PLAT MONITORING PROGRAM

Residential Platting in Developing Communities

In the Twin Cities Region, 2019

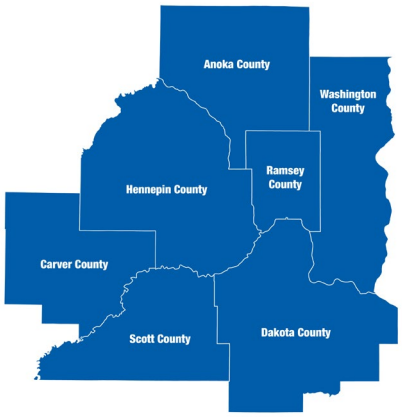
METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

September 2020

The Council's mission is to foster efficient and economic growth for a prosperous metropolitan region

Metropolitan Council Members

Charlie Zelle	Chair	Raymond Zeran	District 9
Judy Johnson	District 1	Peter Lindstrom	District 10
Reva Chamblis	District 2	Susan Vento	District 11
Christopher Ferguson	District 3	Francisco J. Gonzalez	District 12
Deb Barber	District 4	Chai Lee	District 13
Molly Cummings	District 5	Kris Fredson	District 14
Lynnea Atlas-Ingebretson	District 6	Phillip Sterner	District 15
Robert Lilligren	District 7	Wendy Wulff	District 16
Abdirahman Muse	District 8		



The Metropolitan Council is the regional planning organization for the seven-county Twin Cities area. The Council operates the regional bus and rail system, collects and treats wastewater, coordinates regional water resources, plans and helps fund regional parks, and administers federal funds that provide housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income individuals and families. The 17-member Council board is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the governor.

On request, this publication will be made available in alternative formats to people with disabilities. Call Metropolitan Council information at 651-602-1140 or TTY 651-291-0904.

About the Program

The Plat Monitoring Program (Program) tracks and monitors development in 45 communities in the region, mostly located within areas designated as “Suburban Edge,” “Emerging Suburban Edge,” and “Rural Center” in *Thrive MSP 2040* (Figure 1), the metropolitan area’s development guide. The objective of the Program is to measure the success of local implementation of Council policy by providing an annual report on sewered residential development in some communities, including the average density, the mix of new sewered residential development, the number of units platted, the amount of land developed, and the land use consumption. This data creates a baseline for land supply and tracks the housing mix and density of new residential developments. Twelve communities participated in the pilot Program in 2001, reporting on sewered residential plats approved in 2000. The pilot Program focused on communities with the corresponding designations of “Developing” and “Rural Center” in the *2030 Regional Development Framework* (Figure 2). The Program continues to grow to cover more communities as the Twin Cities Region develops.

The Program provides baseline data on residential development trends in participating communities and was designed to help answer the following questions:

- Is residential development consistent with Metropolitan Council policies?
- How are communities accommodating residential development in comparison to their local comprehensive land use plans?
- What is the mix of housing types that communities are approving each year (single family vs. multi-family)?
- How is residential land being developed within the Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA)?

Since 2001, the Council annually reports on residential development in participating communities using data collected through the Program. The Program assists communities and the Council in assessing a community’s consistency with the Council’s residential density policy, which requires sewered residential development to occur at a minimum density of 3 to 5 units per net developable acre for communities with the Suburban Edge, Emerging Suburban Edge, and Rural Center designations. By maintaining a record of approved sewered subdivisions, the Council and metropolitan communities can evaluate the success of communities in implementing the density policy and the extent to which the wastewater treatment system is being used efficiently. In addition, participating communities receive credit for residential plats meeting the Council’s density policy and gain increased

Figure 1. Thrive MSP 2040

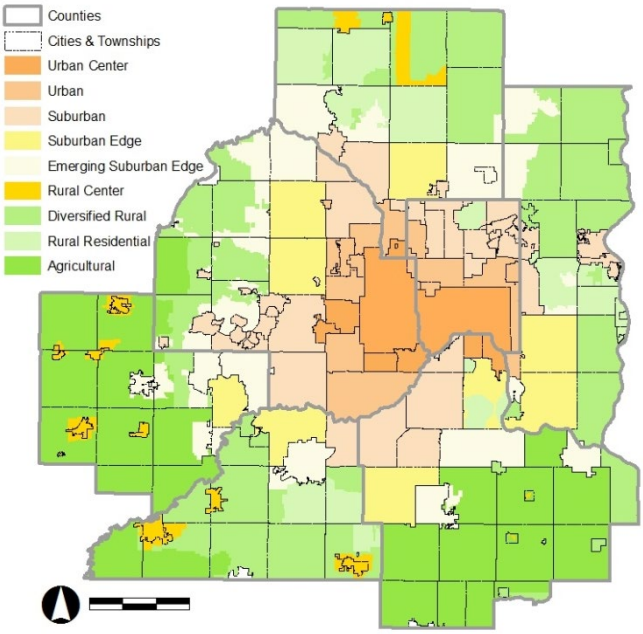
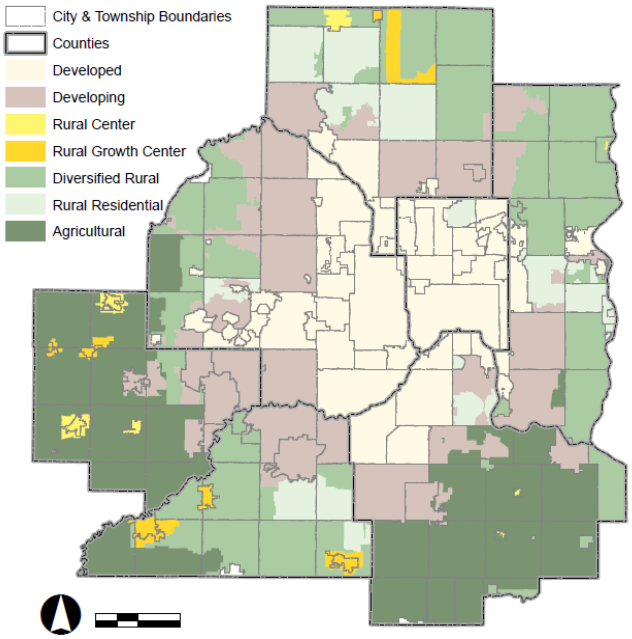


Figure 2. 2030 Regional Development Framework



development flexibility within the MUSA for approving plats that exceed the density policy. For example, if the overall net density of a participating community is higher than 4 units per acre, that community can approve lower residential densities, so long as the overall net density remains above 3 units per acre. The credit from the Program is crucial information in reviewing comprehensive plan updates and amendments to provide more flexibility for the communities as they consider guiding lower density land uses. It is also a key implementation tool in Council's review of Sanitary Sewer extension permit applications.

