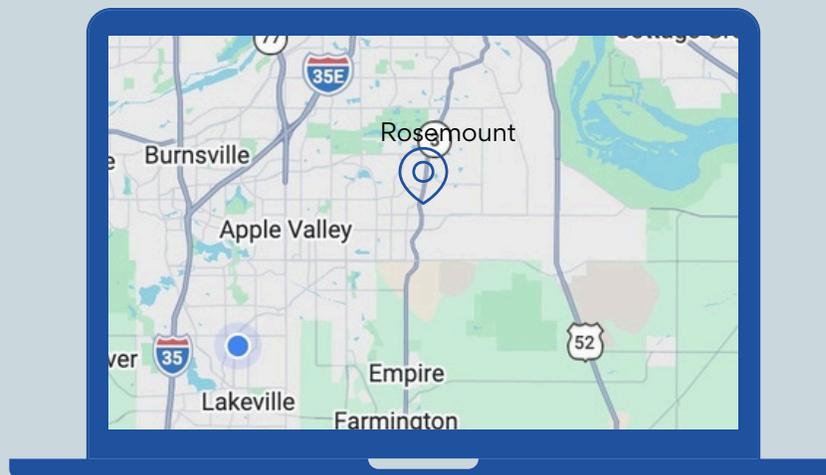
A pro-growth community with small-town roots and big-city access. Named after an Irish town, Rosemount has evolved from an agricultural community into one of Dakota County's most desirable suburbs while retaining its friendly, accessible character.

## Key Features:

- Location: Southern Twin Cities metro with easy access via Highways 52, 3, and 55
- History: Founded 1866; home to UMore Park (former University of Minnesota research facility) and National Guard Armory
- Parks: 467+ acres of parkland including neighborhood, community, and regional parks
- Economic Growth: Rapidly growing with significant residential development
- Education: Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan School District (ISD 196) - highly rated public schools

**Housing:** New construction options are abundant in Rosemount. However, there are many established neighborhoods in all price points. Average sale price is comparable to Lakeville.

**Why Clients Choose Rosemount:** Excellent schools, strong sense of community, and the perfect blend of rural feel with suburban convenience. Recognized in Money Magazine's "Best Places to Live" twice.



# Living in *Farmington*

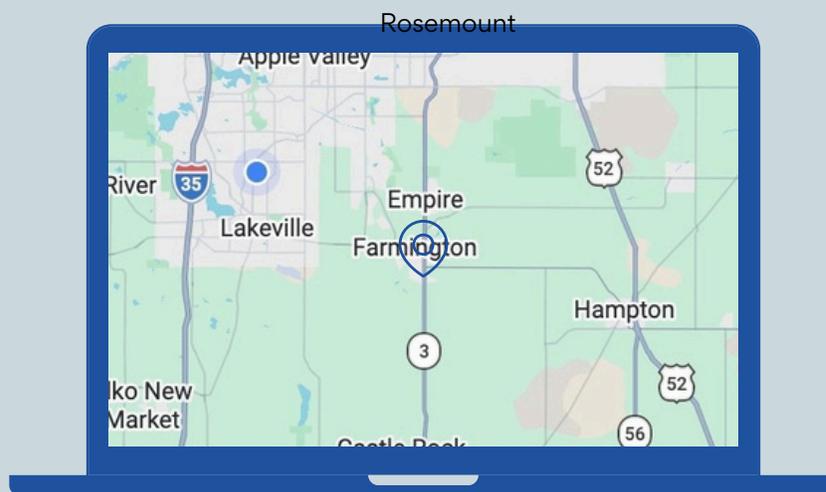
One of Dakota County's oldest communities (second only to Hastings), Farmington combines historic charm with modern growth. Known as one of the region's youngest communities in demographic makeup.

## Key Features:

- Historic Downtown: Dakota County's second-oldest community (village charter 1872)
- Dakota County Fairgrounds: Largest county fairground in Minnesota (360 acres), hosting the state's largest county fair with 125,000+ annual visitors
- First in Innovation: One of the first U.S. communities to offer rural free mail delivery (1897)
- Location: Southeast Twin Cities metro; split between historic downtown south of County Highway 50 and newer northern developments
- Trails: Extensive biking and walking trails throughout housing communities

**Housing:** Outer rung suburb that is actively growing. Average home pricing is less than near by communities of Lakeville and Rosemount.

**Why Clients Choose Farmington:** Small-town community feel, abundant parks and recreational facilities, and the Dakota County Fair tradition. The city offers affordability compared to neighboring communities while maintaining excellent quality of life.



