Density and Land Use Approaches

Land Use Advisory Committee

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

February 22, 2024

Raya Esmaeili

What we know

Long-term impact

- The structure of a community remains for decades
- Past land use practices impact existing and future development patterns

There is a gap

- There is a gap between minimum density requirements and actual development
- Low-density land use patterns do impact infrastructure investments

Takeaways from Density Analysis

- Despite higher density ranges developed in the past decade, overall developed density remains below planned minimum densities.
- Higher developed densities in the recent decade are insufficient to bring the overall density of development up to minimum planned densities.
- Despite some communities building at higher densities, very low densities are still being developed in other communities within the same community designation.
- Recent development trends in Suburban Edge communities are consistent with the planned 2040 densities.
- Overall developed density in Emerging Suburban Edge communities is lower than the minimum requirements.
- Platted density is higher than developed density, suggesting that many plats remain undeveloped.

Snapshot:
Possible Land Use/Density Approaches

Density Policy Decisions

- Increase minimum density requirements
- Restrain MUSA expansion and establish criteria for when expansion would be authorized
- Establish a minimum density requirement for all new connections to the regional sewer system

Administrative Practices and Guidelines

- Consider all land guided to support growth, not just areas of change
- Calculate density requirements per decade rather than over the planning horizon
- Include all existing developments in density calculations
- Establish a target density in addition to minimum density requirements
- Explore other incentives that advance regional goals as part of flexibility in meeting density requirements

Density Policy Decisions

Increase minimum density requirements.

Restrain MUSA expansion and establish criteria for when expansion would be authorized.

Establish a minimum density requirement for all new connections to the regional sewer system.