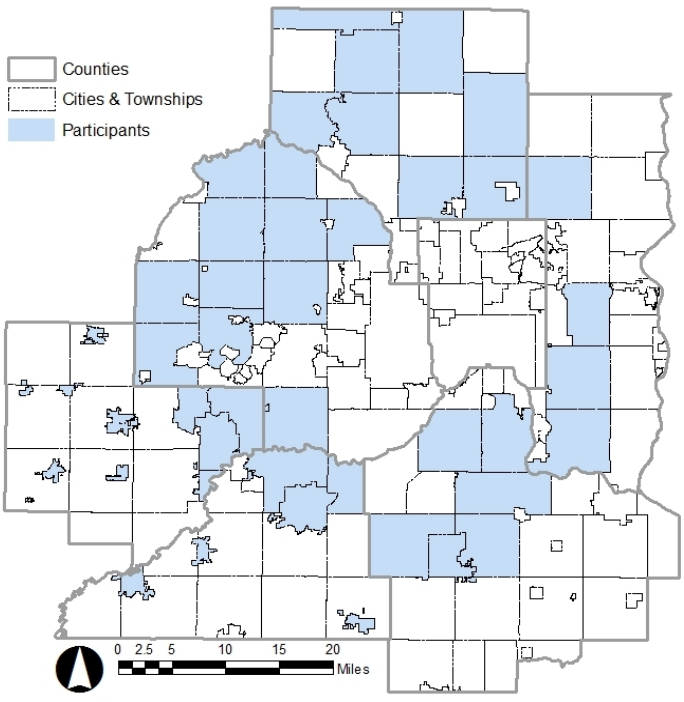
History of Program Participants

In 2001, the Metropolitan Council initiated the Plat Monitoring Program with input from the Builders Association of the Twin Cities (BATC) and MetroCities (formerly the Association of Metropolitan Municipalities). Participating communities complete an annual summary worksheet and submit copies of plats approved during the calendar year.

The initial 12 volunteer communities included Blaine, Chanhassen, Eden Prairie, Hugo, Inver Grove Heights, Lakeville, Maple Grove, Ramsey, Savage, Shakopee, Waconia, and Woodbury. In 2002, the City of Farmington was added to the Program. As conditions of amendments to expand Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA), Empire Township and the Cities of Andover, Lino Lakes, Medina, Minnetrista, Rogers, Rosemount, and Victoria were added to the Program in 2003. The City of Brooklyn Park was required to report sewered residential plats starting with 2006 plats as a condition of a land use amendment. In 2007, the Cities of Cottage Grove and Orono were required to join the Program as conditions of comprehensive plan amendment (CPA) requests, while the City of Eagan voluntarily joined the Program.

In 2008, as a part of the decennial review of comprehensive plan updates, the Cities of East Bethel, Mayer, and New Germany were added to the Program. Another 18 communities, including a number of communities designated as "Rural Center," joined the Program as part of the decennial review of their 2030 comprehensive plan updates: the Cities of Belle Plaine, Carver, Chaska, Cologne, Columbus, Corcoran, Dayton, Elko New Market, Independence, Jordan, Mayer, Norwood Young America, Nowthen, Oak Grove, Plymouth, Prior Lake, St. Francis, and Watertown. The City of Lake Elmo also joined the Program in 2013. In 2015, the City of Nowthen was dropped from the Program due to the Council ending its plans for long-term sanitary sewer extension plans for the community.

Figure 3. 2019 Participating Communities



Analysis

This report analyzes sewered residential development in 45 cities and one township (see Figure 3). This report also shows the trends for all the participating communities since the inception of the Program for years with submitted data, including year-to-year density and housing mix comparisons.

From 2000 to 2019, participant communities platted an average of 5,300 single-family and multi-family

housing units each year, peaking in 2003 with over 10,000 housing units platted. This number declined from 2004 to 2009, with the lowest number of plats ever recorded in the history of the Program when only 286 units were platted. Since 2009, the participating communities have seen an overall increase in the number of platted units, with 6,313 units in 2019. A total of 127 plats were recorded by 45 participating communities in 2019.

Total housing units and housing mix

In 2019, communities experienced an increase in platting numbers compared to 2018. Some of this change can be attributed to the timing of the 2040 comprehensive planning process as communities were occupied with updating their plans in 2018 and many did not submit their residential plats. As shown in Figure 4, platting activity has been increasing steadily since 2009.

