



# Thrive MSP

ONE VISION, ONE METROPOLITAN REGION



2040

*Thrive MSP 2040* is the vision for our region over the next 30 years.



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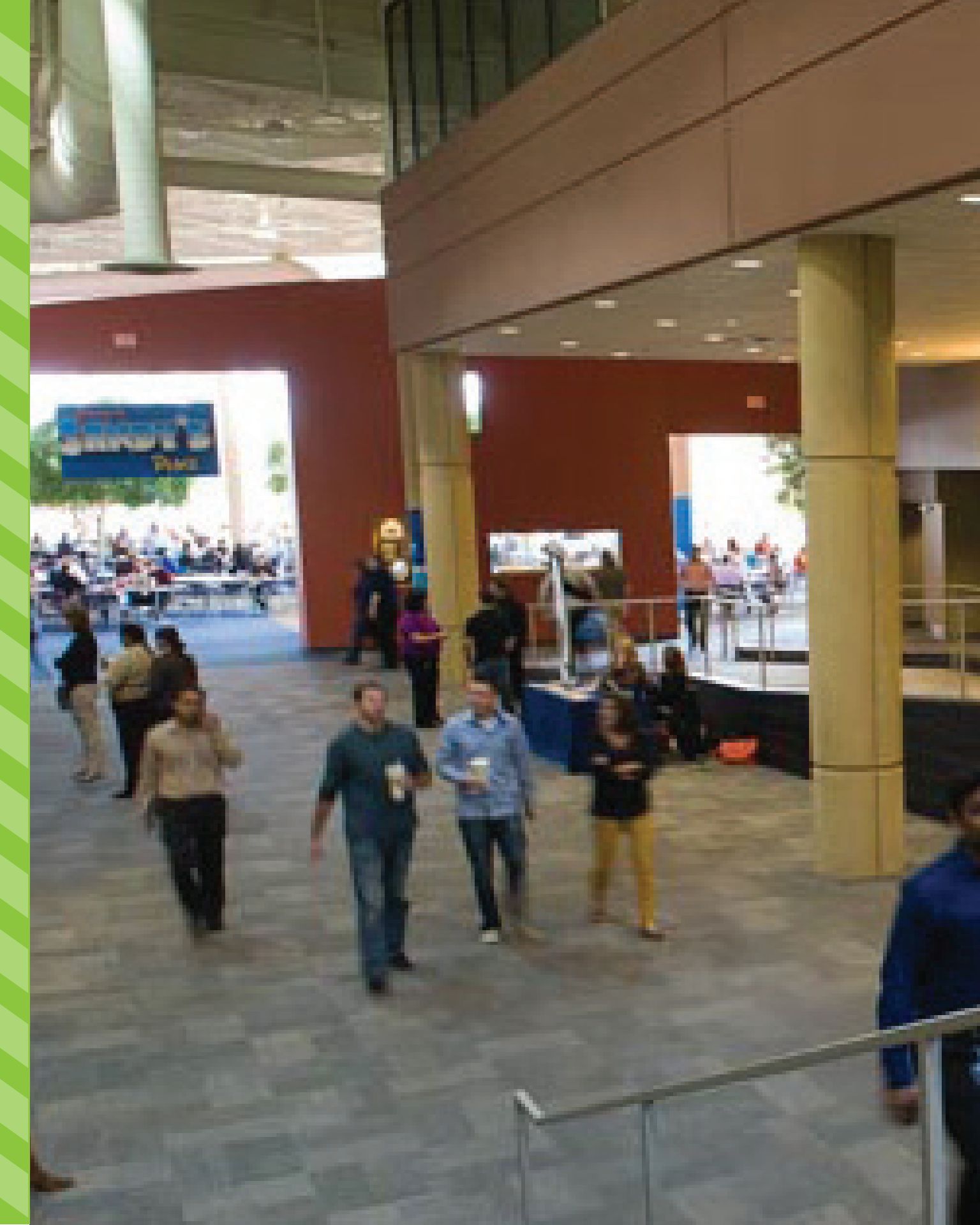






*Thrive MSP 2040* is the vision for our region over the next 30 years. It reflects our concerns and aspirations, anticipates future needs in the region, and addresses our responsibility to future generations.







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## A Thriving Region



Our region is anchored by three great rivers, dotted by hundreds of lakes, and endowed with wide expanses of green space, giving our residents beautiful landscapes that inspire and renew. Its largest river—the Mississippi—gave birth to two frontier settlements—Minneapolis and Saint Paul. From this base, **our region has grown and prospered, and is now well known for its high quality of life, strong economy, and many assets:**

- A resilient economy
- Vibrant arts, music and theatre communities, and professional sports teams
- Rich cultural diversity
- Abundant parks, recreational trails, conserved open space, fertile agricultural land, and natural resources
- A civic tradition of shared action

Today, the Twin Cities metropolitan area—the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Council—is a thriving region of nearly three million people living in 186 communities across the seven counties of Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington. **The region has emerged as a world-class metropolitan area—a great place to live, work, and do business.**







Our region is a great place to live,  
work, and do business.



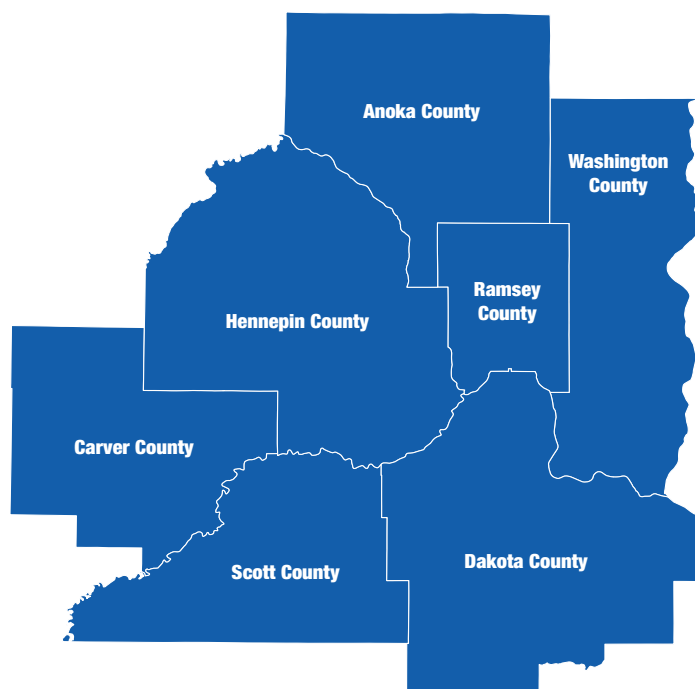
Our region's economy nimbly weathers the ups and downs of national trends. A diverse mix of high-tech and high-value-added industries calls the Twin Cities home—including the headquarters of 18 Fortune 500 companies—and benefits from our highly educated workforce and numerous educational institutions. Efficient transportation systems smoothly move people and goods to their destinations, and our residents enjoy a reasonable cost of living, benefitting from lower-priced public services.

