

## Community Development Committee

Meeting date: September 16, 2013

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of Community Development Committee

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**Subject:** Plat Monitoring Program; Residential Platting in Developing Communities in the Twin Cities Metro Area, 2012

**District(s), Member(s):** All

**Policy/Legal Reference:** MLPA

**Staff Prepared/Presented:** Raya Esmaeili, Planning Technician, 651-602-1616  
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**Division/Department:** Community Development / Local Planning Assistance

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### Proposed Action

Information only item. No action.

### Background

In 2001, the Metropolitan Council initiated the Plat Monitoring Program with input from the Builders Association of the Twin Cities (BATC) and MetroCities (formerly the Association of Metropolitan Municipalities). The program started with 12 volunteer communities, and now includes 44 communities. The communities annually submit their residential plat data for the preceding calendar year. The attached report summarizes data from 44 participating communities through the end of the 2012 calendar year, including 43 cities and one township.

In 2012, the participating communities approved a total of 74 plats, which is an increase from the previous years of economic downturn. These plats accounted for 2,638 housing units, single and multi-family, on 871.5 acres of net developable land. The overall net density of the plats during this year was 3.0 units per acre, sharing the continued consistency in implementing the Council's sewer residential development policy. Of the 2,638 units platted, 65% were single family units and 35% multi-family units. While the majority of units platted in the reporting year are single family, during the life of the program, 52% of the total units platted have been multi-family.

### Rationale

The objective of the Plat Monitoring Program is to measure the success of local implementation of Council policy by providing an annual report on sewer residential development in the majority of *Developing* communities and some *Rural Centers*, including the average density, the mix of new sewer residential development, the number of units platted, the amount of land developed, and the land use consumption. Participating communities complete an annual summary worksheet and submit copies of plats approved during the calendar year.

### Funding

Not applicable.

# PLAT MONITORING PROGRAM

*RESIDENTIAL PLATTING IN DEVELOPING COMMUNITIES  
IN THE TWIN CITIES REGION, 2012*



September 2013

## About the Program

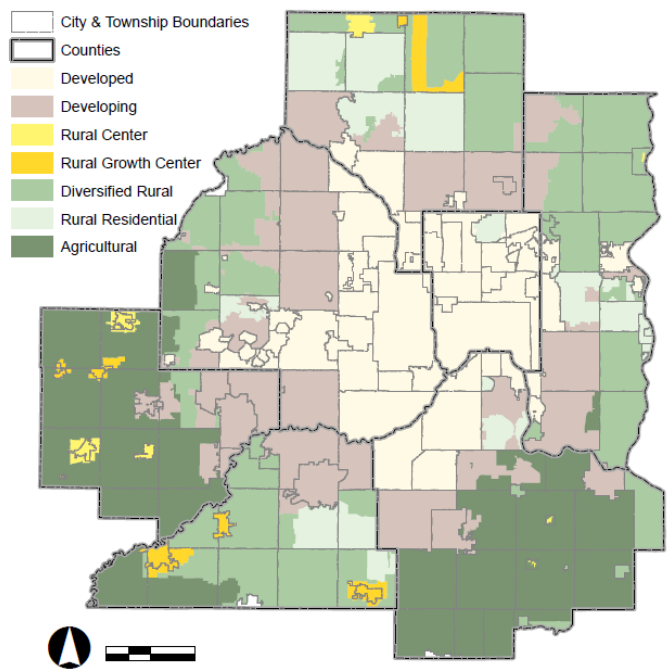
The Plat Monitoring Program tracks and monitors development in 44 communities in the region, specifically within areas designated as “Developing” and “Rural Center” in the *2030 Regional Development Framework* (Figure 1), the metropolitan area’s development guide. The objective of the Plat Monitoring Program is to measure the success of local implementation of Council policy by providing an annual report on sewerred residential development in some *Developing* communities and *Rural Centers*, including the average density, the mix of new sewerred residential development, the number of units platted, the amount of land developed, and the land use consumption. This data creates a baseline for land supply and tracks the housing mix and density of new developments. Twelve communities participated in the pilot program in 2001, reporting on sewerred residential plats in 2000. The Program continues to grow as the Twin Cities Region develops.

