

## Community Development Committee

Meeting date: January 6, 2020

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of January 22, 2020

**Subject:** Ramsey County 2040 Comprehensive Plan, Review File 22191-1

**District(s), Member(s):** District 8, Abdirahman Muse; District 10, Peter Lindstrom; District 11, Susan Vento

**Policy/Legal Reference:** Metropolitan Land Planning Act (Minn. Stat. § 473.175)

**Staff Prepared/Presented:** Patrick Boylan, Planning Analyst (651-602-1438)  
Angela R. Torres, Local Planning Assistance Manager (651-602-1566)

**Division/Department:** Community Development / Regional Planning

### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council adopt the attached Advisory Comments and Review Record and take the following actions:

### Recommendations of the Community Development Committee

1. Authorize Ramsey County to place its 2040 Comprehensive Plan into effect.
2. Advise the County:
  - a. To adopt the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area Plan within 60 days after receiving DNR final approval, and to submit a copy of the final adopted plan and evidence of adoption to the DNR, Council, and National Park Service within ten days after the adoption.
  - b. That authorization of the County's Plan does not commit the Council to funding expansion or improvements to State Trunk Highway 36, the interchange at I-35E/County Road J, and Anoka County's interchange at County Road J/I-35W, as these projects are not in the Current Revenue Scenario of the TPP.
  - c. To implement the advisory comments in the Review Record for Forecasts and Transportation.

## *Advisory Comments*

The following Advisory Comments are part of the Council action authorizing Ramsey County to implement its 2040 Comprehensive Plan (Plan).

### **Community Development Committee**

1. As stated in the *Local Planning Handbook*, the County must take the following steps:
  - a. Adopt the Plan in final form after considering the Council's review recommendations as contained in the body of this report.
  - b. Submit one hard copy and one electronic copy of the Plan to the Council. The electronic copy must be submitted as one unified file.
  - c. Submit to the Council a copy of the County Board resolution evidencing final adoption of the Plan.
2. The *Local Planning Handbook* also states that local governments must formally adopt their comprehensive plans within nine months after the Council's final action. If the Council has recommended changes to the Plan, local governments should incorporate those recommended changes into the Plan or respond to the Council before "final adoption" of the comprehensive plan by the governing body of the local governmental unit. (Minn. Stat. § 473.858, subd. 3)
3. Local governments must adopt official controls as identified in their 2040 comprehensive plans and must submit copies of the official controls to the Council within 30 days after the official controls are adopted. (Minn. Stat. § 473.865, subd. 1)
4. Local governmental units cannot adopt any official controls or fiscal devices that conflict with their comprehensive plans or which permit activities in conflict with the Council's metropolitan system plans (Minn. Stat. §§ 473.864, subd. 2; 473.865, subd. 2). If official controls conflict with comprehensive plans, the official controls must be amended within 9 months following amendments to comprehensive plans (Minn. Stat. § 473.865, subd. 3).

## Background

Ramsey County is located in the central part of the seven-county metropolitan area. It is bordered by Anoka, Washington, Dakota, and Hennepin Counties.

The County submitted its 2040 Comprehensive Plan (Plan) to the Council for review to meet the Metropolitan Land Planning Act requirements (Minn. Stat. §§ 473.851 to 473.871) and the Council's 2015 System Statement requirements.

## Review Authority & Rationale

Minn. Stat. § 473.175 directs the Metropolitan Council to review a local government's comprehensive plan and provide a written statement to the local government regarding the Plan's:

- **Conformance** with metropolitan system plans
- **Consistency** with the adopted plans and policies of the Council
- **Compatibility** with the plans of adjacent governmental units and plans of affected special districts and school districts

By resolution, the Council may require a local government to modify its comprehensive plan if the Council determines that "the plan is more likely than not to have a substantial impact on or contain a substantial departure from metropolitan system plans" (Minn. Stat. § 473.175, subd. 1).

The attached Review Record details the Council's assessment of the Plan's conformance, consistency, and compatibility, and is summarized below.

