



**PRELIMINARY DRAFT**  
*FOR SUBMISSION AS THE  
REGIONAL PLAN FOR  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT*

November 2013



**DRAFT PREPARED FOR METROPOLITAN COUNCIL DISCUSSION  
AT THE DECEMBER 4, 2013 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING**

- 1 This document is the preliminary draft of *Thrive MSP 2040*.
- 2 Working with its regional partners, the Metropolitan Council will submit this draft to the Corridors  
3 of Opportunity Policy Board for their submittal of this report to the U.S. Department of Housing  
4 and Urban Development to fulfill a deliverable of the region's Sustainable Communities  
5 Regional Planning Grant.
- 6 The Metropolitan Council will be revising this document and adding additional material, including  
7 the specifics of Land Use Policy, by early 2014. At that time, the Metropolitan Council will  
8 release an official draft of *Thrive MSP 2040* for public comment.
- 9 Until then, comments on this draft are welcome via email at [thriveMSP@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:thriveMSP@metc.state.mn.us).

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## **A Thriving Region**

1 The Twin Cities region is a great place to live, work, raise a family and do business. With a long  
2 legacy of success, our region is characterized by:

- 3 • Beautiful and varied natural settings and resources;
- 4 • A resilient economy;
- 5 • Rich cultural diversity;
- 6 • A variety of landscapes and urban, suburban, and rural places;
- 7 • A civic tradition of shared action.

8 But we face some real challenges:

- 9 • Persistent disparities by race and ethnicity in education, income and economic mobility;
- 10 • An increasing need for infrastructure preservation;
- 11 • A limited supply of natural resources, including water.

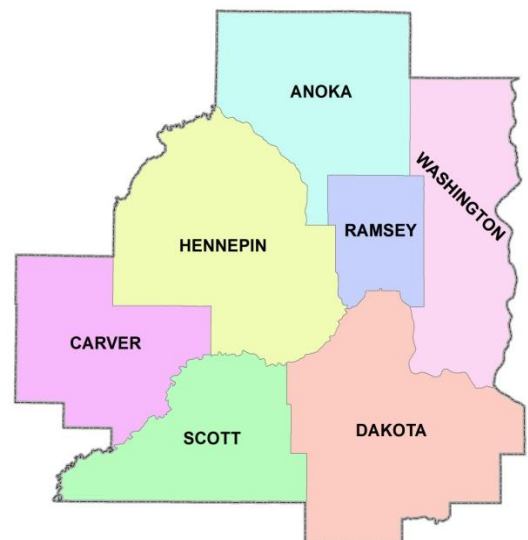
12 And we also foresee changes on the horizon:

- 13 • An older and more diverse population;
- 14 • Growing interest in walkable communities;
- 15 • Increased risks and costs from a changing climate.

16 *Thrive MSP 2040* is the Metropolitan Council's plan to build on our strengths, address our  
17 challenges, and leverage the inevitable change as an opportunity for smart investments that  
18 help our region grow and prosper. We challenge both  
19 ourselves and our regional partners to work toward our  
20 shared vision of a prosperous, equitable and livable  
21 region for today and generations to come.

### ***Three million residents enjoying a high quality of life***

24 The Minneapolis-Saint Paul metropolitan area is a  
25 thriving region of nearly 3 million people, within 186  
26 communities in 7 counties, encompassing nearly 3,000



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27 square miles. The Metropolitan Council’s jurisdiction comprises the seven counties of Anoka,  
28 Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington, which house 87 percent of the  
29 population of the 13-county Minneapolis-Saint Paul metropolitan statistical area. The greater  
30 Minneapolis-Saint Paul metropolitan statistical area is the major center of production, trade and  
31 transportation in the upper Midwest and the nation’s 13th largest metropolitan economy.

32 Our region is well-known for its high quality of life, strong economy and many assets:

- 33 • A resilient economy, with a diverse mix of high-tech and high-value-added industries,  
34 including 18 Fortune 500 headquarters;
- 35 • A highly-educated workforce supported by numerous educational institutions;
- 36 • Vibrant arts, music and theatre communities and professional sports teams;
- 37 • A reasonable cost of living;
- 38 • Abundant parks, conserved open space, and natural resources; and
- 39 • Efficient transportation systems.

40 Indeed, Sperling’s BestPlaces ranked the Twin Cities “the most playful metro in America” in  
41 2011 for the health, happiness and low stress of its residents.

42 Our region offers our residents a range of communities in which to live. Minneapolis and Saint  
43 Paul are the two core cities of the region with histories dating back to the mid-1800s. With a  
44 population of 400,000 and almost 300,000 jobs, Minneapolis is the commercial center of the  
45 region, while Saint Paul, with nearly 300,000 residents and 175,000 jobs, is the state capital.  
46 Minneapolis and Saint Paul have roughly one in four of our region’s residents and three in ten of  
47 our region’s jobs. Another one in four residents lives in suburban cities with a population  
48 between 50,000 and 100,000. One in sixteen residents lives in rural areas and small town  
49 centers outside the urbanized area.

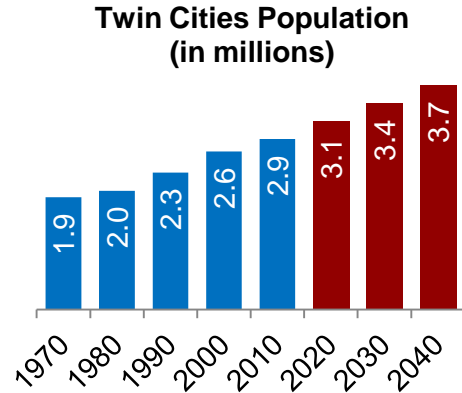
50 *Continued population and job growth through 2040*

51 Since 1970, our region has added nearly one million residents, growing by over 50 percent over  
52 four decades. Over the next thirty years, our region is projected to grow by another 850,000  
53 residents, 31 percent more than today. This pace of growth is consistent with historical trends.  
54 Two-thirds of this population growth is likely to result from natural growth – more births than

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55 deaths and longer life expectancies. The remaining one-third will come from migration as our  
56 region’s economic opportunities attract migrants from  
57 the rest of the nation and world.

58 With 1.6 million jobs, the Minneapolis-St Paul region is  
59 the predominant economic center for a large part of  
60 Minnesota and western Wisconsin. Between 2010  
61 and 2040, our region is projected to add 570,000 new  
62 jobs, growing by 37 percent. Having surpassed one  
63 million jobs by 1980, our region is projected to surpass  
64 two million jobs by 2040. Our region’s broad economic  
65 base helps us weather recessions and mitigates boom-  
66 and-bust cycles. Employment growth is expected to  
67 range from 13 percent in the current decade to 9 percent in the 2030s. This growth compares to  
68 a net employment loss over the 2000s and previous gains of 34 percent in the 1970s, 22  
69 percent in the 1980s, and 26 percent in the 1990s. The region’s Gross Metropolitan Product,  
70 the sum of value added by all industry sectors, will rise to \$400 billion in 2040—equivalent to 1.5  
71 percent of the US Gross Domestic Product – while the region has less than 1.0 percent of the  
72 nation’s population.



73 Over the next three decades, our region will see more infill development, investment and  
74 intensification in the older, urbanized, and most accessible parts of the region. These changes  
75 result from a changing demographic mix, evolving residential preferences among younger  
76 households, and increasing interest in sustainable lifestyles. Suburban edge communities will  
77 continue to grow and fill in, though more slowly than in decades past. *[Additional detail will be  
78 added here when the preliminary local forecasts are finalized in early 2014.]*

79 ***Changes and challenges that lie ahead for our region***

80 As the seven-county Minneapolis-Saint Paul region plans for our next thirty years, key  
81 challenges lie ahead – constrained fiscal resources, demands stemming from demographic  
82 shifts, emerging environmental challenges, new regional planning priorities, and an imperative  
83 for regional economic cooperation.

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84 The growing need for *preservation and maintenance of aging infrastructure* is stressing  
85 increasingly limited fiscal resources:

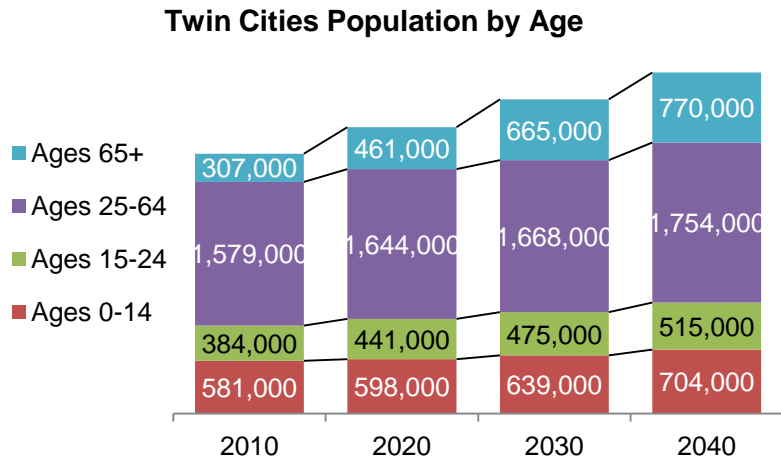
- 86 • 75 years after the construction of the Metro Plant on the Mississippi River to treat  
87 wastewater, our region’s aging wastewater infrastructure requires ongoing investment in  
88 preservation to remain effective.
- 89 • Similarly, crumbling roads and bridges demonstrate the necessity for higher levels of  
90 investment to preserve our highway transportation system.
- 91 • The 2013 [Minnesota State Highway Investment Plan](#) shows that the region will have  
92 only \$56 million available annually from 2014 to 2022 for mobility improvements,  
93 meeting one-quarter of the projected need. From 2023 onward, all state transportation  
94 funding will be devoted to preservation of the existing system.

95

96 **Demographically, our region is changing** and evolving in key ways that will influence the  
97 shape of our future growth  
98 and development:

- 99 • Our region is aging  
100 rapidly: more than  
101 one in five residents  
102 will be age 65 and  
103 older in 2040,  
104 compared to one in  
105 nine in 2010.

- 106 • Significant racial  
107 disparities – in  
108 income, employment,  
109 poverty,  
110 homeownership, education – persist just as our region is becoming more racially and  
111 ethnically diverse. By 2040, 43 percent of the population will be people of color,  
112 compared to 24 percent in 2010. If today’s disparities by race and ethnicity continue,  
113 our region would likely have 151,000 fewer people with jobs, 228,000 fewer





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114 homeowners, and 305,000 more people in poverty compared to what could happen with  
115 the gaps addressed.

116 • The region will gain 458,000 new households by 2040, requiring, on average, over  
117 16,000 new housing units a year – more new units than the region has built annually on  
118 average over the last 40 years. With the changing demographics, these new  
119 households are likely to have different housing needs than today’s households:

120 • Over half of the net new households will be single-earner households, including  
121 both individuals living alone and single parents with children, as well as some  
122 proportion of couples.

123 • Less than one-third of net new households will be households with children.

124 • Seniors will want housing to fit post-retirement lifestyles, in walkable and transit-  
125 served areas accessible to services and amenities.

126

127 Emerging ***environmental challenges*** threaten the continued livability of our region:

128 • We are moving from the presumption of an abundance of water to recognition that our  
129 region’s reliance on groundwater is unsustainable. Increased groundwater pumping to  
130 support development is depleting aquifers, affecting lakes, streams and wetlands. In  
131 some areas, groundwater levels have been dropping a foot a year since the 1970s.

132 • Climate change is already affecting our region as we are seeing more severe weather  
133 events and temperature extremes. In addition to the human and agricultural impacts of  
134 heat waves, the rise of severe weather is already increasing homeowner insurance costs  
135 and infrastructure repair costs such as that borne in 2012 by the City of Duluth in the  
136 aftermath of severe rainfall.

