

Thrive MSP 2040 Policy Discussion

Geographic Planning Areas: Recommendation of the Land Use Advisory Committee

The purpose of the Land Use Advisory Committee's recommendation is to advise the Committee of the Whole on potentially changing geographic planning areas in *Thrive MSP 2040*. This recommendation builds on previous feedback and ideas on geographic planning areas presented to the Committee of the Whole on January 30, 2013.

The objectives of the Committee of the Whole meeting are to:

- Confirm that the Metropolitan Council will develop new definitions of geographic planning areas for *Thrive MSP 2040*.
- Discuss the Land Use Advisory Committee's recommendation and affirm general concepts for planning areas that will be adapted to implement policies under development.
- Provide guidance to staff's upcoming work to refine geographic planning areas as policy discussions continue.

A summary of the Land Use Advisory Committee's work on planning areas and options prepared for discussion appear in a [Geographic Planning Areas Report to LUAC on July 25, 2013](#).

Role of geographic planning areas

Geographic planning areas:

- Implement the Metropolitan Land Planning Act and are used to effectively plan and implement the Council's policies and strategies at the local level.
- Group similar communities and reflect the diversity of communities in the region.
- Apply different policies tailored for different areas within the region.

Land Use Advisory Committee

The Land Use Advisory Committee (LUAC) is authorized by statute to give advice and assistance to the Council on metropolitan land use, comprehensive planning, system statement hearings, and matters of metropolitan significance as requested by the Council.

The Council requested that LUAC make recommendations on geographic planning areas for the following reasons:

- LUAC provides advice and recommendations for implementing the Metropolitan Land Planning Act. Planning areas are a key tool for implementation.
- Input from LUAC provides the perspectives of local officials, land-use expertise, and experience implementing policies at the local level. Half of committee members are locally elected officials.
- Members represent each of the Council's Districts.

LUAC recommendation

On July 25, 2013, LUAC approved a recommendation to the Committee of the Whole on a preferred concept for changing planning areas. LUAC's preferred option is conceptual in nature and does not specify definitions or policies, set boundaries, or craft brand names for planning areas because elements of *Thrive MSP 2040* are not yet all in place to finalize decisions on geographic planning areas.

LUAC's preferred concept for planning areas combines an approach that focuses on characteristics at the community level and features that transcend community borders. Figure 1 illustrates LUAC's recommendation for planning areas. (For comparison, Figure 2 shows the current planning areas.)

Characteristics at the community level

Some policies and strategies are implemented at the community level. The preferred option:

- Retains characteristics of current planning areas.
 - Continues the use of the Long-Term Wastewater Treatment Service Area and the Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA) to distinguish between urban and rural areas.
 - Uses threshold of more than 85 percent of developable land committed to urban uses.
 - Retains rural area definitions in the *2030 Regional Development Framework* because future policy discussions by the Council may affect how rural areas are designated.
- Adds information on intersection density and the age of housing. Both measures represent the character of initial or current development that sets the pattern for future land-use development and redevelopment.
 - *Intersection density*. Addresses connectivity, accessibility and walkability, urban form, and character of development.
 - *Age of housing*. Serves as a proxy for age of infrastructure, maintenance needs, and general development patterns.

Features that transcend community borders (layers or overlays)

Layers or overlays transcend borders, stress commonalities among communities, emphasize networks and systems, or recognize different conditions within a community. The preferred option shows layers that include:

- *Existing job and activity centers*. Shows major, regional, and sub-regional centers. Centers are based on the number of jobs, contiguous job locations, job density, and types of job centers.
- *Transportation corridors*. Shows corridors adopted in the *2030 Transportation Policy Plan* that are existing, have a locally preferred alternative, or are committed to, as identified by Metropolitan Transportation Services.
- *Potential for redevelopment, reuse and infill*. Shows planned 2030 land use for commercial-industrial, institutional, or mixed-use development within ½ mile of a transitway and within ½ mile of a highway corridor. Illustrates the relationship between transportation corridors and plans for redevelopment, reuse and infill, including locations outside of existing job and activity centers. Information comes from initial analysis of 2008 comprehensive plans used in a [Land Use and Planning Resources Report](#) to the Minnesota Legislature in 2011.