Review Standard	Review Area	Plan Status
Conformance	Regional system plan for Parks	Conforms
Conformance	Regional system plan for Transportation, including Aviation	Conforms
Conformance	Water Resources (Wastewater Services and Surface Water Management)	Conforms
Consistency with Council Policy	<i>Thrive MSP 2040</i> and Land Use	Consistent
Consistency with Council Policy	Forecasts	Consistent
Consistency with Council Policy	<i>2040 Housing Policy Plan</i>	Consistent
Consistency with Council Policy	Water Supply	Consistent
Consistency with Council Policy	Community and Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems (SSTS)	Consistent
Compatibility	Compatible with the plans of adjacent and affected governmental districts	Compatible

## Thrive Lens Analysis

The proposed 2040 comprehensive plan is reviewed against the land use policies in *Thrive MSP 2040*. To achieve the outcomes identified in Thrive, the metropolitan development guide defines the Land Use Policy for the region and includes strategies for local governments and the Council to implement. These policies and strategies are interrelated and, taken together, serve to achieve the outcomes identified in Thrive.

## Funding

None.

## Known Support / Opposition

There is no known local opposition to the 2040 comprehensive plan.

# REVIEW RECORD

## Ramsey County 2040 Comprehensive Plan

### Review File No. 22191-1, Business Item No. 2020-11

The following Review Record documents how the proposed Plan meets the requirements of the Metropolitan Land Planning Act and conforms to regional system plans, is consistent with regional policies, and is compatible with the plans of adjacent and affected jurisdictions.

### Conformance with Regional Systems

The Council reviews plans to determine conformance with metropolitan system plans. The Council has reviewed the County's Plan and finds that it conforms to the Council's regional system plans for Regional Parks, Transportation (including Aviation), and Water Resources.

#### *Regional Parks and Trails*

*Reviewer: Colin Kelly, Community Development (CD) - Regional Parks (651-602-1361)*

The Plan conforms to the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan (RPPP). The Plan conforms to the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan for the Regional Parks System element. Ramsey County is the Park implementing agency for the Regional Parks System in Ramsey County, for which the Plan accurately describes the Regional Parks System components (Figure 1).

The Regional Parks, Park Reserves or Special Recreation Features in the County include: Bald Eagle – Otter Lake Regional Park, Battle Creek & Indian Mounds Regional Park, Como Conservatory Special Recreation Feature, Como Regional Park, Como Zoo Special Recreation Feature, Hidden Falls – Crosby Farm Regional Park, Lilydale – Harriet Island & Cherokee Heights Regional Park, Long Lake Regional Park, Mississippi Gorge Regional Park, Phalen – Keller Regional Park, Silverwood Special Recreation Feature, Tony Schmidt Regional Park, Vadnais – Snail Lake Regional Park

Regional Trails identified in the Plan include: Afton Bluffs Regional Trail Search Corridor, Birch Lake Regional Trail, Bruce Vento Regional Trail, Como – Phalen (Wheelock Parkway) Regional Trail Search Corridor, Highway 96 Regional Trail, Highway 96 Regional Trail - Snail Lake Marsh Boundary Adjustment, Johnson Parkway Regional Trail Search Corridor, Lake Links Regional Trail, Lexington Avenue / Parkway Regional Trail Search Corridor, Mississippi – Como Regional Trail Search Corridor, Mississippi River (Harriet Island – South St. Paul) Regional Trail Search Corridor, Point Douglas (Bruce Vento – Washington County) Regional Trail Search Corridor, Rice Creek North Regional Trail, Rice Creek West Regional Trail, Samuel Morgan Regional Trail, St. Anthony Railroad Spur Regional Trail Search Corridor, Summit Regional Trail Search Corridor, Trout Brook Extension Regional Trail Search Corridor, and Trout Brook Regional Trail.

The Plan also acknowledges State recreation lands within the County, including the Gateway State Trail and Pig's Eye Island Heron Rookery Scientific and Natural Area.

