

Information Item

Community Development Committee



Meeting date: April 7, 2025

Topic

2025 Local Planning Assistance Work Plan Update

District(s), member(s):	All
Policy/legal reference:	Minn. Stat. §473 and 473.191
Staff prepared/presented:	Angela Torres, Senior Manager of Local Planning Assistance
Division/department:	Regional Planning / Community Development

Background

At the April 7, 2025, Committee meeting, Council staff will present an overview of 2025 annual work plan for the Local Planning Assistance work unit in the Community Development Division. The 2025 work plan will largely be focused on the implementation of Imagine 2050.

Local Planning Assistance (LPA), enabled in Minn. Stat. §473.191, assists local governments with comprehensive planning updates, amendments, and environmental reviews, amongst other responsibilities. LPA serves as Met Council's liaisons for local planning staff and provides technical resources, tools, and programs to help local planning efforts.

With the recent approval of Imagine 2050, the LPA team will pivot from policy development to implementation. This includes updating guidance and minimum requirements for conformance with regional system plans and consistency with regional policies as well as developing tools and resources to help local governments meet those requirements. Assistance is inclusive of grant funds and professional planning services.

LPA programs and services are structured around technical assistance and implementation tools for local governments to align their planning efforts with regional policy in Imagine 2050. Planning programs, technical assistance, and administrative guidelines will be updated to align more closely with Imagine 2050 policies.

Local Planning Assistance's Implementation Work Plan items include:

Kicking Off the Local Comprehensive Planning Process

- Decennial System Statements Information (Rollout September 2025)
- Local Planning Handbook Updates (Rollout September 2025)
 - Tool and resource development (all policy areas, continuous)
 - New Natural Systems Planning Tool
 - New Climate Strategies Tool
- Administrative Guidance and Program Updates
 - Plat Monitoring Program Updates (Q3 2025)
 - MUSA Implementation Guidelines Updates (Q4 2025)
 - Flexible Development Guidelines Updates (Applies to Rural Service Areas) (2026)
- PlanIt Program (Rollout starts in early 2026)

New Planning Program and Funding

- Planning Assistance Grant Eligibility Criteria (May 2025)
- Small Communities Planning Program Development and Eligibility Criteria (May 2025)

Each of these work plan items will come before the Committee for your information, feedback, or direction. There are many other forms of technical assistance and services that we will update or develop for local governments as they begin their local planning process.

In reference to the 2040 Comp Plan Debrief, for example, we are reviewing and implementing internal process improvements to implement the most efficient administrative review process possible. Other internal efforts include development of a technical reviewer training program and standardization of various procedures within the technical teams. Clearer communication strategies and more opportunities for individualized technical assistance through the Sector Representatives Program are also a priority for the next planning review period.