The program provides baseline data on residential development trends in participating communities and was designed to help answer the following questions:

- Is residential development consistent with Metropolitan Council policies?
- How are communities accommodating residential development in comparison to their local comprehensive land use plans?
- What is the mix of housing types that communities are approving each year (single family vs. multi-family)?
- How is residential land being developed within the Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA)?

Since 2001, the Council annually reports on residential development in participating communities using data collected through the program. The Program assists communities and Metropolitan Council staff in assessing a community’s consistency with the Council’s residential density policy, which requires sewerred residential development to occur at a minimum density of 3 to 5 units per net developable acre. By maintaining a historical record of approved sewerred subdivisions, the Council and metropolitan communities can evaluate the success of communities in implementing the density policy and the extent to which the wastewater treatment system is being used efficiently. In addition, participating communities receive credit for residential plats meeting the Council’s density policy and receive increased development flexibility within the MUSA for approving plats that exceed the density policy. For example, if the overall net density of a participating community is higher than 4 units per acre, that community can approve lower residential densities, so long as the overall net density remains above 3 units per acre. The credit from the program is crucial information in reviewing comprehensive plan updates and amendments. It is also a key implementation tool for Sanitary Sewer extension permit applications.

**Figure 1. 2030 Regional Development Framework**



## History of Program Participants

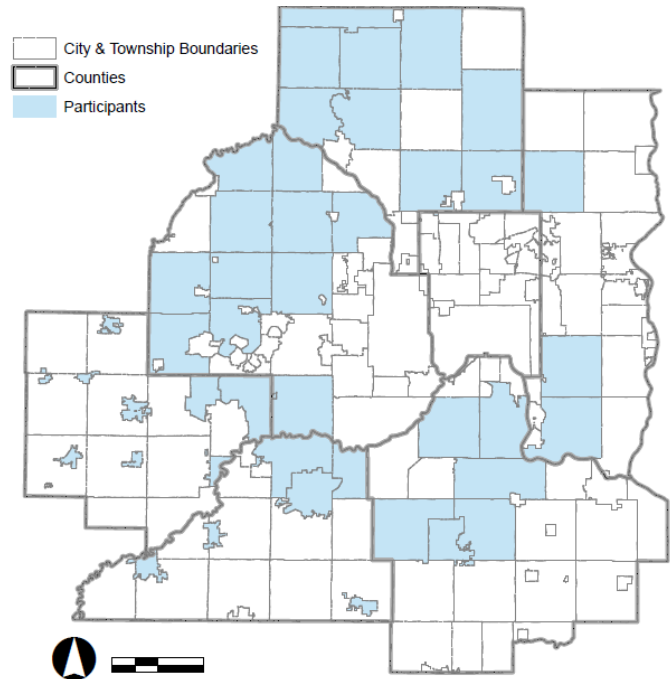
In 2001, the Metropolitan Council initiated the Plat Monitoring Program with input from the Builders Association of the Twin Cities (BATC) and MetroCities (formerly the Association of Metropolitan Municipalities). Participating communities complete an annual summary worksheet and submit copies of plats approved during the calendar year.

The initial 12 volunteer communities included Blaine, Chanhassen, Eden Prairie, Hugo, Inver Grove Heights, Lakeville, Maple Grove, Ramsey, Savage, Shakopee, Woodbury, and Waconia. In 2002, the City of Farmington was added to the program. As conditions of amendments to expand Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA), Empire Township and the Cities of Andover, Lino Lakes, Medina, Minnetrista, Rogers, Rosemount, and Victoria were added to the program in 2003.