#### *Regional Transportation, Transit, and Aviation*

*Reviewer: Russ Owen, Metropolitan Transportation Services (MTS) (651-602-1724)*

The Plan conforms to the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) adopted in 2015, except Transit, which conforms to the 2040 TPP adopted in 2018, as detailed below. It accurately reflects transportation system components of the TPP as well as applicable land use policies for regional transitways. The Plan is also consistent with Council policies regarding community roles, the needs of non-automobile transportation, access to job concentrations, and the needs of freight, except as detailed below.

## **Roadways**

The Plan substantially conforms to the Roadways system element of the TPP. The Plan accurately accounts for the metropolitan highway system of principal arterials including planned additions and improvements identified in the Current Revenue Scenario.

The County's Plan accurately reflects the regional functional classification map of A-minor arterials, and has delineated major and minor collectors.

The Plan identifies all the required characteristics of Ramsey County roadways, including existing and future functional class, right-of-way preservation needs, and existing and forecasted traffic volumes for principal and A-minor arterials. Forecasting is consistent with regional methodology. The Plan also includes guidelines on how access will be managed for principal and A-minor arterials.

The Plan identifies roadway and corridor studies that include recommendations regarding alignments, changes in access, and/or changes in land use. The Plan accurately describes the status of such facilities, including needs for right-of-way and the likelihood and timing of funding.

## ***Advisory Comments***

### **Transit**

The Plan conforms to the Transit system element of the TPP. It shows the location of existing transit routes and facilities and acknowledges the county includes Transit Market Areas I, II, III, IV, and emerging market areas within III and IV.

The Plan incorporates existing and future transitways that are part of the Current Revenue Scenario in the TPP from 2018. These include the Green Line and A Line in service now, as well as Rush Line, Gold Line, and Riverview. For transitways that are in service or in advanced stages of planning, the Plan incorporates guiding land use for station areas that meet the minimum density targets of the TPP. (See Land Use section of this Review Record for land use and density analysis.)

The Plan is consistent with the policies of the Transit system element of the TPP. The Plan addresses community roles related to its Community Designation(s), as well as the opportunities and challenges related to its Transit Market Area(s).

### **Aviation**

The Plan conforms to Aviation system element of the TPP. The Plan includes policies that protect regional airspace from obstructions, addresses seaplane use, and describes how off-site air navigation aids will be protected.

The Plan identifies the St. Paul Downtown Airport and the Benson Airport and addresses elements of their long-term comprehensive plans. The Plan addresses issues including land use compatibility, noise sensitivity, and the protection of airspace from obstructions.

### **Bicycling and Walking**

The Plan is consistent with the Bicycle and Pedestrian chapter of the TPP. The Plan identifies existing and future segments of and connections to the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN) and regional trails.

The Plan is also consistent with Bicycle and Pedestrian policies of the TPP by planning for local pedestrian and bicycle connections to transit, regional trails, regional job concentrations, and other regional destinations as identified on the RBTN map.

### **Freight**

The Plan is consistent with Freight policies of the TPP. The Plan identifies the needs of freight movement in and through the community, including accessibility to freight terminals and facilities.

## Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZs)

The Plan conforms to the TPP regarding TAZ allocations. The County's TAZ allocations for employment, households and population appropriately sum to the Metropolitan Council's countywide forecast totals for all forecast years.

The County's planned land uses and areas identified for development and redevelopment can accommodate the TAZ forecasted allocations in the Plan, and at densities consistent with the community's Thrive designation and applicable TPP policies for transit station areas.

### Advisory Comments

The Plan indicates that State Trunk Highway 36 will be expanded; this expansion is not included in the Current Revenue Scenario and no additional information is included beyond the list reference. The Council will not commit to funding these improvements.

Furthermore, the Plan identifies a proposed new or improved interchange at I-35E/County Road J and Anoka County's interchange at County Road J/I-35W; these have been reviewed and approved by the MnDOT/Metropolitan Council joint interchange committee. However, these improvements are not identified for funding in the Current Revenue Scenario of the TPP.