137

138 As we approach a half century of coordinated planning across the region, new planning  
139 challenges and opportunities are emerging:

140 • Growth is occurring not only through staging new suburban subdivisions connected to  
141 the regional wastewater treatment system but also in redeveloping land in older parts of  
142 the region. While more efficiently using existing regional infrastructure, the challenges

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143 and opportunities of infill, intensification, and redevelopment can be complex and costly  
144 for local units of government.

- 145 • An aging multifamily housing stock, including the large number of rental apartments built  
146 in the 1960s and 1970s, is ready for reinvestment to both retain structural integrity and  
147 meet the housing preferences of today's households. Many of these units have aged  
148 into affordability but are at risk of functional obsolescence.
- 149 • Light rail, commuter rail and bus rapid transit lines are changing the landscape by  
150 attracting new real estate development in station areas and creating new choices for  
151 how people move about the region.

152

153 In today's economy, regions are the primary drivers of economic growth. Our region **competes**  
154 **economically** with other regions across the nation and the globe, upping the ante for  
155 coordination and cooperation among the region's jurisdictions.

- 156 • From 2000 to 2010, the region saw its first decade with net job loss since the Great  
157 Depression, losing 63,000 jobs over the decade. While our region was not alone losing  
158 jobs, our region responded by strengthening our focus on a shared economic  
159 competitiveness strategy and creating the regional economic development partnership  
160 GREATER MSP.
- 161 • In the next 20 years, employers will face a retirement boom. Workforce turnover, skilled  
162 workforce preparedness and succession planning will be major challenges for employers  
163 – not just for the Twin Cities, but for the nation as a whole. While the Council does not  
164 play a role in education, it recognizes that a skilled, educated workforce is a key factor in  
165 maintaining a competitive region.

166

167 *The opportunity of a regional approach*

168 As a region, we can react to these challenges, or we can **plan for these challenges**. The  
169 coordinated regional planning approach underlying the Metropolitan Council and  
170 institutionalized in the Metropolitan Land Planning Act uniquely equips our region to transform  
171 challenges into opportunities to thrive.

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172 In the late 1960s when the Metropolitan Council was created, **community leaders saw value**  
173 **in collaborating to solve regional issues.** The Minneapolis-Saint Paul area was facing rapid  
174 population growth and unimpeded urban sprawl. Severe environmental concerns related to  
175 inadequate wastewater treatment and disposal raised an alarm as untreated waste was  
176 discharged into lakes, rivers and waterways. The Twin Cities' privately owned bus company  
177 was rapidly disintegrating, a victim of rising fares, declining ridership and an aging bus fleet.  
178 Rapid growth was threatening ecosystems and natural areas better suited for preservation as  
179 parks and open space. Growing fiscal disparities were making it difficult for communities with  
180 inadequate tax capacity to fund essential services.

181 The Minnesota Legislature took several unprecedented actions in response to these challenges.  
182 In 1967, the Metropolitan Council was created and tasked with planning and coordinating  
183 growth, and setting policy on regional issues. Upon signing the bill, Governor Harold LeVander  
184 observed that the Council "was conceived with the idea that we will be faced with more and  
185 more problems that will pay no heed to the boundary lines which mark the end of one  
186 community and the beginning of another." Having a region-wide vision provides the opportunity  
187 to address issues that:

- 188 • are bigger than any one community can address alone;
- 189 • cross community boundaries to affect multiple communities;
- 190 • could benefit from an opportunity to share best practices; or
- 191 • require resources that are most effectively used at a regional scale.

192

193 Four additional actions created today's regional structure:

- 194 • 1969: The Legislature created the Metropolitan Sewer Board to consolidate sewer  
195 systems, reduce costs, and modernize the system.
- 196 • 1970: The Metropolitan Transit Commission acquired the privately held transit system  
197 with the charge to overhaul the system, secure new buses, and improve signage,  
198 shelters, and bus stops.
- 199 • 1974: The Legislature designated over 31,000 acres of existing city and county parks as  
200 part of a new regional parks and open space system.

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- 201       • 1994: The Legislature gave the Council control over transit and regional wastewater  
202           systems, consolidating services, operations, and planning functions for the seven-county  
203           area into a single agency.

204 For nearly 50 years the Metropolitan Council has played a key role in coordinating regional  
205 growth and planning, providing essential services such as transportation and wastewater  
206 treatment, and convening partners to achieve ambitious goals unrealistic for a single community  
207 but possible as a region. Thinking ahead – and working together – helps us achieve economies  
208 of scale, high-quality regional services, and a competitive edge envied by other metropolitan  
209 areas.

210 *Thrive MSP 2040: Planning a prosperous, equitable, and livable region for*  
211 *today and generations to come*

212 Pursuant to the Council's [statutory responsibility](#) for a comprehensive development guide for the  
213 seven-county metropolitan area, *Thrive MSP 2040* provides a framework for a shared vision for  
214 the future of our region over the next 30 years. While the Council is responsible for developing  
215 *Thrive* and the plans for three specific statutory regional systems – wastewater, transportation,  
216 and regional parks – the vision within *Thrive* can only succeed through partnerships with local  
217 governments, residents, businesses, philanthropy and the non-profit sector. As a regional plan,  
218 *Thrive* addresses issues greater than any one neighborhood, city or single county can address  
219 alone to build and maintain a thriving metropolitan region. But the future's increasingly complex  
220 challenges demands greater collaboration and innovative approaches to allocating limited  
221 funds. Building upon our region's past planning successes, the Council will adopt more  
222 collaborative, integrative approaches to address the complex multi-dimensional nature of the  
223 challenges that lie ahead. Protecting our resources and investments, *Thrive* provides the  
224 foundation for a prosperous, equitable, and livable region for today and generations to come.

## **Thrive: Outcomes and Principles**

### *An outcome- and principle-based approach to regional planning*

1 *Thrive MSP 2040* asserts five desired outcomes to shape our policy priorities:

2 **Stewardship** ∞ **Prosperity** ∞ **Equity** ∞ **Livability** ∞ **Sustainability**

3 These five outcomes define our shared regional vision. Plans, policies and projects that balance  
4 and optimize all five of these outcomes will create positive change, while efforts that advance  
5 only one or two outcomes at the expense of the others may be disappointments over the long  
6 term. Policymakers make tough decisions at the intersections of these five outcomes, weighing  
7 the benefits and costs of their options against these five outcomes. Focusing on outcomes  
8 allows for flexibility in implementation – both for the Council’s systems and policy plans and for  
9 local comprehensive plans – while prioritizing a shared strategic vision.

10 Three principles guide how the Council implements its policies both internally and externally to  
11 advance the five outcomes:

12 **Integration** ∞ **Collaboration** ∞ **Accountability**

13 These three principles reflect the Council’s understanding of its roles in integrating policy areas,  
14 supporting local governments and regional partners, and promoting and implementing this  
15 regional vision. These principles govern how the Council implements *Thrive* systems and policy  
16 plans and how the Council advances these outcomes, both individually and collectively.

17 With *Thrive MSP 2040*, the Metropolitan Council is adopting an outcomes-orientation to its  
18 regional policy, focusing on policies that demonstrably improve our region. The Council is  
19 challenging itself, local governments and its regional partners and stakeholders to describe how  
20 their work advances the five *Thrive* outcomes. Outcomes describe how our investments and  
21 our policies are enriching our region for our residents and businesses, not how much money we  
22 are investing or how many miles of highway, interceptor pipe or rail we are building.

23 Living out the Council’s first principle of integration, the following narrative weaves together all of  
24 the Council’s core policy authorities – from affordable housing and aviation to wastewater  
25 treatment and water supply – in the framework of the five outcomes. The *Thrive* outcomes—  
26 Stewardship, Prosperity, Equity, Livability and Sustainability—are lofty ideals that defy simple

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27 categorization into the Council's authorities. Instead, progress toward these outcomes demands  
28 that the Council use its full range of authorities and activities in a new, coordinated way.  
29 Integrated approaches will advance the *Thrive* vision of a prosperous, equitable, and livable  
30 region for today and generations to come.

## *Stewardship*

1 **Stewardship** advances the Metropolitan Council’s longstanding mission of orderly and  
2 economical development by both responsibly managing the region’s natural and financial  
3 resources and making strategic investments in our region’s future. Several of the major  
4 challenges that the Council was established to address – such as an aging bus fleet and  
5 inadequately treated wastewater polluting the region’s lakes, rivers, and streams – demonstrate  
6 the need for effective regional stewardship. Stewardship means:

- 7 • Being responsible stewards of our region’s finite resources, including natural resources  
8 (e.g., lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, groundwater, high quality natural habitats, and  
9 agricultural soils), financial resources, and our existing investments in infrastructure;
- 10 • Pivoting from simply expanding our region’s infrastructure – especially wastewater and  
11 highways – to investing our limited resources in maintaining the infrastructure we have  
12 and expanding strategically;
- 13 • Leveraging our infrastructure investments with higher expectations of land use.

### 14 **Being a responsible steward of finite natural resources**

15 The region is home to an abundance of natural resources including three major rivers, over 900  
16 lakes, extensive wetlands, native prairie, woodland habitats, and an abundant groundwater  
17 system. These rich natural assets are part of our regional identity, enhancing our quality of life  
18 and supporting a strong economy. Natural areas recharge our aquifers, clean stormwater runoff  
19 and slow its flow, reducing flood damage and improving the quality of rivers, lakes, streams,  
20 wetlands and groundwater. Natural resources also provide a variety of benefits that would be  
21 costly to replace. Tree canopies can shade our buildings and absorb carbon dioxide and  
22 pollutants. Wetlands and upland woods and prairies provide wildlife habitat and offer access to  
23 nature to nearby residents. Local research “confirms that many types of open spaces, from  
24 parks and nature preserves to greenways, wetlands and lakes, have a positive effect on nearby

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25 property values.”<sup>1</sup> Making natural resources an integral part of the planning and development  
26 process will help protect highly prized natural features for current and future generations.

27 Effectively protecting natural resources from unfettered development patterns and preserving  
28 the region’s natural resources for future generations have long been a core part of the Council’s  
29 work. The Council works to preserve natural resources by partnering with local governments on  
30 land use planning, incorporating natural resources considerations in the Council’s own planning  
31 and infrastructure investment decisions, and planning and funding regional parks. The Council  
32 uses its investments in the Regional Parks and Open Space System to conserve scarce natural  
33 resources, such as habitats for endangered species, fens, unique habitats, conserved prairie,  
34 wetlands, and water resources. For example, regional park resources such as the Minneapolis  
35 Chain of Lakes and Lebanon Hills in Dakota County contribute to the preservation of important  
36 ecological and natural features. Since the founding of the Regional Recreation Open Space  
37 system in 1974, regional parks have protected natural resources, including 30,700 acres of land  
38 designated as Regionally Significant Ecological Areas.

39 Although the region is a water-rich area, the quality of its rivers, lakes, and streams suffers from  
40 stormwater runoff that carries sediment, phosphorus and other nutrients, oils, road salt, and  
41 other pollutants. Loss of natural areas contributes to increased runoff and lowered water quality.  
42 Best management practices minimize pollutants in the region’s surface- and groundwater.  
43 Proper management of subsurface sewage treatment systems is needed to minimize impacts  
44 on surface water, groundwater and public health. The Council and region will work to maintain  
45 and improve the quality and availability of the region’s water resources (rivers, streams, lakes,  
46 aquifers, and wetlands) to support habitat and ecosystem health while providing for recreational  
47 opportunities, all of which are critical elements of our region’s quality of life. To protect natural  
48 resources, the Council will:

- 49 • Fund ongoing acquisition of priority natural resources and the last best places into the  
50 Regional Parks and Open Space System.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Wilder Research (2005) *The Economic Value of Open Space*.



