Community Development Committee

Meeting date: February 5, 2018

Subject: Areas of Concentrated Poverty in the Twin Cities Region

District(s), Member(s): All

Policy/Legal Reference: None

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

Division/Department: Community Development / Regional Policy and Research

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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 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.
- There are ongoing signs that areas of concentrated poverty have peaked and are receding. This is not true, however, for areas of concentrated poverty where at least 50% of the residents are people of color, pointing to the influence of historical and contemporary discrimination on concentrated poverty.

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 the Livability and Prosperity outcomes.