The Council also recommends the following to improve the Plan:

- Roadways: Current traffic volumes should be included as actual count numbers, not shown as broad ranges. Consider summarizing the County's Access Management Policy for the reader. This policy is referenced on page 52, but could benefit with more information.
- Walking: The Plan included a map from the County's Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan for bicycling in the Connected Ramsey Communities Network. To more fully address walking, especially in light of pedestrians as a priority in the modal hierarchy for the County, the map for pedestrian facilities in the pedestrian network from the County's Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan should also be included. The County's revision notes indicated that an additional map was added to address this on page 72, but it was not included in the file submittal. The map included relates to bicycling.
- Bicycling: The Plan should include a brief description of what the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN) is; the Plan currently includes a map of the RBTN and should add an explanation of what it is and the relationship to the local system.

## Water Resources

### Wastewater Service

*Reviewer: Kyle Colvin, Environmental Services (ES) – Engineering Programs (651-602-1151)*

The Plan conforms to the 2040 Water Resources Policy Plan (WRPP). For issues related to septic ordinances and regulations, the county defers to city and local regulations. Each city will have individual requirements for the conditions under which private, community treatment systems would be allowed.

### Sewer Element Comments

Ramsey County does not have any jurisdictional control over centralized wastewater collection or treatment issues; therefore, the County is not required to submit a sewer element as part of their comprehensive plan.

### Surface Water Management

*Reviewer: Jim Larsen, CD – Local Planning Assistance (651-602-1159)*

The Plan conforms with the Metropolitan Council's (Council's) 2040 Water Resources Policy Plan for local surface water management. While the County is not mandated to prepare a local water

management plan, they do have a significant role in water management within the County. The Plan does a good job of describing the County’s role in water resources management and protection.

## Consistency with Council Policies

The Council reviews plans to evaluate their apparent consistency with the adopted plans of the Council. Council staff have reviewed the County’s Plan and find that it is consistent with the Council’s policies, as detailed below.

### Forecasts

*Reviewer: Todd Graham, CD – Research (651-602-1322)*

The forecast-related content in the Plan is consistent with regional policies. The Plan includes forecasts on pages 2 and 13.

Table 1. Ramsey County Forecasts

	Census		Council Forecasts	
	2010	2020	2030	2040
<b>Population</b>	508,640	548,220	570,610	593,320
<b>Households</b>	202,691	223,460	236,090	246,050
<b>Employment</b>	316,937	356,130	375,220	393,070

An allocation of forecasts to Transport Analysis Zones (TAZs) is referred to in the Transportation Chapter. The table itself is published on the County’s website.

### Advisory Comments

The Council will update its own TAZ files using the allocations provided by cities and townships during 2018-2019. The County is advised to follow suit at a later date.

Some cities are requesting forecast adjustments with submission of Plan Updates. County totals will change as a result. These changes to affect the completeness or consistency of the County’s Plan.

### Thrive MSP 2040 and Land Use

*Reviewer: Patrick Boylan, CD – Local Planning Assistance (651-602-1438)*

The Plan is consistent with Thrive MSP 2040 (Thrive) and its land use policies. Thrive designates the County as five different community designations including: Urban Center, Urban Suburban, Suburban Edge, and Rural Residential (see Figure 2). *Thrive* directs communities to accommodate forecasted growth at varying levels of overall residential densities for development and redevelopment. The County does not have any authority over land uses within the cities or township of Ramsey County, and as such does not have any land use guiding requirements as part of its Plan.

### Housing

*Reviewer: Tara Beard, CD – Housing (651-602-1051)*

The County has 212,672 current households and almost 35,000 additional households expected by 2040. There is little undeveloped land in Ramsey County, and its growth will occur almost entirely through infill and redevelopment. However, this does not mean that all of Ramsey County has similar development patterns, and there are many different housing needs that compete for County housing resources. Approximately 77% of housing units in Ramsey County were affordable to households earning 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI) or less (which is \$68,000 for a family of four) in 2016, but only 9% of those housing units were affordable to residents earning 30% AMI or less (which is \$27,100 for a family of four).

