

# Business Item

Community Development Committee



**Committee Meeting Date:** July 7, 2025

**For the Metropolitan Council:** July 23, 2025

## Business Item: 2025-160

City of Forest Lake Land Use Tables Update Comprehensive Plan Amendment, Review File 22270-7

<b>District(s), Member(s):</b>	District 11, Gail Cederberg
<b>Policy/Legal Reference:</b>	Metropolitan Land Planning Act (Minn. Stat. § 473.175)
<b>Staff Prepared/Presented:</b>	Merritt Clapp-Smith, Senior Planner (651-602-1567) Angela R. Torres, Senior Manager (651-602-1566)
<b>Division/Department:</b>	Community Development / Regional Planning

### Proposed Action

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

1. Authorize the City of Forest Lake to place its comprehensive plan amendment into effect.
2. Find that the amendment does not change the City's forecasts.

### Background

The City originally submitted the Land Use Tables Update comprehensive plan amendment on February 7, 2025, and submitted supplemental information most recently on May 22, 2025. The purpose of the amendment is to update the City's Land Use tables based on updated geographic information systems (GIS) data and corrected calculations for developable acreages for all land use categories in the City. The proposed amendment is not related to a development project or land use regarding.

The amendment proposes changes to the following tables within the City's 2040 Comprehensive Plan: Net Residential Density (Table 2-8), Planned Land Use Characteristics (Table 2-12), Guided Land Use Acres for Developable Acres (Table 2-13), Residential Density Calculations (Table 2-15), Employment Density Calculations (Table 2-16), Future Land Use Units/Jobs/Acres (Table 2-17) and Development Potential for Affordable Housing Allocation (Table 4-7). This is the City's sixth amendment to its 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

### Rationale

The proposed amendment conforms to regional system plans, is consistent with Council policies, and is compatible with the plans of other local communities and school districts. There is no regional or system impact resulting from the proposed change.

### Thrive Lens Analysis

On February 12, 2025, the Council adopted Imagine 2050, which builds on policy direction in Thrive MSP 2040. Under the Thrive lens, the proposed amendment 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.



# REVIEW RECORD

City of Forest Lake

Land Use Tables Update Comprehensive Plan Amendment

Review File No. 22270-7, Business Item No. 2025-160

## BACKGROUND

The City of Forest Lake (City) is located in northwestern Washington County, bordered by Wyoming and Chisago City to the north, Columbus to the west, Lino Lakes to the southwest, Hugo to the south, May Township to the southeast, Scandia to the east, and Chisago Lake Township to the northeast.

*Thrive MSP 2040* (Thrive) designates Forest Lake with “Emerging Suburban Edge” and “Diversified Rural” community designations. The Council forecasts that from 2020 to 2040 the City will grow from 21,600 to 26,000 population and 8,131 to 10,800 households. The Council also forecasts that between 2020 and 2040, the City’s employment will increase from 6,096 to 9,500 jobs.

The Metropolitan Council reviewed the City of Forest Lake’s 2040 Comprehensive Plan ([Business Item 2020-60 JT](#), Review File No. 22270-1) on March 25, 2020. This is the sixth comprehensive plan amendment since the 2040 Plan was reviewed.

## REQUEST SUMMARY

The purpose of the amendment is to update the City’s Land Use tables based on updated geographic information systems (GIS) data and corrected calculations for developable acreages for all land use categories in the City. The City decided to review and update its data after noticing potential discrepancies in acreage data between its original 2040 Comprehensive Plan, data in subsequent comprehensive plan amendments, and visual observations of some land use districts.

The amendment proposes changes to the following tables within the City’s 2040 Comprehensive Plan: Net Residential Density (Table 2-8), Planned Land Use Characteristics (Table 2-12), Guided Land Use Acres for Developable Acres (Table 2-13), Residential Density Calculations (Table 2-15), Employment Density Calculations (Table 2-16), Future Land Use Units/Jobs/Acres (Table 2-17) and Development Potential for Affordable Housing Allocation (Table 4-7). This amendment is not related to any development project or land reguiding.

## OVERVIEW

### Conformance with Regional Systems

The amendment conforms to the Regional System Plans for Parks, Transportation (including Aviation), and Wastewater, with no substantial impact on, or departure from, these plans.