# Living in *Credit River*

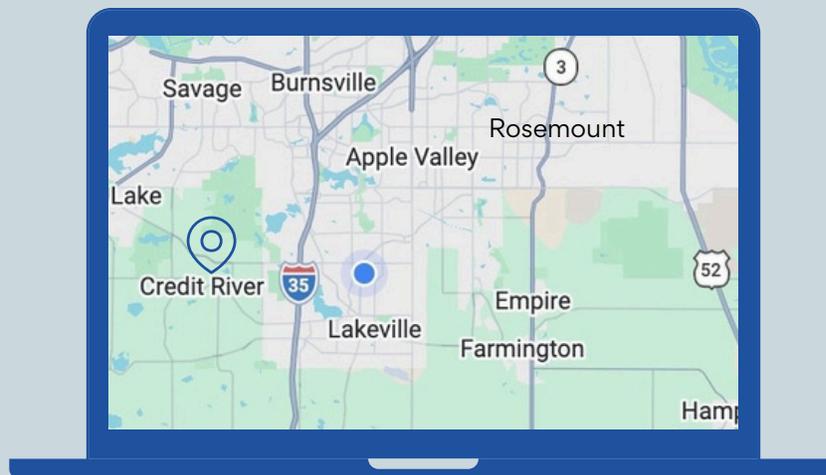
Credit River offers rural tranquility with upscale suburban living. This quiet township provides spacious properties, natural beauty, and a tight-knit community atmosphere while remaining accessible to metro amenities.

## **Key Features:**

- Setting: Rolling countryside with mature trees and natural areas
- Lifestyle: Rural feel with larger lots and privacy
- Location: Scott County, convenient to Prior Lake, Lakeville, and Savage
- Schools: Highly rated Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools
- Community: Close-knit neighbors who truly know each other

**Housing:** Homes tend to have larger lots and price point is often above 1 million for a home.

**Why Clients Choose Credit River:** Those seeking peace, privacy, and natural surroundings without sacrificing school quality or metro access. The township appeals to families wanting more space, established residents, and a true sense of community where neighbors support one another.



# Living in *Elko New Market*

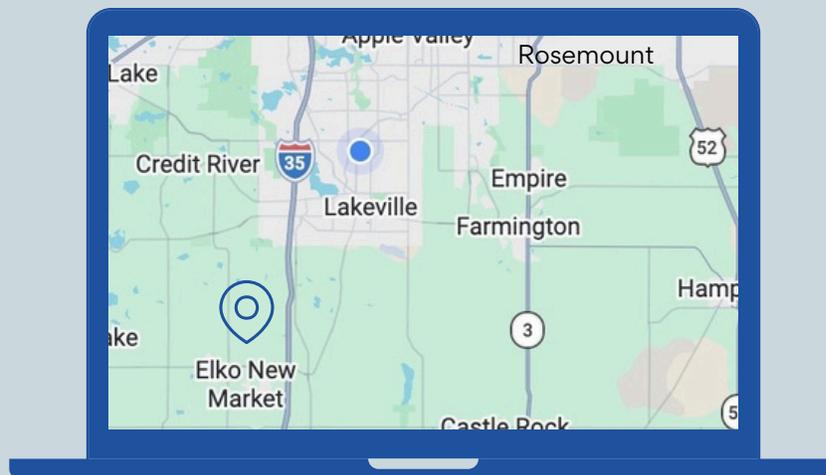
Minnesota's fastest-growing city in the last decade, Elko New Market is a small town with big momentum. This merged community (Elko and New Market combined in 2006) offers small-town charm with progressive growth.

## **Key Features:**

- Location: Off I-35 just south of the Twin Cities; easily accessible
- Main Street: Historic downtown with local shops, pharmacy, library, and fire station
- Elko Speedway: Home to the famous 3/8 mile asphalt oval hosting ASA Midwest Tour and ARCA races
- Golf Course
- Schools: Lakeville Schools, New Prague Schools Or Prior Lake Savage

**Housing:** Scenic country side living without the price point of Credit River. New Construction options is abundant.

**Why Families Choose Elko New Market:** Exceptional safety, small-town values, tight-knit community where neighbors welcome newcomers with parties, and proximity to cities while maintaining country charm. Ideal for families wanting to know their neighbors and raise children in a wholesome environment.