The County has no land use authority over any of its local communities, and as such it does not have requirements to plan for future affordable housing needs. However, 3,892 of the 39,700 additional households in need of affordable housing between 2021 and 2030 are allocated to communities in

Ramsey County. The Plan acknowledges this need and provides policy direction on how it will work with its communities to meet their housing needs, including financial resources, internal planning, and extensive homelessness prevention and elimination efforts.

## **Water Supply**

*Reviewer: Lanya Ross, ES – Water Supply Planning (651-602-1803)*

The Plan is consistent with WRPP policies related to water supply, including the policy on sustainable water supplies, the policy on assessing and protecting regional water resources, and the policy on water conservation and reuse.

Because the County is not a public water supplier, the County does not need to include local water supply plans as part of the County's 2040 comprehensive plan. However, the updated comprehensive plan should and does include information about water sources, including plans to protect private water supplies, in appropriate sections of the comprehensive plan (specifically the Water Resources chapter).

## **Community and Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems (SSTS)**

*Reviewer: Jim Larsen, CD – Local Planning Assistance (651-602-1159)*

The Plan indicates that there are approximately 1692 individual SSTS in operation in the County. At present, Ramsey County is not required to have an SSTS ordinance because the eleven cities and towns within the County that have SSTS in use have ordinances and oversight programs in place that comply with Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Chapter 7080-7083 Rules. Should any community within the County decide to delegate their local SSTS oversight program to the County, the County would need and is prepared to update and adopt their own SSTS ordinance and oversight program.

## **Special Resource Protection**

### **Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area**

*Reviewer: Jim Larsen, CD – Local Planning Assistance (651-602-1159)*

Template text The Plan includes a Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area Plan (MRCCA Plan) element that was reviewed by Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) staff and found to be substantially consistent with Minnesota Statutes Chapter 116G and Minnesota Rules Chapter 6106. Council staff also find the MRCCA Plan element to be consistent with *Thrive MSP 2040* land use policies and Minnesota Rules Chapter 6106. The DNR's November 20, 2019, conditional approval letter is attached (Figure 3). Final DNR approval of the MRCCA Plan will be sent to the County after the Council authorizes the County to put the final comprehensive plan into effect.

### **Advisory Comments**

Within 60 days after receiving DNR final approval, Ramsey County must adopt the MRCCA Plan, and submit a copy of the final adopted plan and evidence of adoption to the DNR, Council, and National Park Service within ten days after the adoption.

### **Solar Access Protection**

*Reviewer: Cameran Bailey, CD – Local Planning Assistance (651-602-1212)*

The Plan is consistent with statutory requirements (Minn. Stat. § 473.859) and Council policy regarding planning for the protection and development of access to direct sunlight for solar energy systems as required by the Metropolitan Land Planning Act (MLPA). The Plan exceeded minimum requirements.

### **Aggregate Resource Protection**

*Reviewer: Jim Larsen, CD – Local Planning Assistance (651-602-1159)*

The Plan does not address the presence or absence of aggregate resources in the County. As the County has no land use planning authority, the Council's aggregate resource protection requirements do not apply.



## Historic Preservation

*Reviewer: Patrick Boylan, CD – Local Planning Assistance (651-602-1438)*

The Plan contains a section on Historic Preservation and has goals for protection in the Plan's goals, as required by the Metropolitan Land Planning Act. The Plan also provides details on the cultural and historic sites within the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA), which identifies issues and opportunities.

## Plan Implementation

*Reviewer: Patrick Boylan, CD – Local Planning Assistance (651-602-1438)*

The Plan includes a description of and schedule for any necessary changes to the capital improvement program, the SSTS Code, and Housing Implementation. The County does not have zoning or subdivision authority, and therefore the Plan does not include a zoning or subdivision codes.

The Plan, with supplemental materials, describes the official controls and fiscal devices that the County will employ to implement the Plan. The implementation chapter contains specific processes, summaries for transportation, parks, and land conservation.