Policy Approach:
Minimum Density Requirements

Community Designation: Suburban Edge

Minimum Density Requirement: 3 du/ac

LDR: 800 acres @ 2-5 du/ac

MDR: 120 acres @ 5-14 du/ac

HDR: 55 acres @ 14-30 du/ac

Overall density= 3.0 du/ac

If minimum density requirements are increased

Community Designation: Suburban Edge

Minimum Density Requirement: 4 du/ac

LDR: 600 acres @ 2-5 du/ac

MDR: 270 acres @ 5-14 du/ac

HDR: 105 acres @ 14-30 du/ac

Overall density= **4.1 du/ac**

Policy Approach:
Minimum Density Requirements

Community Designation: Suburban Edge

Minimum Density Requirement: 3 du/ac

LDR: 800 acres @ 2-5 du/ac

MDR: 120 acres @ 5-14 du/ac

HDR: 55 acres @ 14-30 du/ac

Overall density= 3.0 du/ac

If minimum density requirements are increased

Community Designation: Suburban Edge

Minimum Density Requirement: 4 du/ac

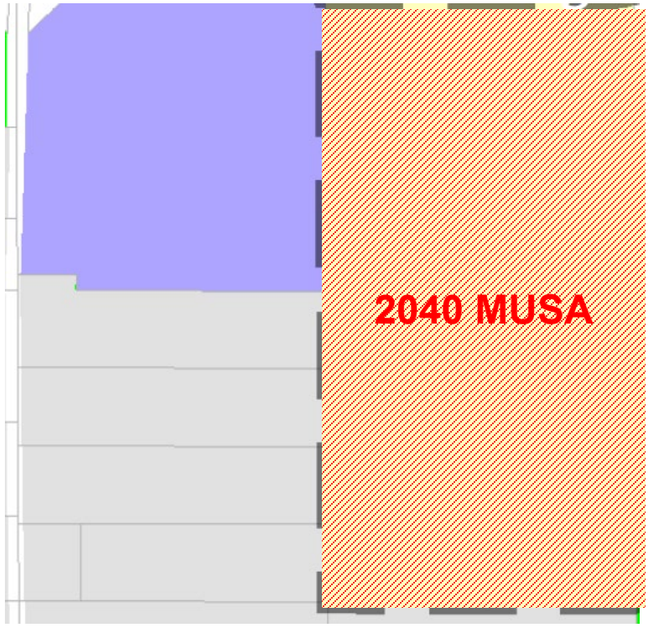
LDR: 800 acres @ 3-6 du/ac

MDR: 120 acres @ 6-14 du/ac

HDR: 55 acres @ 14-30 du/ac

Overall density= **4.0 du/ac**

Policy Approach: MUSA Expansion

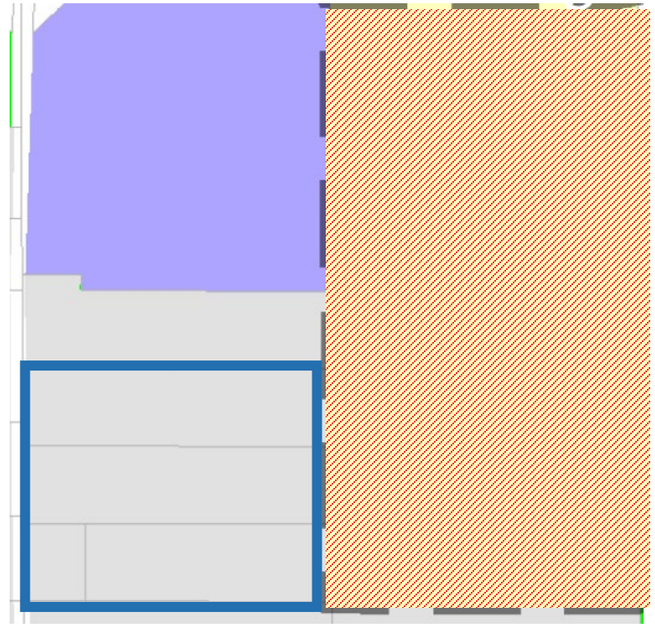


Community Designation:
Emerging Suburban Edge

Minimum Density Requirement: 3 du/ac

Planned 2040 density= 4 du/ac

If a proposal is outside of MUSA



Proposed 2040 MUSA Expansion

MUSA can be expanded if the proposal meets certain criteria adopted by the Council.

Policy Approach:
Minimum Density for New Connections

If a new connection is proposed

Community Designation:
Emerging Suburban Edge

Minimum Density Requirement: 3 du/ac

The proposed project has to be at least 3 du/ac.

Administrative Practices and Guidelines

Consider all land guided to support growth, not just areas of change.

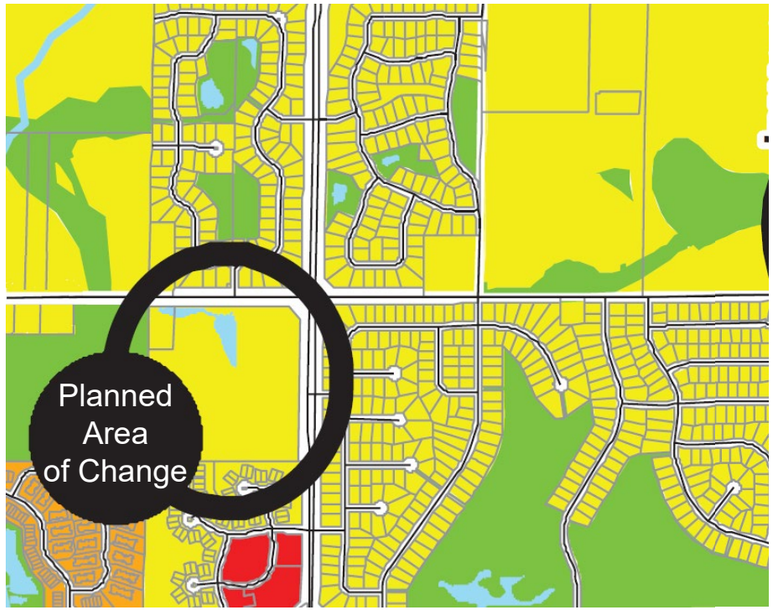
Calculate density requirements per decade rather than over the planning horizon.

Include all existing developments in density calculations.

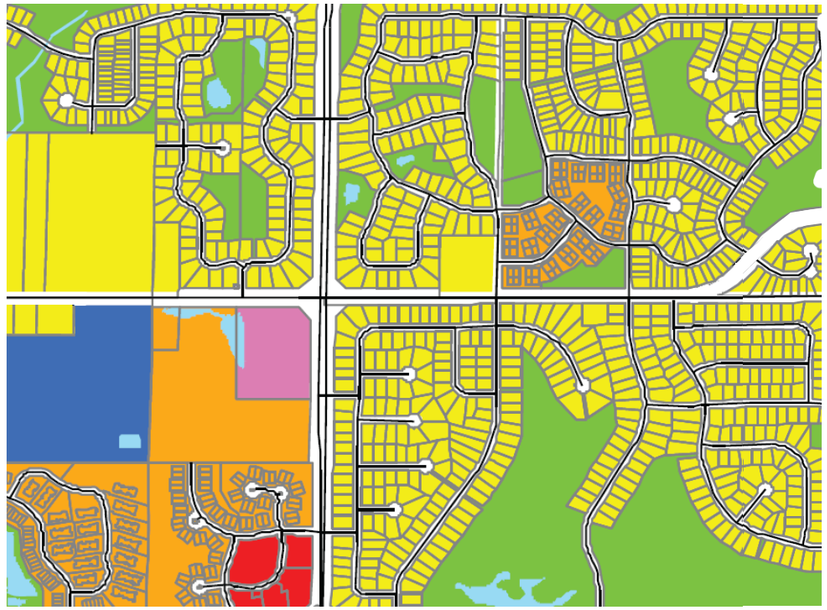
Establish a target density in addition to minimum density requirements.

