

MUSA Implementation Guidelines

Imagine 2050 Update



November 3, 2025

metro council.org

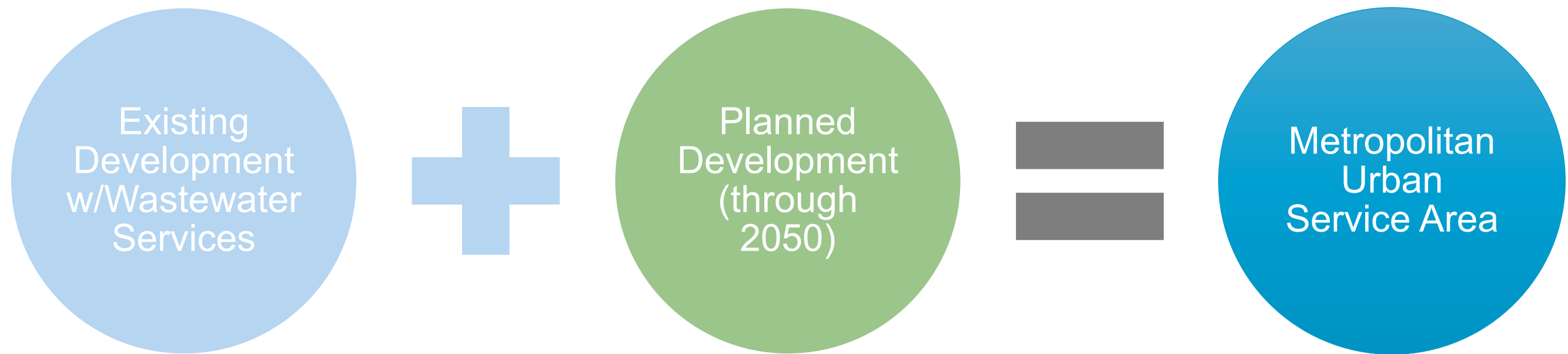
MUSA Implementation Guidelines

Today's Discussion

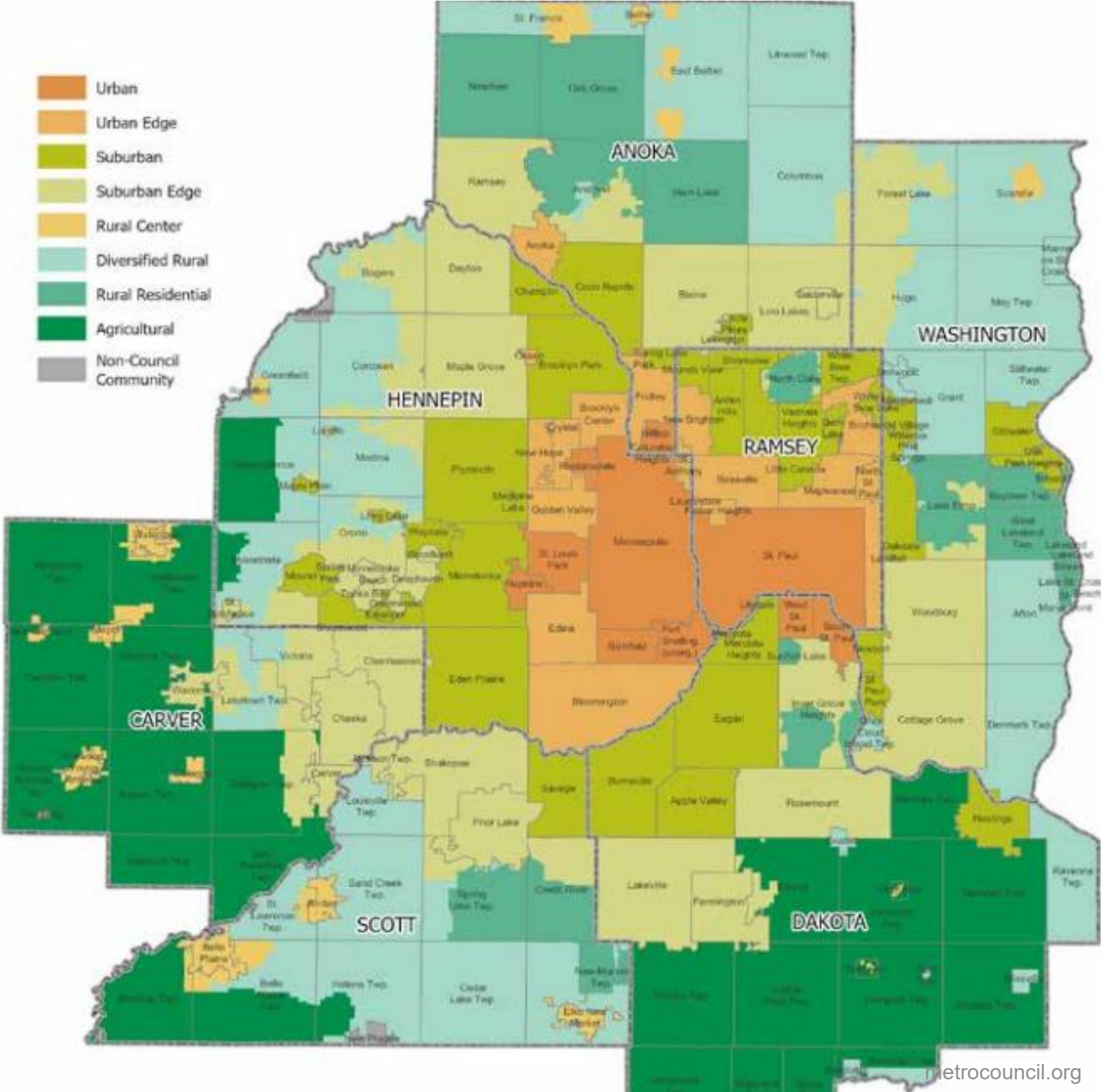
- Background
- Current guidelines
- Proposed changes
- Next steps

Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA)

What is the MUSA?



Imagine 2050 Community Designations



Regional Service Policies



Water Resource Policy Plan

- Conformance with Regional Wastewater System
- Consistency with Council Policies
- Compatibility with adjacent and affected governmental units
 - Accommodate projected growth
 - Provide sufficient land areas to accommodate growth. Developed vs. Undeveloped
 - Preserve areas for post-2040 growth.

Local comprehensive plans



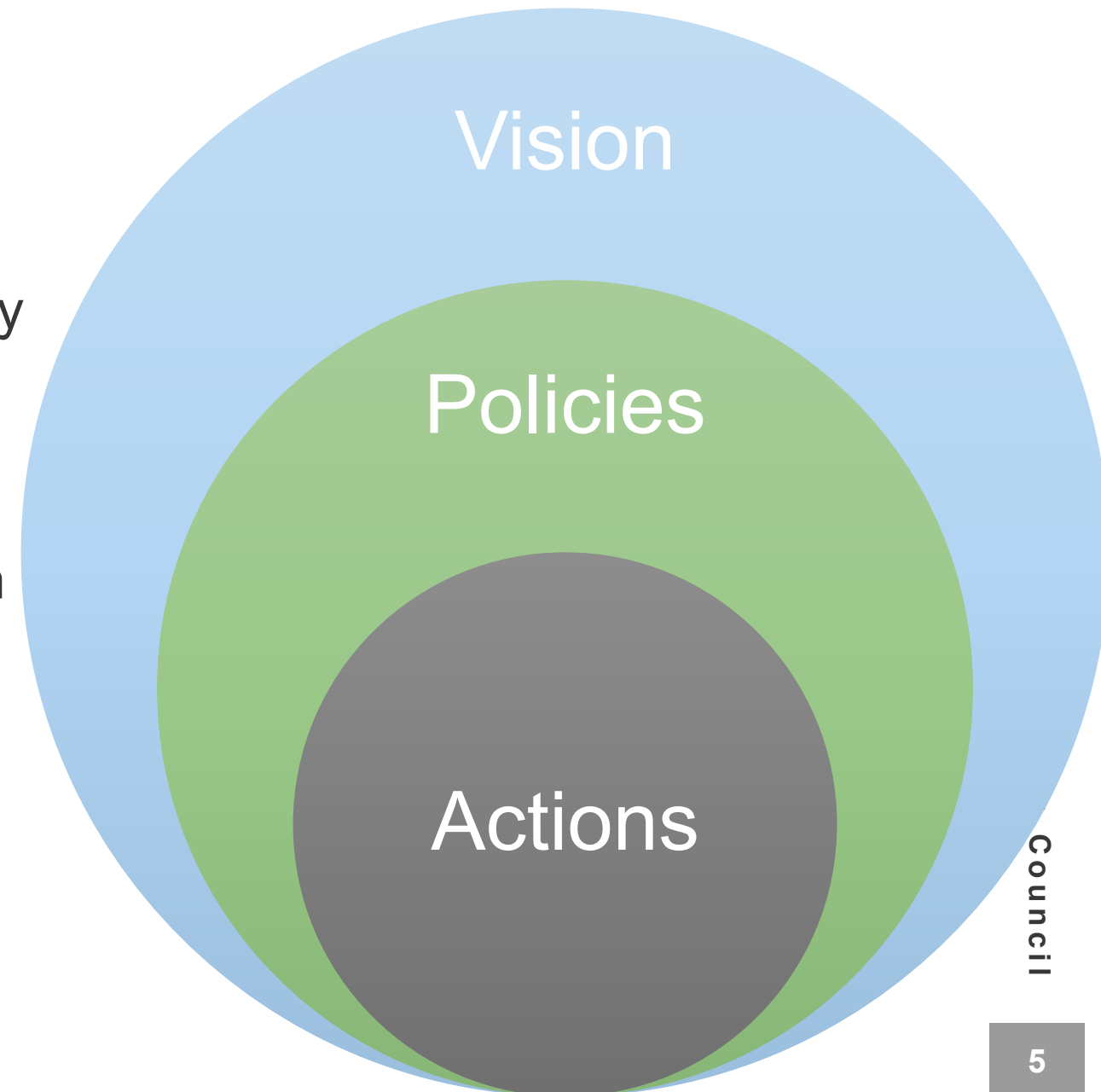
Community's vision

Guides growth and development in community

Identifies key issues in community and how the community intends to deal with them

Provides:

- Basis for community's vision and principles
- Reasoning for public facilities plans/budgets
- Guidance on making decisions



Imagine 2050 Density Policy

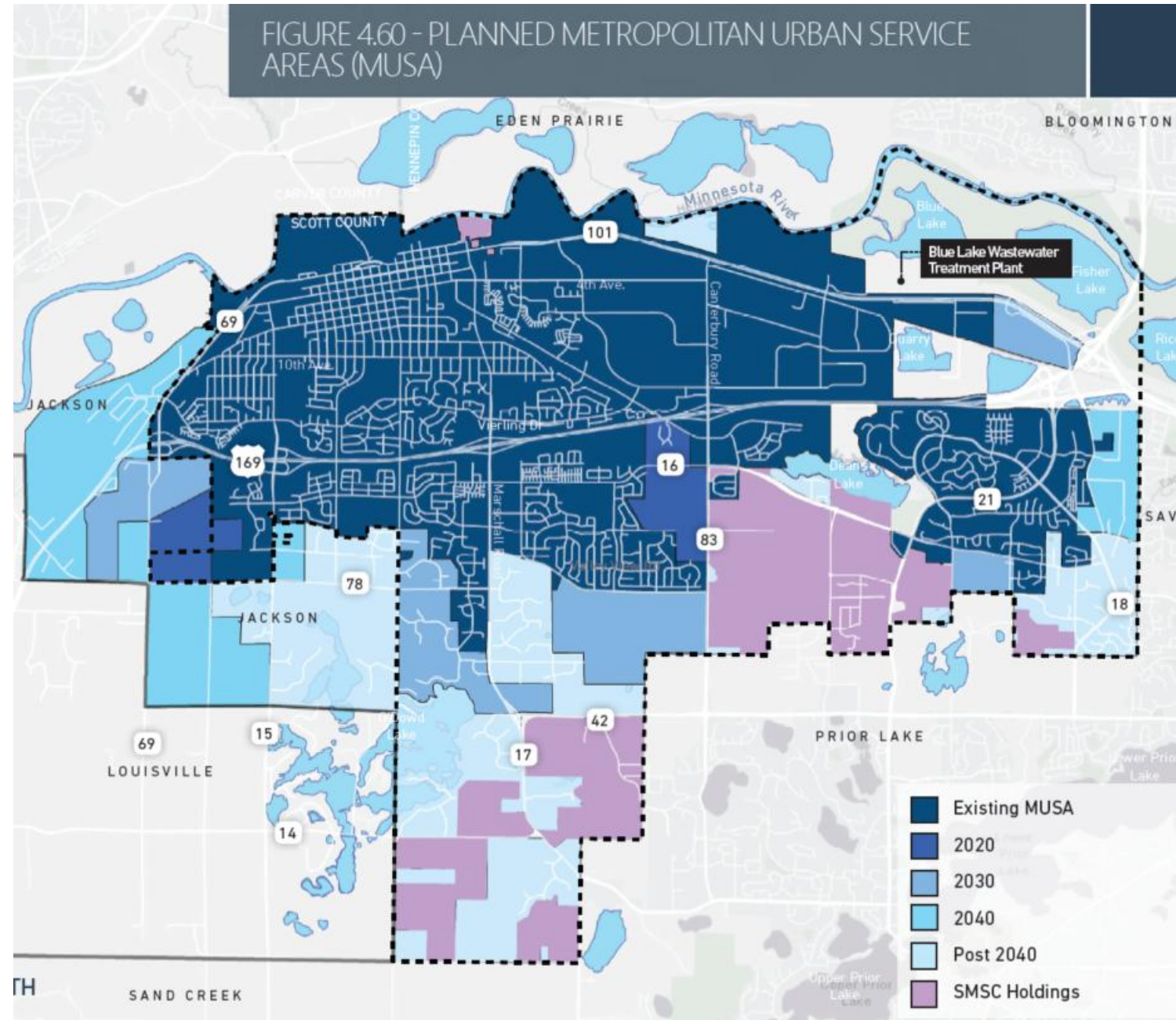
Table 3.1: Overall Density expectations by community designation and service area