## Compatibility with Plans of Adjacent Governmental Units and Plans of Affected Special Districts and School Districts

The proposed Plan is compatible with the plans of adjacent jurisdictions. No compatibility issues with plans of adjacent governmental units and plans of affected special districts and school districts were identified.

## Documents Submitted for Review

In response to the 2015 System Statement, the County submitted the following documents for review:

- January 16, 2019: Ramsey County 2040 Comprehensive Plan
- July 25, 2019: Supplemental and revised material related to Land Use, Forecasts, Parks and Trails, and Transportation.
- August 5, 2019: Updated TAZ Table
- November 4, 2019: Supplemental and revised material related to Transportation.

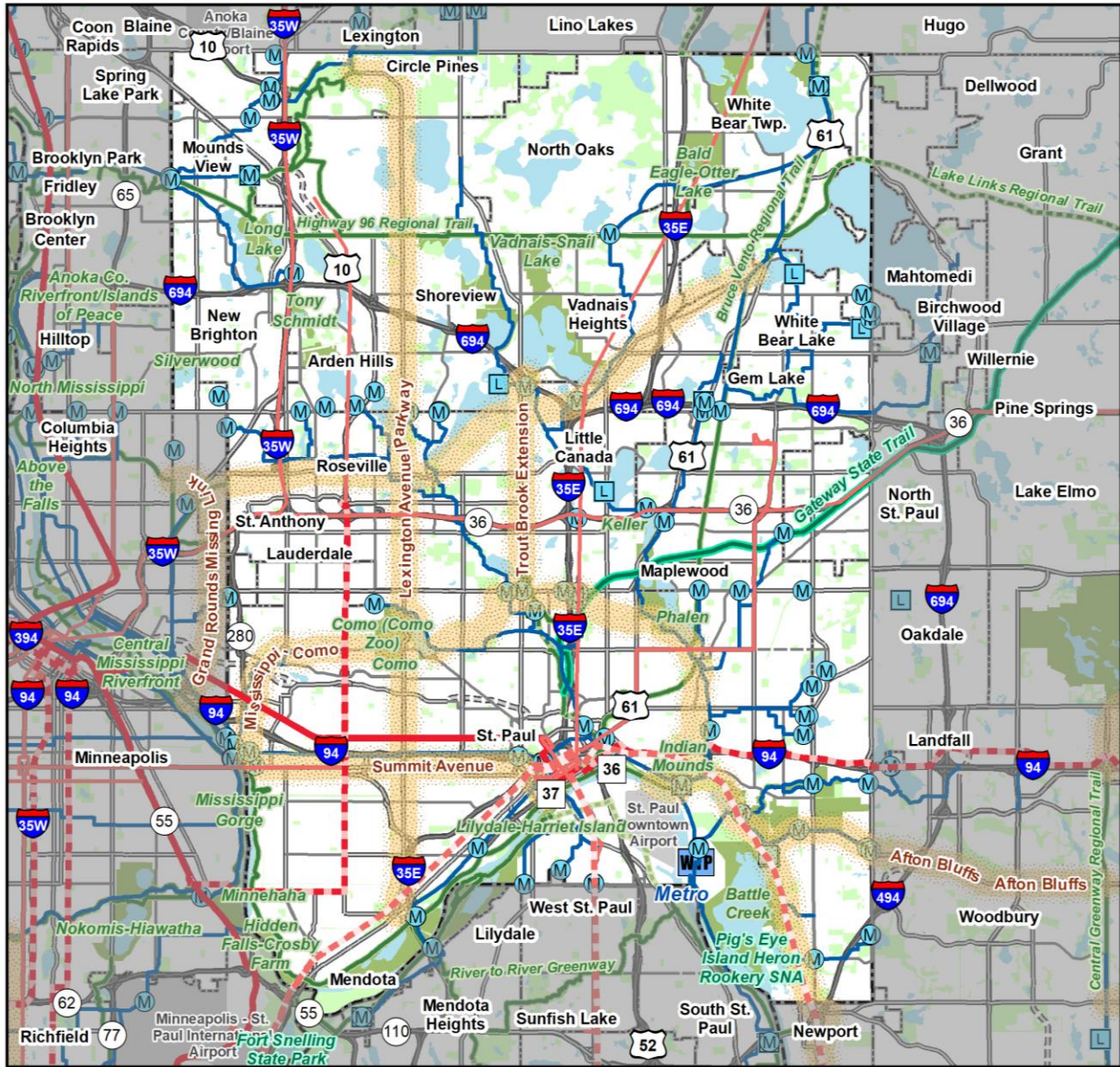
## Attachments

Figure 1: Location Map with Regional Systems

Figure 2: *Thrive MSP 2040* Community Designations