The City of Brooklyn Park was required to report sewer residential plats starting with 2006 plats as a condition of a land use amendment. In 2007, the Cities of Orono and Cottage Grove were required to join the program as conditions of comprehensive plan amendment (CPA) requests, while the City of Eagan voluntarily joined the program. In 2008, as a part of the decennial review of comprehensive plan updates, the Cities of East Bethel, Mayer, and New Germany were added to the program. Another 16 communities, including a number of communities designated as “Rural Center,” joined the program as part of the decennial review of their comprehensive plan updates: the Cities of Belle Plaine, Carver, Cologne, Columbus, Corcoran, Dayton, Elko New Market, Jordan, Mayer, Norwood Young America, Nowthen, Oak Grove, Plymouth, Prior Lake, St. Francis, and Watertown.

This report analyzes sewer residential development in 43 cities and one township (see Figure 2). This report also shows the trends for all the participating communities since the inception of the program for years with submitted data, including year-to-year density and housing mix comparisons.

Figure 2. 2012 Participating Communities



## Analysis

From 2000 to 2012, participant communities platted an average of 5,099 single-family and multi-family housing units each year, peaking in 2003 with over 10,000 housing units platted. This number declined from 2005 to 2009, with the lowest number of plats ever recorded in the history of the program when only 270 units were platted in 2009. Since 2009, the communities have seen an overall increase in the number of platted units, recording 2,638 units in 2012, although this increase is not evenly distributed around the region. A total of 74 plats were recorded by 44 participating communities in 2012.

Figure 3. Housing Mix

	'00	'01	'02	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12
Single Family	3,390	2908	4909	4122	3059	5183	2933	1433	270	239	905	977	1715
Multi Family	3139	4144	4873	6141	5287	3306	2811	1588	1021	31	345	638	923
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,529</b>	<b>7,052</b>	<b>9,782</b>	<b>10,263</b>	<b>8,346</b>	<b>8,489</b>	<b>5,744</b>	<b>3,021</b>	<b>1,291</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>1,250</b>	<b>1,615</b>	<b>2,638</b>

### Total housing units and housing mix

In 2012, communities continued to see an increase in the number of units platted, a 63% rise from the previous year and almost ten times larger than 2009 recorded number of housing units. As shown in Figure 4, the number of units platted is gradually increasing since 2009.

During the previous year, 65% of the platted units were single family, for a total of 1,715 single family and 923 multi-family units. There was a slight decrease in the makeup of housing mix, from 40% multi-family housing in 2011 to 35% in 2012. Despite the decline in platted multi-family units, the overall composition of housing mix since 2000 continues to show multi-family housing as the slight majority of total platted units. Figure 5 shows the mix of housing during the length of the program, with an average of 52% platted multi-family versus 48% platted single family units.

Figure 4. Total Units Platted, 2000-2012

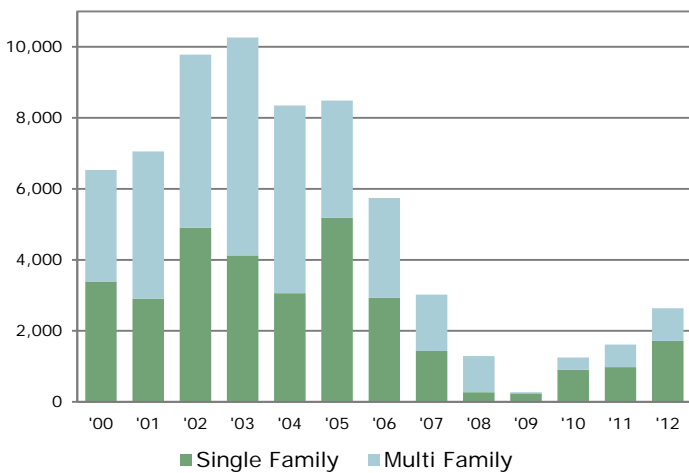
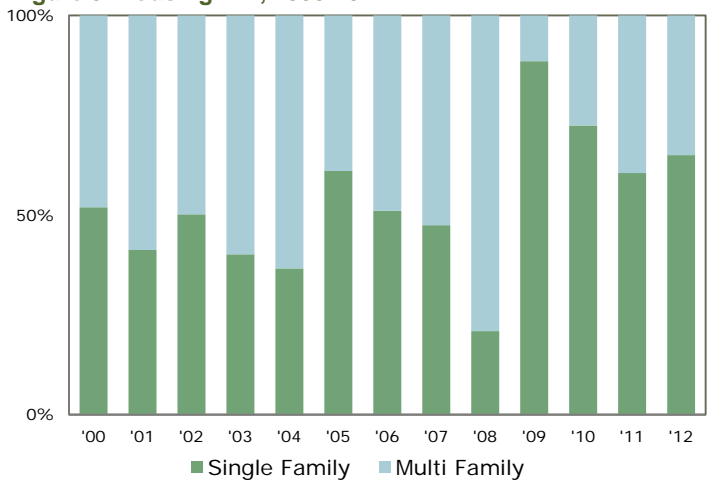