Figure 4. Total Units Platted, 2000-2019

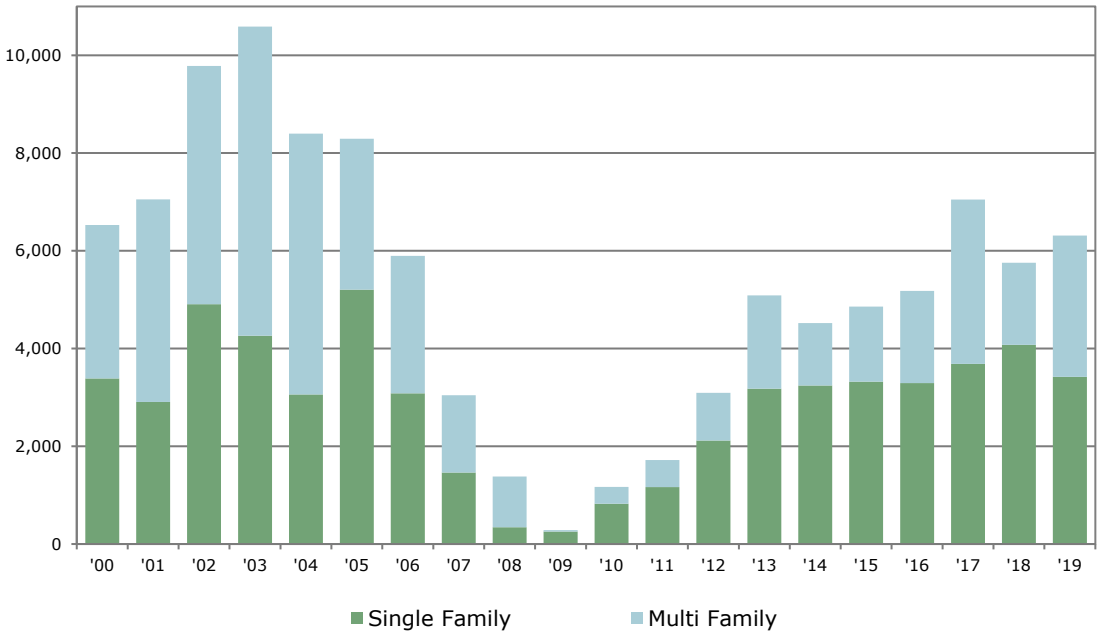
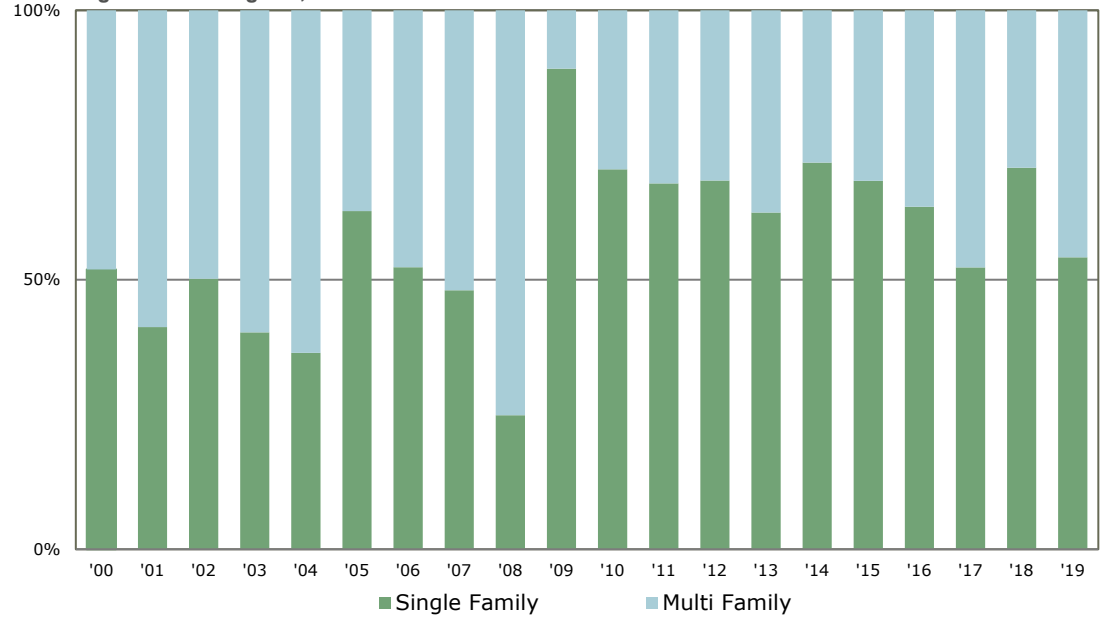


Figure 5. Housing Mix, 2000-2019



During 2019, 46% of the platted units were multi-family, for a total of 2,893 units, which is more than 2018 with 29% multi-family units, accounting for 1,681 units. In contrast, there was a decrease in the number of single family units platted, changing the share of single family housing from 71% in 2018 to 54% in 2019 with 3,420 units. The composition of housing mix since 2000 (Figure 5) shows that, while there is variability from year to year, overall there is almost an equal number of multi-family and single family units platted over the course of the Program, for a total of 105,999 units. Since 2000, 54% of all units platted were single family and 46% were multi-family.

Consistency with local comprehensive plans

Every year since the start of the Program, participant communities have approved plats that are consistent with the guided densities in their local comprehensive plans. The allowable density is measured based on the corresponding land use designation and density range described in local comprehensive plans for the platted properties.

Figure 6. Number of Units Platted & Allowable Number of Units, 2019

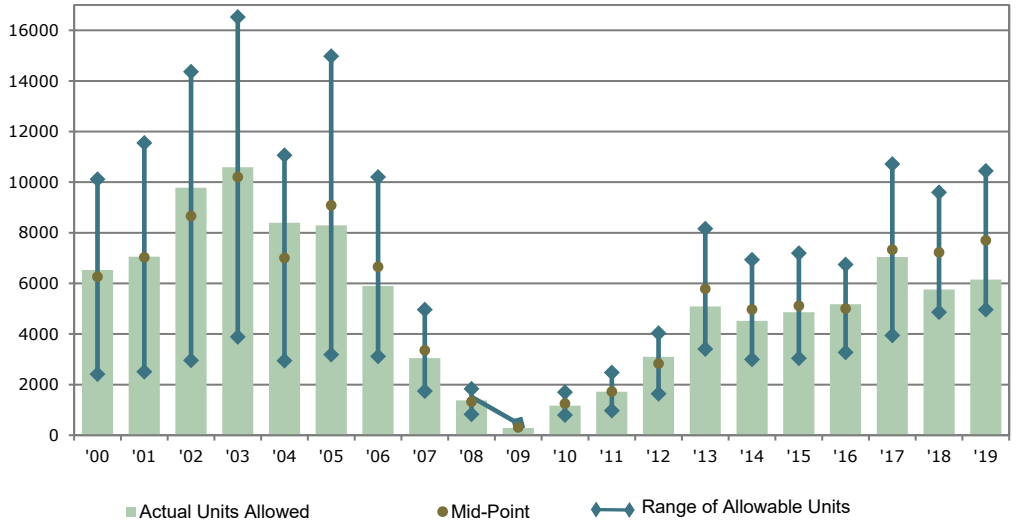
Lowest Allowable Units	4,972
Highest Allowable Units	10,476
Actual Units Platted	6,154

As shown in Figure 6, the actual number of units platted in 2019 is well within the range of overall allowable units for the participant communities as a group, while closer to the lowest allowable number of units. The lowest allowable unit total is the sum of the number of units anticipated if all 127 plats were subdivided at the lowest allowable density defined in the local comprehensive plan. Likewise, the highest allowable units would have been expected if all the plats were subdivided at the highest allowable density based on the land use designation.