### Consistency with Council Policies

The amendment is consistent with the *Thrive MSP 2040*, with the *Housing Policy Plan*, with water resources management, and is consistent with Council forecasts.

### Compatibility with Plans of Adjacent Jurisdictions

The amendment will not have an impact on adjacent communities, school districts, or watershed districts, and is compatible with the plans of those districts.

## PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTIONS

- The Council acted on the City’s 2040 Plan on March 25, 2020 ([Business Item 2020-60 JT](#), Review File No. 22270-1).



- The MN Lakes Self Storage amendment was approved by the Council on October 14, 2020 ([Business Item 2020-257](#), Review File 22270-2). The amendment reguided 15 acres from High Density Residential to Highway Commercial to allow for the development of a 324-unit storage facility.
- The Headwaters 123 amendment was approved by the Council on February 10, 2021 ([Business Item 2021-31](#), Review File 22270-3). The amendment reguided 90 acres of Mixed Use and 33 acres of Low-Medium Density Residential to Business Park to allow for the opportunity for an employment center development.
- The Council administratively reviewed the Smith Property amendment on March 26, 2021 (Review File No. 22270-4). The amendment reguided 38.7 acres from Mixed Use to Low-Medium Density Residential in order to guide the amendment site in a manner consistent with adjacent properties.
- The Council administratively reviewed the 932 2nd Street NW amendment on July 12, 2024 (Review File No. 22270-5). The amendment reguided 8.9 acres from Rural Residential to Highway Commercial in order to accommodate a contractor office/showroom on the site.
- The Council administratively reviewed the Shadow Creek Estates amendment on August 6, 2024 (Review File No. 22270-6). The amendment reguided 8.63 acres from High Density Residential to Medium Density Residential, and an additional 17.22 acres from Mixed Use to High Density Residential in order to support the construction of a 46-unit townhome development on the northern parcel.

## ISSUES

- I. Does the amendment conform to the regional system plans?
- II. Is the amendment consistent with Thrive MSP 2040 and other Council policies?
- III. Does the amendment change the City's forecasts?
- IV. Is the amendment compatible with the plans of adjacent local governmental units and affected jurisdictions?

## ISSUES ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

### Conformance with Regional Systems

The amendment conforms to the regional system plan for Regional Parks, Transportation, and Wastewater, with no substantial impact on, or departure from, these system plans. Additional review comments are included below.

#### Regional Parks

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

The Plan conforms to the Regional Parks and Trails System and is consistent with Council policy. There is one unit of the Regional Parks and Trails System in the City of Forest Lake. The Hardwood Creek Regional Trail travels north-south through the western half of the City, paralleling Highway 61 and following a former rail line. The proposal to update the Land Use tables in the City's comprehensive plan will not impact the Hardwood Creek Regional Trail or the Regional Parks and Trails System more broadly.

#### Wastewater Service

*Reviewer: Roger Janzig, Environmental Services (ES) – Wastewater Planning and Community Programs (651-602-1119)*

The proposed amendment conforms to the 2040 Water Resources Policy Plan (WRPP). The amendment is being driven by the need to correct data and not changing plans for growth, development, or sewer flows.

## Transportation

*Reviewer: Joe Widing, Metropolitan Transportation Services (MTS) (651-602-1822)*

The amendment does not impact any regional transportation system and conforms to the regional system as proposed.

## Transit

*Reviewer: Stephen Baisden, Metro Transit (MT) (612-349-7361)*

Given the current and proposed transit investments, this proposal to amend the Land Use and Housing Chapter tables in the Forest Lake 2040 Comprehensive Plan, will likely have a marginal impact on the existing transit network and not prompt expansion of the transit network.

## Consistency with Council Policy

The amendment is consistent with Council policies for forecasts, land use, housing, sub-surface sewage treatment systems, and water supply. Additional review comments are detailed below.

## Forecasts

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

The City offers that the amendment does not affect the communitywide forecast and does not change sewer-serviced forecasts or MUSA staging. Council staff agree; there is no forecast adjustment at this time.

## Thrive MSP 2040 and Land Use

*Reviewer: Merritt Clapp-Smith, CD – Local Planning Assistance (651-602-1567)*

The proposed changes are consistent with Thrive MSP 2040 policy for land use. Thrive identifies the City as an Emerging Suburban Edge Community. Emerging Suburban Edge communities are expected to plan for forecasted population and household growth at average densities of at least 3-5 units per acre for new development and redevelopment.