Figure 5. Housing Mix, 2000-2012



### Consistency with Local Comprehensive Plans

Every year since the start of the program, participant communities have approved plats that are consistent with their local comprehensive plans guiding. The allowable density is measured based on the corresponding land use designation and density range described in local comprehensive plans for the platted properties.

As shown in Figure 6, the actual number of units platted in 2012 is well within the range of overall allowable density for the participant communities as a group. The lowest allowable density is the sum of the number of units anticipated if all 74 plats were subdivided at the lowest allowable density defined in the local comprehensive plan. Likewise, the highest allowable density would have been expected if all the plats were subdivided at the highest allowable density based on the local comprehensive plan designation.

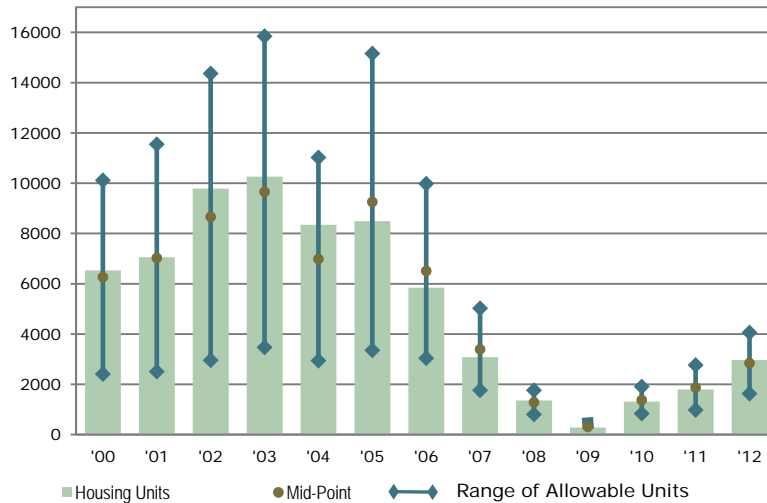
Figure 6. Number of Units Platted & Allowable Number of Units

Lowest Allowable Units	1632
Highest Allowable Units	4062
Actual Units Allowed	2971

Since 2000, participant communities have generally platted at a density around the mid-point of the overall density range. While some communities approve plats that are lower than the mid-point allowable density, in 2012 the total number of actual units platted fell above the mid-point density.

The annual fluctuation of the number of units around the mid-point is not significant over the course of the program. However, with the exception of 2008, since 2005 the overall density of plats generally fell below the mid-point, until its increase in 2012. The total number of approved housing units since 2009, the lowest point of the program, approximately equals the number of units platted only in year 2000 with only 12 participants.