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- 51 • Encourage local governments to locate and design new developments in a way that  
52 preserves and benefits from the natural environment and to promote growth in already-  
53 urbanized areas in order to reduce development pressures that endanger natural  
54 resources.
- 55 • Assess the quality of the regional groundwater system and vulnerability to land use  
56 changes along with identifying high potential areas for recharge.
- 57 • Monitor and assess the condition of the region's lakes, rivers and streams.
- 58 • Partner to conserve, maintain, and restore natural resources identified in natural  
59 resource inventories.
- 60 • Provide direction, guidance and technical assistance on best management practices for  
61 effective stormwater management and land use strategies that preserve and protect  
62 natural resources.
- 63 • Ask local comprehensive plans to include local natural resources inventories, identify the  
64 tension points between natural resource protections and development pressures; and  
65 describe local land uses and planning strategies for protecting natural resources and  
66 minimizing development impacts.

67 **Pivoting from expanding to maintaining our region's infrastructure**

68 Just as important as the preservation of natural resources is the responsibility of the Council to  
69 be a wise steward of public resources and to strategically, effectively and efficiently guide those  
70 dollars to the greatest benefit to our region. The combination of structural and demographic  
71 changes has made public resources for infrastructure expansion and preservation significantly  
72 more limited than in the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Consequently, it becomes more critical  
73 that we make smart investments and wise financial decisions. The declining condition of  
74 pavement and the aging condition of the regional sewers demonstrate the urgency to invest  
75 significantly more resources in preserving and maintaining our aging infrastructure, particularly  
76 our roads and bridges. As a result, the Council is pivoting from expanding our systems –  
77 especially wastewater and highways – to both maintaining the infrastructure we have and  
78 maximizing the impact of limited dollars. It is time to strike a new balance between being good  
79 stewards of the infrastructure we have and building more.

80 The Council's effective planning, combined with slowed population growth and reduced per  
81 capita water use over the last decade, has created a regional wastewater treatment system with

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82 adequate capacity and service coverage planned through at least 2040. Prudent planning and  
83 system improvements at the regional and local levels have helped maintain and extend the  
84 capacity and life of the existing wastewater treatment system. With the system largely planned,  
85 and forecasted population growth suggesting no need for expansion of the wastewater system's  
86 geographic footprint, the Council's attention will turn from managing the edge of the system to  
87 ensuring adequate maintenance and capacity in the redeveloping areas of the region in order to  
88 efficiently use existing wastewater investments.

89 Our region's highway investment strategy exemplifies the need and the opportunity for  
90 thoughtful and strategic stewardship of transportation resources. The region's aging system  
91 has increasing needs for preservation and maintenance just as federal, state and local  
92 resources for transportation infrastructure are declining. Demand for highway capacity projects  
93 to relieve congestion and to serve the suburban edge and emerging suburban edge are well  
94 beyond the available resources to pay for transportation improvements. Regional congestion is  
95 a sign of economic activity and occurs primarily during peak commuting hours. As a result,  
96 moving more people during these times requires different solutions than just addressing the  
97 congestion. With limited fiscal resources, smart highway capacity investments across the region  
98 must take a system-wide approach and create alternatives to driving alone in congestion, rather  
99 than project-by-project expansions that often simply move the congestion "down the road". The  
100 Council's policies will emphasize preserving existing highway assets and optimizing capacity  
101 through strategic investments that will be further defined in the Transportation Policy Plan:

- 102 • Preserve, manage, and optimize the capacity of the existing highway system to move  
103 more people and vehicles;
- 104 • Construct lower-cost/high-benefit safety and capacity improvement projects throughout  
105 the region;
- 106 • Leverage preservation projects with lower-cost/high-benefit investments, such as the I-  
107 35E Cayuga bridge replacement project which is also adding capacity for managed  
108 lanes;
- 109 • Expand the regional system of managed (priced) lanes to provide a congestion-free  
110 option for those using transit, sharing rides, or willing to pay;
- 111 • Strategically enhance capacity such as converting signaled intersections into highway  
112 interchanges;

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- 113 • Enhance transit projects;
- 114 • Offer modal choices.

**Leveraging our infrastructure investments with higher expectations of land use**

116 The intersection of land use, urban form and the transportation system shapes the effectiveness  
117 of stewardship of transportation investments. The Council will work with municipalities to align  
118 development patterns and highway investments by focusing growth and investment along  
119 corridors with strong potential for future transit or managed lane investments. Areas outside  
120 these corridors may continue to develop but will receive only limited investments from federal or  
121 state sources for new or expanded highways.

122 While the region has been building its highway system for more than 60 years, we have only  
123 started to build a new fixed-route transitway system in the last decade to supplement our  
124 extensive network of buses. Our transitway network is largely still in development with  
125 opportunities to invest in transit across the urbanized parts of our region. Effective stewardship  
126 of public transit dollars requires the strategic coordination of regional transit investments with  
127 more-intensive surrounding land uses, connected development patterns and urban form. Since  
128 much of our region developed around roads and private automobiles, the changes in land use  
129 and urban form required to make transit successful will be significant. To effectively leverage  
130 our regional transit investments, the Council will need strong local partners who are willing to  
131 plan and invest in their communities and coordinate with neighboring communities to develop  
132 around transit. The Council will:

- 133 • Prioritize transit investments in areas where infrastructure and development patterns to  
134 support a successful transit system are either in place or committed to in the planning or  
135 development process, balancing transit ridership with added connectivity;
- 136 • Assess carefully the costs, benefits, local commitment to transit-supportive development  
137 patterns, and the market for future development prior to expanding geographic coverage  
138 of transit service;
- 139 • Stage transit modes, coverage, and service levels to match the intensity of development  
140 to minimize the risk to public resources and maximize return on public infrastructure  
141 investments;

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- 142       • Define the Council's expectations for transit-supportive land use planning – including  
143       expectations for connectivity, density and intensity, environmental considerations, and  
144       zoning – near major transit investments in policy to be refined in the Thrive  
145       Transportation Policy Plan;
- 146       • Collaborate with municipalities to coordinate land use and development patterns with  
147       frequent, all-day transit service and transitways to increase transit ridership, increase the  
148       likelihood of successful transit investment, and respond to new market opportunities  
149       around transit investment.

150

151       *In addition to being a responsible steward of its existing resources, we must also focus on our*  
152       *economic prosperity to expand our pool of resources for future investments.*

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*Prosperity*

1 **Prosperity** results from investments in infrastructure and amenities that create regional  
2 economic competitiveness, thereby attracting and retaining successful businesses, a talented  
3 workforce, and, consequently, wealth. Regional economic competitiveness results from  
4 strategic, long-term decisions that build on and grow the region’s economic strengths relative to  
5 other regions. How the Twin Cities region strategically positions itself relative to other  
6 metropolitan regions, both domestically and internationally, influences our region’s long-term  
7 economic prosperity. Collectively, the region must provide great locations for businesses to  
8 succeed – particularly the industries that export a product or service beyond the region and  
9 therefore bring wealth into the region. Advancing prosperity involves:

- 10 • Fostering the conditions for shared economic vitality by balancing major investments  
11 across the region;
- 12 • Protecting natural resources that are the foundation of prosperity;
- 13 • Planning for and investing in infrastructure, amenities, and quality of life with an eye to  
14 what the region needs to be economically competitive;
- 15 • Reducing the cost differential between redevelopment and greenfield development sites  
16 to maintain a strong core.

17

18 Minneapolis and Saint Paul developed as cities because of strategic locations. Saint Paul is  
19 considered the navigable head of the Mississippi River, while Minneapolis found its origins  
20 alongside the hydropower provided by Saint Anthony Falls where milling blossomed. James J.  
21 Hill’s Great Northern Railway brought the agricultural wealth of the entire northwestern United  
22 States through Minneapolis and Saint Paul, creating and reinforcing the region as a financial  
23 hub. Though the economy has evolved over the last 150 years, businesses seek locational  
24 advantages, particularly access to a skilled workforce, access to markets and an overall  
25 environment that allows them to compete in the global market. Some businesses are more  
26 focused on freight and the movement of goods, while knowledge-intensive services are more  
27 focused on the movement of people to employment locations and the quality of life that attracts  
28 and maintains a highly-skilled workforce to and in the region.

29 The Metropolitan Council’s regional planning and provision of infrastructure sets the stage for  
30 our region’s economic competitiveness and prosperity. While economic development

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31 authorities and others conduct the transactional economic development work of interacting with  
32 specific businesses, the work of creating, attracting and retaining businesses requires  
33 coordinated efforts. The Council’s specific contributions to regional economic competitiveness  
34 lie in the arena of community development – that is, supporting the infrastructure, amenities and  
35 quality of life that are essential to attracting and retaining businesses and talent. The Council  
36 will intentionally leverage its capacity to plan for and invest in community development and  
37 consider prosperity and economic competitiveness as a lens through which to evaluate its  
38 planning, operational and investment decisions.

39 **Fostering the conditions for shared economic vitality by balancing major**  
40 **investments across the region**

41 To advance prosperity across the Twin Cities, the Council will intentionally consider regional  
42 balance – that is, balancing its investments and activity across the region – in its planning,  
43 operational, and investment decisions. The Council’s intent is that no part of the region is  
44 consistently favored or consistently ignored. The regional balance issue has multiple  
45 dimensions; sometimes the issue is north and east vs. southwest, other times the issue is  
46 suburban edge vs. suburban vs. urban center. Because development patterns vary across the  
47 region, advancing regional balance does not guarantee that all parts of the region will receive  
48 the same level or intensity of investments, activity or attention. Rather, advancing regional  
49 balance will be a consideration that helps all parts of the region receive investments that  
50 promote prosperity at their stage and level of development.

51 **Protecting natural resources that are the foundation of prosperity**

52 Location is but one of the Twin Cities region’s attributes that create economic prosperity; our  
53 metropolitan area is also endowed with rich natural resources, such as soil, water and  
54 aggregate.

55 *Prime agricultural soils* both support the region’s farm economy and provide for local food  
56 production. Agricultural land creates economic opportunity for a variety of residents, ranging  
57 from farmers growing crops on century-old family farms to new Americans bringing their farming  
58 experience into small-scale local food production serving farmers’ markets. About a half-million  
59 acres in the region, one-quarter of the region’s land, are planned, guided and zoned to maintain  
60 agriculture as the primary long-term land use – mainly in a crescent-shaped arc through Dakota,

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61 Scott and Carver Counties. The Council supports the preservation of agricultural land to protect  
62 the agricultural economy in the region, to provide economic opportunities for farmers, and to  
63 promote local food production. The Council limits urbanization in rural areas to reduce  
64 development pressure on agricultural lands and to avoid the premature expansion of  
65 metropolitan systems. Some of the region’s agricultural lands are identified as part of the  
66 Council’s long-term service area for post-2040 sewered development, giving the Council greater  
67 authority to enable long-term agricultural uses and avoid premature development until urban  
68 densities are needed to accommodate regional growth. The Council acknowledges that local  
69 jurisdictions are best-positioned to determine how best to guide agricultural land within their  
70 borders.

71 From its role in the early historical development of our region, *water* is a critical prerequisite of  
72 regional growth and prosperity. Access to clean water through both groundwater and the  
73 Mississippi River will be a competitive advantage for our metropolitan area during the next  
74 century when many other regions around the globe will struggle to provide clean water at a  
75 reasonable cost. The City of Minneapolis has calculated that a shutdown of the Minneapolis  
76 water supply system would cost businesses over \$65,000,000 a day.<sup>2</sup> The Council’s long-term  
77 approach to planning water sustainability gives our region a key competitive advantage –  
78 particularly when other regions across the country are planning for water supplies in days or  
79 weeks, not decades and generations. The Council’s regional vision and approach to managing  
80 our regional water resources consider the interrelationships of land use, development patterns,  
81 transportation and other regional services, and water resource protection. Managing and using  
82 the region’s water resources wisely will sustain the region now and into the future.