- *Groundwater recharge potential.* Shows areas of high, low, mixed, and moderate potential for water recharge, as identified by Environmental Services.

Priorities and rationales supporting recommendation

LUAC members explained how the recommended concept for planning areas shows the importance of:

- emphasizing environmental sustainability, protecting the region’s water supply and making the region a leader;
- enhancing economic competitiveness through centers and by valuing connectivity and transit;
- reflecting the character of communities and infrastructure;
- maximizing efficient use of regional infrastructure, in part by encouraging development where infrastructure capacity exists;
- providing efficient transportation;
- showing areas of development and redevelopment;
- recommending concepts that are important for the region as a whole; and
- supporting the best option for planning.

Summary of LUAC discussion

LUAC considered five suggested options for planning areas. They are shown in Figures 6 through 10 in the [Geographic Planning Areas Report to LUAC on July 25, 2013](#) on pages 18 to 22. Options were based on input from LUAC and the Committee of the Whole, the Council’s statutory authority and staff review.

While discussing options for planning areas, some LUAC members:

- preferred an option that added information on the percentage of urbanized land and residential density and emphasized job and activity centers, transportation corridors, and potential for redevelopment, reuse, and infill (did not include groundwater recharge potential); and
- expressed concerns about reflecting water supply in planning areas given multiple entities involved and questions about funding and other constraints.

LUAC members also exchanged different viewpoints on: socio-economic indicators, such as racially concentrated areas of poverty (RCAPs); concepts that show current conditions versus planning for changes; sequence of decisions on policies and planning areas; interest in showing more differences within communities; and tradeoffs of not including proximity to surface water sources and natural resources in layers or overlays.

LUAC members suggested several ideas for additional analysis to refine planning areas:

- Recognize where growth is shifting and incorporate job forecasts and other growth into revised planning areas. Transportation staff have identified a need to study “future centers” and the potential for existing centers to intensify or redevelop with other uses (examples include TCAAP and UMore sites).
- Refine areas with potential for redevelopment, reuse and infill.

Figure 1: LUAC Recommendation on Geographic Planning Areas

This map illustrates the concepts the Land Use Advisory Committee (LUAC) recommends be included in forming geographic planning areas for Thrive MSP 2040. Category names, boundaries, and specifics are expected to be refined pending the outcomes of Committee of the Whole policy discussions.

RDF w/Intersection Density & Age of Housing

- Developed, Higher Connectivity, Older Housing
- Developed, Moderate Connectivity, Post War Housing
- Developed, Moderate Connectivity, Newer Housing
- Developing, Moderate Connectivity, Newer Housing
- Developing, Lower Connectivity, Newer Housing
- Rural Center
- Rural Growth Center
- Diversified Rural
- Rural Residential
- Agricultural
- Non Region

Existing Job & Activity Centers

- Major (> 50,000 Jobs)
- Regional (> 15,000 Jobs)
- Subregional (> 7,000 Jobs)