**Figure 7. Planned and Actual Units**

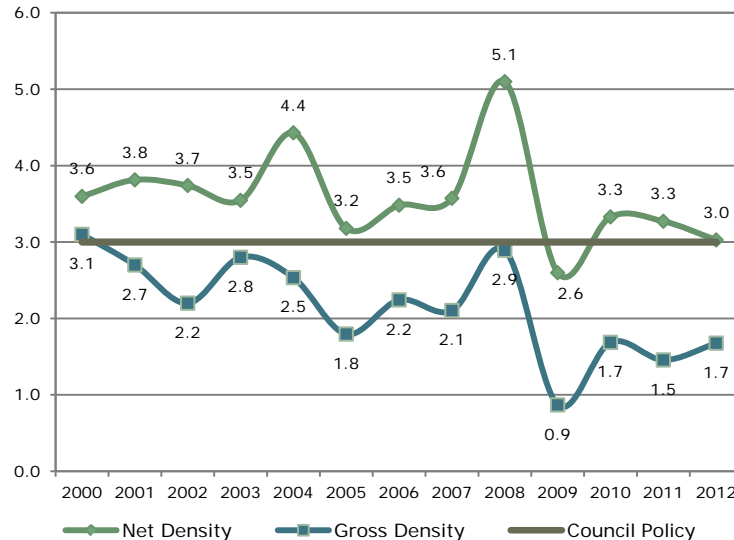


### Overall Density and Council Policy

Based on the Council’s 2030 Regional Development Framework and Council policies, developing communities are to maintain an average density of at least 3 dwelling units per acre. From 2000 to 2012, Plat Monitoring Program participants, as a group, have generally platted sewer residential developments at or above 3 units per net developable acre, with the exception of 2009, when recorded average density fell below 3 units per acre (2.6 units per developable acre).

During the reporting year of 2012, 35 communities had two or fewer plats reported, while only two communities had approved over 10 plats. For plats approved in 2012, 14 of the participating communities had net densities below 3 units per acre: Blaine, Brooklyn Park, Cologne, Cottage Grove, Dayton, Lakeville, Medina, Prior Lake, Rogers, Rosemount Shakopee, Victoria, Waconia, and Woodbury. Additionally, 19 communities did not record any plats in 2012, a decrease from 2011 when 25 communities did not have plats to report.

**Figure 8. Overall Densities, 2000-2012**



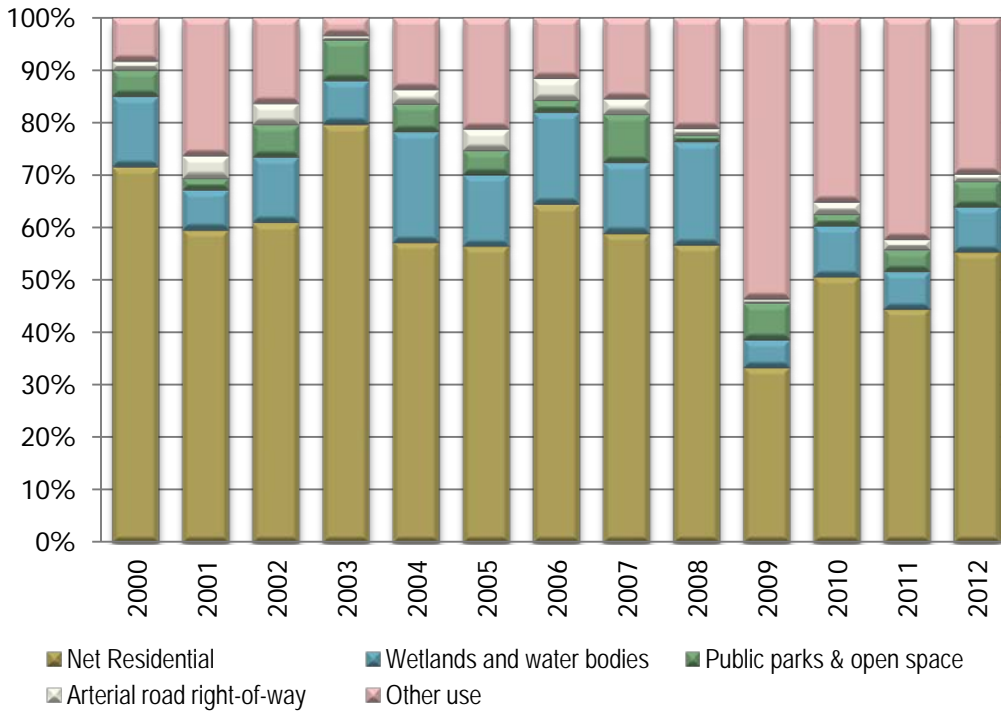
While the number of units platted has been increasing during the past three years, the overall net density platted is just at 3 units per acre in 2012. This number conforms to the Council policies, though there is still a significant gap between last year’s overall density and the recorded peak of 5.1 units per developable acre in 2008, which is a reflection of change in market demand towards large single family homes. Nevertheless, from 2000 to 2012, the overall average net density of the plats in all participating communities is 3.6 units per acre.