83 *Aggregate*—i.e., gravel and crushed rock—is another resource vital to the area. The regional  
84 transportation systems and the building industry need large volumes of aggregate for  
85 construction and maintenance. The local availability of aggregate helps reduce construction  
86 costs for roads, bridges and housing. Because aggregate is a limited resource critical to the  
87 construction industry, it is critical to avoid blocking access to aggregate until aggregate has

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<sup>2</sup> 2013 analysis

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88 been removed. Analysis that was published in 2000 found that as of 1997, 45 percent of the  
89 region’s aggregate deposits had either been built over by development or already mined.<sup>3</sup>

90 To protect soils, water and aggregate, the natural resources that are the foundation of economic  
91 prosperity, the Council will:

- 92 • Encourage local governments to promote the use of the Metropolitan Agricultural  
93 Preserves program to preserve prime agricultural lands; identify and guide lands  
94 intended for long-term agriculture at appropriate densities to support enrollment in the  
95 Metropolitan Agricultural Preserves Program; develop and implement strategies for  
96 protecting farmlands, such as agricultural security districts; and use local ordinances and  
97 official controls to minimize conflicts between agricultural and non-farm uses through  
98 local ordinances and official controls.
- 99 • Maintain and update the regional water supply plan to promote a sustainable water  
100 supply for the long-term.
- 101 • Incorporate water sustainability considerations in all areas of Council policy and actions,  
102 including overall development patterns, water management, transportation, and housing  
103 and regional parks.
- 104 • Require local governments to address water sustainability in their local comprehensive  
105 plans.
- 106 • Work with regional and local partners to identify subregional and local water  
107 sustainability solutions that balance regional needs and local objectives.
- 108 • Implement the statutory requirement that local jurisdictions with aggregate resources  
109 within their borders address their goals, intentions, and priorities concerning aggregate  
110 in their local comprehensive plans.

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<sup>3</sup> Source: Minnesota Geological Survey Information Circular 46, “Aggregate Resources Inventory of the Seven-County Metropolitan Area, Minnesota”, 2000.



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111 **Planning for and investing in infrastructure, amenities and quality of life with an**  
112 **eye to what the region needs to be economically competitive**

113 While economic competitiveness is a new emphasis, the Council's long-range planning and  
114 infrastructure investments already advance regional economic prosperity by planning for the  
115 efficient movement of people and freight, providing cost-effective and efficient wastewater  
116 treatment with wholesale rates that are today as much as 40 percent lower than comparable  
117 regions, and contributing to a quality of life and cost structure that attract and retain businesses  
118 and talent. Regional transportation systems provide efficient, effective and reliable access to  
119 inputs, materials or suppliers, and regional, national and international markets. Time spent in  
120 transportation – for raw materials or finished goods – does not add value to businesses, so  
121 strategic locations require access to efficient transportation. The region's bustling international  
122 airport, rail and river freight systems, regional highways, and growing transit system all work  
123 together to support our vibrant regional economy.

124 A thriving *regional aviation system* is an economic asset to the region, providing businesses and  
125 people with competitive access to the global economy. Airport access is particularly important  
126 for our region's corporate headquarters and industries dependent on travel. Our system of  
127 reliever airports provides geographically-dispersed alternatives for general aviation across the  
128 region and creates options to using the Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport, the region's  
129 only commercial service airport. The Council supports airport facilities investment to keep pace  
130 with market needs and maintain the region's economic vitality.

131 Although trucks carry 75 percent of all freight, barges and freight rail contribute to economic  
132 competitiveness by moving materials and goods long distances at low cost and with low carbon  
133 impact. Different modes serve different types of freight – barges typically carry bulk  
134 commodities such as aggregate, fertilizer, or grain, while rail is used for longer-distance (500  
135 miles or more) trips moving liquids, commodities or containerized goods. In addition to its ports,  
136 the Twin Cities region has the competitive advantage of being at the intersection of four Class  
137 One railroads and several short line railroads, dramatically increasing the accessibility of the  
138 region to markets and raw materials. However, direct access to freight rail is limited to land  
139 adjacent to railroads and, at scale, requires intermodal terminals to complete the transition from  
140 rail to truck. The region has two well-used major intermodal terminals – the BNSF Midway Hub  
141 in Saint Paul and the CP Shoreham Yard in Northeast Minneapolis – that serve the transition  
142 from rail to truck and are important to support and protect.

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143 *Industrial land* provides locations for exporting industries and good-paying jobs; the Council  
144 discourages redevelopment of industrial land into other uses in strategically important locations  
145 along rivers and railroads in the metropolitan region. Local government plans should also  
146 consider the potential conflicts and impacts resulting from residential communities, commercial  
147 districts, and parklands encroaching upon existing industrial land uses.

148 The Council recognizes the essential role that *highways* serve in the transportation system of  
149 the region. The region's highway investments are part of a coordinated, interconnected, and  
150 multimodal regional transportation network that safely, reliably and affordably connects people  
151 and freight with destinations in the region and beyond. The vast majority of the region's freight  
152 moves by truck. The Council works with the Minnesota Department of Transportation, counties  
153 and local units of government to preserve and improve these roadways. To improve the  
154 efficiency of the regional highway system, the Council and the Minnesota Department of  
155 Transportation are building MnPass lanes which provide a congestion-free alternative to those  
156 using transit and carpools or willing to pay. This market-based solution allows auto drivers and  
157 small trucks to price the value of their time spent in congestion and pay for a faster alternative.  
158 This also creates more capacity for larger trucks in the general highway lanes during peak traffic  
159 periods.

160 Some locations possess unique characteristics or assets that are significant to the regional  
161 economy – for example, airports, intermodal freight terminals, barge terminals, and major  
162 manufacturers. In many of these cases, these places serve region-wide needs at a cost to the  
163 neighboring area – whether noise, nuisance or a loss of tax base to public purpose.

164 Employers locate worksites to maximize their accessibility and proximity to the workforce they  
165 need. We must compete with regions around the globe for attracting talented young workers  
166 who are necessary to meet the needs of the region's growing economy and replace aging baby  
167 boomers. To compete successfully for this generation, our region must provide the housing,  
168 transit, transportation and quality of life amenities that will continue to attract the talent needed  
169 by employers in our region – including an exceptionally high concentration of corporate  
170 headquarters and business service firms. The region's transportation system, including  
171 highways, transit and the emerging bicycle network, provides our residents options for  
172 commuting to their workplaces. Accessibility to transit is of particular interest to office-based  
173 employers because transit reduces both employer costs of providing parking and employee

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174 transportation costs. Employers are also interested in locations that are proximate to housing  
175 options affordable to their employees.

176 To plan for and invest in the infrastructure, amenities, and quality of life the region needs to be  
177 economically competitive, the Council will:

- 178 • Plan for the efficient and multimodal movement of freight globally, nationally and  
179 regionally;
- 180 • Provide cost-effective and efficient wastewater treatment at wholesale rates that are as  
181 much as 40 percent lower today than comparable regions;
- 182 • Contribute to a quality of life and cost of living that attract and retain a talented  
183 workforce;
- 184 • Focus expansion of transit service to and within existing high-density job and activity  
185 centers;
- 186 • Encourage workforce housing that is affordable to a variety of income levels across the  
187 region, especially in proximity to job centers and transit;
- 188 • Plan for adequate capacity at Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport, and maintain,  
189 improve and preserve our system of reliever airports;
- 190 • Use its authority and provide technical assistance to protect and preserve compatible  
191 land uses around resources such as airports, railroads and industrial land;
- 192 • Conduct a metrowide inventory and analysis of industrial land to assess the supply of  
193 and demand for industrial land with freight access;
- 194 • Investigate and assess cost-effective options for regional water supply infrastructure.

195

196 **Reducing the cost differential between redevelopment and greenfield**  
197 **development sites**

198 Development on undeveloped or agricultural land – greenfield development – traditionally costs  
199 developers or builders less because there are no costs for demolition or land remediation.  
200 However, development on greenfields often has higher public costs as it necessitates extending  
201 infrastructure to new sites. Infill development and redevelopment, on the other hand, require  
202 less new regional infrastructure but cost more for the developer, both in the direct costs of

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203 demolition and land remediation as well as the increased complexity of integrating a project into  
204 existing neighborhoods. Redevelopment projects may require direct public subsidy or indirect  
205 support through specific infrastructure investments. Because healthy thriving regions need both  
206 a strong periphery and a strong core, the Council will work to reduce the cost differential  
207 between redevelopment and greenfield development sites. To advance redevelopment, the  
208 Council will:

- 209 • Compile locally-identified priority sites for development and redevelopment, as included  
210 in local comprehensive plans, into a regional inventory of development priorities;
- 211 • Analyze the market readiness of these sites and work with local and regional partners to  
212 develop investment and redevelopment strategies customized to the needs of different  
213 types of strong and weak markets, including concentrated and racially-concentrated  
214 areas of poverty;
- 215 • Use its role and authorities to streamline redevelopment processes and help equalize  
216 the playing field between redevelopment and greenfield sites.

217

218 *To leverage the full power of our region's economic assets, we must help all of the region's*  
219 *residents access opportunity and participate in regional economic competitiveness.*

## *Equity*

1 **Equity** connects all residents to opportunity and creates viable housing and transportation  
2 options for people of all races, ethnicities and incomes so that all communities share the  
3 opportunities and challenges of growth and change. To reach our region's full economic  
4 potential, all of our residents must be able to access opportunity. Our region is stronger when  
5 all people live in communities that provide them access to opportunities for success, prosperity,  
6 and quality of life. Promoting equity means:

- 7 • Using our influence and investments to build a more equitable region;
- 8 • Creating real choices in where we live and how we travel for all our residents, across  
9 age, race and ethnicity, economic means, and ability;
- 10 • Investing in a mix of housing affordability along the region's transitways;
- 11 • Engaging a full cross-section of the community in decision-making.

12

13 Our region has some of the largest disparities by race and ethnicity of any large metropolitan  
14 area in the nation:

- 15 • In the Twin Cities region, 24.8 percent of all people of color are poor, compared with 6.0  
16 percent of white non-Latino people.<sup>4</sup> This is the largest such disparity among the 25  
17 largest metropolitan areas. The poverty rate for African Americans is 5.6 times greater  
18 than the poverty rate for white, non-Latino people – by far the largest such disparity  
19 among the 25 largest metropolitan areas.
- 20 • The per capita personal income for Black and African American people (\$16,300) is just  
21 41 percent of the per capita personal income for white, non-Latino people (\$39,280).
- 22 • The percentage of adults of color who lack a high school diploma is nearly six times that  
23 of white, non-Latino adults.

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<sup>4</sup> Data from the American Community Survey, 2007-2012 five-year data release. All national comparisons use the 13-county Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan statistical area, while all local numbers are for the seven-county area.

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- 24 • The unemployment rate for people of color is nearly twice that of white, non-Latino  
25 persons. The unemployment rate for Blacks and African Americans is 2.5 times the  
26 unemployment rate for white, non-Latino people – the biggest such disparity among the  
27 25 largest metropolitan areas.
- 28 • The homeownership rate among households of color is 57 percent of the  
29 homeownership rate among white, non-Latino households. Just 26 percent of Black or  
30 African American households own their homes.