The region offers residents a wide range of communities to call home—active urban districts, city and suburban neighborhoods, small towns, and rural areas. Residents enjoy active living and year-round outdoor activities. *Sperling's BestPlaces* has ranked the Twin Cities as “the most playful metro in America” for the health, happiness, and low stress of its residents. In survey after survey, residents have declared our metropolitan area better or much better than other regions around the country.

Above all, our region has embraced a civic tradition of shared action by government, non-profit and philanthropic organizations, community groups, and business leaders to enhance our communities and the region as a whole. The strengths that have made our region a success will help us meet the changes and challenges of today and tomorrow.

*Our strengths  
will help us meet  
changes and  
challenges.*

Our Twin Cities region



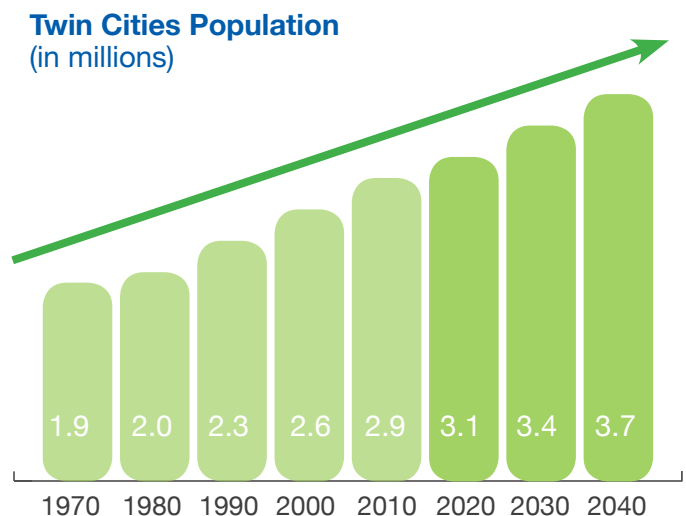


## Continued population and job growth through 2040

**More people.** Over the next thirty years, **our region is projected to grow by 824,000 residents**, a gain of 29% more than in 2010. Two-thirds of this population growth is likely to result from natural growth—more births than deaths and longer life expectancies. The remaining one-third will come from migration as our region’s economic opportunities attract migrants from the rest of the nation and world.

**More jobs and economic growth.** With 1.6 million jobs, the seven-county Minneapolis-Saint Paul region is the predominant economic center for Minnesota, western Wisconsin, the Dakotas, and Montana. Between 2010 and 2040, **our region is projected to add 550,000 new jobs**, an increase of 36%. Having surpassed one million jobs by 1980, our region is projected to surpass two million jobs by 2040. The total value added by all industry sectors in the region—the Gross Metropolitan Product—will rise to \$400 billion in 2040. That \$400 billion represents 1.5% of the U.S. Gross Domestic Product, a major achievement considering that the region has less than 1.0% of the nation’s population. (For more information, see the Metropolitan Council’s [MetroStats: Regional Forecast to 2040](#).)

The seven-county area addressed by *Thrive MSP 2040* is the heart of the larger Minneapolis-Saint Paul-Bloomington metropolitan statistical area. Defined by the federal government, the metropolitan statistical area now adds nine additional counties—Chisago, Isanti, Le Sueur, Mille Lacs, Sherburne, Sibley, and Wright Counties in Minnesota, and Pierce and St. Croix Counties in Wisconsin—to the core seven counties that are the purview of the Metropolitan Council. According to federal estimates, the seven-county Twin Cities region is 85% of the population and 92% of the employment of the greater 16-county metropolitan statistical area. The Office of Management and Budget connects the nine additional counties to the core seven on the basis of interconnected commuting patterns; nearly six in ten workers living in the nine collar counties work in the seven-county area. As the vibrancy of the seven-county core region grows, so will the vitality of the larger metropolitan statistical area.



## Changes and challenges that lie ahead for our region

As we plan for our next 30 years, key challenges lie ahead—constrained fiscal resources, new demands stemming from demographic shifts, emerging environmental challenges, new regional planning priorities, and the increasing necessity of regional economic cooperation.

The growing need to **preserve and maintain our aging infrastructure** is an increasing burden on limited fiscal resources. For example:

- Seventy-five years after the construction of the Metro Plant on the Mississippi River, our region’s aging wastewater infrastructure requires ongoing investments to remain effective.
- Similarly, crumbling roads and bridges demonstrate the necessity for higher levels of investment to maintain our highway system.

**Financial resources are inadequate** to fully address the region’s needs:

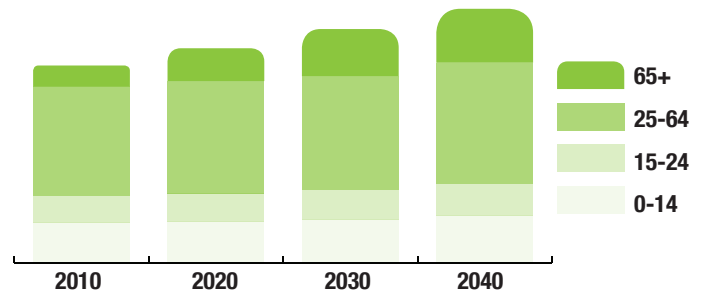
- The [2013 Minnesota State Highway Investment Plan](#), prepared by the Minnesota Department of Transportation, shows that, under expected funding streams, the region will have only \$52 million available annually from 2014 to 2022 for highway mobility improvements, meeting only one-quarter of the projected need. No state transportation funding is available for highway mobility improvements after 2023.
- While there is adequate funding to operate the existing bus and transitway system through 2040, there is no funding to expand bus system operations, including both new routes and increased service frequency. Capital investments necessary for bus expansion compete for limited federal resources.
- Transitway funding projections anticipate that no resources will be available to construct new transitways beyond the METRO Orange Line (I-35W South), the METRO Green Line Extension (Southwest), the METRO Blue Line Extension (Bottineau), and four Arterial BRT Projects through 2024 without local financing through the Counties Transit Improvement Board. Under current forecasts, at least 11 potential transitways and 10 Arterial BRT projects will be competing for funding for transitway construction available beyond 2024.
- The Metropolitan Council projected that the region should add 51,000 new units of affordable housing between 2011 and 2020 to meet the growth in low- and moderate-income households. Over the first two years of the decade the region added 2,272 new affordable units, meeting less than 5% of the decade-long need. From 2011 to 2013, Minnesota Housing’s “Super RFP”—the state’s largest single source for financing housing for low-income households—funded construction of less than 2,000 new affordable units in the metro area, far under the need.
- Financial constraints exist for many of the initiatives described in this plan—particularly in emerging policy areas such as regional bicycle infrastructure and surface water treatment.



