

Information Item

Community Development Committee



Meeting Date: September 2, 2025

Topic

2024 Plat Monitoring Report

District(s), Member(s):	All
Policy/Legal Reference:	Metropolitan Land Planning Act
Staff Prepared/Presented:	MacKenzie Young-Walters, Senior Planner, Local Planning Assistance (651-602-1373)
Division/Department:	Community Development / Regional Planning

Background

At the September 2, 2025, Community Development Committee meeting, Committee members will review the 2024 Plat monitoring Report. The Council annually reports on the platting activity in the participating communities as a method of tracking development patterns on the region's developing edge. This information is used to assess consistency with the Council's land use policies, evaluate trends in land usage and housing mix, analyze for consistency with local comprehensive plans, and review sewer connection permits.

In 2001, the Metropolitan Council initiated the Plat Monitoring Program (Program) with input from the Builders Association of the Twin Cities (BATC), currently known as Housing First Minnesota, and MetroCities (formerly the Association of Metropolitan Municipalities). The Program started with 12 volunteer communities, and now includes 45 communities. The communities annually submit their residential plat data for the preceding calendar year. The attached report summarizes data from 45 participating communities through the end of the 2024 calendar year.

In 2024, the participating communities approved a total of 103 plats, which is an increase from 93 plats in 2023. These plats accounted for 7,260 single and multi-family housing units on 1,308 acres of net developable land. The overall net density of the plats during 2024 was 5.5 units per acre, demonstrating the continued consistency in implementing the Council's sewer residential development policy. Of the units platted, 48.7.4% were single family units and 51.3% were multi-family units, which is slightly below the historical 55% single family unit and 45% multi-family unit split observed over the life of the program.

This year's report continues to analyze the platting activity relative to the Council's residential permit data to show the amount of time it takes for residential plats to be realized as permits. Tracking this information for the long term will result in a better understanding of development trends and market demand. Between 2009 and 2024, 10% of plats were realized as development permits within the same year, 46% of the plats within one year, and 70% within two years of the lot being platted.

Implementing Imagine 2050

With the adoption of Imagine 2050, the Council committed to updating the Plat Monitoring Program by examining altering the Program's look-back period to better reflect current development trends.

Staff observed that in recent years, most cities did not need to use the Program credit, which is a marked change from the early years of the Program. So, the need for an update to the Program was identified to improve Program impact and maintain its relevance for participating cities, but also to continue to provide the Council with a tool to monitor consistency with regional policy and development trends in the greenfield part of the region. Currently, its under-utilization is largely due to cities' planned land uses resulting in a higher average net residential densities than their long-term platting activity; however, many of these cities have expressed interest in having more flexibility in meeting Imagine 2050's density policy. By reducing the lookback period, the Program will more accurately reflect cities' recent platting activity, which generally has a higher density than the developments approved under previous comprehensive plans. In order to determine what impact a reduced lookback period would actually have on cities, staff conducted an analysis of the available plat monitoring data (which begins in 2000 for the earliest participants). Staff evaluated implications of four different scenarios:

- Reduce the lookback period to include only plats recorded since 2010
- Reduce the lookback period to include only plats recorded since 2014
- Reduce the lookback period to include only plats recorded since 2019
- Include only the last 10 recorded plats

For each scenario, the change in density was calculated for each participating city and both the average and median change in net residential density was determined for each community designation. The analysis also evaluated how the various scenarios would impact the number of cities platting above or below the density minimums established by Thrive MSP 2040 and Imagine 2050.

Based on this analysis, two scenarios were eliminated. First, staff determined that the post-2010 scenario did not have a significant impact on the Plat Monitoring Program. This is likely due to the fact that nearly half of the participants joined the program after 2007 and the period from 2007 to 2012 had relatively modest platting activity due to the lead-up to and slow recovery from the corresponding economic downturn. Second, the 10 most recent plats scenario was also problematic in that it resulted in such a small data set that a single high- or low-density plat caused such radical shifts in cities performance that there was the risk that cities, especially those with high platting volumes, would vacillate from being in or out of conformance with Council density policy on an annual basis.

Ultimately, staff determined that the post-2014 (last 10 years) and post-2019 (roughly aligning with the adoption of the 2040 comprehensive plan) scenarios merited further investigation. These scenarios were developed into two proposals:

- 1) The Plat Monitoring Program could consider the last 10 years of a city's platting activity with the oldest year's data being replaced by the most recent data every year; and,
- 2) The Plat Monitoring Program could be reset to align with cities implementation of Thrive MSP 2040 and then going forward data from the period covered by Imagine 2050 would be included, with the Thrive MSP 2040 data being removed upon the adoption of the 2060 comprehensive plans.

These approaches were discussed in broad terms with the Regional Planning Advisory Group on October 1, 2024, and in more specific terms with a Local Government Focus Group on April 22, 2025. These conversations with local partners revealed that both scenarios needed to re-evaluate how to meet the needs of cities with lower volumes of platting activity. There was interest from these cities in exploring alternatives for a rolling 20-year lookback period or for a mechanism which ensures a larger data set for cities with less annual platting activity. Based on this feedback, staff investigated a 20-year scenario and explored a modified version of the 2010 lookback scenario where the Program would give credit based on the last 10 years of platting data or a minimum of the last 10 plats, regardless of how long ago those plats were submitted.

Staff will present detailed information on the analysis, the feedback received to date, and on the proposed and preferred scenarios at the September 18, 2025, Land Use Advisory Committee (LUAC) meeting. Once direction from the LUAC has been incorporated, recommendations will be

presented to the Community Development Committee for discussion and consideration later this year. Local government partners will also be given additional opportunities to provide input on the recommended scenario prior to Council adoption.