31

32 **Disparities by Race and Ethnicity in the Twin Cities, 2012**

| Measure                                                        | White, non-Latino | Persons of color | Absolute disparity | Rank of among 25 largest metro areas <sup>5</sup> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Percentage of population age 25+ with a high school diploma    | 96.6 %            | 77.9 %           | -18.7 %            | 9                                                 |
| Percentage of civilian working-age population that is employed | 79.5 %            | 64.9 %           | -14.6 %            | 4                                                 |
| Percentage above poverty threshold                             | 93.7 %            | 74.1 %           | -19.6 %            | 3                                                 |
| Per capita income                                              | \$39,415          | \$17,651         | -\$21,764          | 11                                                |
| Percentage of householders who own their homes                 | 74.8 %            | 36.2 %           | -38.6 %            | 1                                                 |

33

34 These disparities are growing at the same time the share of our region’s population of color is  
35 growing. In 2010, 24 percent of our region’s population was people of color; by 2040, 43  
36 percent of our region’s residents are expected to be people of color. The share of people of  
37 color increases among younger age cohorts; 54 percent of residents under age 18 will be  
38 people of color in 2040. Eliminating these disparities, on the other hand, can have dramatic  
39 benefits. If everyone in the Twin Cities in 2040 enjoyed the same socioeconomic profile as white

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<sup>5</sup> All national comparisons use the 13-county Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan statistical area.

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40 non-Latino people do today, the social and economic impact would be significant. Compared to  
41 the disparities continuing unabated, there would be:

- 42 • 169,000 more people with a high school diploma;
- 43 • 151,000 more people with jobs;
- 44 • 305,000 fewer people in poverty;
- 45 • an additional \$32 billion in income; and
- 46 • 228,000 more homeowners.

47 The combined impact of increased employment, income and homeownership would go far to  
48 close today's disparities in wealth by race and ethnicity. All of our region's net workforce growth  
49 will come from residents of color. In short, *all* residents of the Twin Cities region need access to  
50 opportunity if the region is to have a healthy and prosperous future.

51 **Using our influence and investments to build a more equitable region**

52 The Metropolitan Council will use equity as a lens to evaluate its operational, planning, and  
53 investment decisions and intentionally use its resources, roles, and authorities to mitigate the  
54 place-based dimension of racial, ethnic and income-based disparities.

55 Triggered by the federal Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant, the Fair Housing  
56 and Equity Assessment has led our region through a process to understand its historical and  
57 current geography of race, poverty, and opportunity and to explore whether and how public  
58 investments can effectively address a legacy of private disinvestment in select neighborhoods.  
59 The Fair Housing and Equity Assessment introduced the focus on racially-concentrated areas of  
60 poverty, defined for our region as census tracts where at least half of the residents are people of  
61 color and at least 40 percent of the residents live below 185 percent of the federal poverty line.<sup>6</sup>

62 The Council will:

- 63 • Work to mitigate concentrated and racially-concentrated areas of poverty by better  
64 connecting their residents to opportunity and catalyzing neighborhood revitalization;

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<sup>6</sup> (\$42,589 in annual income for a four-person household in 2011)

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- 65 • Work with communities to create more economically balanced neighborhoods, including  
66 strategically targeted subsidies to develop market-rate housing in select areas;
- 67 • Use Livable Communities Act resources to catalyze private investment in concentrated  
68 and racially-concentrated areas of poverty;
- 69 • Actively partner in neighborhood revitalization efforts such as Penn Avenue Community  
70 Works;
- 71 • Conduct a regional inventory of industrial land that considers the location of industrial  
72 land relative to the potential workforce eager to access nearby higher-wage job  
73 opportunities;
- 74 • Ask funding applicants to explain how their projects would advance equity, including  
75 helping residents of concentrated and racially-concentrated areas of poverty and/or  
76 lower-income households.

77 By using public resources to catalyze investment in areas that have seen chronic private  
78 disinvestment – specifically including the concentrated and racially-concentrated areas of  
79 poverty identified through the Fair Housing and Equity Assessment – the Council will seek to  
80 help the region grow and prosper more equitably.

81 Because the challenges of racial and economic equity require aligning efforts across multiple  
82 entities, the Council will convene multiple partners, including cities, counties, school districts,  
83 non-profits and philanthropy, to develop shared plans and investment strategies to address the  
84 issues of concentrated and racially-concentrated areas of poverty. The Council will play a  
85 leadership role in this strategy, bringing data to the table and co-convening conversations with  
86 partner institutions. Based on these conversations, the Council may explore funding set-asides  
87 or special investment resources to help create opportunities in concentrated and racially-  
88 concentrated areas of poverty.

89 **Expanding choices in where we live and how we travel for all our residents,**  
90 **across age, race and ethnicity, economic means, and ability**

91 To advance racial and economic equity across the metropolitan area, the Council will work to  
92 create and protect viable housing and transportation options for the region’s residents,  
93 regardless of race, ethnicity, income, immigrant status or disability. While different people will



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94 make different choices reflecting their own needs and preferences, the Council's priority will be  
95 expanding real choices for housing and transportation.

96 The Council wants the region to have housing options that give people in all life stages and of  
97 all economic means viable choices for safe, stable and affordable homes. To help more  
98 households have real housing choices, the Council will:

- 99 • Use its resources, including investments in transit, infrastructure and redevelopment, to  
100 help create and preserve racially-integrated, mixed-income neighborhoods across the  
101 region;
- 102 • Encourage preserving existing affordable housing across the region and encourage new  
103 additions to the affordable housing stock in areas that have an inadequate supply of  
104 existing affordable housing and are experiencing new housing construction – particularly  
105 in areas that are well-connected to jobs and transit;
- 106 • Invest in affordable housing construction and preservation in higher-income areas of the  
107 region;
- 108 • Provide competitive rent limits to enable Housing Choice Voucher holders to choose the  
109 location that best meets their needs, including those opportunities in higher-cost  
110 communities;
- 111 • Encourage increased resources for preserving existing and producing more affordable  
112 housing opportunities at the federal, state, regional and local level to help close the gap  
113 between the region's affordable housing need and the supply;
- 114 • Support research and testing related to fair housing, discriminatory lending practices,  
115 and real estate steering to determine if these discriminatory practices are occurring and  
116 limiting housing choices.

117

118 Transportation choices are as important to lower-income households as housing choices. The  
119 Council will continue to strengthen transit connections between lower-income residents and  
120 opportunities such as jobs and education. To expand the transportation choices that all  
121 households have, including in some neighborhoods the choice to live without a car, the Council  
122 will:

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- 123       • Include a measure of households who do not own private automobiles – also known as  
124       “transit dependency” – as one of the elements driving the Transit Market Areas and  
125       defining the level of transit service neighborhoods expect to receive;
- 126       • Conduct Title VI service equity analyses to ensure that major changes in transit service  
127       do not lead to disparate impacts on low-income residents and communities of color;
- 128       • Prioritize transportation investments, including transitways, strategic highway capacity  
129       improvements, and bicycle / pedestrian infrastructure, that connect lower-income areas  
130       to job opportunities;
- 131       • Engage neighborhood residents in transit planning to understand how to most effectively  
132       use transit service and investments to promote access to opportunity.

133       **Investing in a mix of housing affordability along the region’s transit corridors**

134       As our region makes significant investments in transit, particularly transitways, we must also  
135       ensure that the inevitable changes in neighborhoods along transit do not displace existing low-  
136       income residents. To promote a mix of housing affordability along the region’s transit corridors,  
137       the Council will:

- 138       • Align its resources and work with other partners to help preserve a mix of housing  
139       affordability along the region’s transit routes and corridors to help low-income  
140       households benefit from transit investments;
- 141       • Require that local jurisdictions applying for Livable Communities transit-oriented  
142       development grants adopt local policies reflecting equity in the proposed grant area;
- 143       • Promote transit-oriented development that expands affordable housing in transit station  
144       areas.

145       **Engaging a full cross-section of the community in decision-making**

146       Beyond convening regional stakeholders, the Council will strengthen its approach to outreach,  
147       public participation, and community engagement by developing a Council-wide Public  
148       Participation Plan. In the development of this Public Participation Plan, the Council will:

- 149       • Define consistent expectations of how the Council will engage;

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150 • Evaluate what types of policy, planning and operational decisions need what levels of  
151 engagement, recognizing that not all decisions need and merit the same intensity of  
152 engagement;

153 • Consult with members of the community;

154 • Focus on developing lasting relationships;

155 • Work toward making decisions with people, not for people.

156 *The commitment to address racial and economic disparities across neighborhoods*  
157 *demonstrates the necessity of ensuring that all residents live in a healthy, vibrant and livable*  
158 *region.*



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*Livability*

1 **Livability** focuses on the quality of our residents' lives and experiences in our region and how  
2 places and infrastructure create and enhance the quality of life that makes our region a great  
3 place to live. With abundant open space, a vibrant arts community, a range of housing options,  
4 and a reasonable cost of living, the Twin Cities region is widely recognized for its high quality of  
5 life. The Metropolitan Council's focus on livability is on creating vibrant places and underlying  
6 infrastructure, investing in regional parks and affordable housing, and collaborating with  
7 partners to achieve the full range of possibilities that make our region a great place to live.  
8 Livability adds value to our region by retaining and attracting a talented workforce, by increasing  
9 living choices, by building community identity, by highlighting the unique qualities of local  
10 places, and by informing individual decisions that reinforce those qualities. The Council is  
11 committed to increasing livability in the region through its authority, its investments in  
12 infrastructure, and its collaboration with others to sustain and increase a high quality of life.  
13 Enhancing livability means:

- 14 • Providing people access to nature and outdoor recreation through regional parks and  
15 trails;
- 16 • Supporting regional bicycle facilities to promote bicycling for transportation, recreation  
17 and healthy lifestyles;
- 18 • Providing housing and transportation choices for a range of demographic characteristics  
19 and economic means;
- 20 • Aligning resources to support transit-oriented development and walkable, urban places.

21  
22 Livability helps attract and retain the great people and great businesses that our region needs to  
23 thrive and compete economically. Individuals are increasingly choosing regions that offer  
24 attractive lifestyles before searching for employment. Young, creative professionals today are  
25 highly mobile and can live anywhere they want. They are choosing high-amenity places that  
26 have a diverse population, a rich arts and entertainment culture, natural beauty, abundant  
27 recreation, and sufficient walkability and transit systems that allow them to travel without a car.  
28 Do we have communities that will attract and retain this desired group? Attracting younger  
29 talent through high-quality communities is also an investment in the future market for our  
30 housing stock. Many of those young urbanites will be looking for more space as they have

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31 children and their lifestyle preferences change. As existing residents age out of their homes,  
32 these younger residents will be ready to move in. Businesses also place a high value on  
33 livability. Whether it is a large company seeking a location for an office or a talented  
34 entrepreneur looking to grow an innovative business, decision-makers want to know their  
35 employees can get to work and are happy living here.

36 **Giving people access to nature and outdoor recreation through regional parks**  
37 **and trails**

38 It is difficult to overstate the importance of the regional parks system in keeping our region on  
39 the top of national livability rankings. The Twin Cities area's 59 regional parks, park reserves  
40 and special recreation features plus over 300 miles of regional trails showcase the unique  
41 landscapes of the region and provide year-round recreation. Our residents have long identified  
42 the region's parks, trails and natural environment as the most attractive feature of the region.<sup>7</sup>  
43 Attracting 45.8 million annual visitors, the Regional Parks System provides access to natural  
44 space that contributes to physical and emotional well-being. Many of our region's most well-  
45 known and iconic sites – the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes, Como Zoo and Conservatory,  
46 Lebanon Hills Regional Park, Bunker Hills Regional Park, Elm Creek Park Reserve, and Lake  
47 Elmo Park Reserve – are part of the regional parks system. The Council will collaborate with  
48 the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, regional park agencies and State  
49 partners to:

- 50 • Expand the regional park system to conserve, maintain and connect natural resources  
51 identified as high quality or of regional importance;
- 52 • Provide a comprehensive regional park and trail system that preserves quality natural  
53 resources, increases climate resiliency, fosters healthy communities, and enhances  
54 quality of life in the region;
- 55 • Promote multi-modal access to regional parks, trails and transit network, where  
56 appropriate;

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<sup>7</sup> For more information, see the [Metro Residents Survey](#).