Since 2000, participant communities have generally platted at a density around the mid-point of the overall density range. However, in 2019, similar to 2018, the total number of actual units platted was below the mid-point of allowable units.

The annual fluctuation of the number of units around the mid-point is not significant over the course of the Program. However, since 2005, the number of platted units has mostly been below the mid-point of allowable density range, except in 2008, 2012, and 2016 as shown in Figure 7. This trend shows demand in the market for lower densities in these communities, even during the market rebound, as well as reflecting the propensity of some communities to encourage development at densities lower that what might be proposed.

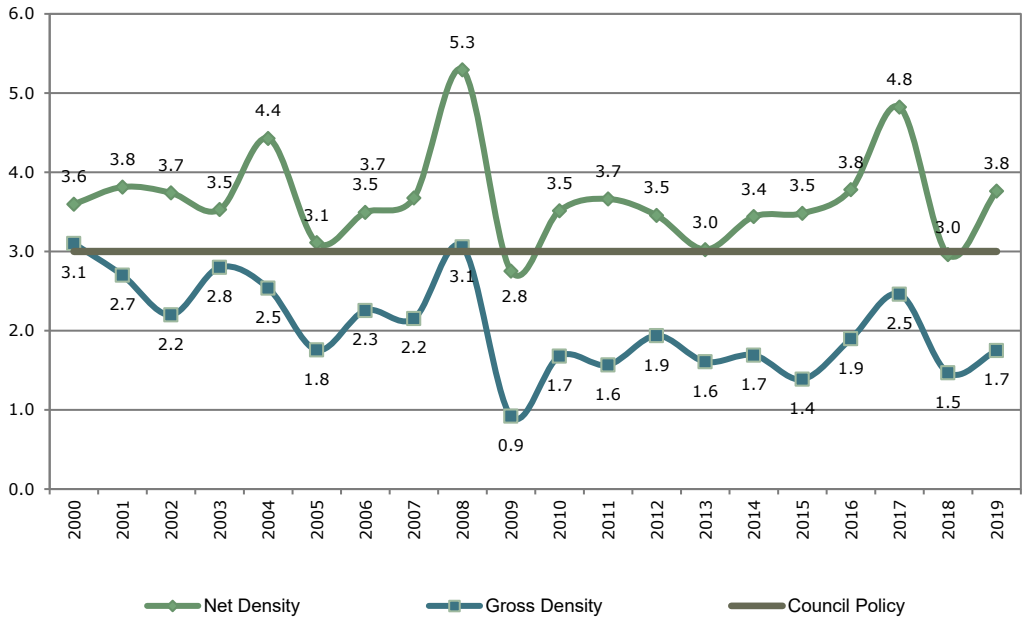
Figure 7. Planned and Actual Units



Overall density and Council policy

Based on the Council's *Thrive MSP 2040* and Council policies, Suburban Edge, Emerging Suburban Edge, and Rural Center communities are to maintain an average density of at least 3 dwelling units per acre. From 2000 to 2019, Plat Monitoring Program participants, as a group, have generally platted sewered residential developments at or above 3 units per developable acre (Figure 8), except for 2009, when recorded average density fell below 3 units per acre (2.8 units per developable acre).

Figure 8. Overall Densities, 2000-2019



During the reporting year of 2019, 25 communities had two or fewer plats reported, while three communities approved over 10 plats. Of the plats approved in 2019, 10 of the participating communities had annual platted net densities below 3 units per acre: Andover, Carver, Chaska, Corcoran, Dayton, Inver Grove Heights, Minnetrista, Orono, Prior Lake, and Rosemount. Additionally, 19 participating communities did not record any plats in 2019, compared to 2018 when 22 communities did not report any plats. It is assumed that part of the change is due to these communities not reporting their platting activity in 2018 because of internal staffing resources related to 2040 comprehensive planning activities.

Since 2009, the number of units platted has been generally increasing, with the overall net density of platted units is at 3.8 units per acre in 2019. While this number conforms to Council policies, there is still a gap between overall density in 2019 and the recorded peak of 5.3 units per developable acre in 2008. This is a reflection of change in market production towards larger-lot single family homes in these communities. From 2000 to 2019, the overall average net density of the plats in all participating communities is 3.67 units per acre.

Land utilization

The net developable acres in each plat are calculated based on an analysis of land cover and land uses on that property. Wetlands, natural bodies of water, publicly owned park and open space, arterial road rights-of-way, and land set aside for future development are subtracted from the gross residential acres to determine the net residential area. Communities are encouraged to take the most advantage of developable land to plan for anticipated units in order to achieve or exceed the minimum required net residential density of 3 units per acre.

Figure 9 shows the breakdown of land consumption from 2000 to 2019. The year 2009 marks the lowest use of platted land for residential development and highest percentage of land reserved for future development, which is in sync with the economic downturn. With decreased housing demand and the economic crisis, about a third of gross residential acres had been reserved for future development as outlots ("Other use" in Figure 9). Despite the increase in the share of net residential acres since 2009, the percentage of net residential acres has yet to reach the highest levels in 2003 (79%), compared to 61% in 2019.