# Living in *Eagan*

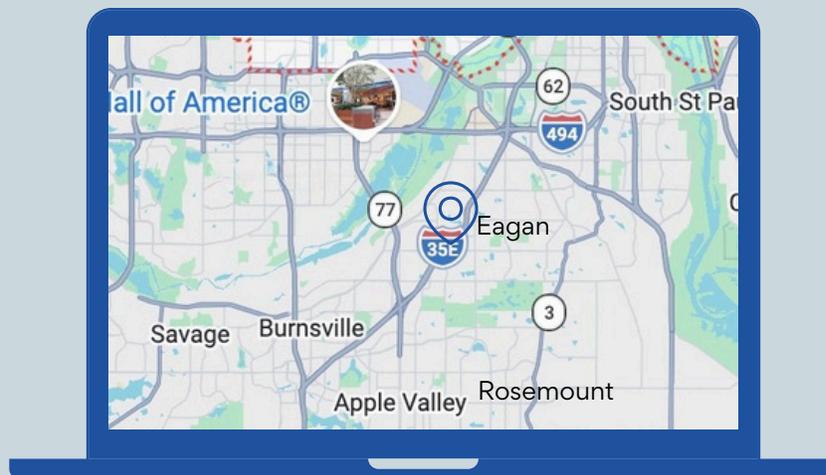
Urban-suburban mix offering diversity, convenience, and opportunity. Eagan is the 13<sup>th</sup> largest city in Minnesota and has transformed into a major employment and residential hub while maintaining over 1,300 acres of parkland.

## Key Features:

- Major Employers: Blue Cross Blue Shield (3,900 employees), Thomson Reuters/West Publishing (5,000 employees), Coca-Cola bottling, plus numerous warehouses and distribution centers near MSP Airport
- Minnesota Vikings: Team headquarters and training facility at former Northwest Airlines campus
- Parks & Recreation: 1,300+ acres of parkland with nearly 1,200 water bodies
- Transportation: Easy access via I-494, I-35E, and multiple state highways
- Diversity: Most diverse community in the South Metro

**Housing:** Average house prices are not quite as high as nearby Rosemount. Existing neighborhoods dominate and there is a lot of mixed housing opportunity.

**Why Clients Choose Eagan:** Excellent location for commuters, highly rated schools (ISD 196), abundant restaurants and shopping, diverse and welcoming community, extensive park system, and strong job market. Perfect for families wanting suburban convenience with urban amenities.



# Living in *Apple Valley*

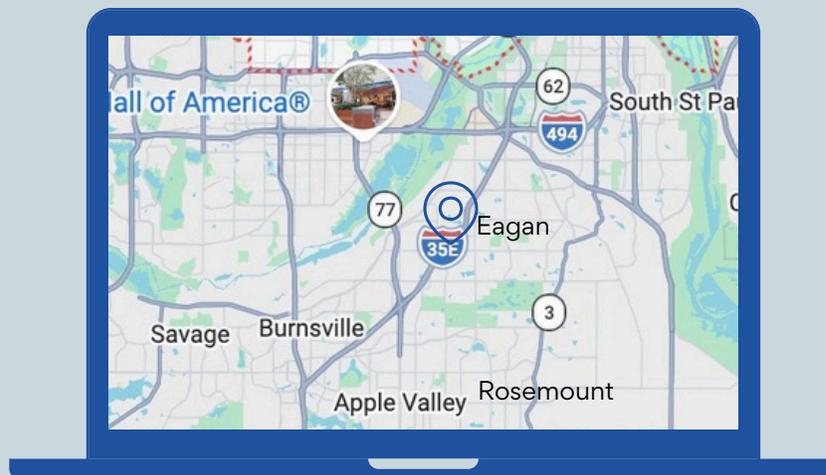
Established suburban community with dense neighborhoods, excellent amenities, and family-friendly atmosphere. Mature trees are a staple of this community.

## Key Features:

- Minnesota Zoo: Nationally recognized zoological garden with indoor Tropics Trail, Northern Trail with cold-climate animals, and year-round exhibits
- Education: Three high schools in ISD 196 including comprehensive schools and School of Environmental Studies magnet program
- Parks: Extensive park system throughout the city
- Location: Direct access to Minneapolis via I-35E and Cedar Avenue
- Freedom Days: Annual July 4th celebration bringing the community together

**Housing:** Variety of housing available. Developed community with limited opportunity for new construction. Moderate pricing to executive single family homes available.

**Why Clients Choose Apple Valley:** The Minnesota Zoo, highly rated schools, diverse community, established infrastructure, and the perfect mix of small-town vibes with metropolitan opportunities. Excellent for families at all stages with abundant services and community events.