This amendment updates the acres of land guided for different land uses in the Forest Lake 2040 Comprehensive Plan tables. The updates are based on:

- Clean up of citywide GIS data for all acres and land uses
- Corrected assumptions for calculating developable versus undevelopable land
- Clarification of land use acres from previously authorized comprehensive plan amendments to the 2040 Plan

The City initiated the amendment after identifying inconsistencies between land use acres in their 2040 Plan tables, what they observed on the ground, and Met Council data for net density calculations. The City decided to conduct a comprehensive re-evaluation of its land use GIS data and ensure that the land use tables accurately represented all developable acres available to accommodate future growth in the city. Despite the data errors in the tables, the 2040 Land Use map of available acres was, and continues to be, **accurate and is unchanged**.

Thrive directs Emerging Suburban Edge communities to plan for sewer residential densities of 3 to 5 units per acre. This amendment updates the total net acres for residential land use categories, such that the City's corrected planned residential density is 3.51 units per acre, as shown in Table 2 below. Prior to this amendment, the City's planned residential density was 3.38 units per acre. The City remains consistent with regional land use and density policies.



Table 2. Planned Residential Density, City of Forest Lake

2016-2040 Change					
Category	Density		Net Acres	Min Units	Max Units
	Min	Max			
Low Density Residential	1.5	4	283	424	1,132
Low/Medium Density Resid.	3	6	1,566	4,698	9,396
Medium Density Residential	6	10	18	108	180
High Density Residential	15	20	27	405	540
Mixed Use*	10	15	150	1,500	2,250
Downtown Mixed Use*	20	30	3	60	90
<b>TOTALS</b>			<b>2,047</b>	<b>7,195</b>	<b>13,588</b>
*50% residential			<b>Overall Density</b>	<b>3.51</b>	<b>6.64</b>

## Housing

Reviewer: Olivia Boerschinger, CD – Housing (651-602-1327)

The amendment is consistent with the Council's Housing Policy Plan. The Plan currently provides sufficient land to address its share of the region's 2021-2030 need for affordable housing, which is 648 units. This amendment continues to allow the City to implement the housing element of their 2040 Plan and to address their share of the region's affordable housing need for 2021-2030. As of this amendment, the Plan will be guiding approximately 245 acres of higher density residential land such that at least 1,525 units could be built.

The City is a current participant in the Livable Communities Act program. The last grant awarded to the City was in 2010.

## Water Resources

Reviewer: Maureen Hoffman, ES—Surface Water (651-602-8026) and John Clark, ES-Water Supply (651-602-1452)

The proposed amendment request is consistent with the Water Policy Plan and does not propose any impacts to surface water or water supply.