**Our population is changing** in ways that will influence the shape of our future growth and development:

- Our region is aging rapidly. More than one in five residents will be age 65 and older in 2040, compared to one in nine in 2010.
- By 2040, 40% of the population will be people of color, compared to 24% in 2010. This growing racial and ethnic diversity will add to the region's economic vitality.
- The region will gain 391,000 new households by 2040, requiring, on average, over 13,000 new housing units a year. With the changing demographics, these new households are likely to have different housing needs than today's households:
  - Only one in five net new households will be households with children.
  - Seniors will want housing to fit post-retirement lifestyles with some choosing to age in place and others choosing to move to walkable and transit-served areas accessible to services and amenities.
- Significant racial disparities—in income, employment, poverty, homeownership, education—persist just as our region is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse. If today's disparities by race and ethnicity continue, our region would likely have 124,000 fewer people with jobs, 186,000 fewer homeowners, 274,000 more people in poverty, and \$31.8 billion less income compared to the outcomes if residents of color had the same socioeconomic characteristics as today's white residents. Unchallenged, these disparities jeopardize the future economic vitality of our region.

### Twin Cities Population By Age



**Emerging environmental challenges** threaten the continued livability of our region:

- We have long assumed that our region has plenty of water, but we now recognize that our reliance on groundwater is unsustainable. Increased pumping of groundwater to support development is depleting aquifers, affecting lakes, streams, and wetlands. In some areas, groundwater levels have been dropping a foot a year since the 1970s.
- Our region is already feeling the effects of climate change as we experience more severe weather events and temperature extremes. Severe heat waves have stressed people, agriculture, and energy supplies. Increased frequency of severe weather is already increasing homeowner insurance premiums and repair costs of public facilities.

As we approach a half-century of coordinated planning across the region, new planning challenges and opportunities are emerging:

- Growth is occurring in not only new suburban subdivisions connected to the regional wastewater treatment system, but also redeveloping parts of the region. Driving this change are our aging population, new residential preferences among younger households, and increasing interest in sustainable lifestyles. This redevelopment, infill development, and intensification in the older, urbanized, and most accessible parts of the region more efficiently uses existing regional infrastructure, but can be complex and costly for developers and local units of government.
- An aging multifamily housing stock, including the large number of rental apartments built in the 1960s and 1970s, is ready for reinvestment to both retain structural integrity and meet the housing preferences of today's households. Many of these units have aged into affordability but are at risk of functional obsolescence.
- Light rail, commuter rail, and bus rapid transit lines are changing the landscape by attracting new real estate development in station areas and, along with new bicycle facilities, are creating more choices for how people move about the region.

In today's economy, regions are the primary drivers of **economic growth**. Our region competes economically with other regions across the nation and the globe. To thrive in this competitive environment, our region's public jurisdictions and private interests must work together:

- From 2000 to 2010, the region saw its first decade with net job loss since the Great Depression, losing 63,000 jobs. While our region was not alone losing jobs, regional leaders responded by strengthening our focus on a shared economic competitiveness strategy and creating [GREATER MSP](#), a public-private economic development partnership focused on growing the regional economy.
- In the next 20 years, employers will face a retirement boom. Workforce turnover, skilled workforce preparedness, and succession planning will be major challenges for employers —not just for the Twin Cities, but for the nation as a whole. While the Council does not play a direct role in education, it recognizes that a skilled, educated workforce is a key factor in maintaining a competitive region.



## The opportunity of a regional approach

As a region, we can react to these challenges, or we can **plan for these challenges**. The coordinated regional planning approach underlying the Metropolitan Council and institutionalized in the Metropolitan Land Planning Act uniquely equips our region to transform challenges into opportunities to thrive.

In the late 1960s when the Metropolitan Council was created, **community leaders saw value in collaborating to solve regional issues**. At that time, the Minneapolis-Saint Paul region was facing tough challenges resulting from rapid population growth and unimpeded urban sprawl:

- Rapid growth was threatening ecosystems and natural areas better suited for preservation as parks and open space.
- Inadequately treated wastewater was emptying into lakes, rivers, and waterways.
- The Twin Cities' privately owned bus company was rapidly deteriorating, a victim of rising fares, declining ridership, and an aging bus fleet.
- Growing fiscal disparities were making it difficult for communities with inadequate tax capacity to fund essential services.

The Minnesota Legislature took unprecedented action to address these challenges. In 1967, the Legislature created the Metropolitan Council and gave it responsibilities for planning and coordinating the region's growth and setting policies to deal with regional issues. On signing the bill, then Governor Harold LeVander observed that the Council "was conceived with the idea that we will be faced with more and more problems that will pay no heed to the boundary lines which mark the end of one community and the beginning of another."

A region-wide perspective provides the opportunity to address issues that:

- Are bigger than any one community can address alone.
- Cross community boundaries to affect multiple communities.
- Could benefit from an opportunity to share best practices.
- Require resources that are most effectively used at a regional scale.

Four additional actions created today's regional organizational structure:

- 1969: The Legislature created the Metropolitan Sewer Board to consolidate sewer systems, reduce costs, and modernize the system.
- 1969: The Legislature created the Metropolitan Transit Commission to acquire the privately held transit system with the charge to overhaul the system, buy new buses, and improve signage, shelters, and bus stops.
- 1974: The Legislature designated more than 31,000 acres of existing city and county parks to be a new regional parks and open space system.
- 1994: The Legislature gave the Council operational control over transit and regional wastewater systems—consolidating planning, services, and operations into a single agency.

For nearly 50 years the Metropolitan Council has played a key role in coordinating regional growth and planning—providing essential services such as transportation and wastewater treatment, and convening partners to accomplish ambitious goals unrealistic for a single community but possible as a region. Thinking ahead—and working together—helps the region achieve a high quality of life, economies of scale, high-quality regional services, and a competitive edge envied by other metropolitan areas.





## ***Thrive MSP 2040: Planning a prosperous, equitable, and livable region for today and generations to come***

Under state law, the Council is responsible for preparing a comprehensive development guide for the seven-county metropolitan area. *Thrive MSP 2040* provides a framework for a shared vision for the future of our region over the next 30 years. While the Council is responsible for developing *Thrive* and the plans for the three statutory regional systems—wastewater, transportation, and regional parks—the vision within *Thrive* can only succeed through partnerships with local governments, residents, businesses, philanthropy, and the nonprofit sector.

As a regional plan, *Thrive* addresses issues greater than any one neighborhood, city, or single county can tackle alone to build and maintain a thriving metropolitan region. At the same time, the future's increasingly complex challenges demand innovative strategies and greater collaboration. Building on our region's past planning successes, the Council will adopt more collaborative and integrative approaches to allocating limited funds and addressing the demanding challenges that lie ahead. **Protecting our resources and investments**, *Thrive* provides the foundation for a prosperous, equitable, and livable region for today and generations to come.

*Thinking ahead—and working together—helps the region achieve a high quality of life, economies of scale, high-quality regional services, and a competitive edge envied by other metropolitan areas.*



## Thrive MSP 2040 and the role of the Metropolitan Council

Under state statute, the Metropolitan Council is responsible for developing the comprehensive development guide:

The Metropolitan Council shall prepare and adopt, after appropriate study and such public hearings as may be necessary, a comprehensive development guide for the metropolitan area. It shall consist of a compilation of policy statements, goals, standards, programs, and maps prescribing guides for the orderly and economical development, public and private, of the metropolitan area. (Minn. Stat. 473.145)

The Council develops a comprehensive development guide at least once a decade following the updates to the long-term forecasts that follow the Decennial Census.

