

Information Item

Community Development Committee



Meeting Date: December 18, 2023

Topic

2040 Comprehensive Plan Amendment Annual Report

District(s), Member(s):	ALL
Policy/Legal Reference:	Minn. Stat. § 473.864, subd. 2
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Michael Larson, Planning Analyst (651-602-1407) Katelyn Champoux, Planner (651-602-1831)
Division/Department:	Community Development / Regional Planning

Proposed Action

No action necessary. This is an information item only.

Background

Local governments amend their 2040 comprehensive plans as the need arises. Most amendments are related to development proposals that are supported by the City but are not consistent with the current guiding land use or other policies in their adopted Plan. Other reasons for amending plans include the incorporation of more detailed planning (e.g., neighborhood or station area plans); refinement of policy; or changes in the timing, location, or staging of development.

Council staff review amendments for conformance with regional system plans, consistency with regional policy, and compatibility with affected jurisdictions. Many of these are reviewed administratively by staff, but amendments with larger impacts require consideration by the Community Development Committee and full Council, consistent with the Council's adopted Administrative Review Guidelines.

Council staff have been compiling information related to comprehensive plan amendments to better understand and report on themes related to amendments. The ongoing inventory and analysis of amendments help staff provide assistance to local governments as well as help craft future regional policies and practices.

Types of Amendments

The amendments submitted by communities often have multiple components. They may include one or more of the following:

- Changes in guiding land uses:
 - Parcel-specific changes to accommodate development proposals (most common amendment)
 - Modifying many parcels as a result of a small area planning exercise
 - Assigning a guiding land use as a result of annexation (infrequent)
 - "Correcting" a guiding land use to better match the existing use (uncommon)
- Adjustments to the Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA) or staging areas of the Plan based on development interest or lack thereof

- Adjustments to the density range of an existing guiding land use to accommodate market conditions for these locations
- Increases to the community’s forecasts related to a development proposal and/or policy changes that create more favorable conditions for development given market demand

Less common amendments also occur, such as:

- Creation of a new guiding land use category.
- Infrastructure-related amendments, like the incorporation of a new bicycle plan.
- Change in Community Designation for a parcel(s).

Findings

When communities submit amendments for Council review, they might include multiple policy changes or actions. For example, a City might submit a proposed amendment for the reguiding of properties for two unrelated developments. Council staff have disaggregated this information for reporting and analysis.

The Big Picture for 2040 Plans

- The Council has authorized 322 amendments¹, consisting of 360 actions. Of the 322 amendments, 80 required Council action and 242 were reviewed administratively by staff.
 - Communities within the MUSA account for 88% of amendments.
 - The Council authorized the highest number of amendments in Emerging Suburban Edge (73) communities, followed by Suburban (67) and Suburban Edge (60).
- The number of amendments has declined since its peak in 2021 (Figure 2).
 - Only three amendments were submitted in 2019, as most plans were still under review for the 2040 decennial update.
 - Amendments grew to 47 in 2020 and peaked the following year with 115 amendments.
 - Amendments declined in 2022 and 2023 with 81 and 76 amendments, respectively.
- The most frequently submitted amendments included changes in guiding land use, including those associated with a development (170) and those without a specific development proposal (90). There were 82 amendments related to changes in the text, such as the creation of a new guiding land use or revisions to density ranges.
- Of the 322 total amendments to 2040 Plans, the Council has found 14 amendments to be inconsistent with regional policy.
 - Nine amendments created inconsistencies with housing policy.
 - Two amendments created inconsistencies with natural resources policy.
 - One amendment created an inconsistency with land use policy.
 - One amendment created an inconsistency with both land use and natural resources policies.
 - One amendment created an inconsistency with agricultural preserves policy.

A Closer Look at 2023

In 2023, the Council authorized 76 amendments consisting of 83 actions through November 30, 2023. Of the 76 amendments, 12 required Council action and 64 were reviewed administratively by staff. The trends in 2023 align with those seen across all amendments authorized by the Council. The following are some key findings of the amendments authorized in 2023:

¹ The Council authorized the first 2040 Comprehensive Plan on February 14, 2018.

- Frequency of amendments:
 - Among the 181 communities and 7 counties in the region that require comprehensive plans, 43 amended their plan in 2023.
 - Communities within the MUSA account for 82% of amendments.
 - The Council authorized the highest number of amendments in Suburban Edge (15) and Emerging Suburban Edge (15) communities, followed by Suburban (14) and Urban (12).
 - The most frequently submitted amendments included changes in guiding land use, including those associated with a development (36) and those without a specific development proposal (22). There were 20 amendments related to changes in the text, such as the creation of a new guiding land use or revisions to density ranges.
- Land use impacts:
 - Development-driven amendments authorized in 2023 accounted for 3,465 housing units, including 485 affordable units.
 - Half of the development-driven changes in guiding land use in 2023 were either a change from one residential land use to another residential land use (25%), or a change from a non-residential land use to a residential land use (25%).
- Regional policy impacts:
 - Two amendments created inconsistencies with regional housing policy.
 - One amendment created an inconsistency with both regional land use and natural resource policies.
 - Two communities had amendments that involved changes to Community Designation for the subject property.