# Iconic Twin Cities Attractions

## **Mall of America** (Bloomington)

Yes, it's a mall—but it's so much more! The nation's largest shopping and entertainment complex features:

- 500+ stores (no sales tax on clothing!)
- Nickelodeon Universe indoor theme park
- SEA LIFE Minnesota Aquarium
- Mini golf, escape rooms, and virtual reality experiences
- Dozens of restaurants



## **Minnesota Zoo** (Apple Valley)

A world-class zoo right in your backyard featuring:

## **Stone Arch Bridge** (Minneapolis)

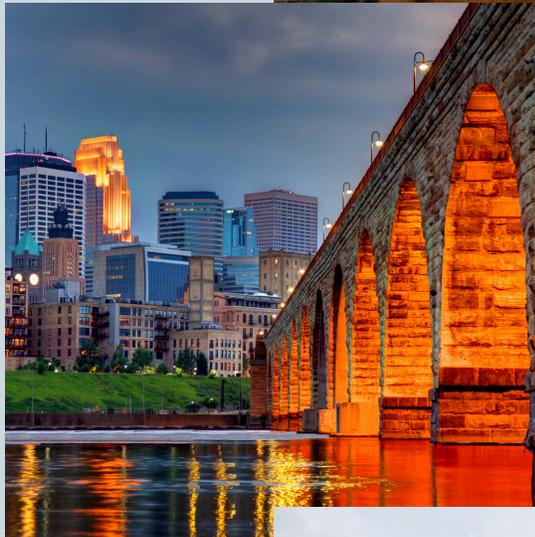
This iconic Minneapolis landmark offers:

- Stunning views of the Mississippi River and St. Anthony Falls
- Pedestrian and bike-friendly bridge
- Connect to extensive riverfront trail system

## **Minnesota State Capitol** (St. Paul)

Take a free guided tour of this architectural masterpiece featuring:

- Stunning marble and gold-leaf interiors
- The world's largest unsupported marble dome
- Rich Minnesota history



# Iconic Twin Cities Attractions

## ARTS, CULTURE & MUSEUMS

### Walker Art Center & Minneapolis Sculpture Garden

- Contemporary art museum (admission required)
- FREE outdoor sculpture garden featuring the iconic "Spoonbridge and Cherry"



### Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia)

- FREE admission to world-class art collection
- Over 90,000 works spanning 5,000 years
- Special exhibitions throughout the year



### Science Museum of Minnesota

- Hands-on science exhibits
- Omnitheater with immersive films
- Changing special exhibitions



### Guthrie Theater (Minneapolis)

- Award-winning repertory theater
- FREE Endless Bridge observation deck overlooking the Mississippi



### Como Park Zoo & Conservatory

- FREE zoo and conservatory
- Beautiful gardens and seasonal displays
- Perfect for families with young children
- Adjacent to Como Lake for walking/jogging



# Outdoor Recreation & Parks

## Chain of Lakes (Minneapolis)

- Bde Maka Ska (formerly Lake Calhoun) - Largest, most popular for swimming, sailing, and paddleboarding
- Lake Harriet - Band shell with free summer concerts, rose gardens, bird sanctuary
- Lake of the Isles - Scenic walking path, perfect for peaceful strolls
- Miles of trails connecting all the lakes
- Bike rentals available



## Minnehaha Falls (Minneapolis)

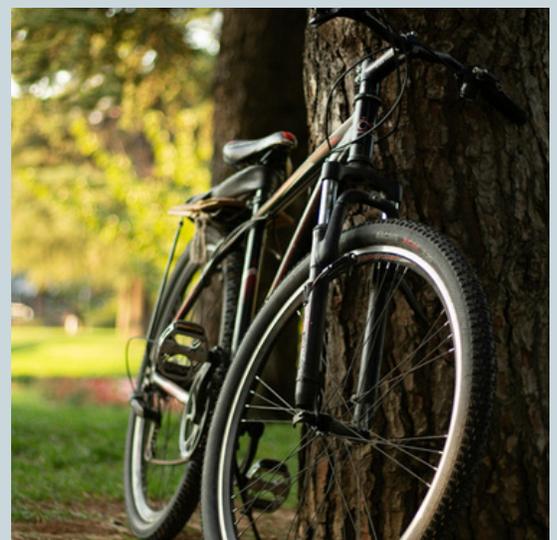
- 53-foot waterfall in beautiful urban park
- Hiking trails, picnic areas, and gardens
- Historic pavilion and restaurant
- Connects to extensive trail system
- Absolutely stunning in all four seasons



## Minnesota River Valley

Right in your South Metro backyard:

- Lebanon Hills Regional Park (Eagan) - 2,000+ acres with lakes, trails, camping
- Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve - Mountain biking, hiking, winter sports
- Fort Snelling State Park - Historic fort, trails, river confluence
- Buck Hill - Down Hill Skiing



# Minnesota Living - It's a *Vibe!*

1. **"Ope!"** The universal Minnesota word. Bumped into someone? "Ope!" Need to squeeze past? "Ope, just gonna sneak right past ya!" It means excuse me, oops, pardon me, and sorry all at once.
2. It's **"Pop"** not soda. Just accept it. You're in the Upper Midwest now.
3. **Hot Dish**, not casserole. Tater tot hot dish is basically the state dish. Green bean casserole at Thanksgiving? That's a hot dish now.
4. Duck Duck **GREY DUCK**. Not "Goose." This is the hill Minnesotans will die on. Don't even try to argue.
5. **Minnesota Nice** is real (and complicated). People are genuinely friendly, helpful, and will give you directions for 20 minutes. But "Minnesota Nice" also means conflict-avoidant and passive-aggressive. "That's different" = I hate it. Goodbyes take 20 minutes minimum.
6. **"Up North"** is a state of mind. It doesn't matter if it's 30 minutes away or 5 hours - if you have a cabin, you're going "Up North" for the weekend. Doesn't even have to be north geographically.
7. **The State Fair** is an INSTITUTION. Late August/early September, 12 days, 2 million people. Everything is on a stick. Plan your whole year around it. The Pronto Pup vs. corn dog debate is serious.
8. **Weather talk** is constant. It's not small talk - it's survival information. Minnesotans will discuss weather patterns, storm systems, and temperature fluctuations with meteorological precision.
9. You'll say these things soon: **"You betcha," "Uff da," "Don'tcha know,"** "For fun" (not "for fun?"), "Come with" (not "come with me"), and you'll end sentences with prepositions without realizing it.
10. **Lakes = Life**. With 11,842 lakes, everyone has "their lake." You'll be asked about your lake. You'll develop opinions about which lake is best. Lake culture is real.



## THINGS NEWCOMERS SHOULD KNOW

- No Sales Tax on Clothing and Shoes - One of Minnesota's best perks! No matter how much you spend on clothing or shoes, no sales tax.
- Four Seasons = Four Wardrobes
- You truly need clothes for every extreme. Winter parkas to summer shorts to spring rain gear to fall layers.
- The Skyways -Downtown Minneapolis and St. Paul have climate-controlled skyway systems (enclosed second-floor walkways between buildings). You can navigate downtown in winter without going outside.
- "The Cities" - When Minnesotans say "the cities" or "the metro," they mean the entire Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area—not just the two cities themselves.
- Cabin Culture -Weekend getaways "up north" to the cabin are a way of life. You'll get invited to someone's cabin. Go. It's an honor.
- Bike Culture - Minneapolis is ranked #1 in the nation for biking infrastructure. People bike year-round (yes, even in winter). Fat tire bikes are a thing.
- We're Genuinely Nice - Yes, Minnesota Nice can be passive-aggressive, but overall, people really are kind, helpful, and welcoming. Neighbors help neighbors. Communities rally together. You'll feel welcomed here.

## EMBRACE IT!

Minnesota culture is quirky, warm, and full of traditions that might seem odd at first but will quickly feel like home. The "Minnesota Nice" reputation is earned—people genuinely care about their neighbors and communities.

### You'll know you've become a Minnesotan when:

- You say "ope" without thinking
- You can't imagine missing the State Fair
- You own multiple winter coats for different temperatures
- You have strong opinions about the best Juicy Lucy
- You find yourself saying "could be worse" about the weather
- You've been to someone's cabin
- You understand that Grey Duck is obviously the correct version
- You've planned a summer around lake weekends
- Welcome to Minnesota—we're so glad you're here! 🍷

## Let's Start Your *Journey*



You've made it to the end of this guide, which means you're serious about relocating to the Twin Cities South Metro. That's exciting!

### Here's what happens next:

#### Book Your Introductory Call

I'd love to hear your story and learn about what you're looking for. In our conversation, we'll discuss:

- What's bringing you to Minnesota
- Your timeline and budget
- Must-haves in a home and community
- Questions you have about the area
- Next steps in your home search

No pressure. No sales pitch. Just a genuine conversation about your needs and how I can help.

📞 Schedule your call

✉ Email me: [lisa@lisahansenrealestate.com](mailto:lisa@lisahansenrealestate.com)

📱 Text me: 612-597-2058