This document, *Thrive MSP 2040*, establishes the policy foundation used to complete regional systems and policy plans, development policies, and implementation strategies that together form the comprehensive development guide. State statute defines three metropolitan systems plans:

- *Transportation Policy Plan* (Minn. Stat. 473.146);
- *Water Resources Policy Plan* (Minn. Stat. 473.146 and 473.157);
- *Regional Parks Policy Plan* (Minn. Stat. 473.147).

In addition to the three statutory metropolitan systems plans, the Council is also producing a *Housing Policy Plan*. The *Housing Policy Plan* will provide an expanded policy framework to inform the Council's review of the housing elements and housing implementation programs of local comprehensive plans required in statute (Minn. Stat. 473.859, subd. 2 and subd. 4).

In 2005, the Minnesota State Legislature authorized the Metropolitan Council to take on planning activities to address regional water supply issues (Minn. Stat. 473.1565). As part of its overall planning efforts, the Council is currently updating the *Master Water Supply Plan*.

The policy direction in *Thrive*—and the systems and policy plans that follow—assist local governments to create consistent, compatible, and coordinated local comprehensive plans that together strive to achieve local visions within the regional policy framework and help ensure efficient and cost-effective regional infrastructure.

The Council reviews local comprehensive plans based on the requirements of the Metropolitan Land Planning Act, state and federal guidelines referenced in this document, and the comprehensive development guide (*Thrive MSP 2040* and the metropolitan systems plans). The Council considers each local comprehensive plan's compatibility with the plans of neighboring municipalities, consistency with adopted Council policies, and conformance with metropolitan system plans. If the Council finds that a community's local comprehensive plan is more likely than not to have a substantial impact on or contain a substantial departure from metropolitan system plans, the Council can require the community to modify its local plan to assure conformance with the metropolitan system plans (Minn. Stat. 473.175).





## Thrive: Outcomes

The Metropolitan Council has listened to the aspirations voiced by the region's residents, civic, nonprofit and business leaders, and government officials and woven their thoughts and hopes into five desired outcomes that define our shared regional vision:

Stewardship Prosperity Equity Livability Sustainability



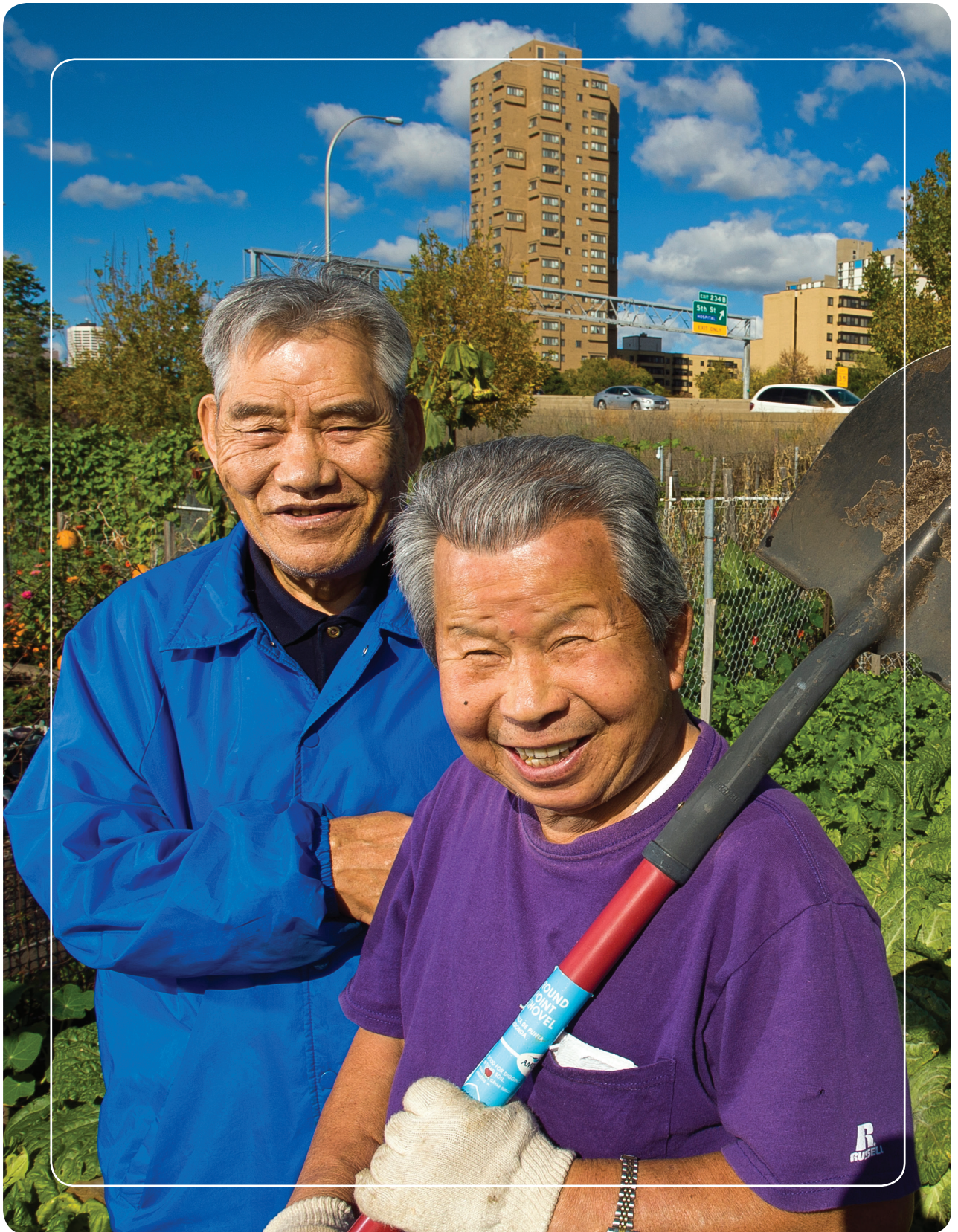
These five outcomes reinforce and support one another to produce greater benefits than any single outcome alone. Stewardship leads to decisions that advance prosperity, equity, livability, and sustainability. Prosperity provides more resources to support stewardship, equity, livability, and sustainability. Equity is crucial to creating greater prosperity and livability in the region. And so on.

Plans, policies, and projects that balance all five of these outcomes will create positive change, while efforts that advance only one or two at the expense of the others may fall short over the long term. Policymakers make tough decisions at the intersections of these five outcomes, weighing the benefits and costs of their options against these five outcomes. Focusing on outcomes allows for flexibility in implementation—for both the Council's systems and policy plans and local comprehensive plans—while prioritizing a shared strategic vision.

