

## Land Use Advisory Committee

Meeting date: January 20, 2022

**Subject:** Community Designations

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

**Policy/Legal Reference:** Bylaws of the Metropolitan Council Land Use Advisory Committee, Art. I. B.1(a).

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

### Proposed Action

None. This item is presented for informational purposes to support the Land Use Advisory Committee's effort to develop recommendations for community designations for the 2050 regional development guide.

### Background

The Metropolitan Land Planning Act (Minn. Stat. § 473.145) tasks the Metropolitan Council (Council) with planning for the orderly and economic growth of the region. Every 10 years, the Council prepares a regional development guide for the seven-county metro area that sets the vision and land use policies that are carried forward in the regional systems and policy plans. Regional land use policies are framed around common characteristics of communities. These characteristics, identified in the current regional development guide, *Thrive MSP 2040* (Thrive), form the basis for the current community designations.

As part of the regional development guide, community designations work in concert with land use policies to guide growth in areas with urban infrastructure; establish distinct land use policies and density expectations; protect agricultural land and natural amenities; and outline strategies to meet the region's forecasted growth. Community designations are further used to plan and implement regional policies at the local level.

On January 18, 2022, the Community Development Committee (CDC) is expected to direct the Land Use Advisory Committee (LUAC) to develop recommendations for community designations for the 2050 regional development guide. This is consistent with LUAC's responsibilities, which include providing advice and recommendations to the Council for implementing the Metropolitan Land Planning Act, as requested by the Council. LUAC members provide local expertise, experience, and perspectives. The Committee includes 11 locally elected officials.

Staff will be presenting a history of community designations, their importance in regional planning processes, procedure of analyzing current community designations, LUAC's role as a stakeholder and recommending body, and timeline of the project. Staff will request feedback from LUAC on potential gaps and refinements to current community designations and any additional feedback regarding the project's direction.

### *Community Designations in the Regional Development Guide*

By grouping similar communities into community designations, the Council develops policies to: guide growth to areas planned for urban infrastructure;

establish density expectations based on development patterns and market forces; and protect agricultural land and natural amenities.

Characteristics used to develop the adopted [community designations in Thrive MSP 2040](#) include: (1) the Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA); (2) the percentage of developable land committed to urban uses; (3) the age of the housing stock (as a proxy for infrastructure age and development characteristics); (4) intersection density (as a proxy for connectivity, urban form, and accessibility to transit); and (5) the Long-term Wastewater Service Area. *Thrive MSP 2040* describes five community designations within the MUSA and four in the rural area.

### *Process and Timeframe*

The Committee will evaluate the adopted Thrive community designations to determine their effectiveness in furthering regional policy outcomes. The evaluation will include information gathered through the 2040 comprehensive planning process, analysis related to density, patterns of change in community designations, attributes influencing local policy application, and others. A spatial analysis will be used to determine the need for any adjustment to previous approaches or revisions to the characteristics used to define community designations mentioned above.

The Committee will hear input from stakeholders and partners including staff from technical areas and external stakeholder groups including a MetroCities focus group and a local planner focus group. The Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee (MAWSAC) will also be engaged as part of ongoing collaboration with LUAC. In addition, the Community Development Division's racial equity impact tool will be used to help guide the development of the community designations using an equity lens.

This project is expected to be an iterative process and is aligned with other efforts related to planning for the 2050 regional development guide reflected in the Committee's 2022 Work Plan including scenario planning, regional visioning, and land use and forecasts modeling efforts that are in process at the same time. The Committee will be asked to provide recommendations for community designations to the CDC by the end of 2022. Its recommendation will then be considered for final adoption by the Council. The proposed timeline for the Committee's final recommendation to the CDC by the end of 2022 is ambitious and, due to the interconnected nature of all these projects, the timeline will be adjusted as necessary.

### *Deliverables*

The Committee will be asked to provide a set of criteria for defining community designations; proposed community designation(s) for each jurisdiction responsible for planning in the region; descriptions of each community designation; density expectations based on community designation; and maps and shapefiles for community designations.