

MUSA Implementation Guidelines

Imagine 2050 Update



November 20, 2025

metro council.org

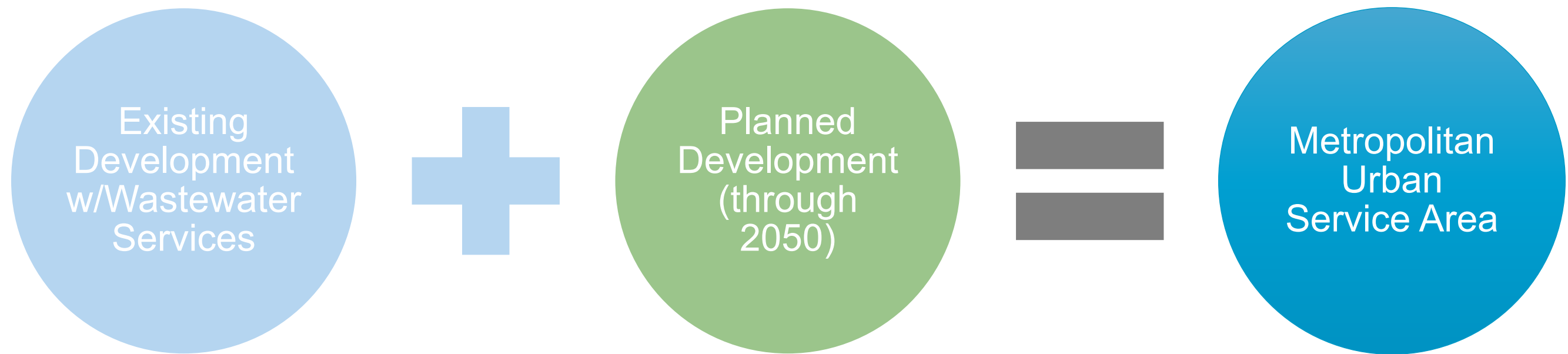
MUSA Implementation Guidelines

Today's Discussion

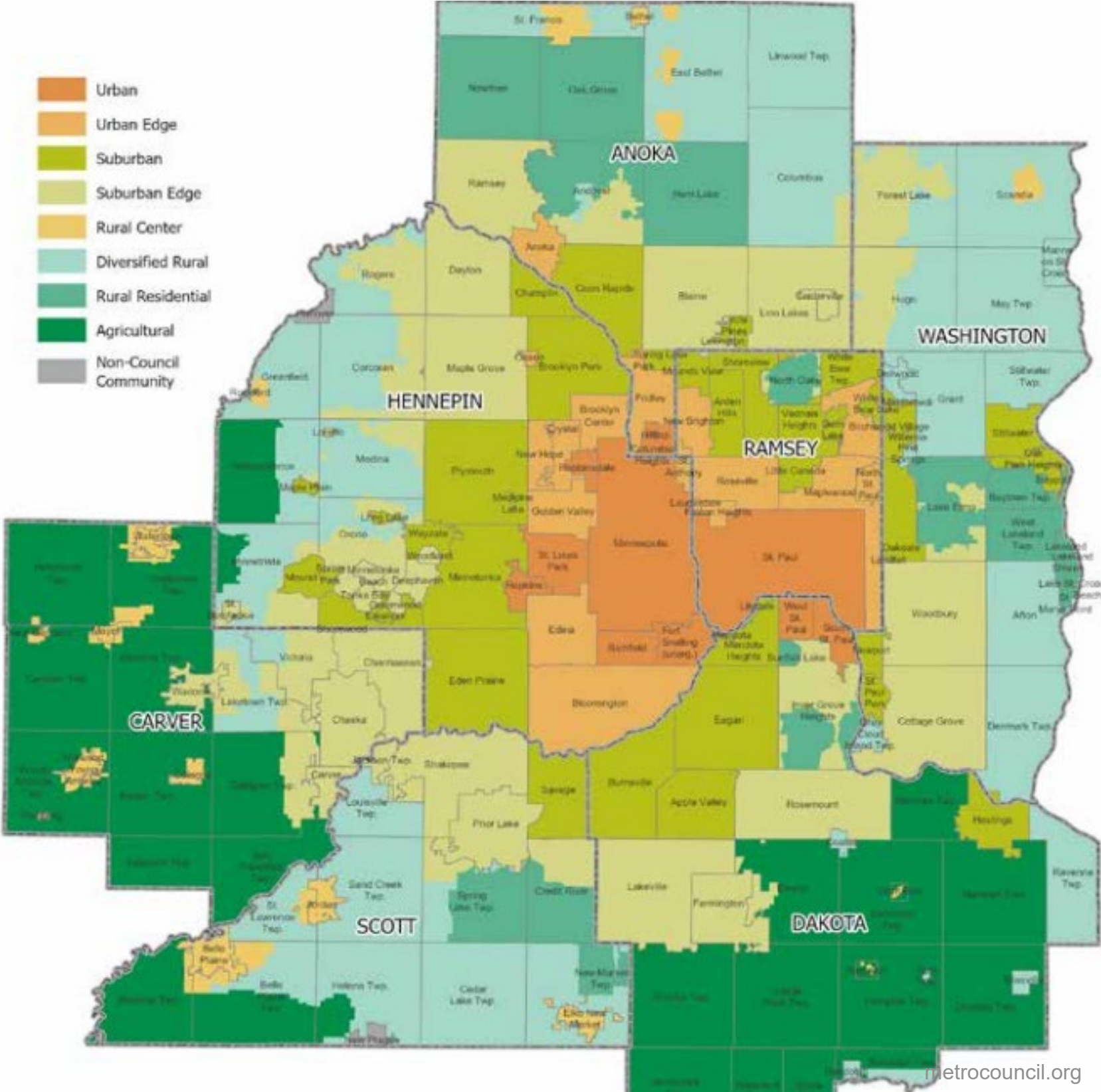
- Background
- Current guidelines
- Proposed changes
- Next steps

Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA)

What is the MUSA?



Imagine 2050 Community Designations



Regional Service Policies



System and Policy Plans

- Conformance with Regional Wastewater System
 - Accommodate projected growth
 - Provide sufficient land areas to accommodate growth. Developed vs. Undeveloped
 - Preserve areas for post-2050 growth.
- Consistency with Council Policies
- Compatibility with adjacent and affected governmental units

