

Community Development Committee

Meeting date: January 17, 2017

Subject: Areas of Concentrated Poverty in the Twin Cities Region

District(s), Member(s): All

Policy/Legal Reference: None

Staff Prepared/Presented: Matt Schroeder (651-602-1513)

Division/Department: Community Development / Regional Policy and Research

Proposed Action

None; information and discussion only.

Background

In 2014, the Metropolitan Council released *Choice, Place and Opportunity: An Equity Analysis of the Twin Cities Region*. This report defined Areas of Concentrated Poverty (census tracts where at least 40% of residents have incomes less than 185% of the federal poverty threshold), analyzed their origins and evolution, evaluated their access to opportunity, and offered policy responses.

Recently released American Community Survey data from the U.S. Census Bureau offer the latest look at Areas of Concentrated Poverty. Key findings from the new data include:

- The region's poverty rate (measured as 185% of the federal poverty threshold) has declined slightly in recent years.
- Over the past decade, areas of concentrated poverty have expanded in the cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul as well as in the suburbs.
- Areas of Concentrated Poverty vary with respect to demographic and housing characteristics; other than poverty, there is no single characteristic that distinguishes them from the rest of the region.
- Nevertheless, there are early signs that concentrated poverty may have peaked. For the first time since data became available, the estimated number and share of the region's residents living in Areas of Concentrated Poverty declined.

Thrive Lens Analysis

The Council's work to define and publicize Areas of Concentrated Poverty supports the Equity outcome most directly by providing analyses of "the place-based dimension of disparities" (*Thrive MSP 2040*, p. 41). Based on this research, the Council will collaborate with other stakeholders to both expand housing and transportation options for residents of Areas of Concentrated Poverty and promote investment in Areas of Concentrated Poverty, thereby advancing livability and prosperity.