

2030 Development Framework

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Challenges and opportunities

During the 1990s, the Twin Cities metropolitan area gained more population—353,000 people—than in any previous decade in our history. Growth in the current decade is on a similar pace.

Accommodating growth is not always easy, as anyone who’s been stuck in rush-hour traffic can attest. And the Twin Cities will keep growing. Between 2000 and 2030, the region is expected to add nearly one million people—the equivalent of two Denvers plunked down within the boundaries of the seven-county metro area.

Such robust growth is a sign of our region’s continued economic health and vitality. But it will bring both opportunities and challenges:

- How can the region accommodate growth while maintaining the quality of life for the 2.7 million people who already live and work here?
- How can the region preserve and revitalize its prized communities and neighborhoods—the buildings, parks, shared

spaces and streets that tell us we’re “home”—while building new communities with their own character and sense of place?

- How can the region capitalize on opportunities for economic development while preserving its vital natural assets and abundant opportunities for outdoor recreation?

Flexibility, efficiency, cooperation

Under state law, the Metropolitan Council is responsible for creating a comprehensive development guide for the seven-county area.

The keystone of the *Metropolitan Development Guide* is the Council’s *2030 Regional Development Framework*. Also included in the guide are four plans for regional systems—aviation, transportation, regional parks and water resources management.

The purpose of the *Framework* is to provide a plan for how the Metropolitan Council—in partnership with local communities, builders, environmentalists and others—can guide our region’s growth and shape our future.

In the *Framework*, the Council emphasizes its commitment to:

- Work collaboratively with local communities.
- Make the most cost-effective use of new and existing roads, sewers and other costly infrastructure.
- Be accountable to the public—by establishing benchmarks for annually measuring the region’s progress toward our goals.

The *Framework* recognizes that “one size does not fit all”—that different communities have different opportunities, needs and aspirations. But it also reflects the belief that all communities have a shared responsibility to help accommodate the region’s growth in a sensible, cost-effective manner.

It also acknowledges that the Council doesn’t have a monopoly on new ideas for guiding growth and development. Many of the ideas contained in the *Framework* grew out of efforts already under way in communities throughout the region—from Brooklyn Park to Burnsville and from Maplewood to Maple Grove.

The *Framework's* strategies for success

The Council's strategies are organized around four policies:

1. Accommodating growth in a flexible, connected and efficient manner.

Support land-use patterns that efficiently connect housing, jobs, retail centers and civic uses. Encourage growth and reinvestment in centers with convenient access to transportation corridors. Ensure an adequate supply of developable land for future growth.

2. Slowing the growth in traffic congestion and improving mobility.

Improve the highway system, removing bottlenecks and adding capacity. Make more efficient use of the highway system by encouraging flexible work hours, telecommuting, ridesharing and other traffic management efforts. Expand the bus system and develop a network of new bus and/or rail transitways, based on a thorough cost-benefit analysis.

3. Encouraging expanded choices in housing locations and types.

Allow market forces to respond to changing market needs, including increased demand for townhomes and condominiums as baby-boomers grow older.

Preserve the existing housing stock to help maintain a full range of housing choices. Support the production of lifecycle and affordable housing with better links to jobs, services and amenities.

4. Working to conserve, protect and enhance the region's vital natural resources.

Encourage the integration of natural-resource conservation into all land-planning decisions. Seek to protect important natural resources and adding areas to the regional park system. Work to protect our region's water resources.

Measuring the region's progress

Many of the goals and objectives established in the

Framework are ambitious. The region's success will hinge on the efforts of not only the Metropolitan Council, but also those of local communities and other regional partners. Success also will require the commitment of additional resources—particularly in the areas of highways and transit.

Nonetheless, the Council is committed to monitoring our region's progress toward the achievement of the goals. The *Framework* includes a set of benchmarks that will be used to track and measure progress on an annual basis.

For more information

Visit: www.metrocouncil.org/planning/framework/overview.htm for another overview of the *Framework*, or see the full [2030 Regional Development Framework](#) (pdf).

Pub. 14-07-022 April 2007