With *Thrive MSP 2040*, the Metropolitan Council is adopting an outcomes-orientation to its regional policy, focusing on policies that demonstrably improve our region. The Council is challenging itself, local governments, and its regional partners and stakeholders to describe how their work advances the five *Thrive* outcomes. Outcomes describe how our investments and our policies are enriching our region for our residents and businesses, not how much money we are investing or how many miles of highway, interceptor pipe, or rail we are building.

Living out the Council's first principle of integration, the following narrative weaves together all of the Council's core policy authorities—from affordable housing and aviation to wastewater treatment and water supply—in the framework of the five outcomes. The *Thrive* outcomes—stewardship, prosperity, equity, livability, and sustainability—are lofty ideals that defy simple categorization into the Council's authorities. Instead, progress toward these outcomes demands that the Council use its full range of authorities and activities in a new, coordinated way. Integrated approaches will advance the *Thrive* vision of a prosperous, equitable, and livable region for today and generations to come.







## Stewardship ●

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Stewardship advances the Metropolitan Council's longstanding mission of orderly and economical development by responsibly managing the region's natural and financial resources, and making strategic investments in our region's future. Several of the major challenges that the Council was established to address—such as an aging bus fleet and inadequately treated wastewater polluting the region's lakes, rivers, and streams—demonstrate the need for effective regional stewardship.

### Stewardship means:

- Responsibly managing our region's finite resources, including natural resources—such as lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, groundwater, high quality natural habitats, and agricultural soils—financial resources, and our existing investments in infrastructure.
- Pivoting from expanding to maintaining our region's wastewater and highway infrastructure.
- Leveraging transit investments with higher expectations of land use.

## Responsibly managing finite natural resources

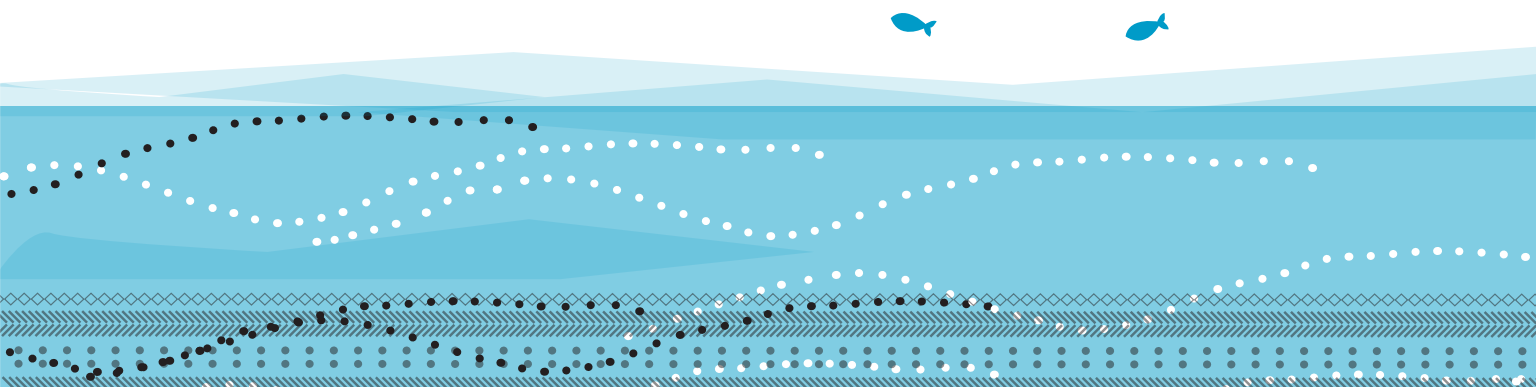
The region enjoys a bounty of natural resources including three major rivers, over 900 lakes, extensive wetlands, native prairie, woodland habitats, and an abundant groundwater system. These rich natural assets are part of our regional identity, enhancing our quality of life and supporting a strong economy. Natural areas recharge our aquifers and clean stormwater runoff and slow its flow, reducing flood damage and improving the quality of rivers, lakes, streams, wetlands, and groundwater.

Natural resources also provide a variety of benefits that would be costly to replace. Tree canopies shade our buildings and absorb carbon dioxide and pollutants. Wetlands, upland woods, and prairies provide wildlife habitat and offer access to nature. Local research “confirms that many types of open spaces, from parks and nature preserves to greenways, wetlands, and lakes, have a positive effect on nearby property values.”<sup>1</sup>

Nonetheless, challenges to the quality and extent of natural resources abound. Making natural resources a key part of the planning and development process will help protect highly prized natural features, for current and future generations. Protecting and preserving the region’s natural resources have long been an important part of the Council’s work. The Council works to preserve natural resources by partnering with local governments on land use planning, considering natural resources in the Council’s own planning and infrastructure investment decisions, and planning and funding regional parks. The Council uses its investments in the Regional Parks System to conserve scarce natural resources, such as habitats for endangered species, fens, unique habitats, conserved prairie, wetlands, and water resources. For example, regional park resources such as the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes and Lebanon Hills in Dakota County help preserve important ecological and natural features. Since its founding in 1974, the Regional Parks System has protected natural resources, including 30,700 acres of land designated as Regionally Significant Ecological Areas. In addition, the Council partners with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and other state and local organizations to manage natural resources, especially water.

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<sup>1</sup> Wilder Research, “The Economic Value of Open Space”, 2005.



Although the region is a water-rich area, the quality of its rivers, lakes, and streams suffers from stormwater runoff that carries sediment, phosphorus, nitrates, oils, road salt, and other pollutants. Loss of natural areas contributes to increased runoff and lowered water quality. Best management practices minimize pollutants in the region's surface water and groundwater. Proper management of Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems is needed to minimize impacts on surface water, groundwater, and public health. The Council and its partners will work to maintain and improve the quality and availability of the region's water resources (rivers, streams, lakes, aquifers, and wetlands) to support healthy habitats and ecosystems while providing for recreational opportunities.



To protect natural resources, the Council will:

- Fund ongoing acquisition of priority natural resource areas for inclusion in the Regional Parks System as identified in the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*.
- Encourage local governments to locate and design new developments in a way that preserves and benefits from the natural environment and reduces development pressures that endanger natural resources by promoting growth in already urbanized areas.
- Assess the quality of the regional groundwater system and its vulnerability to land use changes and identify high potential areas for recharge.
- Monitor and assess the condition of the region's lakes, rivers, and streams.
- Partner to conserve, maintain, and restore natural resources identified in local natural resource inventories.
- Provide direction, guidance, and technical assistance on best management practices for effective stormwater management and land use strategies that preserve and protect natural resources.
- Continue to ask local governments that their local comprehensive plans include local natural resources inventories, identify the tension points between natural resource protections and development pressures, and adopt local land uses and planning strategies for protecting natural resources and minimizing development impacts.



## Pivoting from expanding to maintaining our region's wastewater and highway infrastructure

As with preserving natural resources, the Council is expected to be a wise steward of public financial resources and to strategically, effectively, and efficiently guide those dollars to the greatest benefit to our region. The combination of structural and demographic changes has made public resources for infrastructure expansion and preservation much more limited than in the last half of the 20th century. Consequently, it becomes more critical that we make smart investments and wise financial decisions to maximize the benefit from the resources we have.