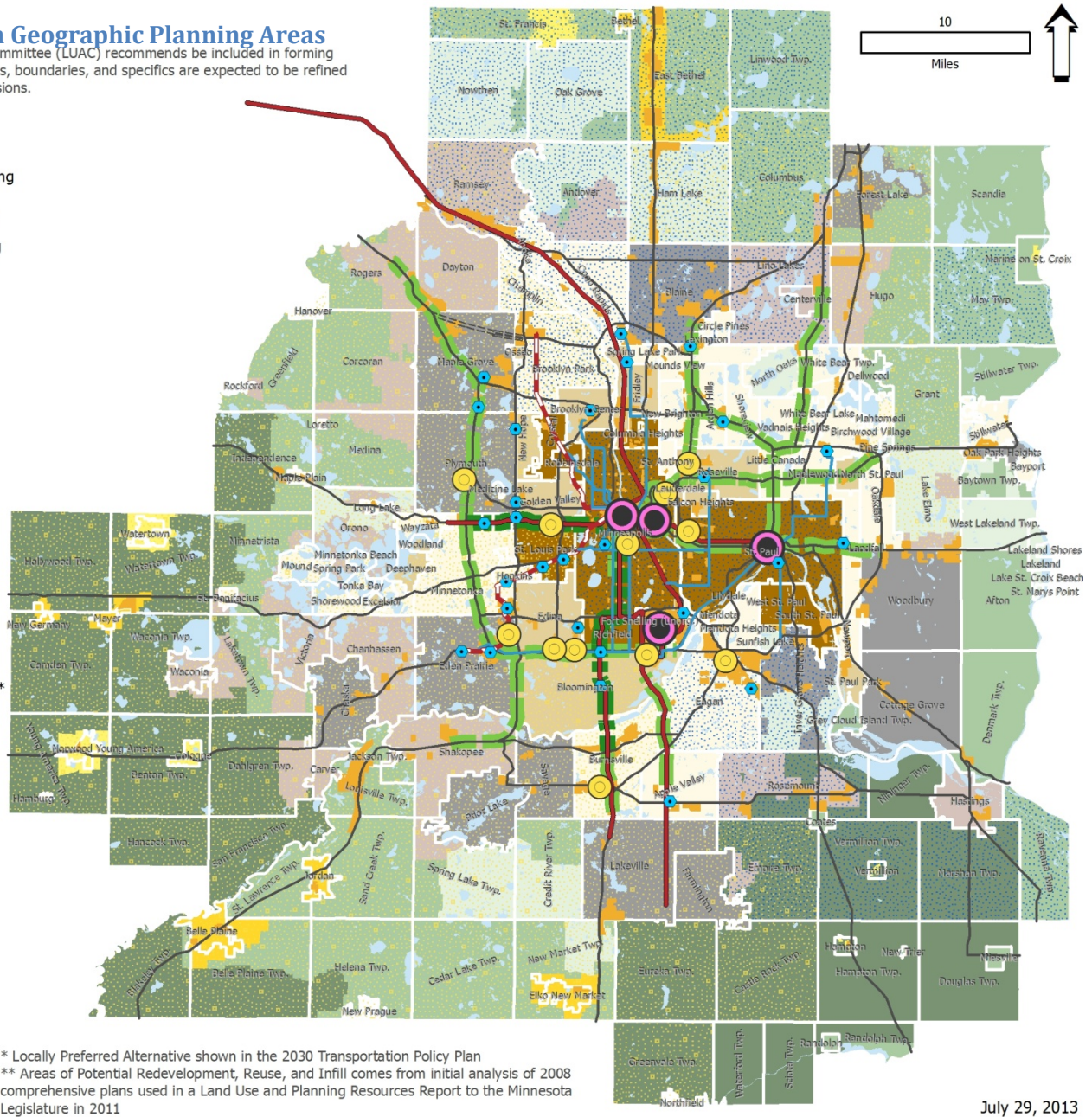
Areas of Potential Redevelopment, Reuse, & Infill**

Groundwater Recharge Potential

- High Recharge Potential
- Mix of Recharge Potential Extreme: High & Low
- Low Recharge Potential

Transportation Corridors

- Metropolitan Highway System
- Future Metropolitan Highway System
- Completed Transitway
- Developing Transitway*
- Arterial BRT
- Existing Managed Lane
- Future Managed Lane