Explore other incentives that advance regional goals as part of flexibility in meeting density requirements.

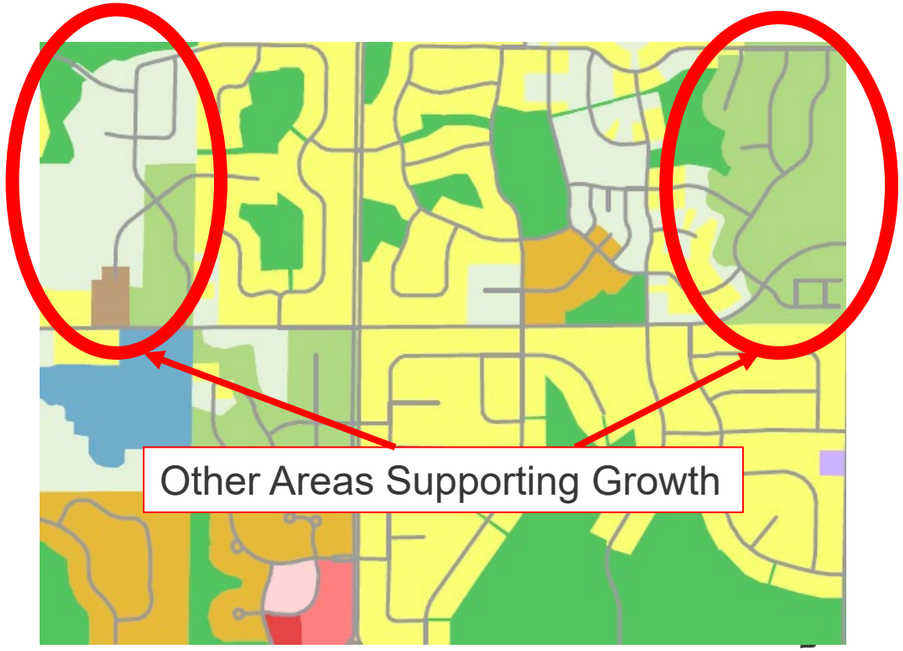
Administrative Approach:
All land guided to support growth



Area of change from
2030 Future Land Use Map



2040 Future Land Use Map



Existing Land Use Map

n Council

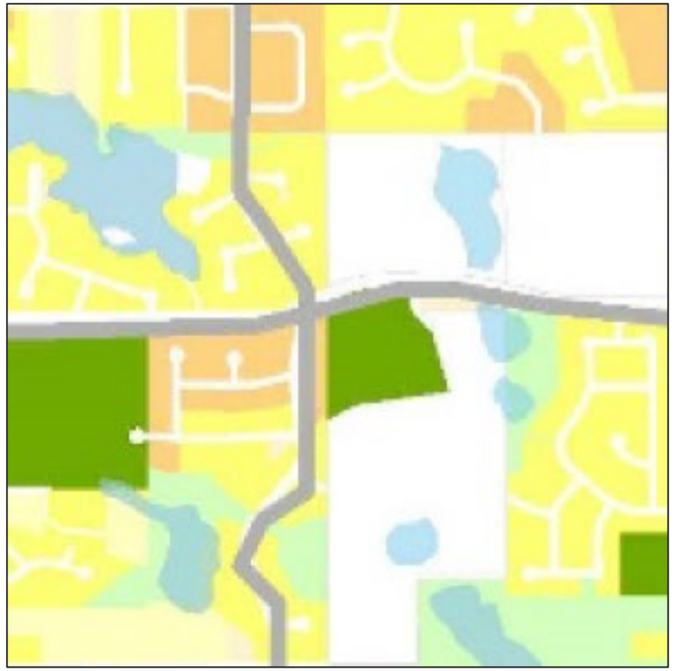
Administrative Approach: Meet Density Minimums Every Decade

	2018-2040 Change					
	Density Range		%			
Land Use	Min	Max	Residential	Net Acres	Min Units	Max Units
Low Density Residential	3	6	100%	473.80	1,421	2,843
Medium Density Residential	6	12	100%	40.40	242	485
High Density Residential	12	40	100%	31.70	380	1,268
Mixed Residential	10	40	75%	141.30	565	5,652
Total				**695.60**	**2,609**	**10,248**
				Overall Density	**3.80**	**14.91**