Discussion

At the December 18, 2023, Community Development Committee meeting, staff will present an overview of this information with additional data, graphs, and brief amendment examples.

We are interested in your reaction and questions about this data, and what you think would warrant further investigation and reporting. We will continue to build upon this effort so that we have an ongoing means to track and report on trends in amendments.



Figure 1. Comprehensive Plan Amendments by Community Designation

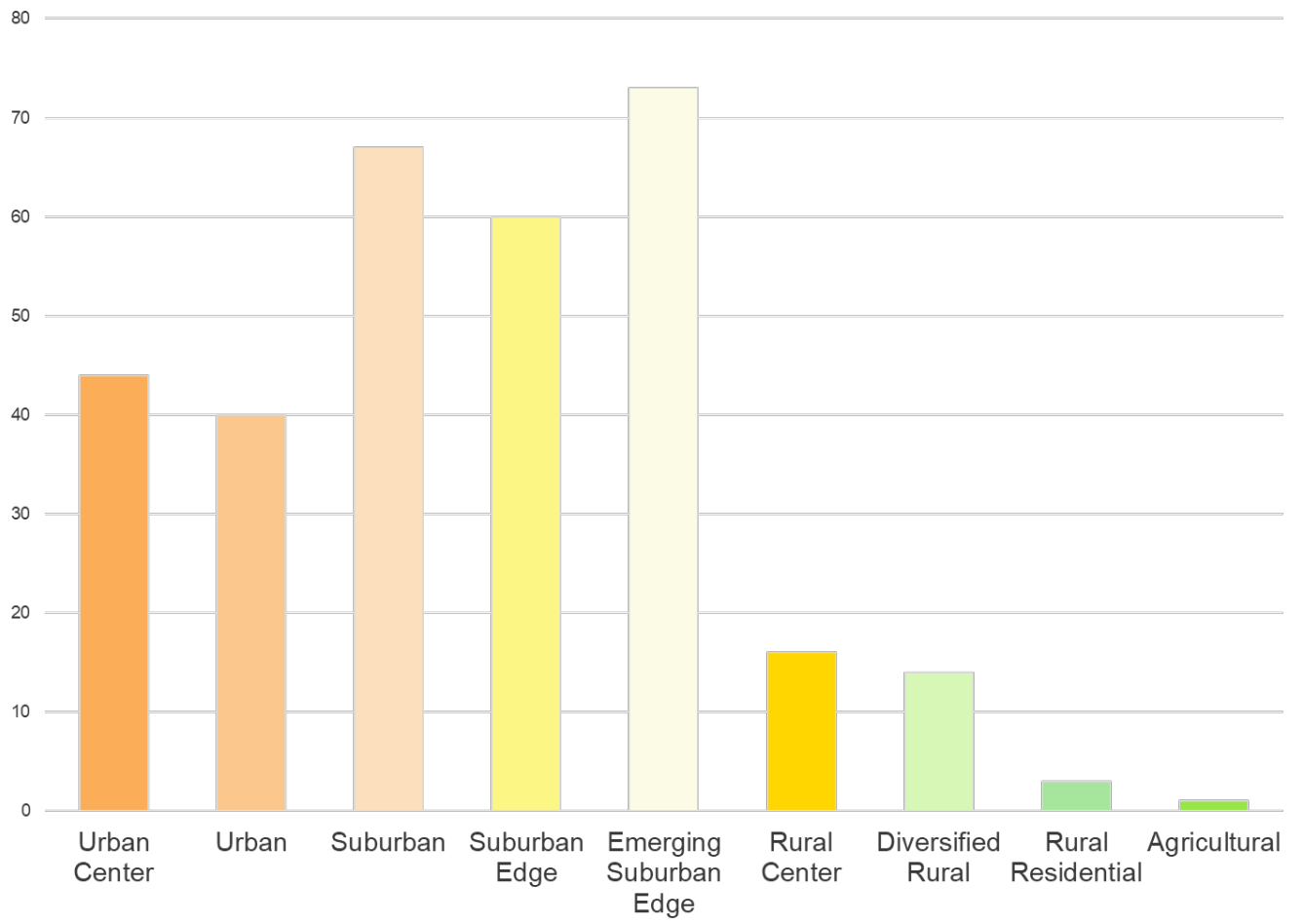


Figure 2. Comprehensive Plan Amendments by Year