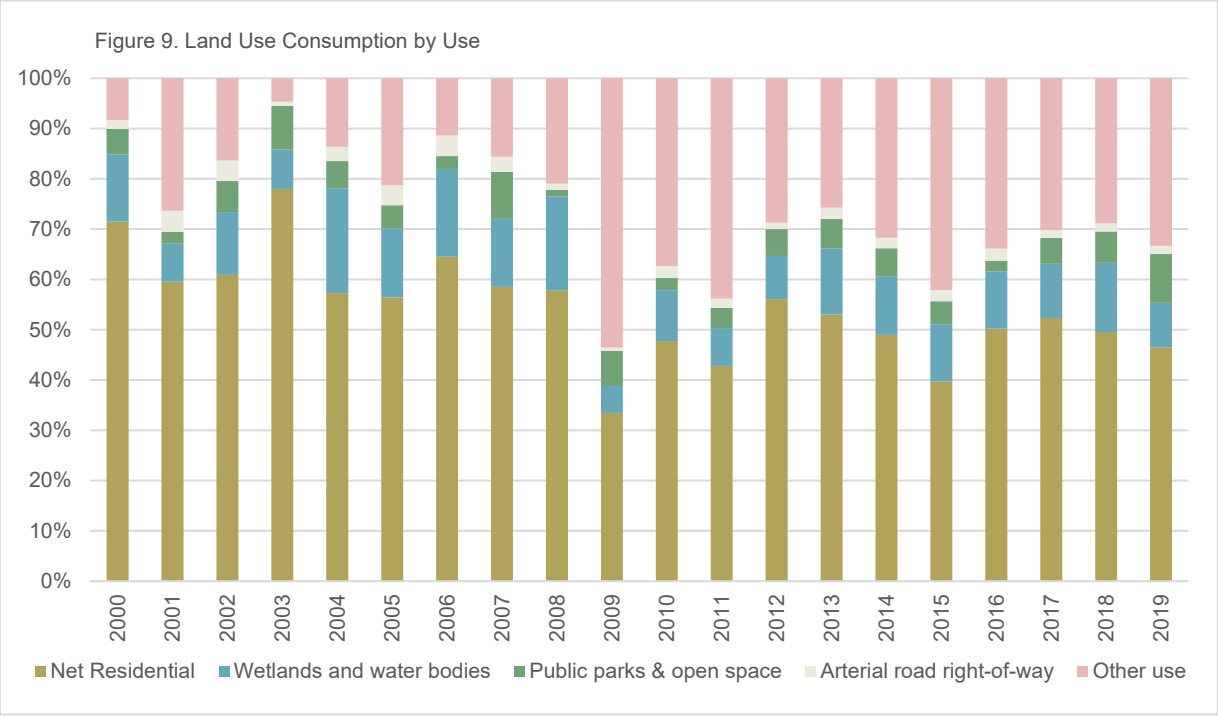
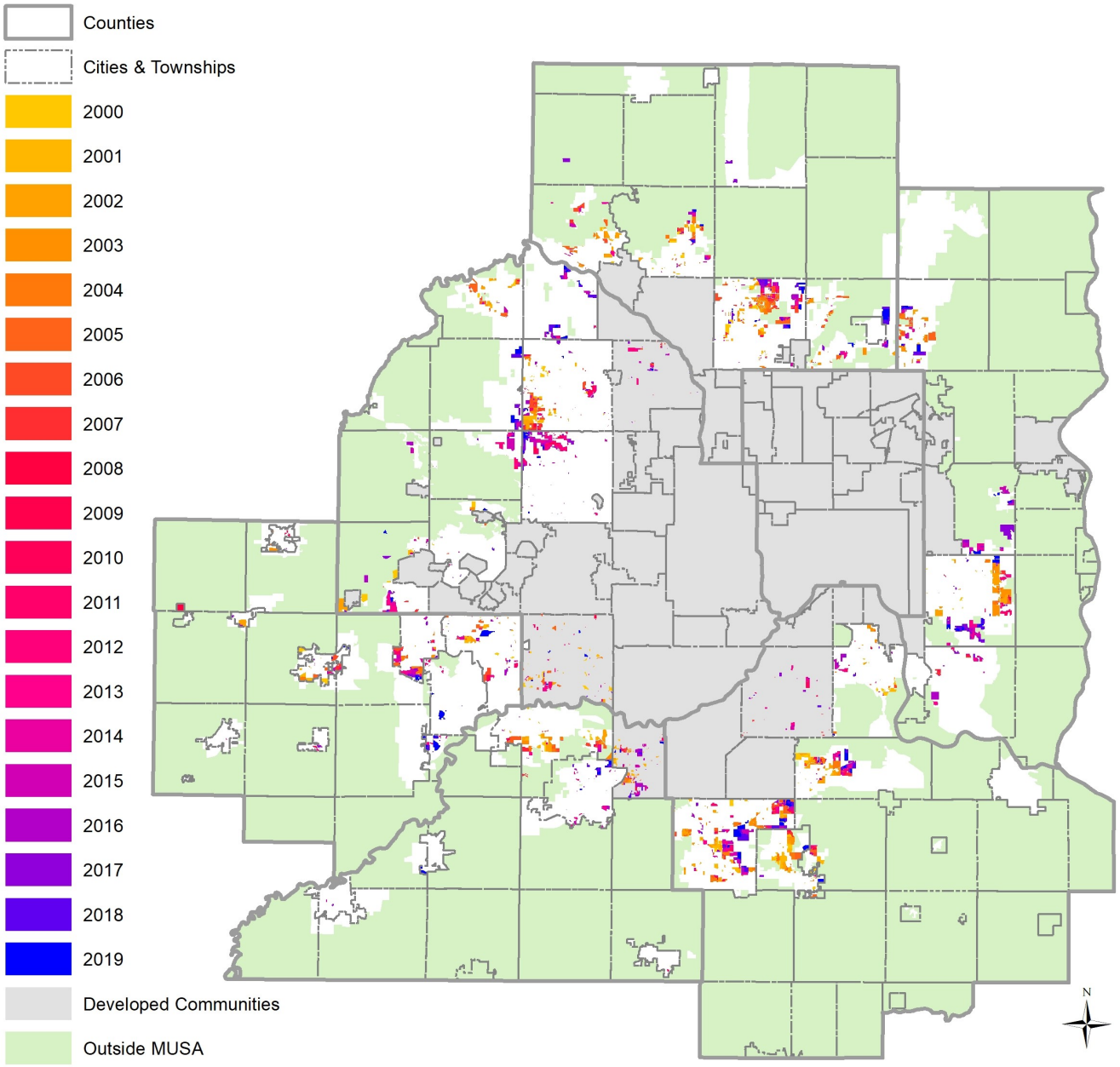


Figure 10 shows all the plats approved in the participating communities between 2000 and 2019 by year. Areas shown in gray are communities with the designations of Urban Center, Urban, and Suburban in *Thrive MSP 2040*, which correspond to the Developed Communities category in the previous development guide, *2030 Regional Development Framework*. Areas in light green are rural and agricultural communities which are not within the Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA) and are not part the Plat Monitoring Program. The remaining communities are those that are part of the Program and have been approving plats within the sewered areas. With the exception of the Suburban cities of Brooklyn Park, Eagan, Eden Prairie, and Savage, all of these communities represent the designations of Suburban Edge, Emerging Suburban Edge, or Rural Center in *Thrive MSP 2040*.

