

PLAT MONITORING PROGRAM



ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Plat Monitoring Program tracks and monitors development in the region, specifically within areas designated as Suburban Edge, Emerging Suburban Edge, and Rural Center in Thrive MSP 2040, the metropolitan area's regional development guide. Twelve communities participated in the pilot program in 2001, including: Blaine, Chanhassen, Eden Prairie, Hugo, Inver Grove Heights, Lakeville, Maple Grove, Ramsey, Savage, Shakopee, Woodbury, and Waconia. The Program continues to grow as the Twin Cities region develops, with 45 current participants. The program provides baseline data on residential development trends in these communities and was designed to help answer the following questions:

- Is residential development consistent with Metropolitan Council policies?
- How are communities accommodating residential development in comparison to their local comprehensive land use plans?
- What is the mix of housing types that communities are approving each year (single-family vs. multi-family)?
- How is residential land being developed within the Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA)?
- What is the lot absorption rate for residential plats in the region?

The Council annually reports on residential development in participating communities, using data collected through the Plat Monitoring Program. The report includes analysis on the following:

- Overall residential development densities, both net and gross densities (see descriptions below);
- Amount of land that had been consumed for various uses, such as single-family dwellings, parks, and arterial road right-of-way, among others;
- Single-family and multi-family housing mix;
- Development trends since the inception of program;
- Average duration (in years) between initial site platting and issuance of residential permits; and
- Planned units based on allowable densities and actual units platted.

The program assists communities and Council staff in assessing a community's consistency with the Council's residential density policy, which requires residential sewered development to occur at a minimum density of 3 units per net developable acre. By maintaining an historical record of approved sewered subdivisions, the Council and metropolitan communities can evaluate the success of communities in implementing the density policy and the extent to which the Metropolitan Wastewater System is being used efficiently. In addition, participating communities receive credit for previous plats meeting the Council's density policy and increased development flexibility within the MUSA.

PROGRAM REPORTING FORM

Participating communities complete and submit an annual residential plat reporting form. The form requests the following information (bolded titles represent column headings in the form):

1. Project Background

- Plat Names** – The official name for the sewered residential plat that received final plat approval during the calendar year.
- MUSA Exp.** – Did the plat require the expansion of the Metropolitan Urban Service Area? (Yes or No)
- Comp Plan Amend** – Did the plat require an amendment to the community's comprehensive plan? (Yes or No)
- Rezoning** – Did the plat require the zoning designation to be changed? If so, indicate the original zoning and the new zoning classification.

2. Type of Residential Development and Allowed Density

- Land Use Designation** – The future land use designation of the development property in the community's comprehensive plan.
- Allowed Density Range** – Based on the comprehensive plan future land use designation of the property, indicate the lower and upper number of allowable units per acre.

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- c. **Units Allowed** – The form automatically calculates this value by multiplying the Allowed Density Range by the Net Residential Acres in the plat.
- d. **Number of Units** – The number of single-family and multi-family units the community approved in the plat.
- e. **Total Units** – The form automatically calculates this value by adding the single-family and multi-family columns.

3. Land and Density Analysis

- a. **Gross Residential Acres** – The total acreage contained within the boundaries of the residential plat. If a plat includes commercial and residential acreage, only include the residential portion.
- b. **Wetlands, Water Bodies, Ponds** – The number of acres of wetlands, water bodies, and ponds in the plat, but not including setbacks or stormwater ponds.
- c. **Public Parks and Open Space** – The number of acres of parks and open space set aside in the development for public use/ownership, including trails. If wetlands are located in these areas, do not count that acreage in this column; rather, include that under the Wetlands column. Do not include private parks or outlots for future development.
- d. **Arterial Roads Right-of-Way** – The area within the plat that is set aside for the rights-of-way of arterial roads. Do not include rights-of-way for any other roads.
- e. **Other** – Other undevelopable acres, including those that are protected by local ordinances such as steep slopes and bluffs, as well as outlots reserved for future development and outlots that are restricted for development, but not included in the categories above.
- f. **Net Residential Acres** – The form automatically calculates this value by subtracting the figures entered in the Wetlands, Parks and Open Space, Arterial Roads, and Other columns from the Gross Residential Acres figure.
- g. **Net Density** – The form automatically calculates this value by dividing the Total Units by the Net Residential Acres.
- h. **Gross Density** – The form automatically calculates this value by dividing the Total Units by the Gross Residential Acres.
- i. Participating communities also submit copies of each plat approved by the community. Council staff uses these copies to verify submitted numbers and to track geographic development patterns. Data is typically collected in the first quarter of the calendar year for all plats that have received final plat approval from the city in the previous calendar year.

SENIOR HOUSING GUIDELINES

It is the Council’s practice to follow the U.S. Census definition of “housing unit” consistently in the Council’s research and monitoring programs. The definition has changed in last decennial Census, so the Council has updated its guidelines accordingly. The [below guidelines](#) follow U.S. Census practices and identify when a senior housing facility qualifies as a housing unit or is classified as group quarters. When providing information, identify senior housing developments and their breakdown on the reporting form. The following are considered housing units, are within the scope of the Council’s Plat Monitoring Program, and count toward the community’s net residential density calculations:

- Independent living
- Assisted living
- Commercially-managed apartments

The following are considered group quarters and do not count toward a community’s net residential density:

- Nursing home/facility
- Memory care
- Homeless shelter facility
- Dormitory



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How is the net residential acreage calculated?

Net density is calculated by taking the gross (total) area of the development and removing wetlands and water bodies, public parks and open spaces, arterial road rights-of-way, and any other area that is protected or removed from development by local ordinances. Examples of areas that may be protected by local ordinances include steep slopes and floodplains. These areas are listed under the “Other” column in the spreadsheet. When listing items here, communities should include an explanation of what this area represents in the comments column. The Program Reporting Form automatically calculates net residential acreage.

If the final plat was approved, but has not yet been recorded, do I still include that information in the plat monitoring spreadsheet for the year it was approved?

Yes, we include all plats that received final approval for the year in question, with the understanding that some applicants take time to submit their plats for recording several months after receiving final approval. If the period for filing the plat has expired, please just note that in your submitted information so that we may track that in our records. The approved expired plat will not count against the community’s net density calculations. The Council will note the expired status of the plat in its geographic files.

Should I submit information regarding replatted areas?

Yes. This information helps Council staff to track trends in development patterns. The Council will use the plat that provides the most amount of density credit for the community.

Are townhomes considered single-family or multi-family in the Plat Monitoring Program?

Single-family. Following the U.S. Census Bureau’s classification, townhomes are considered single-family attached housing units in the Plat Monitoring data.

In which field should I account for wetlands that fall within outlots reserved for future development?

If wetlands or water bodies fall within outlots reserved for future development their acreage should be included in the Other field. Do not include this acreage in the Wetland field to avoid double counting.

How should I report a plat when it is only one phase of a bigger subdivision?

Often, a plat is one phase of a bigger development. Sometimes, each phase is a completely separate plat that is added to previous phases. Other times, specifically with the first phase of a development, the platted area encompasses only a portion of the bigger development, and the rest of the area is identified as outlots for future phases. In that case, include the total area of the development (both platted and outlots) in the “gross residential acres” column and report the outlots’ acreage in the “other” column. Please also add a note about the phasing of the project in the “additional information and comments” column.

How do I obtain the Plat Monitoring Report?

The latest Plat Monitoring Report can be viewed and downloaded from the Council’s website at <https://metro council.org/Communities/Planning/Local-Planning-Assistance/Plat-Monitoring-Program.aspx>. This report contains information and analyzes data updated from the most recent full calendar year.

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