Figure 3: MRCCA Plan Conditional Approval Letter from the DNR

Figure 1. Location Map with Regional Systems



**Regional Systems**

**Transportation**

**Transitways**

2040 Transportation System Policy - adopted January 2015

- Existing
- - - - Planned Current Revenue Scenario
- - - - Planned Current Revenue Scenario - CTIB\* Phase 1 Projects
- - - - Potential Increased Revenue Scenario

**Regional Highway System**

- Existing Principal Arterials
- Planned Principal Arterials
- Existing Minor Arterials
- Planned Minor Arterials
- Existing Other Arterials
- Planned Other Arterials

**Recreation Open Space**

**Regional Parks**

- Existing (Open to Public)
- In Master Plan (Not Open to Public)
- Planned Units

**Regional Trails**

- Existing (Open to Public)
- - - - Existing (Not Open to Public)
- - - - Planned

**Wastewater**

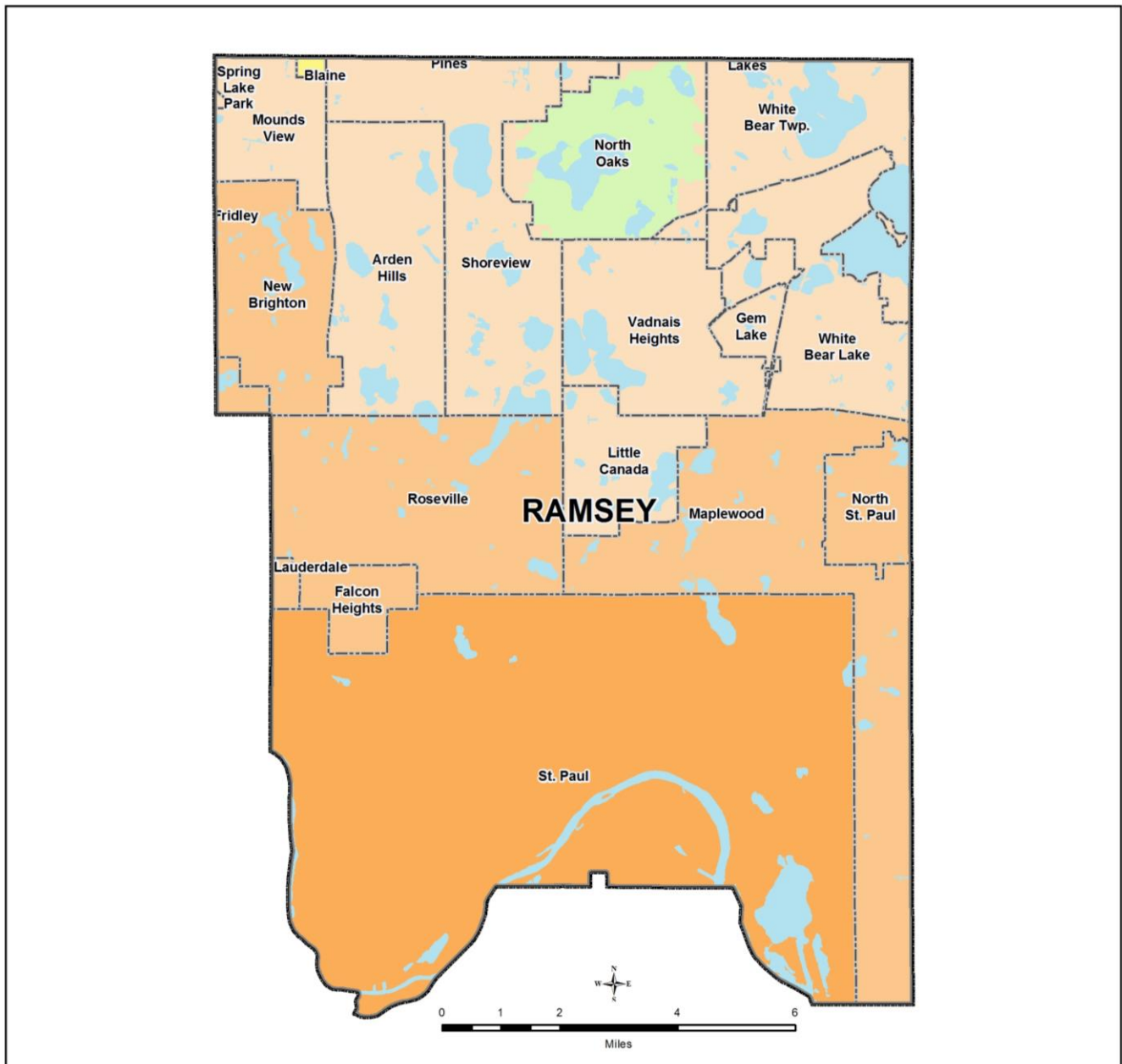
- Meters
- Lift Stations
- MCES Interceptors
- MCES Treatment Plants