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- 57       • Strengthen equitable usage of regional parks and trails by all our region’s residents,  
58       such as across race, ethnicity, class, age, ability and immigrant status.

59

60   **Providing housing and transportation choices for a range of demographic**  
61   **characteristics and economic means**

62   Over our region’s history, a variety of neighborhoods have developed to meet the needs of  
63   residents, especially those who want single-family homes, which comprise 58 percent of our  
64   region’s current housing stock. Demand for this housing stock is projected to continue, but the  
65   growth segments of our population will be households that may increasingly prefer alternative  
66   forms of neighborhoods. Recent trends support this shift. Since 2000, only 43 percent of our  
67   region’s building permits have been for single-family detached homes; in 2012, the region  
68   issued building permits for more multifamily units than all housing units in any of the previous  
69   three years. The livability challenge around these shifts is to create communities that offer  
70   satisfying experiences and meet the daily needs for living, shopping, working, and recreation for  
71   each group, not simply housing developments that offer a place to own or rent.

72   As residents age, their needs, preferences and travel behavior shift; some communities are  
73   poorly designed to accommodate their residents’ future needs. Growing cohorts of residents,  
74   including international immigrants and young professionals living alone, may need housing and  
75   transportation choices beyond what our region now offers. As infrastructure ages, rebuilding will  
76   be necessary. Going forward, each jurisdiction will have to examine whether it offers satisfying  
77   living options for its current and future residents.

78   Some of the larger groups and the experiences they may value include:

- 79       • Seniors, or the Silver Tsunami, will be the fastest growing segment of our population,  
80       doubling in absolute numbers by 2030 and reaching one in five of our region’s residents  
81       by 2040. As people age, their housing preferences tend to change. While some choose  
82       to move to a downtown condo and others want to stay close to their places of worship,  
83       friends or family members (especially the grandchildren), most seniors share common  
84       interests in less household maintenance, smaller housing units, and easy access to  
85       nearby goods and services, especially health care. Are there adequate housing choices

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86 available for seniors to stay active, conveniently access goods and services, and/or be  
87 near friends and family?

88 • The Millennial generation, already the largest generation demographically, seems to  
89 have different lifestyle preferences. Millennials tend to favor urban amenities, access to  
90 transit and bicycling options, and more dense and active neighborhoods rather than the  
91 auto-oriented subdivisions of their youth. Between stagnant entry-level wages, higher  
92 student loan debt, and delayed marriage and child-rearing, Millennials are less likely to  
93 move into homeownership at the same ages as their predecessors. Critical to the  
94 region's future prosperity, will we have places that retain and attract these young  
95 individuals and households? If their living preferences continue to diverge from their  
96 parents' generation, will our region's communities continue to offer them satisfying living  
97 situations?

98 • New Americans move to our region from across the globe, bringing with them unique  
99 cultural histories that build the richness of our region. As these residents come to the  
100 region, will they find places that facilitate their settlement, provide affordability,  
101 community and employment, and offer opportunities to prosper?

102 To support the livability of our region for our changing demographics, the Council will:

- 103 • Continue to provide regional wastewater treatment services at rates that today are 40  
104 percent below the national average for similar-sized systems;
- 105 • Encourage and invest in a wide variety of housing options throughout the region to serve  
106 the increasingly diverse population, including viable housing choices for households with  
107 low and moderate incomes;
- 108 • Invest in transit to expand transportation options, particularly to connect workers to jobs  
109 throughout the region;
- 110 • Promote the preservation of existing housing, especially affordable housing, to cost-  
111 effectively maintain affordability and preserve the unique historical characteristics of the  
112 region's housing stock.



113 **Supporting the region's bicycle and pedestrian facilities to promote bicycling for**  
114 **transportation, recreation and healthy lifestyles**

115 Over the last ten years, bicycling as a mode of transportation has increased as a result of  
116 growing interest in physically-active lifestyles, concern about climate change, improved  
117 connections to transit, and the preferences of the Millennial generation. Data from the 2010  
118 Travel Behavior Inventory show that bicycling's share of work commute trips has grown by 70  
119 percent over the decade and now represents one in 11 work commutes in the central cities.  
120 Facilities for walking – which makes up 6 percent of all trips – are also important for transit  
121 ridership, healthy active lifestyles, and safety. The Council will collaborate with local  
122 communities, MnDOT, the Transportation Advisory Board and other partners to connect and  
123 improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Specifically, the Council will:

- 124 • Focus its bicycle and pedestrian efforts on regional-scale issues and coordination  
125 among jurisdictions in the region, including:
  - 126 • Aggregating local bike plans into a shared regional format;
  - 127 • Identifying regionally important bicycle corridors in the Transportation Policy  
128 Plan;
  - 129 • Reducing gaps and barriers and improving links across jurisdictional borders.
- 130 • Work with its partners, including MnDOT, the Transportation Advisory Board and local  
131 jurisdictions, to expand the region's bicycle and pedestrian system and increase these  
132 modes' share of the regional trips over the coming decades by:
  - 133 • Encouraging local jurisdictions to recognize planning and building of bicycle and  
134 pedestrian facilities as a component of new development;
  - 135 • Encouraging adoption of Complete Streets solutions by local communities where  
136 appropriate;
  - 137 • Encouraging local communities to include bicycle plans and pedestrian plans in  
138 their comprehensive plans;
- 139 • Work with partners to plan, construct and maintain bicycle and pedestrian connections to  
140 regional systems (such as transit stations, highways or regional parks).

141 **Aligning resources to support transit-oriented development and walkable, urban**  
142 **places**

143 Every community can strive for more livability, but the infrastructure and place-making needs  
144 and challenges can vary widely by location. An urban core neighborhood may need wider  
145 sidewalks, shared open spaces, careful building detailing and a mix of activities to be livable. A  
146 suburban neighborhood may need increased housing options and more bike trails to access  
147 parks and transit stops. A rural center may need a traffic-calmed main street that allows  
148 pedestrians to cross more safely or the small businesses that would attract those pedestrians.  
149 Livability for all areas also takes the network of businesses – whether an ethnic restaurant  
150 owned by new immigrants or the small-town bar owned by the same family for generations –  
151 that makes our communities unique, both supporting local residents and attracting visitors from  
152 across the world. Each jurisdiction has a unique combination of natural landscape, built  
153 environment, and local culture; communities that recognize and value their particular character,  
154 needs and opportunities can more effectively invest in their future. The Council will:

- 155 • In areas with density suitable for transit, support transit-oriented development that  
156 creates vibrant, mixed-income, places where people can live without an automobile;
- 157 • In areas where density is not yet suitable for transit, encourage transit-friendly  
158 development patterns across jurisdictional boundaries to lay the groundwork for future  
159 transit-readiness and improve livability in the interim;
- 160 • In areas where density is not suitable for transit, support walkable neighborhoods and  
161 centers.

## *Sustainability*

1                    “Our greatest responsibility is to be good ancestors.” – Jonas Salk

2    **Sustainability** protects our regional vitality for generations to come by preserving our capacity  
3 to maintain and support well-being and productivity over the long-term. The region’s  
4 investments in prosperity, equity and livability will be meaningless over the long term if the  
5 region exhausts its natural and financial resources in the present with no investment in the  
6 future sustainability of our region. Planning for sustainability means:

- 7            • Promoting the wise use of water through expanding water conservation and reuse,  
8                    increasing groundwater recharge, and rebalancing surface water and groundwater use;
- 9            • Providing leadership, information and technical assistance to support local governments  
10                    thinking about climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience;
- 11           • Operating wastewater treatment and transit systems sustainably.

### **Promoting the wise use of water**

13 The Twin Cities metropolitan area is water rich with a relative abundance of high quality ground  
14 and surface water. Three major rivers, vast underground aquifers, and over 900 lakes make us  
15 the envy of urban areas the world over. Aside from the beauty and recreational value of the  
16 region’s lakes and rivers, water is necessary to sustain our residents and our economic  
17 prosperity. The area’s plentiful water supplies and the proximity of navigable rivers sustained  
18 indigenous communities and supported the development of the region’s growing cities. The  
19 Mississippi River and the region’s prolific aquifers continue to provide residents with a reliable  
20 water supply; our rivers are natural highways that serve commerce; our region’s lakes, rivers,  
21 and streams nurture wildlife and offer people a variety of recreational opportunities.

22 Yet our water supplies are not limitless. Population growth, development, localized water  
23 shortages, the impact of groundwater withdrawal on surface waters, contamination, and drought  
24 are affecting our future water supply. Increasing reliance on groundwater as our main source of  
25 drinking water has become a significant issue. In parts of the region, groundwater levels are  
26 declining. In some cases, it is affecting, or has the potential to affect, lake and wetland levels. A  
27 pressing concern is the impact that future development might have on the reliability of  
28 groundwater as a drinking water source.

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29 In 2010, 70 percent of our region’s drinking water came from groundwater with the remainder  
30 coming from surface water sources. Groundwater analysis indicates that our aquifers are  
31 showing signs of depletion – water levels in some locations have declined by 40 feet in the last  
32 40 years – which in turn has begun to have impacts on our lakes and wetlands in the region.  
33 Forecasts indicate that the region will add over 800,000 residents over the lifetime of this plan.  
34 Continuing current practices of using groundwater as a primary drinking water source will lead  
35 to continued depletion of groundwater supplies across the region. Conservation measures  
36 alone are inadequate to protect the region’s water supply. Rather, the region needs to restore  
37 balance among water sources, maintain and enhance groundwater recharge and expand the  
38 use of conservation measures. To achieve our long-term vision of the region’s prosperity and  
39 livability, our region’s water resources must be sustainable, supported by a regional strategy  
40 that balances growth and protection to improve and maintain the quality and quantity of our  
41 water in our lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands and aquifers.

42 The Minnesota State Legislature defines water sustainability as, “Water is sustainable when the  
43 use does not harm ecosystems, degrade water quality or compromise the ability of future  
44 generations to meet their own needs.” The Metropolitan Council is committed to collaborating  
45 with its partners to promote the long-term sustainability of the region’s water resources and  
46 water supply. This regional strategy will balance growth and protection to improve and maintain  
47 the quality and quantity of our lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands and groundwater supplies. The  
48 Council will work with state, local and regional partners to provide for sustainable water  
49 resources through effective water supply, surface water, and wastewater planning and  
50 management. To promote adequate and high quality ground and surface water supplies, the  
51 Council will:

- 52 • Promote water sustainability in communities through the Water Resources Policy Plan  
53 and the Water Supply Master Plan, and through the review of local water supply plans,  
54 surface water management plans, comprehensive plans and comprehensive sewer  
55 plans.
- 56 • Promote the wise use of water through optimizing surface water and groundwater use,  
57 conservation, reuse, aquifer recharge, and other practices.
- 58 • Collaborate with partners, including providing technical assistance to local governments  
59 related to wastewater, water supply and surface water management.

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- 60 • Address the reliability, resiliency, security, and cost-effectiveness of the region's water  
61 supplies.
- 62 • Incorporate water sustainability considerations in all areas of Council policy and actions,  
63 including overall development patterns, water management, transportation, housing, and  
64 regional parks.
- 65 • Identify subregional and local water sustainability solutions that balance regional needs  
66 and local objectives.

67 The Council's Water Resources Policy Plan will advance water sustainability through specific  
68 policies for water supply, surface water management and wastewater.