### Land Utilization

The net developable acres in each plat are calculated based on an analysis of land uses on that property. Wetlands, natural water bodies, public park and open space, arterial road right-of-way and land set aside for future subdivision are subtracted from the gross residential acres to determine the net residential area. Communities are encouraged to take the most advantage of developable land to plan for anticipated units in order to achieve the minimum required residential density of 3 units per acre.

Figure 9 shows the breakdown of land consumption from 2000 to 2012. Since 2009, a larger portion of plats has been reserved for future development. Such practice is consistent with the housing market crash. With decreased housing demand and the economic crisis, more than a third of gross residential acres have been reserved for future development as outlots (Other use category in Figure 8). Despite the increase in net residential acres in 2012, the percentage of net residential acres has yet to reach the higher levels seen in 2003 to 2006.

**Figure 9. Land Use Consumption by Use**



### Density by Community

The attached 2012 Plat Monitoring Program Summary Sheet outlines the number of submitted plats, number of units platted, housing mix, and the average net density for each community and for all communities overall. Most of the participating communities have been developing with an average net density of 3 units per acre or above.

Based on the submitted data since the beginning of the program and the history of communities' participation, eight of participating communities have an overall density falling below 3 units per acre since their involvement in the program: Brooklyn Park, Cologne, Dayton, Empire Township, Lakeville, Minnetrista, New Germany, and Victoria. Some of these recorded densities are low due to the short timeframe of their participation and reduced development in recent years. A total of 11 communities have not submitted any approved plats during their participation in the program. Almost all of these participants have joined the program in 2009, during the housing market dilemma.

**New Participants**

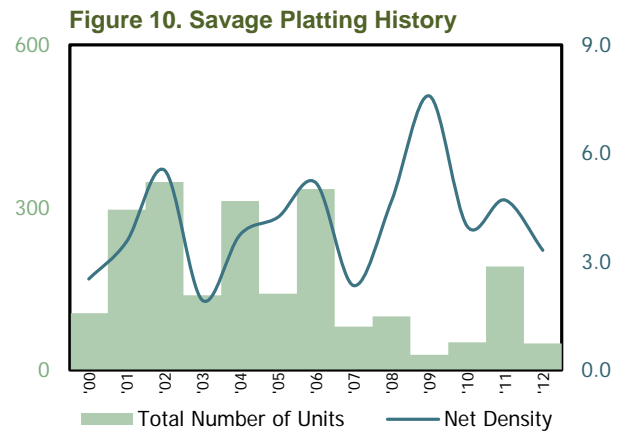
There have not been any new participants since 2010, when the City of Independence joined the program as a condition of their local Comprehensive Plan Update. The City of Independence along with eight of 14 communities that joined the program in 2009, have not recorded any residential plats.