Local comprehensive plans



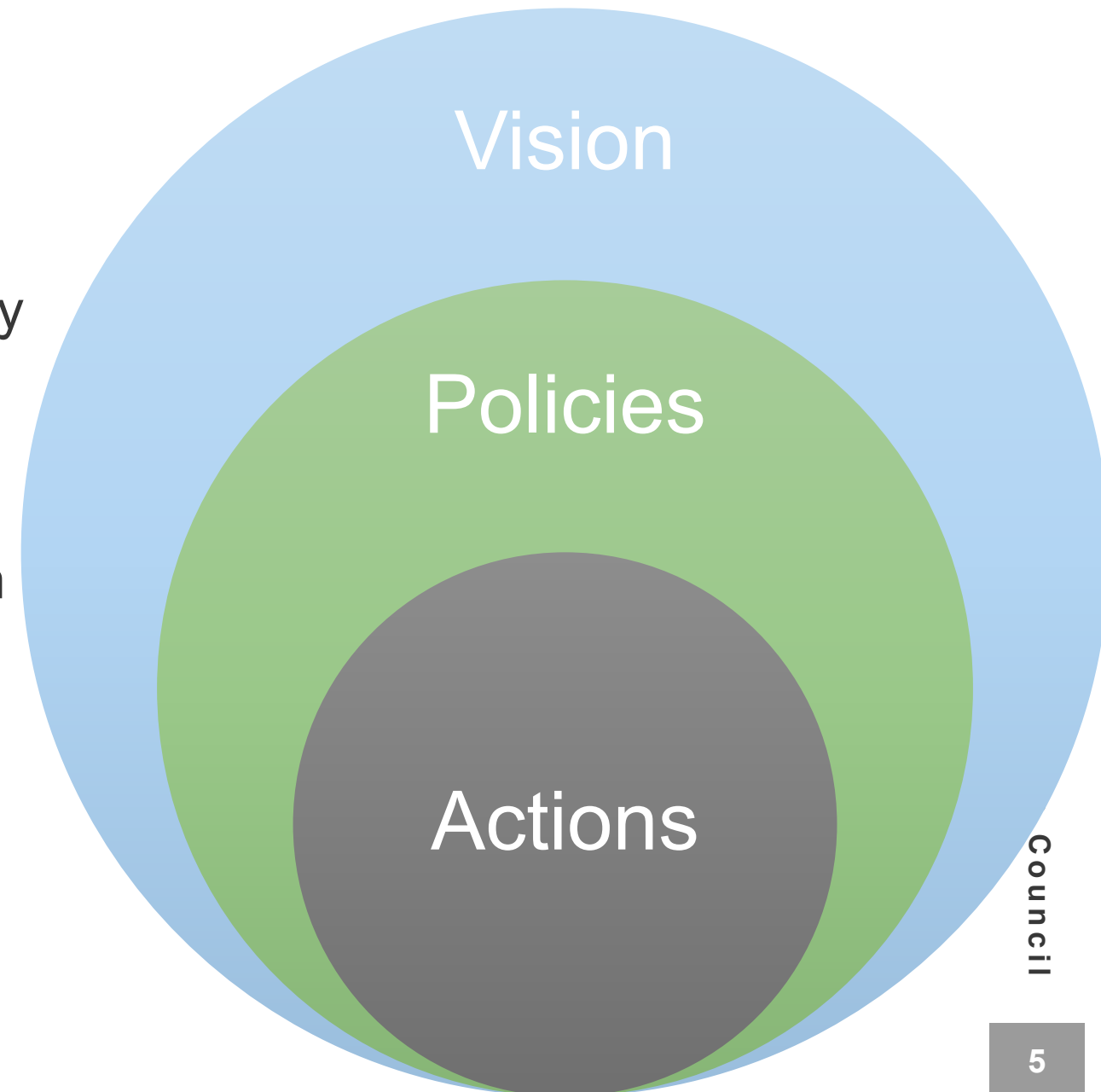
Community's vision

Guides growth and development in community

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

Provides:

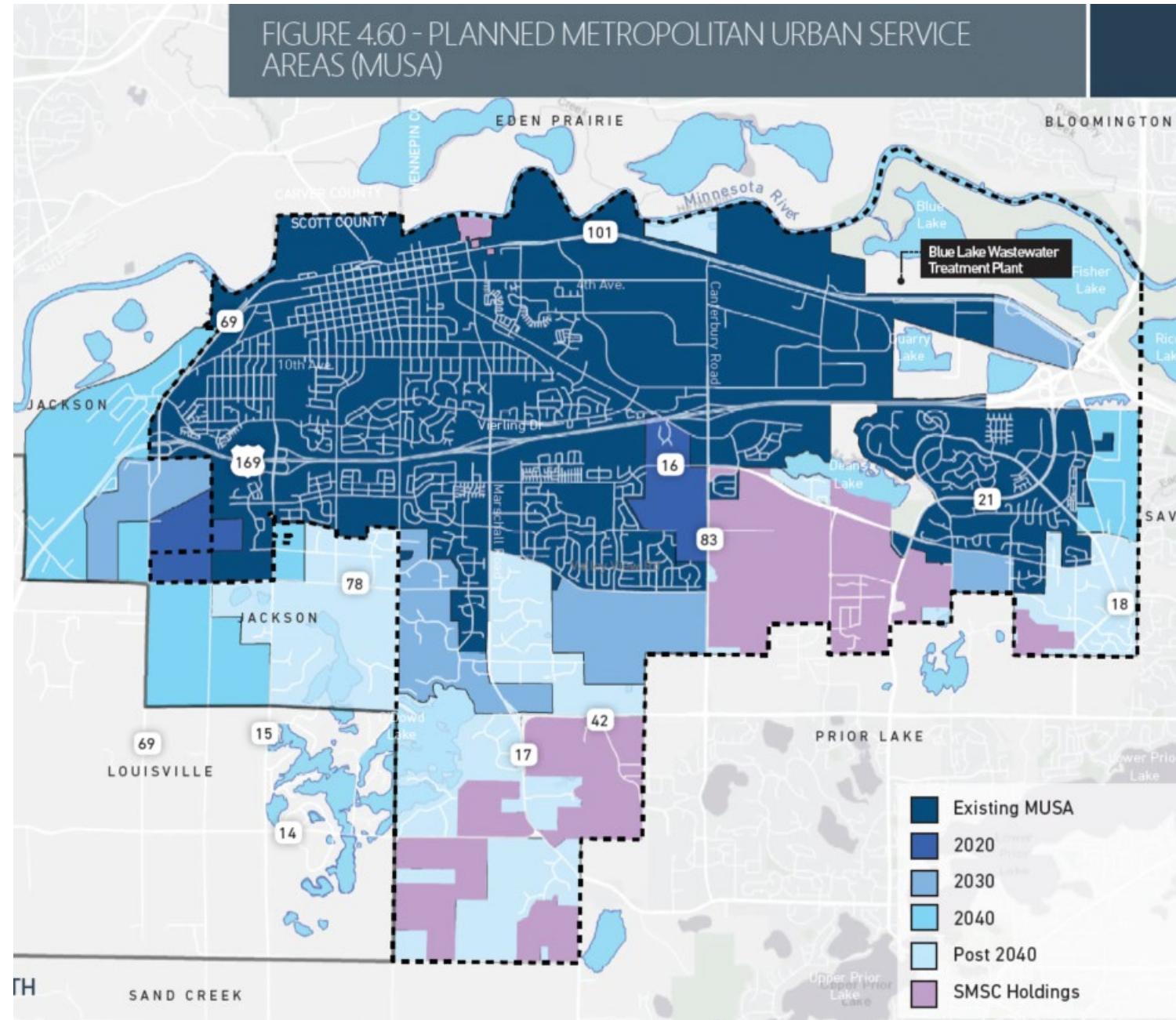
- Basis for community's vision and principles
- Reasoning for public facilities plans/budgets
- Guidance on making decisions



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 from 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.

Feedback



CDC Discussion Summary (November 3, 2025)

- The CDC asked staff if there were areas that cities have requested be excluded from density calculations which staff is not proposing to exclude.
- The CDC requests clarification on what would happen if a city wanted to expand their MUSA but the Council did not agree that it needed to be expanded.
- The CDC requested that the Environmental Committee be given a chance to provide input on the proposed guidelines, especially the proposed land use inefficiency surcharge.

Feedback



Focus Group Discussion Summary (November 12, 2025)

- Participants felt strongly that public versus private ownership of stormwater BMPs was not related to their impact on density. (i.e. They are required infrastructure taking up the same acreage of land regardless of ownership).
- Believe that Metropolitan Council should allow density to be averaged within a development. Note that developments often use PUDs to create mixed neighborhoods that do not neatly align with Land Use Map. Feel this policy creates excessive number of comprehensive plan amendments.
- Extensive discussion on how road right of way is treated. Noted that if created as a separate lot, already not included in calculations because not part of development plat.

Next Steps

- Receive feedback and direction from LUAC, CDC, and Environment Committee
- Engagement
 - Land Use Advisory Committee
 - Environment 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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