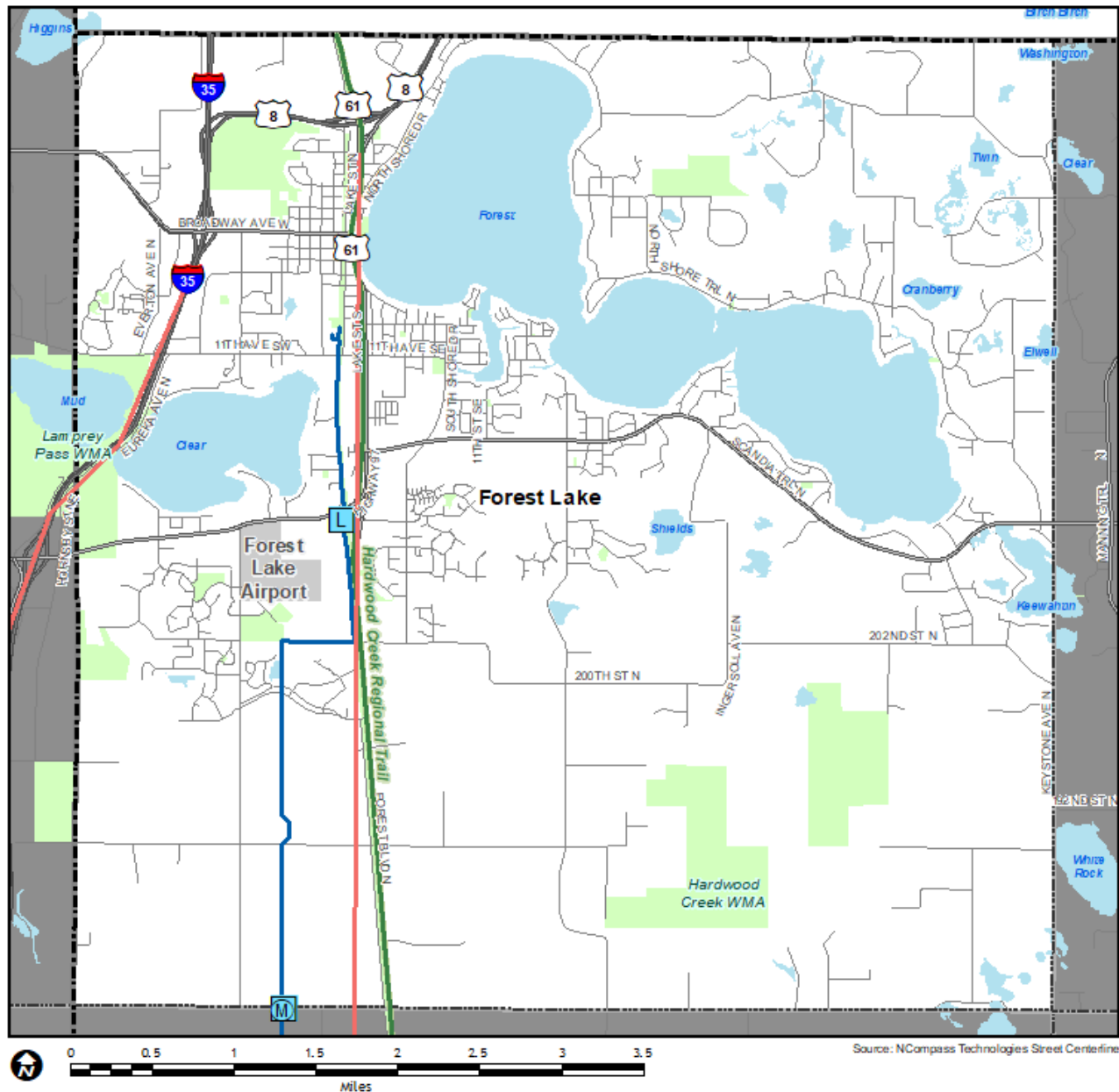
## Compatibility with Plans of Adjacent Governmental Units and Plans of Affected Special Districts and School Districts

The proposed amendment 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.

## ATTACHMENTS

- Figure 1: Location Map Showing Regional Systems
- Figure 2: Location Map Showing Community Designations
- Figure 3: Land Guided for Affordable Housing

Figure 1. Location Map Showing 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