Developments in the other participating communities generally follow patterns that can be sorted in the five categories. The following groups are examples of different development experiences around the region. Figures 10 through 14 show the platting history of the described community with total number of units on the left and net density on the right side of the chart.

**Steady Development**

Savage has been reporting residential plats in their community for each year since they joined the program in 2000, with an overall net density of 3.83 units per acre. The City of Savage joined the program voluntarily and has approved a total of 68 plats, averaging five plats annually. In 2009, the City reported only one plat, which is the lowest number for Savage in the history of the program.

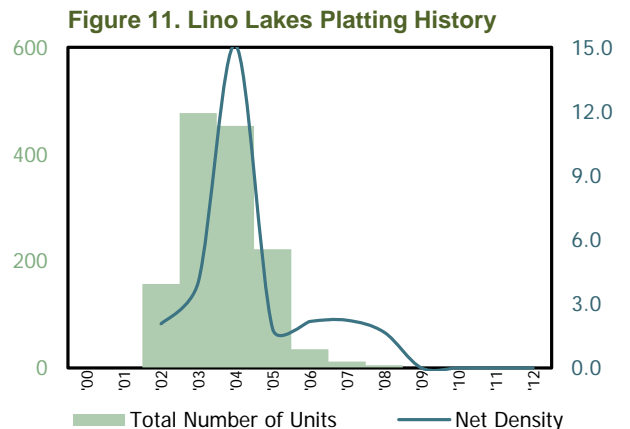
The City's net density has fluctuated during the program, recording the lowest density of 1.9 units per acre in 2003 and the highest density of 7.6 units per acre in 2009. During 2012, the City approved three plats with a total 49 units on 14.8 net developable acres, resulting in a net density of 3.3 units per acre.



**Declining Development**

The City of Lino Lakes joined the Plat Monitoring Program in 2002. From 2002 to 2008, the City approved a total of 34 plats, averaging 3 per year. The City platted a peak of 477 total housing units in 2003 on 119 acres of net developable land, resulting in a net density of 4.0 units per acre.

In the past four years, the City has not approved any residential plats, which is consistent with the stagnant market conditions. The City's overall net residential density of the plats is 3.67 units per acre, which is a steep decline from the peak residential density of 15.1 units per acre in 2004, but still above the Council's policy of 3 units/acre.

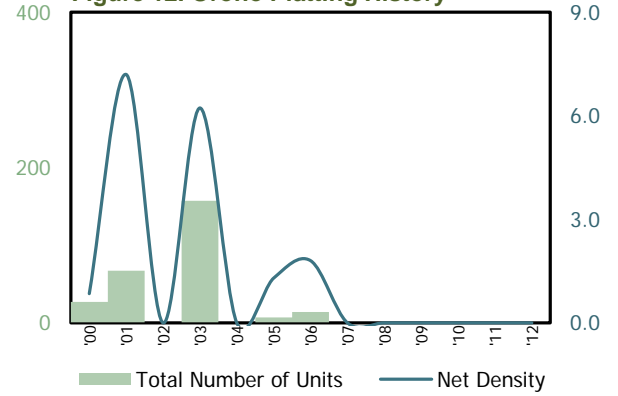




### Seesaw Experience

The City of Orono joined the program in 2007, but reported on the approved plats from year 2000. Over the course of 13 years, the City approved 8 plats with an overall net density of 3.42 units per acre. The City of Orono platted a total of 272 housing units on 79.6 acres of developable land, with 81% multi-family units. Based on Plat Monitoring Program data, Orono’s platting experience has fluctuated between a range of no approved plats and the highest units platted of 157 in 2003. The net density of plats peaked in 2001 at 7.2 units per acre when 67 units were platted for 9.3 net developable acres.