Figure 10. Platting Activity by Year in Twin Cities

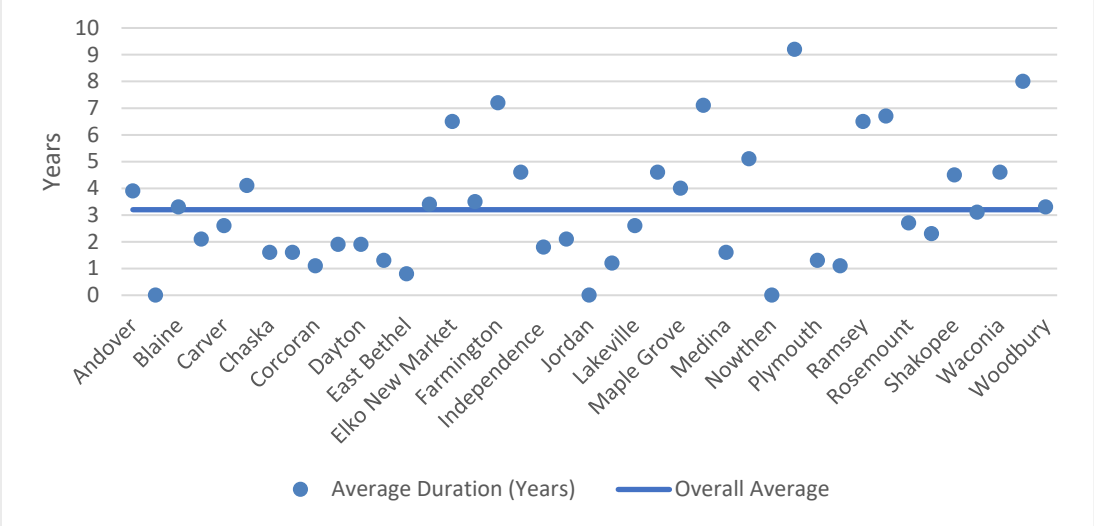


From a plat to permit

While analyzing platting activity is valuable to understand development patterns in the region, plats are only one step of the development process. For a residential plat to be realized as a development, building permits need to be issued by the local authority.

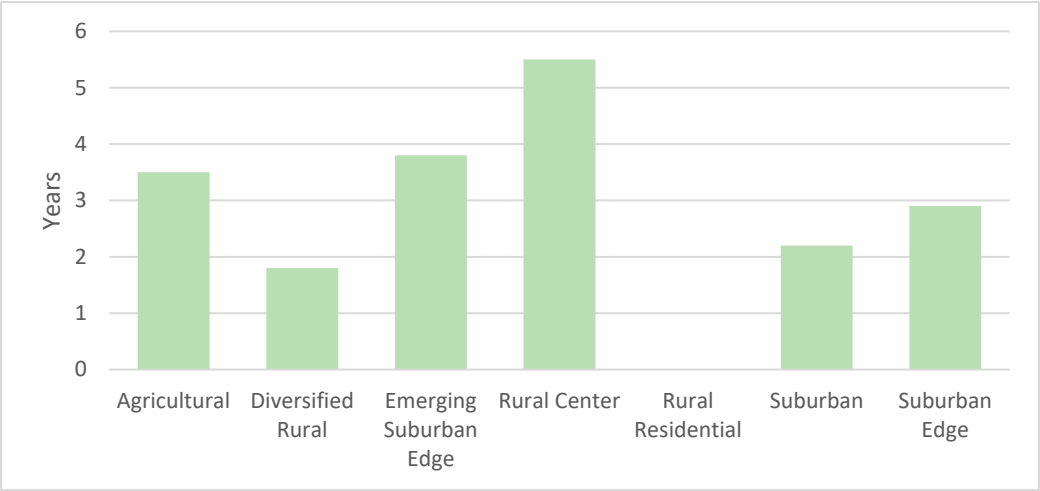
The Council's Research department collects annual residential permitting activity around the region. Overlaying plat data with permit information reveals the amount of time that it takes from the initial platting of a site to the development being built. Development proposals can be platted and permitted in the same year or take more than ten years before being constructed. This timeframe, often referred to as lot absorption, can vary based on a variety of factors, most importantly economic stability and housing demand. Since the geocoded permit data goes as far back as 2009, the analysis only includes the plats that were permitted in the last ten years (2009-2019). It has taken between zero and 18 years for the plats in all the counties to receive a development permit, zero signifying that the permit was issued the same year as the plat was approved. Between all the Program participants, there is a wide range of duration from an average of zero (Belle Plaine and Jordan) to 9.2 years (Orono), as shown in Figure 11, only showing those that have had any plats recorded. Overall, participating communities have experienced an average of 3.3 years for the platted lots to receive building permits, for permits issued between 2009 and 2019.

Figure 11. Average Duration (Years) by Community



Lot absorption shows the availability of platted lots and the community's capacity to issue development permits, if the demand is there. The longer the lot absorption, the more platted land is readily available for permitting and development. Shorter lot absorption shows a stronger demand and rapid growth in an area. Tracking this information can help inform growth patterns, land capacity, forecasting, and permitting process.

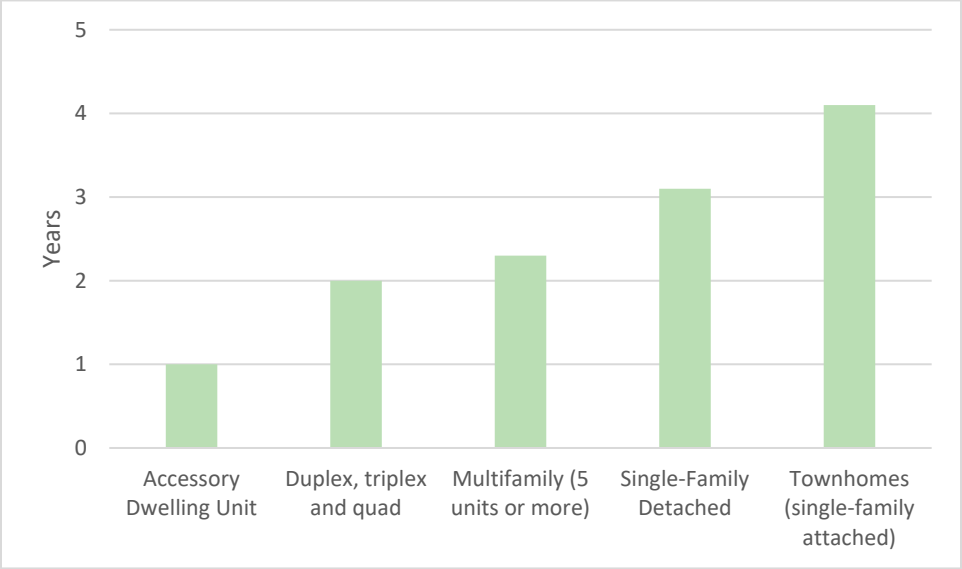
Figure 12. Average Duration (Years) by Community Designation