	2018-2040 Change										
	Density Range		%	2018-2020	2018-2020	2021-2030	2021-2030	2031-2040	2031-2040		
Land Use	Min	Max	Residential	Net Acres	Min Units	Net Acres	Min Units	Net Acres	Min Units	Total	Min Units	Max Units
Low Density Residential	3	6	100%	64.8	194	253	759	156	468	473.8	1,421	2,843
Medium Density Residential	6	12	100%	4	24	21.1	127	15.3	91.8	40.4	242	485
High Density Residential	12	30	100%	5	60	16.3	196	10.4	124.8	31.7	380	1,268
Mixed Residential	4	30	75%	38	114	85	255	65.3	195.9	141.3	565	5,652
Total				**111.8**	**392**	**375.4**	**1,336**	**247**	**880**	**695.6**	**2,609**	**10,248**
	Overall Density				**3.5**		**3.6**		**3.6**		**3.8**	**14.9**

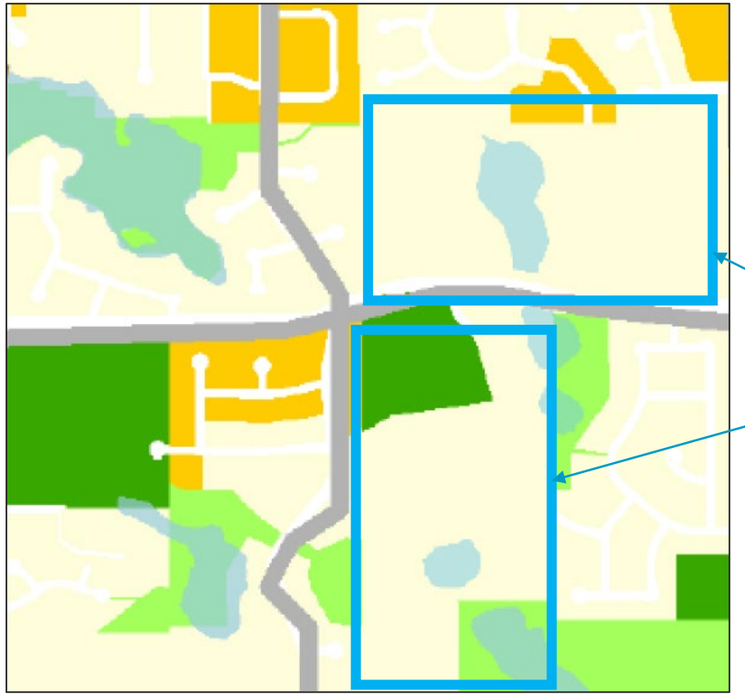
Administrative Approach: All Existing Developments

Existing Land Use



- Agriculture
- Large Lot Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Quasi Public

Future Land Use



- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Open Space
- Quasi Public

Administrative Approach: Target Density

Table 1. Average Minimum Residential Density Requirements (dwelling units per acre)

Right-of-Way Type	Transit Type	Geography	Urban Center	Urban	Suburban	Suburban Edge / Emerging Suburban Edge
Fixed or Dedicated Transitway	Light Rail Transit Commuter Rail Dedicated BRT	half-mile radius	50	25	20	15
Highway Transitway (MnPass / HOV)	Highway BRT	half-mile radius	25	12	10	8
Shared Rights-of-Way	Arterial BRT	quarter-mile radius	15	15	15	15
	Local Bus Routes on High Frequency Network	quarter-mile along route	10	10	10	10

Table 2. Target Residential Densities (dwelling units per acre)

Right-of-Way Type	Transit Type	Geography	Urban Center	Urban	Suburban	Suburban Edge / Emerging Suburban Edge
Fixed or Dedicated Transitway	Light Rail Transit Commuter Rail Dedicated BRT	half-mile radius	75-150+	50-100+	40-75+	40-75+
Highway Transitway (MnPass / HOV)	Highway BRT	half-mile radius	40-75+	25-50+	20-40+	20-40+
Shared Rights-of-Way	Arterial BRT	quarter-mile radius	20-60+	20-60+	20-60+	20-60+
	Local Bus Routes on High Frequency Network	quarter-mile along route	15-60+	15-60+	15-60+	15-60+

Administrative Approach: Incentives

- Protection of natural resources, such as Regionally Significant Ecological Areas
- Compact development practices
- Affordable housing development
- Transit-oriented development
- Adaptive reuse for historic preservation
- Incorporation of energy-efficiency practices
- Green space contribution
- Other programs that advance regional goals

Discussion

Feedback

- Do you have any immediate thoughts about the approaches presented?
- Are there additional insights or ideas to consider?
- How can the information presented be clearer to make recommendations?
- Other questions?

Raya Esmaeili

Planning Analyst, Local Planning Assistance
raya.esmaeili@metc.state.mn.us
651.602.1616

METROPOLITAN
COUNCIL