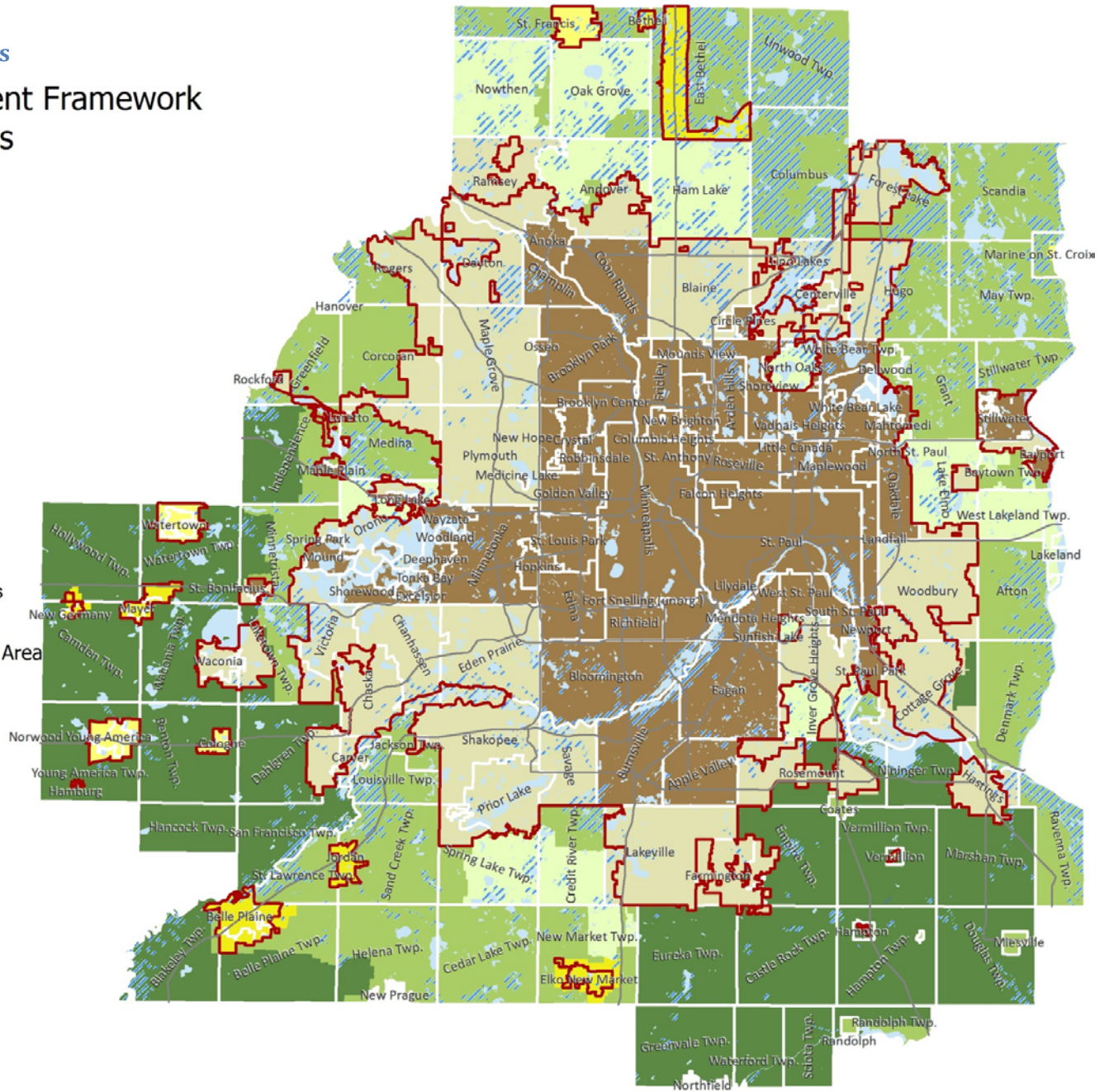
* Locally Preferred Alternative shown in the 2030 Transportation Policy Plan
 ** Areas of Potential Redevelopment, Reuse, and Infill comes from initial analysis of 2008 comprehensive plans used in a Land Use and Planning Resources Report to the Minnesota Legislature in 2011

Figure 2: Current Planning Areas

2030 Regional Development Framework Geographic Planning Areas

Geographic Planning Areas - 2011

- Developed Area
- Developing Area
- Rural Growth Center
- Rural Center
- Rural Residential
- Diversified Rural
- Agricultural Area
- Non Region
- Regional Natural Resource Areas
- 2030 Metropolitan Urban Service Area



Geographic Planning Areas were updated in 2011 to reflect changes made during review of the 2008 local comprehensive plans.

Sources: Metropolitan Council
May 15, 2013