Recorded plats are in areas with a variety of community designations, as shown in Figure 12. The time from platting a site to issuing a permit was the shortest in Rural Residential designation with zero years, followed by Diversified Rural designation with 1.8 years. However, both these averages are based on only one or two plats, as these designations experience relatively less platting and permitting activities. Most of the activity has occurred in Suburban Edge and Emerging Suburban Edge communities. The time between platting and permitting was 2.9 years in Suburban Edge and 3.8 years in Emerging suburban Edge areas.

Additionally, based on the issued permits, Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) and Duplex/Triplex/Quad have experienced the shortest amount of time between platting and permitting, with one and two years respectively. Although, there was only one ADU permit issued during this time. Townhomes (single family attached) have taken the most amount time with an average of 4.1 years.

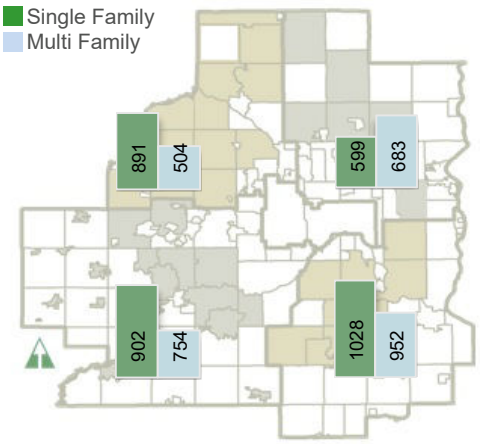
Figure 13. Average Duration (Years) by Housing Type



Density by community

In 2019, communities approved a total of 127 plats. As shown in Figure 14, Southeast and Southwest quadrants of the region had the highest number of units platted, with the Northeast and Northwest quadrants lower. The composition of multi-family and single-family housing is similar between all quadrants, except for the Northeast quadrant with more multi-family (53%) than single family (47%) units.

Figure 14. Units Platted by Regional Quadrants in 2019



The attached 2019 Plat Monitoring Program Summary Sheet outlines the number of submitted plats, number of units platted, housing mix, and the average net density for each community and for all communities overall. Most of the participating communities have been developing with an average net density of 3 units per acre or above.

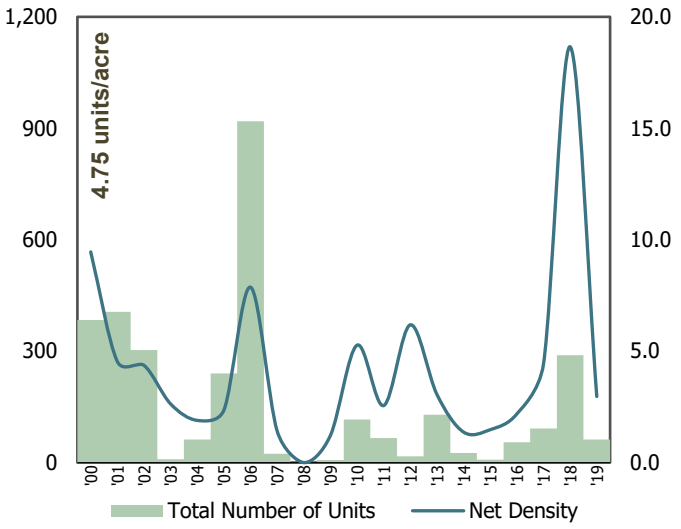
Based on the submitted data since the beginning of the Program and the history of communities' participation, 18 participating communities have an overall density falling below 3 units per acre since their involvement in the Program: Andover, Carver, Chaska, Cologne, Columbus, Corcoran, Cottage Grove, East Bethel, Empire Township, Independence, Lino Lakes, Mayer, Minnetrista, New Germany, Norwood Young America, Orono, Rogers, and Victoria. Some of these recorded densities are low due to the short timeframe of their participation and reduced levels of development in recent years. Ten of these communities have been a part of the Program only since 2008 or after. The others have mostly joined the Program around 2003. In 2015, the City of Nowthen was removed from the Program due to lack of any sewer extension plans in that area. No new participants joined the Program in 2019.

Below are a few examples of participating communities and their platting and density pattern since the beginning of the Program, representing a variety of different platting histories.

City of Chanhassen

Chanhassen voluntarily joined the Program in 2000 and has reported platting activity since then. The City has approved a total of 77 plats, reporting an overall net density of 4.75 residential units per acre. This platting activity has resulted in a total of 3,214 units, with 39% single family and 61% multi-family residential units.

Figure 15. Chanhassen Platting History



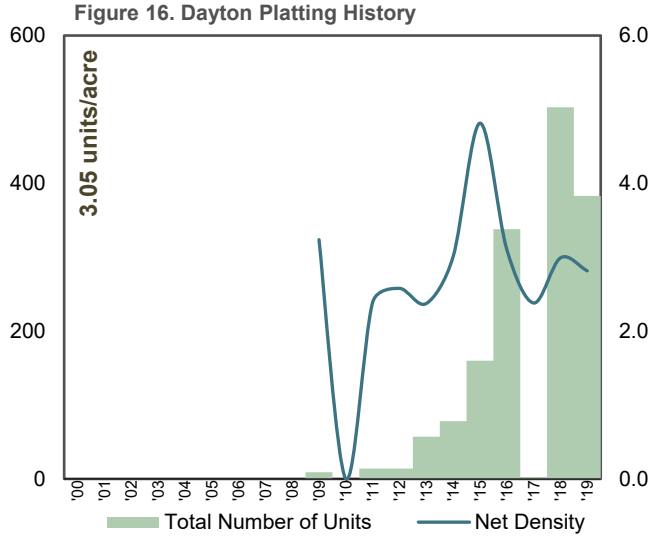
The City's platting activity was the lowest in 2008 with no plats and 2009 when only 7 units were platted through one approved plat. In 2019, the City approved three plats with 62 single family residential units, resulting in a net density of 2.96 units per acre for that year. Although 2019 net density is lower than Council's policy of three units per acre, due to credit from higher platting activities in previous years, the City's overall net residential density of plats is still consistent with Council's policy.