The deterioration of roadway pavement and the aging condition of the regional sewers demonstrate the urgency of investing significantly more in their preservation, maintenance, and rebuilding. It is time to strike a new balance between being good stewards of the infrastructure we have and building more. As a result, the Council is pivoting from an emphasis on expanding our systems—especially wastewater and highways—to maintaining the infrastructure we have and maximizing the impact of limited dollars.

The Council's effective planning, combined with slowed population growth and reduced per capita water use over the last decade, has created a regional wastewater treatment system with adequate capacity and service coverage planned through at least 2040. Prudent planning and system improvements at the regional and local levels have helped maintain and extend the capacity and life of the existing wastewater treatment system. Forecasted population growth to 2040 suggests minimal need to expand the wastewater system's geographic footprint beyond that negotiated between the Council and local governments and reflected in 2030 local comprehensive plans. As a result, the Council's attention will increasingly turn from managing the edge of the system to ensuring adequate maintenance and capacity in the redeveloping areas of the region in order to efficiently use existing wastewater investments. Although it has reduced 30-year population forecasts for some jurisdictions, the Council will provide necessary infrastructure to honor existing 2030 commitments for land to be included in the Metropolitan Urban Service Area by 2040.

Our region's highway investment strategy exemplifies the need and the opportunity for thoughtful and strategic stewardship of resources. The existing system is a significant public investment that must be maintained and preserved for future generations. Concerns about congestion, safety, access, and freight movement must be balanced with available funding amounts, sources, and long-term sustainability.

While some gaps remain, the region's principal arterial network is essentially complete and must now be rebuilt. Those rebuilding and replacement needs are increasing as federal, state, and local resources for roads and bridges lose ground to inflation. Moreover, gas tax revenues are declining due to improved fuel efficiency and changing travel patterns. The [Minnesota State Highway Investment Plan](#) (2013-2033) shows that the region will have \$52 million available annually from 2014 to 2022 for highway mobility improvements. This is a reduction from 2030 Transportation Policy Plan projections and falls significantly short of the anticipated need. Beyond 2023, all state highway funding will be devoted to rebuilding existing highway assets.



While the region must operate, maintain, and rebuild the existing highway system, these investments alone cannot accommodate the growing region. Congestion on regional highways—a sign of economic activity—will likely be a reality in the coming years, particularly during peak commuting hours. Moving more people and more freight on the system with limited fiscal resources will require more coordinated approaches than simply expanding the pavement footprint.

Strategic investment in the transportation system as a whole will be needed to ease congestion, and improve safety and capacity. To accomplish this, the region will focus its investments on affordable, high-return-on-investment projects, including:

- Placing priority on safely operating, maintaining, and rebuilding the existing state highway system with improvements to better accommodate bicycle and accessible pedestrian travel where appropriate.
- Implementing mobility improvements such as Traffic Management Technologies (TMT), spot mobility improvements, new and extended MnPASS lanes, and affordable strategic capacity enhancements.
- Implementing projects to increase access to Job Concentrations and Manufacturing/Distribution Locations.
- Continuing to support enhancements to the A-minor arterial system.
- Encouraging, supporting, and coordinating efforts beyond investments in the physical highway system, including Travel Demand Management such as carpools, vanpools, and staggered work hours; implementing transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and park-and-ride facilities that encourage use of the full range of transportation modes; and coordination with local land use guidance that increases job and housing concentrations.

The intersection of land use, urban form, and the transportation system shapes the effectiveness of stewardship of transportation investments. The Council will work with municipalities to align development patterns and highway investments by focusing growth and investment along corridors with strong potential for future transit or managed lanes. Areas outside these corridors may continue to develop but will receive only limited investments from federal or state sources for new or expanded highways. This approach will be described in detail in the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*.





## Leveraging transit investments with higher expectations of land use

The region has been building its highway system for more than 50 years, but only in the last decade have we started to build new fixed-route transitways to supplement our extensive bus network. Our transitway network is largely still in development with opportunities to invest in transit across the urbanized parts of our region. We have learned that effective stewardship of public transit dollars requires a more strategic coordination of regional transit investments with more-intensive surrounding land uses, connected development patterns and urban form. Since much of our region developed around roads and private automobiles, the changes in land use and urban form required to make transit successful are significant. To effectively leverage our regional transit investments, the Council will need strong local partners who are willing to plan and invest in their communities and coordinate with neighboring communities to develop around transit. The Council will:

- Prioritize expanded bus service and transitway investments in areas where infrastructure and development patterns to support a successful transit system are either in place or committed to in the planning or development process, balancing transit ridership with added connectivity.
- Expand the geographic coverage of bus service and transitway investments in areas with a local commitment to transit-supportive development patterns and the market for future development.
- Stage transit modes, coverage, and service levels to match the intensity of development to both minimize the risk to public resources and maximize return on public investments.
- Define the Council's expectations for transit-supportive land use planning—including expectations for connectivity, density and intensity, environmental considerations, opportunities for a mix of housing affordability, and zoning near major transit investments (policy will be refined in the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*).
- Collaborate with municipalities to coordinate land use and development patterns with frequent, all-day bus service and transitways to increase transit ridership, increase the likelihood of successful transit investment, and respond to new market opportunities around transit investment.





In addition to being a responsible steward of its existing resources, we must also focus on our economic prosperity to expand our pool of resources for future investments.







# Prosperity ●

Prosperity is fostered by investments in infrastructure and amenities that create regional economic competitiveness, thereby attracting and retaining successful businesses, a talented workforce, and, consequently, wealth. Regional economic competitiveness results from strategic, long-term public and private decisions that build on and grow our region's economic strengths relative to other regions. Collectively, the region must provide great locations for businesses to succeed—particularly the industries that export products or services beyond the metropolitan area and bring revenue into the region.

## Advancing prosperity involves:

- Fostering the conditions for shared economic vitality by balancing major investments across the region.
- Protecting natural resources that are the foundation of prosperity.
- Planning for and investing in infrastructure, amenities, and quality of life needed for economic competitiveness.
- Encouraging redevelopment and infill development.

Minneapolis and Saint Paul developed as cities because of their favorable locations. Saint Paul was considered the navigable head of the Mississippi River, while Minneapolis found its origins alongside the hydropower provided by Saint Anthony Falls where milling blossomed. James J. Hill's Great Northern Railway brought the agricultural wealth of the entire northwestern United States through Minneapolis and Saint Paul, creating and reinforcing the region as a financial hub.

Though the economy has evolved over the last 150 years, businesses still seek locational advantages, particularly access to a skilled workforce, access to markets, and an overall environment that allows them to compete in the global market. Some businesses rely more heavily on freight and the movement of goods, while knowledge-intensive services concentrate on moving people to jobs and on the quality of life that attracts and retains a highly-skilled workforce.