**Regional Park Search Areas and Regional Trail Search Corridors**

- Boundary Adjustment
- Search Area
- Regional Trail Search Corridors
- Existing State Trails
- Other Parks, Preserves, Refuges and Natural Areas

\* Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB)

Figure 2. Thrive MSP 2040 Community Designations



**Community Designations**

- Outside Council planning authority
- Agricultural
- Rural Residential
- Diversified Rural
- Rural Center
- Emerging Suburban Edge
- Suburban Edge
- Suburban
- Urban
- Urban Center
- County Boundaries
- City and Township Boundaries
- Lakes and Major Rivers

Figure 3. MRCCA Plan Conditional Approval Letter from the DNR



November 20, 2019

Max Holdhusen, Senior Policy Analyst  
Ramsey County  
15 W Kellogg Blvd  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

**Re: Conditional Approval of Ramsey County MRCCA Plan**

Dear Mr. Holdhusen:

I am pleased to inform you that the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) conditionally approves the Ramsey County Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA) plan.

We reviewed the MRCCA plan chapter of your 2040 comprehensive plan submitted to the Metropolitan Council on November 4, 2019. We have found that the MRCCA plan is substantially consistent with Minnesota Statutes, §116G, and Minnesota Rules, chapter 6106. We will send final approval of your MRCCA plan after the Metropolitan Council authorizes Ramsey County to put the comprehensive plan into effect. Within 60 days of receiving DNR final approval, Ramsey County must adopt the MRCCA plan. Ramsey County must then submit a copy of the final adopted plan, with evidence of adoption, to the DNR, the Metropolitan Council, and the National Park Service within ten days of the adoption.

Only MRCCA plans and plan amendments approved by the DNR have the force and effect of law. Once in effect, local governments must implement and enforce the DNR-approved plans.

We appreciate your efforts to develop and adopt the MRCCA plan, which provides a solid basis for future ordinance amendments and MRCCA management. Please contact Matt Bauman at 651-259-5710 or at [matthew.bauman@state.mn.us](mailto:matthew.bauman@state.mn.us) if you have any questions about next steps.

Sincerely,

Jenny Shillcox  
Land Use Unit Supervisor

c: Raya Esmaeili, Metropolitan Council  
Alan Robbins-Fenger, National Park Service  
Jen Sorensen, DNR Region 3 Area Hydrologist  
Matt Bauman, DNR Land Use Unit

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources • Division of Ecological and Water Resources  
500 Lafayette Road, Box 25, Saint Paul, MN 55155-4025