City of Dayton

The City of Dayton was added to the Program in 2009 as part of the review of their 2030 Comprehensive Plan. Dayton has approved a total of 39 plats since, with an overall net density of 3.05 units per acre. This platting activity has resulted in a total of 1,558 units over 511 acres of net developable land, 100% of which are single family residential units.

The City's platting activity was the lowest in 2010 with no plats. Subsequently, the City submitted only one plat in 2009, 2011, and 2012, which is consistent with market conditions during that time. In 2019, the City platted 383 single family units through eight recorded plats, resulting in a net density of 2.8 units per acre for that year.

Figure 16. Dayton Platting History

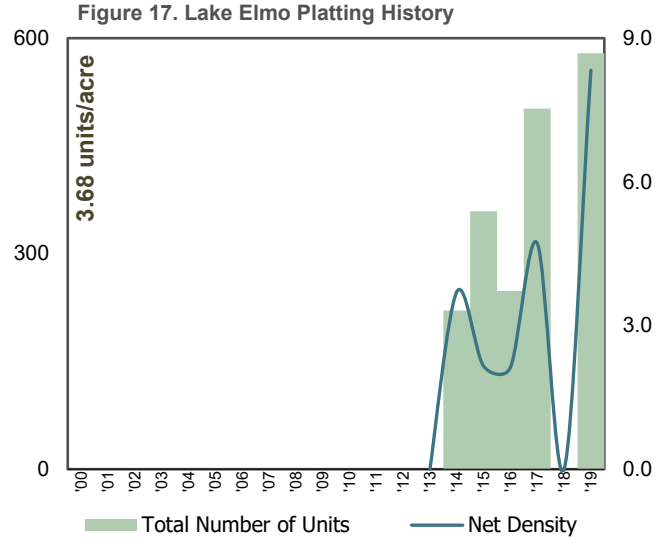


City of Lake Elmo

The City of Lake Elmo joined the Program in 2013. Lake Elmo has approved a total of 22 plats since then, with an overall net density of 3.68 units per acre. The City has approved an average of five plats every year since joining the Program, with no plats in 2013 and no data submitted in 2018.

The City has platted a total of 1,909 units over a total of 519.2 net developable acres, 76% of which are single family residential units. In 2019, the City platted 122 single family and 457 multi-family units through five recorded plats, resulting in a net density of 8.33 units per acre for that year.

Figure 17. Lake Elmo Platting History

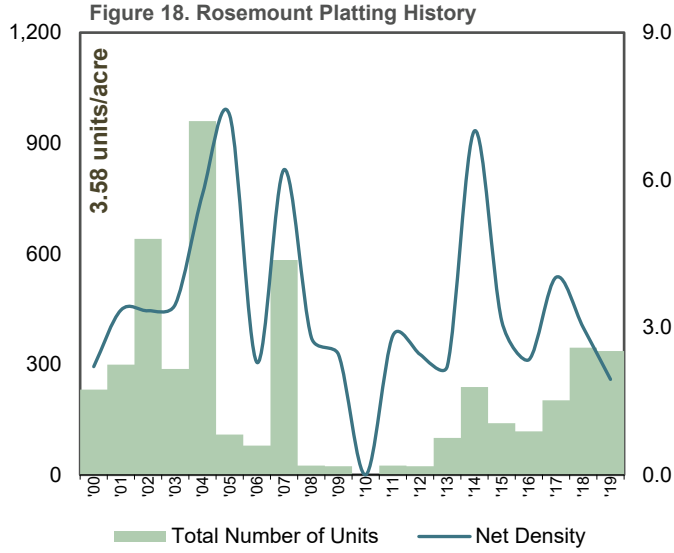


City of Rosemount

The City of Rosemount joined the Program in 2005 as a condition of a comprehensive plan amendment. Since then, the City has reported 88 plats, resulting in 4,763 housing units. The breakdown of single family and multi-family homes platted is nearly equal with 49% single family and 51% multi-family units.

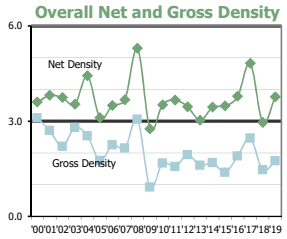
The City has continuously reported platting activity going back to 2000. The lowest number of plats was 2010 with no plats, and 2011 and 2012 each one plat. The City reported nine plats in 2019 with a net density of 1.9 units per acre. The overall net density of the plats is 3.58 units per acre. As shown in Figure 18, the City has seen fluctuation in number of units platted, while maintaining an above average density of platted development.

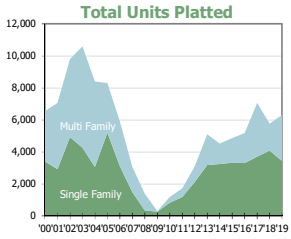
Figure 18. Rosemount Platting History

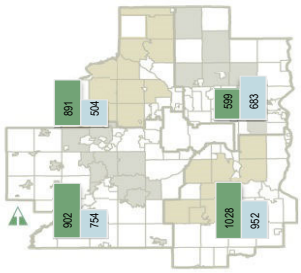


Plat Monitoring Program: 2019 Summary

2019 SNAPSHOT	
Participating Communities	45
Total Number of Plats	127
Gross Acres Platted	3,611.3
Net Acres Platted	1,677.9
Number of Units Platted	6,313
Single Family	3,420
Multi-Family	2,893
Housing Mix	
Single Family	54%
Multi-Family	46%
Average Net Density ('00-'19)	3.67







Units Platted by Regional Quadrant in 2019

Single Family Units
Multi-Family Units

Number of Units Platted and Net Density by Community

Number of Housing Units
Annual Net Density
#.# Overall Net Density
Year Community joined

390 Robert Street North
Saint Paul, MN 55101-1805

651.602.1000
TTY 651.291.0904
public.info@metc.state.mn.us
metrocouncil.org

Follow us on:
twitter.com/metcouncilnews
facebook.com/MetropolitanCouncil
youtube.com/MetropolitanCouncil