The Metropolitan Council's regional planning and infrastructure set the stage for our region's economic competitiveness and prosperity. While local economic development authorities and others work directly with businesses, the work of creating and retaining businesses in the region requires coordinated efforts. The Council's contributions to regional economic competitiveness lie in the arena of community development—that is, supporting the infrastructure, amenities, and quality of life that are essential to attracting and retaining businesses and talent. The Council will use its existing role and capacity to plan and invest in community development and consider prosperity and economic competitiveness as a lens through which to evaluate its planning, operations, and investment decisions.

Prosperity



## Fostering the conditions for shared economic vitality by balancing major investments across the region

To advance prosperity across the Twin Cities area, the Council will intentionally consider regional balance—that is, balancing its investments and activities across the region—in its planning, operations, and investment decisions. The Council’s intent is that no part of the region is consistently favored or consistently ignored. The issue of regional balance has multiple dimensions; sometimes the issue is north and east vs. southwest, other times the issue is Suburban Edge vs. Suburban vs. Urban Center. For example, are investments supporting new development at the edge of the region as well as redevelopment in the oldest parts of the region? Are transit investments supporting the needs of the entire region rather than serving only one quadrant? Because development patterns vary across the region, advancing regional balance does not guarantee that all parts of the region will receive the same level or intensity of investments, activity, or attention. Rather, advancing regional balance will be a consideration that helps all parts of the region receive investments that promote prosperity at their stage and level of development.



## Protecting natural resources that are the foundation of prosperity

Location is only one of the Twin Cities region’s attributes that create economic prosperity; our metropolitan area is also endowed with rich natural resources, such as soil, water, and aggregate that help make our region prosperous.

**Prime agricultural soils** support the region’s farm economy and sustain local food production. Agricultural land creates economic opportunity for a variety of residents, ranging from farmers growing crops on century-old family farms to new Americans bringing their farming experience into small-scale local food production serving farmers markets. About a half-million acres in the region, one-quarter of the region’s land, are planned, guided, and zoned to maintain agriculture as the primary long-term land use—mainly in a crescent-shaped area through Dakota, Scott, and Carver Counties. The Council supports preserving agricultural land to protect the agricultural economy in the region, provide economic opportunities for farmers, and promote local food production and processing.

The Council limits urbanization in rural areas to reduce development pressure on farmland and to avoid the premature extension of roads and sewers. Some of the region’s agricultural lands are identified as part of the Council’s Long-term Wastewater Service Area for sewer development only after 2040. This designation gives the Council greater authority to enable long-term agricultural uses and avoid premature development until urban densities are needed to accommodate regional growth. The Council acknowledges that local jurisdictions are best-positioned to address agricultural needs within their communities.

From its role in the early historical development of our region, water is a critical prerequisite of regional growth and prosperity. Access to clean water through both groundwater and the Mississippi River will be a competitive advantage for our metropolitan area during the next century when many other regions around the globe will struggle to provide clean water at a reasonable cost. Illustrating the economic importance of water supply, the City of Minneapolis has calculated that a shutdown of its water supply system would cost businesses over \$65 million a day (2013 analysis).

The Council's long-term approach to planning water sustainability gives our region a competitive edge—particularly considering that other regions across the country are planning for water supplies in days or weeks, not decades and generations. The Council's regional vision and approach to managing our regional water resources consider the interrelationships of land use, development patterns, transportation and other regional services, and water resource protection. Managing and using our water resources wisely will sustain the region now and into the future.

**Aggregate**—i.e., gravel and crushed rock—is another resource vital to our area. Regional transportation systems and the building industry need large volumes of aggregate for construction and maintenance. The local availability of aggregate helps reduce construction costs for roads, bridges, and housing. Because aggregate is a limited resource to the construction industry, it is essential to avoid building over aggregate until aggregate has been removed. Analysis that was published in 2000 found that as of 1997, 45% of the region's aggregate deposits had either been built over by development or already mined.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Minnesota Geological Survey Information Circular 46, "Aggregate Resources Inventory of the Seven-County Metropolitan Area, Minnesota", 2000.

To protect soils, water, and aggregate, the natural resources that are the foundation of economic prosperity, the Council will:

- Encourage local governments to promote and preserve agricultural land and locate and design new developments in ways that reduce development pressures on this limited resource.
- Maintain and update the *Master Water Supply Plan* to promote a sustainable water supply for the long-term.
- Incorporate water sustainability considerations in all areas of Council policy and actions, including overall development patterns, water management, transportation, housing, and regional parks.
- Require local governments to address water sustainability in their local comprehensive plans.
- Work with regional and local partners to identify subregional and local solutions to water sustainability that balance regional needs and local objectives.
- Implement the statutory requirement that local jurisdictions with aggregate resources within their borders address their goals, intentions, and priorities concerning aggregate in their local comprehensive plans.



## Planning for and investing in infrastructure, amenities, and quality of life needed for economic competitiveness

While *Thrive MSP 2040* identifies economic competitiveness as a new emphasis, the Council's long-range planning and infrastructure investments already advance regional economic prosperity. The benefits of the Council's regional approach include planning for the efficient movement of people and freight, providing cost-effective and efficient wastewater treatment, and contributing to a quality of life and cost structure that attract and retain businesses and talent. In fact, today the Council's wholesale wastewater treatment rates are as much as 40% lower than comparable regions. Regional transportation systems provide efficient, effective, and reliable access to materials and regional, national, and international markets. Time spent in transportation—for raw materials, commuting, or finished goods—does not add value to businesses, so strategic locations require access to efficient transportation. The region's bustling international airport, rail and river freight systems, regional highways, and growing transit system all work together to support our vibrant regional economy.

A thriving [regional aviation system](#) is an economic asset to the region, providing businesses and people with competitive access to the global economy. Airport access is particularly important for our region's corporate headquarters and industries dependent on travel and shipping high-value goods. Our system of reliever airports provides alternatives for general aviation that are dispersed across the region and creates options to using the Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport, the region's only commercial service airport. The Council reviews major capital projects of the Metropolitan Airports Commission and supports investment in airport facilities to keep pace with market needs and maintain the region's economic vitality.



Our region has a competitive advantage over many regions in its [multimodal freight system](#). With four Class I railroads (large railroads with a nationwide or continental network) and several short-line railroads, barge shipping on the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers, and an extensive highway system anchored by two interstate highways, the freight movement system ensures the accessibility of the region to markets and raw materials. In addition to the aviation system described in the previous paragraph, the region's freight system has four components:

- Trucks, the workhorses of the local freight system, carry 75% of all freight in the region. They are the most flexible mode of the system but need nearby highway access, appropriate development patterns, and predictable mobility to work efficiently.
- Freight rail is used for longer-distance (500 miles or more) trips, moving materials, liquids, commodities or containerized goods, often in specialized cars, at low cost and with low carbon impact. Industries that ship these bulk products require direct access to freight rail.
- Barges on the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers move bulk commodities such as aggregate, fertilizer, or grain long distances at very low cost and with low carbon impact. Barge traffic needs continued access to ports to succeed.
- The final component of the freight system is the intermodal transfer facilities where freight can be moved between trucks, trains, and barges. In addition to river ports, the region has two well-used major intermodal terminals—the BNSF Midway Hub in Saint Paul and the CP Shoreham Yard in Northeast Minneapolis—that serve the transition from rail to truck. In recent years, the rise of containerized shipping has made the transfer facilities even more critical to our freight system's efficiency. These transfer facilities have great value to regional economic competitiveness and should be recognized and protected.