Metropolitan Urban Service Areas Minimum Average Net Density	
Urban	25 units per acre
Urban Edge	14 units per acre
Suburban	7 units per acre
Suburban Edge	3.5 units per acre
Rural Service Area Maximum Allowed Density, except Rural Centers	
Rural Center	3 units per acre minimum
Rural Residential	1-2.5 acre lots existing, 1 unit/10 acres where possible
Diversified Rural	4 units per 40 acres
Agricultural	1 unit per 40 acres

Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA)

Application

- Staging identified by local government
- Implementation guidelines for proposed changes to *local* staging and expansions
- Council reviews for system impacts (density/flows), timing, and forecast consistency



Monitoring Development



Planned and Actual

- Comprehensive Plan Amendments
- Sewer Connection Permits
- Plat Monitoring Data
- Building Permit Data

MUSA Implementation Guidelines

History

- First established in 2004
- Collaboration with Metro Cities
- Last Major updated in 2017 with adoption of *Thrive MSP 2040*
- Minor Update in 2023

Purpose

- Allow more local flexibility
- Be responsive to market forces
- Acknowledge the performance of individual communities

Current Guidelines

- Minimum net density: 3 units/acre overall
- New and redevelopment
- Credit for participation in Plat Monitoring Program
 - Gives credit for installation of publicly owned stormwater facilities (outlots)
 - Excludes previously platted areas
- Excludes existing developments in annexation areas
- Excludes areas with failing subsurface sewage treatment systems (SSTS), except for failing communal SSTS which must be included.

Proposed Changes



Plat Monitoring

- Updated to reflect proposed revisions to the Plat Monitoring Program (10-year lookback period, or minimum of 10 plats)
- Clarifies how plat monitoring data will be used to provide flexibility in meeting density policy.

Proposed Changes



New Areas Excluded for Density Calculations

- Areas where there is insufficient depth to bedrock or water table.
- Publicly owned and maintained stormwater BMPs (expanded from only those on city owned outlots)
- Publicly Owned Conservation Easements
- Existing local and collector right of way (only for infill developments).

Proposed Changes



Determining Consistency with Regional Policy

- Allows for multi-phased developments to use preliminary plats to determine consistency with regional density policy.
 - For projects with multiple land uses, each phase still needs to independently meet the requirements of its respective land use.
 - Establishes that if local approvals are subsequently amended, a comprehensive plan amendment may be required.

Proposed Changes



Demonstrated Need

- Requires cities to demonstrate need for MUSA expansions either through a forecast amendment or demonstrating additional land is needed to maintain a 20-year rolling land supply.
- Provides clear guidance on how cities projected to grow into adjoining townships not currently within the MUSA can demonstrate need.
- Provides guidance on how MUSA expansion requests can be resolved when need cannot be demonstrated.

Proposed Changes



Mandated Connections

- Requires new areas connecting to MUSA to accommodate forecasted growth at densities established by Metropolitan Council Policy.
- If forecasted growth and the existing density of the area connecting cannot meet regional density policy, allows an inefficiency surcharge to offset the density shortfall.
- Allows the Metropolitan Council to require the connecting area to pay for expenses associated with extending municipal services.

Next Steps

- Receive feedback and direction from CDC members
- Engagement
 - Land Use Advisory Committee
 - Regional Planning Advisory Group (Metro Cities)
 - Local Planners Focus Group
- Respond to feedback and make revisions
- Revisit at future CDC meeting (Q1 2026) as Business Item





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