69 **Providing leadership to support climate change mitigation, adaptation and**  
70 **resilience**

71 Over the long term, one of the greatest threats to our region's ongoing prosperity and livability  
72 may be climate change. Our region is already seeing rising temperatures and increased severe  
73 weather events. Climate change looms large as an issue with the potential to negatively  
74 transform the region without intentional and proactive planning. Responding to climate change  
75 takes three approaches: mitigation, adaptation, and resilience. Mitigation strategies focus on  
76 minimizing contributions to climate change – for example, reducing energy use that leads to  
77 greenhouse gas emissions. Adaptation strategies start from the premise that, despite mitigation  
78 strategies, climate change is already occurring and focus on how to change policies and  
79 practices to adjust. Resilience strategies recognize that difficulty of predicting what the impacts  
80 of climate change will be and emphasize growing flexibility to survive and thrive regardless of  
81 how climate change develops.

82 The nation has seen the risks of not preparing for significant climatic events through the  
83 experiences of Duluth after its summer 2012 flooding, New York City after Superstorm Sandy,  
84 and, most recently, Colorado after the September 2013 rains. Hitting the most densely-  
85 developed parts of the nation, Superstorm Sandy may cost the federal government \$60 billion.  
86 The collective cost to the city of Duluth in infrastructure repair and replacement ran to \$80  
87 million or \$2,000 for each city household. While each event individually was impossible to  
88 predict, the growing frequency and large-scale impact of severe weather events demonstrate  
89 the necessity of planning for resilience.

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90 The Council is committed to building a resilient region that minimizes the region’s adverse  
91 contributions to climate and air quality and is prepared for the challenges and opportunities of a  
92 changing climate. Recognizing the importance of climate change mitigation, adaptation and  
93 resilience, the Council will use climate impacts as a lens through which to examine all of its  
94 work. The Council will look for opportunities to use both its operational and planning authorities  
95 to plan for and respond to the effects of climate change, both challenges and opportunities. In  
96 addition to climate change, regional air quality factors (criteria pollutants) threaten both the  
97 quality of life and our economy as we may face severe additional regulations from the federal  
98 government.

99 The Council acknowledges the state’s goals for greenhouse gas reduction adopted in 2007’s  
100 [Next Generation Energy Act](#). By tracking regional greenhouse gas emissions, we will identify  
101 opportunities for emissions reduction in the region. Broadly, the Council’s work supports the  
102 region’s collective efforts to minimize greenhouse gas emissions by:

- 103 • Providing and promoting alternatives to single-occupant vehicle travel, including transit,  
104 carpooling, and bicycling;
- 105 • Promoting compact, pedestrian-friendly development patterns and funding their  
106 development through the Livable Communities Act funds;
- 107 • Protecting industrial land with access to ports and rail to encourage carbon-efficient  
108 means of transporting freight;
- 109 • Supporting the Regional Parks System to protect open spaces and vegetative cover that  
110 mitigate the impact of the urban heat island and improve local wind circulation;
- 111 • Investing in and pursuing local renewable energy generation for operations, including  
112 large scale solar facilities;
- 113 • Promoting more efficient water use and water conservation, which reduces the amount  
114 of energy used to pump and treat water, often one of a community’s highest energy  
115 requirements;
- 116 • Protecting agricultural land for local food production to reduce distance-to-market travel  
117 emissions.

118 The Council intends to expand its role supporting local governments around climate change  
119 planning to assist their efforts toward mitigation, adaptation and resilience. The Council will:

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- 120 • Expand the information and technical assistance it provides to local governments to  
121 support regional and local climate change planning;
- 122 • Work with partners to collaboratively identify and examine the feasibility of energy  
123 improvement opportunities and pursue group purchasing to facilitate energy  
124 improvements where this might provide synergy and/or an improved economy of scale;
- 125 • Develop, collect and disseminate information about climate change, including energy  
126 and climate data, the next generation of the Regional Indicators data, and a regional  
127 greenhouse gas emissions inventory;
- 128 • Provide technical assistance to the region's local governments, including identifying  
129 risks, best practices and model ordinances for climate change mitigation and adaptation  
130 and working in partnership with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's Minnesota  
131 GreenStep Cities program;
- 132 • Provide information to local jurisdictions about the risks of not responding to or preparing  
133 for climate change and encourage local governments to plan and prepare for climate  
134 change, including incorporating climate change planning into their local comprehensive  
135 plans;
- 136 • Create incentives to reward local governments that set and make progress on local  
137 greenhouse gas reduction goals.

138 The Council's approach to climate change will focus on positive approaches – such as  
139 information, technical assistance and incentives – unless and until the collective financial cost to  
140 the region of non-action justifies the Council taking a stronger approach. Parallel to the  
141 potential impact of greenhouse gas emissions, the region may be approaching the foreseeable  
142 yet avoidable risk of failing to maintain air quality attainment status with the Environmental  
143 Protection Agency around fine particulate matter; the costs of air quality non-attainment would  
144 justify a stronger regional role.

145 Additionally, the Council will collaborate with regional leadership and convene local  
146 governments and the broader community to address climate change mitigation and adaptation  
147 within the region. These expanded roles in information and technical assistance will help the  
148 Council serve as a resource to both local jurisdictions and the region at large. The Council  
149 intends to be a prominent player in elevating this important issue which affects the long-term  
150 viability of the Minneapolis-Saint Paul region.



151 **Operating wastewater treatment and transit systems sustainably**

152 The Council will mitigate its own contributions to climate change by reducing its own  
153 greenhouse gas emissions. In 2012, the Council adopted a Sustainability Policy for Internal  
154 Operations and Management which states that the Council will conduct its own operations in a  
155 sustainable manner, when economically feasible, specifically to increase energy efficiency and  
156 use of renewable energy sources; reduce greenhouse gas emissions from Council operations;  
157 conserve and protect water resources; reduce solid waste generation; and reuse and recycle  
158 materials. Furthermore, the Council will monitor and track energy use and, when economically  
159 feasible, pursue opportunities to reduce energy use. The Council also will identify and pursue  
160 renewable energy opportunities, purchase energy star products, manage energy costs – review  
161 tariffs and peak control options, and track, and when feasible, reduce carbon dioxide equivalent  
162 emissions. Both Environmental Services and Metro Transit have set the goal of reducing their  
163 facility energy purchases by 50 percent from a 2006 baseline by 2020. The Council will continue  
164 to adopt innovative technologies to improve operations and use resources more sustainably.  
165 The Council will:

- 166 • Invest resources to continually reduce energy use in its building and operations and be  
167 among the efficiency leaders in the region;
- 168 • Invest in and pursue local renewable energy generation for operations, including large  
169 scale solar facilities;
- 170 • Continue to implement a regional inflow and infiltration mitigation program, which in part,  
171 addresses wastewater peak flow increases that result from significant storm events.  
172 Excess wet-weather related system flow consumes system capacity which could  
173 otherwise be used to support future growth;
- 174 • Adopt technological advancements in the Metro Transit bus fleet to maximize  
175 operational efficiency through engine improvements, acceleration management,  
176 electrification, and material improvements.



## *Integration*

1 **Integration** is the intentional combining of related activities to achieve more effective, greater  
2 results, leveraging multiple policy tools to address complex regional challenges and  
3 opportunities. The Metropolitan Council is committed to integrating its activities to pursue its  
4 outcomes, achieve greater efficiencies and address problems that are too complex for singular  
5 approaches. The *Thrive* outcomes—Stewardship, Prosperity, Equity, Livability and  
6 Sustainability—are lofty ideals that defy simple categorization into the Council’s authorities.  
7 Instead, pursuing them demands that the Council use its full range of authorities and activities in  
8 ever-more coordinated ways. Realizing integration means:

- 9 • Moving beyond silo-ed approaches to leverage all of the Council’s divisions, roles and  
10 authorities in addressing regional issues;
- 11 • Coordinating effectively with partners and stakeholders across and throughout the  
12 region.

### 13 **Moving beyond silo-ed approaches**

14 A growing challenge faced by the region is diminishing funding. As the availability of funding  
15 decreases while the region continues to grow, the Council will have to extract more efficiency  
16 from each dollar it invests. That efficiency increasingly lies at the intersections between different  
17 systems.

18 For example, the Environmental Services Division of the Council provides wastewater service,  
19 surface water quality planning and coordination, and water supply information and planning for  
20 the region. While each of these activities has been conducted on its own in the past, the  
21 challenges of today, especially the emerging groundwater issues, have prompted staff to  
22 incorporate all three water topics into a new, integrated approach: water sustainability. By  
23 considering all three as available tools, the Council will be able to do more with the same  
24 amount of water: increase groundwater recharge, provide clean wastewater discharge re-use  
25 options, and decrease demands on groundwater supplies.

26 The principle extends throughout Council activities. Through integration of activities, the Council  
27 can leverage more benefit from each investment. The Council will pursue integration of  
28 activities and investments within and among its divisions to advance the five *Thrive* outcomes,

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29 find greater efficiencies in investments, and address problems that single approaches cannot  
30 address. This will include activities such as:

- 31 • Including appropriate regional trails in the designation of regional bicycle transportation  
32 corridors;
- 33 • Exploring Council-wide activities to address the effects of climate change;
- 34 • Integrating water supply activities, surface water management and wastewater  
35 management to increase sustainability;
- 36 • Requiring land use in transit corridors, especially in station areas, to be commensurate  
37 with the level of transit investment;
- 38 • Identifying critical relationships between regional systems and local investments, such  
39 as local pedestrian systems to access regional transit.

40 **Coordinating effectively with partners and stakeholders**

41 The Council's Outcomes – Stewardship, Prosperity, Equity, Livability and Sustainability – are  
42 larger than the Council can achieve by itself. By setting out a regional vision, the outcomes  
43 define the foundation for the Council's coordination with others. Much of this coordination is  
44 discussed in the next section – Collaboration – but the Council intends to more intentionally  
45 integrate its policy authorities and organizational structure. This approach will emerge through:  
46 :

- 47 • The Council's work with local cities, counties and townships on comprehensive planning;
- 48 • The Council's partnerships with state agencies and state boards, including:
  - 49 • Department of Agriculture,
  - 50 • Department of Employment and Economic Development,
  - 51 • Department of Health,
  - 52 • Department of Human Rights,
  - 53 • Department of Natural Resources,
  - 54 • Environmental Quality Board,
  - 55 • Minnesota Housing,
  - 56 • Minnesota Department of Transportation, and

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57

- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

58

- The Council's funding decisions where one resource may advance multiple policy objectives.

59

1



## *Collaboration*

1 **Collaboration** recognizes that shared efforts advance our region most effectively toward shared  
2 outcomes. Addressing the region’s issues – particularly the emerging challenges of climate  
3 change, economic competitiveness, racial disparities, and water sustainability – requires  
4 collaboration as no single entity has the capacity or the authority to do the work alone. Even  
5 when one entity is the primary funder or investor in a project, success requires the coordinated  
6 collaboration of a range of public and private entities to fully realize the development potential –  
7 witness, for example, the extensive partnerships supporting development beyond the rails along  
8 the METRO Green Line (Central Corridor). For the Council, acting collaboratively means:

- 9 • Being open to shared strategies, supportive partnerships and reciprocal relationships;
- 10 • Convening the region’s best thinkers, experts, and stakeholders to address complex  
11 regional issues beyond the capacity or authority of any single jurisdiction or institution;
- 12 • Providing additional technical assistance and enhanced information to support local  
13 planning and decision-making.

### 14 **Being open to shared strategies, supportive partnerships and reciprocal** 15 **relationships**

16 Through the implementation of *Thrive* via the systems and policy plans and the next round of  
17 local comprehensive plans, the Metropolitan Council intends to be a collaborator first and a  
18 regulator second. Technical or regulatory solutions led by a single entity cannot match the  
19 complex adaptive challenges now facing our region, driving the need for a collaborative stance.