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

### Regional Park Search Areas and Regional Trail Search Corridors

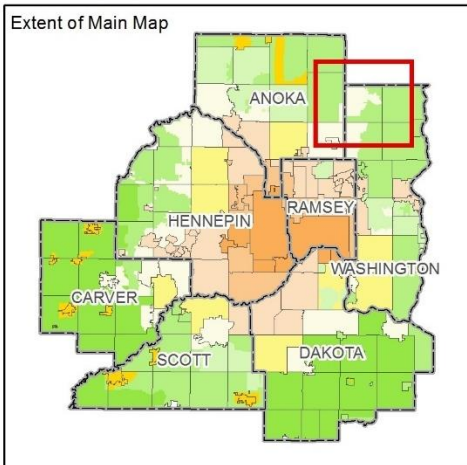
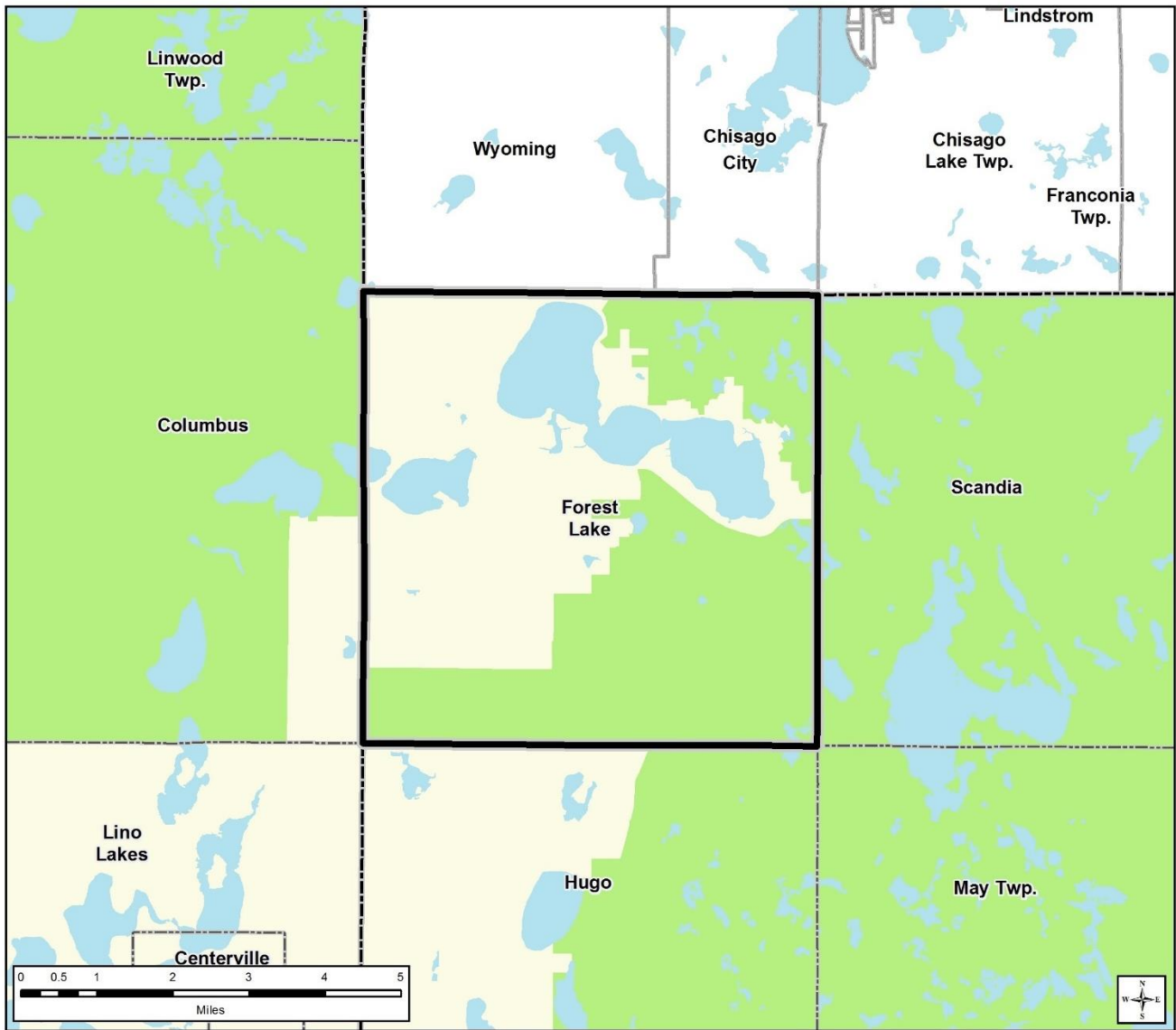
- Boundary Adjustment
- Search Area
- Regional Trail Search Corridors

- Local Streets
- Existing State Trails
- Other Parks, Preserves, Refuges and Natural Areas

\* Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB)



**Figure 2. Location Map Showing Community Designations**



**Community Designations**

- |                                    |                        |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Outside Council planning authority | Emerging Suburban Edge |
| Agricultural                       | Suburban Edge          |
| Rural Residential                  | Suburban               |
| Diversified Rural                  | Urban                  |
| Rural Center                       | Urban Center           |

- County Boundaries
- City and Township Boundaries
- Lakes and Major Rivers



Figure 3. Land Guided for Affordable Housing

2021-2030 share of regional need for Affordable Housing: 648 units

2021-2030 total regional need for Affordable Housing: 37,900 units

	Available Acres	×	Minimum Density <small>(units per acre)</small>	×	Expected % Residential <small>(if mixed use)</small>	=	Minimum Units Possible
High Density Residential	27.00		15		100%		405
Mixed Use	212.00		10		50%		1,060
Downtown Mixed Use	6.00		20		50%		60
Total	245						1,525

Sufficient/(insufficient) units possible against share of regional need: 877

Affordable units built since 2021: 0

Sufficient/(insufficient) units possible adjusted for affordable units built: 877