Figure 12. Orono Platting History

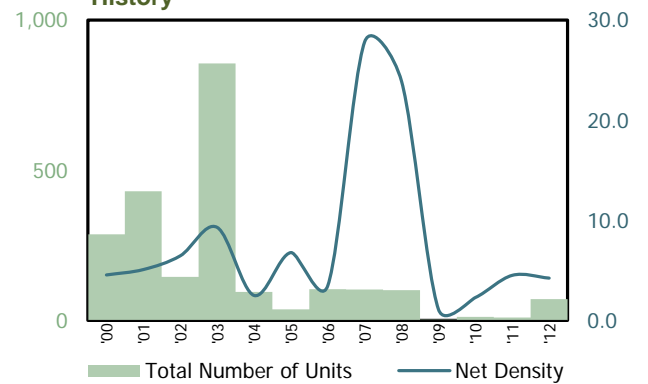


### Above Average Densities

The City of Inver Grove Heights joined the program in 2000 voluntarily, and has continuously submitted approved plats every year. Although the number of residential plats in the past few years has been very small, the City has recorded an average net density of 6.08 units per acre from 2000 to 2012, with the peak of 27.8 units per acre in 2007.

Since 2000, the City of Inver Grove Heights has submitted 43 residential plats, 84% of which were multi-family units with a net density of 5.1 units per acre.

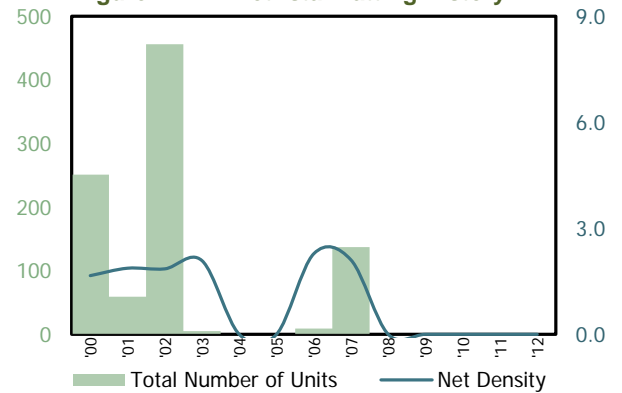
Figure 13. Inver Grove Heights Platting History



### Routinely Low

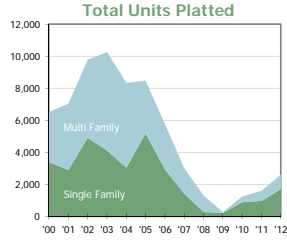
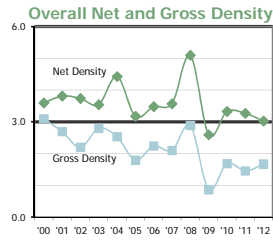
The City of Minnetrista joined the program in 2003, but submitted data beginning with year 2000. Based on the City’s comprehensive plan from 2008 and the 2006 comprehensive plan amendment (CPA), sewer residential development is expected to reach an overall net density of 2.2 units per net developable acre. Since the 2006 CPA, the City has approved plats that were compatible with the conditions of the 2006 amendment and the land use designation. However, the City has not approved any plats since 2008, reflecting the economic downturn.

Figure 14. Minnetrista Platting History

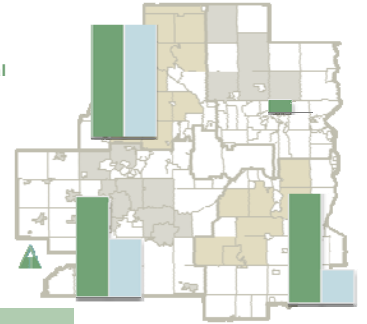


# Plat Monitoring Program: 2012 Summary

2012 SNAPSHOT	
Participating Communities	44
Total Number of Plats	74
Gross Acres Platted	1573.322
Net Acres Platted	871.5025
Number of Units Platted	2,638
Single Family	1715
Multi-Family	923
Housing Mix	
Single Family	65%
Multi-Family	35%
Overall Net Density of Plats	3.60



Units Platted by Regional Quadrant in 2012



## Number of Units Platted and Net Density by Community





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