### 20 **Convening to address complex regional issues**

21 As a regional entity, the Metropolitan Council was formed to address issues that transcend local  
22 government boundaries and cannot be adequately addressed by any single governmental unit.  
23 During outreach held to inform this plan, the Council heard a desire from stakeholders for the  
24 Council to play a larger role as a regional convener around issues that the Council alone cannot  
25 resolve, ranging from economic competitiveness to regional poverty to water supply. The  
26 Council will use its regional role to be a convener of regional conversations, both in areas where  
27 the Council does and does not have statutory authority. The Council can make a significant  
28 regional contribution by bringing the region’s best thinkers, experts, and stakeholders together

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29 to collectively develop regional or subregional solutions. This includes facilitating collaboration  
30 among cities or among organizations working on similar issues. For example, in 2013 the  
31 Council hosted regional meetings in the Northeast Metro Area around the issues related to the  
32 decline in water levels in White Bear Lake. This effort is a good example where the Council has  
33 brought together interested parties to help identify problems and ultimately to develop solutions.  
34 While the challenges of the next decade may vary, the Council intends to play a role as a  
35 regional convener to advance conversations around:

- 36 • Promoting affordable housing within the region;
- 37 • Addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation within the region and to elevate  
38 this important issue which affects the long-term viability of the Minneapolis-Saint Paul  
39 region;
- 40 • Developing integrated plans and investment strategies to transform racially-concentrated  
41 areas of poverty into thriving mixed-income, multi-racial neighborhoods;
- 42 • Promoting the wise use of our region's water through rebalancing surface water and  
43 groundwater use, conservation, reuse, aquifer recharge, and other practices.

44 As new issues emerge – such as the groundwater and surface water interaction issues in White  
45 Bear Lake – the Council is prepared to play a convening role.

46 The Council will collaborate with regional partners to develop a shared vision and strategic  
47 priorities to advance regional economic competitiveness. At the regional level, the Council will  
48 continue to grow its partnership with cities, counties, GREATER MSP, and other partners in  
49 economic competitiveness, including possible development of a shared economic  
50 competitiveness strategy that outlines the roles and responsibilities of each partner as well as a  
51 process for identifying select development or redevelopment opportunities whose location, scale  
52 and complexity justify a regional focus. The Council will leverage its research and analysis  
53 function to strategically examine and analyze the land use and infrastructure needs of the  
54 region's leading industry clusters.

55 Beyond convening regional stakeholders, the Council will deepen the robustness and alignment  
56 of its approach to outreach, public participation and community engagement by developing a  
57 Council-wide Public Participation Plan.

58 **Providing additional technical assistance and enhanced information to support**  
59 **local planning**

60 The Minnesota Land Planning Act and the Council's review authority give the Council a unique  
61 role with local governments. The Council already provides technical assistance to local  
62 jurisdictions to support the local comprehensive planning process and the effective  
63 implementation of regional policies around issues as diverse as aviation-compatible land uses,  
64 natural resource preservation, and inflow/infiltration mitigation.

65 To supplement its traditional role reviewing local comprehensive plans, the Council intends to  
66 expand this technical assistance and its information resources to support local government in  
67 advancing regional outcomes and addressing today's complex adaptive challenges. In addition,  
68 the Council will provide expanded technical assistance to local units of government around:

- 69 • Stronger housing elements and/or implementation plans of local comprehensive plans;
- 70 • Local government support of housing development projects (e.g., site selection, funding  
71 options, or design recommendations);
- 72 • Identifying risks, best practices and model ordinances for climate change mitigation and  
73 adaptation in partnership with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's statewide  
74 Minnesota GreenStep Cities program;
- 75 • Providing enhanced information and analysis on economic competitiveness, helping  
76 local jurisdictions better understand their contributions to the regional economy and  
77 therefore focus on leveraging their strengths, including through the local comprehensive  
78 planning process;
- 79 • Understanding market forces associated with economic development and leveraging  
80 local economic development authority into a broader regional vision for economic  
81 competitiveness;
- 82 • Transit-supportive land use, urban form and zoning; creating a pedestrian-friendly public  
83 realm; understanding and attracting transit-oriented development (TOD) within the  
84 constraints of the market; and cultivating neighborhood support for transit-supportive  
85 development;
- 86 • Surface water planning and management, including assistance in preparing local surface  
87 water plans, identifying the appropriate tools to use and ordinances needed to

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88           implement those plans with the goal of maintaining and improving the region’s valued  
89           water resources.

90

91   In addition to technical assistance, the Council also collects, analyzes and disseminates  
92   information, including data and maps, about the region to support local government decision-  
93   making. Key highlights of the Council’s existing portfolio of information include forecasting of  
94   future population, households and employment, tracking of regional trends on affordable  
95   housing production, mapping existing land use, and providing water quality data for over 200  
96   lakes and numerous streams and rivers within the region. The Council’s regional perspective  
97   allows for data collection and analysis at economies of scale across the region. As new  
98   priorities have emerged through the *Thrive* planning process, the Council will expand its  
99   information resources in the following areas:

- 100       • Aggregating local bike plans into a shared format;
- 101       • Developing, collecting and disseminating information about climate change, including  
102       energy and climate data; the next generation of the Regional Indicators data; and a  
103       regional greenhouse gas emissions inventory;
- 104       • Analyzing the land use and infrastructure needs of the region’s leading industry clusters;
- 105       • Aggregating local redevelopment priorities into a shared regional map;
- 106       • Supporting research and testing related to fair housing, discriminatory lending practices,  
107       and real estate steering;
- 108       • Maintaining an up-to-date regional natural resources inventory and assessment in  
109       partnership with the Department of Natural Resources.

110   While the Council will lead with its collaborative role, the Council will continue to exercise its  
111   regulatory authority and roles when appropriate to promote the regional outcomes of  
112   stewardship, prosperity, equity, livability and sustainability.

113   The Council will continue to seek partnerships and relationships with residents, businesses,  
114   and stakeholders to most effectively advance the *Thrive* outcomes.



## *Accountability*

1 “One of the great mistakes is to judge policies and programs by their intentions rather than their  
2 results.” – Milton Friedman

3 **Accountability** requires a commitment to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of our  
4 policies and practices toward achieving shared outcomes and a willingness to adjust course to  
5 improve performance. *Thrive MSP 2040* aspires to be the foundation for regional policy that is  
6 accountable to the hopes, dreams, and vision that the Metropolitan Council heard from the  
7 region’s residents, local governments, and the Council’s regional partners throughout the  
8 development of this document. Acting accountably means:

- 9 • Adopting a data-driven approach to measure progress toward the outcomes;
- 10 • Learning from the results of measures and indicators to guide future refinements of our  
11 policies;
- 12 • Providing clear, easily accessible information about our progress;
- 13 • Deploying the Council’s regulatory authority when necessary.

### 14 **Adopting a data-driven approach to measure progress<sup>8</sup>**

15 Accountability focuses on managing to outcomes – how is our region better – not tasks or  
16 outputs. An outcome-oriented approach measures how effectively and efficiently our regional  
17 transportation system delivers people to their destinations – not the miles of highway built.  
18 Outputs and tasks are the day-to-day work that moves toward outcomes, but outputs without  
19 outcomes are a waste of public resources. With *Thrive*, the Council is adopting an outcomes-  
20 orientation to its regional policy and is challenging itself, local governments and its regional  
21 partners and stakeholders to describe how their work advances the five Thrive outcomes.  
22 Outcomes describe how our investments and our policies are improving the region for our

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<sup>8</sup> Special thanks to Performance Accountability: The Five Building Blocks and Six Essential Practices by Shelley H. Metzenbaum, published by the IBM Center for The Business of Government in 2006, available at <http://www.businessofgovernment.org/report/performance-accountability-five-building-blocks-and-six-essential-practices>, for defining some of the key concepts in this section.

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23 residents and businesses, not how much money we are investing or how many miles of  
24 interceptor pipe we are building. Outcomes create the why and the rationale for tasks and  
25 outputs. Managing to outcomes helps us ask not only are we effectively implementing our  
26 policies but also are we implementing the most effective policies, the policies that will help our  
27 region and our residents thrive today and tomorrow.

28 **Learning from indicators**

29 Accompanying our narrative of the five outcomes is a set of *Thrive* indicators, adopted  
30 separately but parallel to this document to allow for flexibility in refining the indicators over the  
31 lifetime of *Thrive*. The Council will use the indicators to assess and monitor regional progress  
32 toward the five outcomes. Rather than using the indicators and accountability structure  
33 punitively, the Council will use the indicators as the foundation for inquiry – what do the  
34 indicators tell us about the state of the region and our policies? How do we leverage what’s  
35 working well? How do we effectively address areas where progress towards outcomes is less  
36 than our expectations? To borrow from Shelley Metzenbaum, the Council will use  
37 “measurement to motivate, illuminate and communicate.” The Council will use the insights that  
38 emerge from these questions to guide future decisions, including adjusting policies and priorities  
39 as needed to more effectively advance the outcomes. We will actively review our measures and  
40 indicators as the basis of continuous improvement for both ourselves and our policies, striving to  
41 be the best region, providing infrastructure in a coordinated and economically feasible way.

42 **Providing clear, easily accessible information**

43 The Council will share the annual updates of the indicators, providing clear, easily accessible  
44 information about the progress of the region and Council policies. The focus on outcomes  
45 allows us to be transparent with our partners and stakeholders – what does success look like?  
46 What kind of region do we want to create? Most importantly, the focus on outcomes creates the  
47 foundation for collaborative dialogue with partners and stakeholders – what can and will the  
48 Council do to advance these outcomes? What will other organizations do to advance these  
49 outcomes? What role will local governments play? And where are the gaps, overlaps and  
50 opportunities?

51 The Thrive indicators will focus on the Thrive outcomes and will reflect the intentional integration  
52 of policy areas into the Thrive outcomes. In addition, systems and policy plans will contain

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53 indicators and measures that align with the specific policy areas. Together, these indicators will  
54 build upon the 2004 Regional Development Framework's Benchmarks to create a stronger  
55 foundation for data-driven decision-making.

56 **Deploying the Council's regulatory authority**

57 While the Council will lead with its collaborative role, the Council will continue to use its  
58 regulatory authority and roles to advance the regional outcomes of stewardship, prosperity,  
59 equity, livability and sustainability. Nonetheless, the Council will continue to seek partnerships  
60 and relationships with residents, businesses, and stakeholders to most effectively advance the  
61 *Thrive* outcomes.



## **Implementing Thrive**

### 1 *Geographic Planning Areas*

2 The Council develops policies, programs and implementation tools by identifying geographic  
3 areas that share similar issues and needs.

### 4 *Next steps*

5 *Thrive* establishes the policy foundation used to complete regional systems and policy plans,  
6 development policies, and implementation strategies that together form the comprehensive  
7 development guide. Detailed policies implementing the *Thrive* policy direction and advancing  
8 the five *Thrive* outcomes will emerge and be formally adopted in the *Thrive* systems and policy  
9 plans:

- 10 • Housing Policy Plan (summer 2014);
- 11 • Water Resources Policy Plan (summer 2014);
- 12 • Transportation Policy Plan (late 2014);
- 13 • Regional Parks Policy Plan (early 2015).

14 The policy direction in *Thrive* and the systems and policy plans that follow assist local  
15 governments to create consistent, compatible, and coordinated local comprehensive plans that  
16 together strive to reach a common purpose. The Council will distribute systems statements to  
17 local jurisdictions in fall 2015, beginning this decade's round of local comprehensive plan  
18 updates due back to the Council in 2018.

19 In addition to the *Thrive* systems and policy plans, the Council will consider how to advance the  
20 Thrive outcomes through:

- 21 • Making investments through Livable Communities Act grants (Livable Communities  
22 Demonstration Account, Local Housing Incentives Account and Tax Base Revitalization  
23 Account);
- 24 • Working with the Transportation Advisory Board on the Regional Solicitation for  
25 Transportation Funds;
- 26 • Investigating the use of the Council's current funding mechanisms as tools to aid in  
27 promoting the Thrive outcomes.