This interconnected freight system contributes to economic competitiveness by offering optimal shipping options for a variety of industries.

[Industrial land](#) provides locations for export industries and good-paying jobs; the Council discourages redevelopment of industrial land in strategically important locations along rivers and railroads in the region into other uses. Local government plans should also consider the potential conflicts and impacts resulting from residential communities, commercial districts, and parklands encroaching upon rather than coexisting alongside existing industrial land uses.





Some locations possess unique characteristics or assets that are significant to the regional economy—for example, airports, intermodal freight terminals, barge terminals, highways, freight railroads, and major manufacturers. Many of these locations serve region-wide needs despite a cost to the neighboring area—whether noise, nuisance, or a loss of tax base. The Council will work with local communities to monitor and manage these land use conflicts and recommend solutions that balance the region’s overall needs with local needs.

The region’s highway investments are part of a coordinated, interconnected, and multimodal regional transportation network that safely, reliably, and affordably connects people and freight with destinations in the region and beyond. In fact, the vast majority of the region’s freight moves by truck. The Council works with the Minnesota Department of Transportation, counties, and local units of government to preserve and improve these roadways. To make the regional highway system more efficient, the Council and the Minnesota Department of Transportation are building managed lanes—MnPASS lanes—which provide a congestion-free alternative for transit users, carpools, and those willing to pay. This market-based solution allows auto drivers and small trucks to price the value of their time spent in congestion and pay for a faster alternative. Independent evaluation of local MnPASS lanes has found that people of all income levels use and support them, especially to increase the reliability of their travel times for inflexible work schedules. These managed lanes also create more capacity for larger trucks in the general highway lanes during peak traffic periods.

Employers locate worksites to maximize their accessibility and proximity to the workforce they need. Our region competes with other regions across the world to attract the talented young workers who are necessary to meet the needs of the region’s growing economy and replace retiring baby boomers. To compete successfully for this generation, our region must provide the housing, transit, transportation, and quality of life amenities that will continue to attract the talent needed by employers in our region—including an exceptionally high concentration of corporate headquarters and business service firms. The region’s transportation system—including highways, transit, the emerging bicycle network, and pedestrian amenities—provides our residents options for commuting to their workplaces and enhances our quality of life. Accessibility to transit benefits employers by reducing their costs to provide parking, decreasing employee transportation costs, and expanding their pool of potential employees to include those who do not drive.



To plan for and invest in the infrastructure, amenities, and quality of life the region needs to be economically competitive, the Council will:

- Contribute to a quality of life and cost of living that attract and retain a talented workforce.
- Continue to provide cost-effective and efficient wastewater treatment at wholesale rates that are as much as 40% lower today than in comparable regions.
- Pursue additional funding for the multimodal transportation system including highways, transit (both transitways and bus capital investment and operations), local roads, and the bicycle and pedestrian systems.
- Collaborate with the Counties Transit Improvement Board, a major transit funder, to create a regional transitway network.
- Plan for the efficient and multimodal movement of freight globally, nationally, and regionally to support the region's industries.
- Focus expansion of bus service and transitway investment to and within existing and emerging high-density Job Concentrations, high-density activity centers (such as shopping and educational institutions), and dense residential areas.
- Construct and support park-and-rides to provide access to transit in less dense residential areas.
- Collaborate with [GREATER MSP](#) and other partners in providing information resources and technical assistance to help local communities benefit from the region's economic development strategy.
- Plan for adequate capacity at Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport and maintain, improve, and preserve our system of reliever airports.
- Use its authority and provide technical assistance to protect and preserve compatible land uses around resources such as airports, railroads, and industrial land.
- Conduct a metrowide inventory and analysis of industrial land to assess the supply of and demand for industrial land with freight access.
- Encourage the expansion of industrial land and supportive infrastructure as needed to fulfill demand for industrial land with freight access.
- Investigate and assess cost-effective options for regional and subregional water supply infrastructure in collaboration with local, regional, and state partners.
- Encourage workforce housing that is affordable to a variety of income levels across the region.

## Encouraging redevelopment and infill

Development on undeveloped or agricultural land—greenfield development—traditionally costs developers or builders less because the costs of demolition or pollution remediation are minimal. However, development on greenfields often has higher long-term public costs because it requires extending regional infrastructure to new areas. On the other hand, infill development and redevelopment require less new regional infrastructure but can cost more for the developer up front, both in the direct costs of demolition and pollution remediation as well as the increased complexity of integrating projects into existing neighborhoods. Over the long-term, proportionately more infill development and redevelopment compared to greenfield development will result in a denser, more compact region, minimizing the loss of agricultural land, reducing travel distances, and enhancing the ability of the region to support transit. Redevelopment projects may require direct public subsidy or indirect support through specific infrastructure investments. Because healthy, thriving regions need both a strong periphery and a strong core, the Council will work to encourage redevelopment and infill development across the region by:

- Compiling locally identified priority sites for development and redevelopment, as included in local comprehensive plans, into a regional inventory of development priorities.
- Analyzing the market readiness of these sites and working with local and regional partners to develop investment and redevelopment strategies customized to the needs of different types of strong and weak markets, including Areas of Concentrated Poverty and Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty.
- Working with cities and other regional partners to explore the need for new and additional tools to support and finance redevelopment.
- Using its role and authorities to streamline redevelopment processes and help equalize the playing field—including differences in cost—between redevelopment, infill development, and greenfield development sites.







To leverage the full power of our region's economic assets, we must help all of the region's residents access opportunity and participate in regional economic competitiveness.





# Equity ●

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Equity connects all residents to opportunity and creates viable housing, transportation, and recreation options for people of all races, ethnicities, incomes, and abilities so that all communities share the opportunities and challenges of growth and change. For our region to reach its full economic potential, all of our residents must be able to access opportunity. Our region is stronger when all people live in communities that provide them access to opportunities for success, prosperity, and quality of life.

## Promoting equity means:

- Using our influence and investments to build a more equitable region.
- Creating real choices in where we live, how we travel, and where we recreate for all residents, across race, ethnicity, economic means, and ability.
- Investing in a mix of housing affordability along the region's transit corridors.
- Engaging a full cross-section of the community in decision-making.

Kirby  
Equity



Over the next three decades, the Twin Cities region will become more racially and ethnically diverse. In 2010, 24% of our region's population was people of color; by 2040, 40% of our region's residents are expected to be people of color. The share of people of color increases among younger age groups; 54% of residents under age 18 will be people of color in 2040. This rich and growing racial and ethnic diversity should be an asset to our continued economic vitality. However, our region has some of the largest disparities by race and ethnicity of any large metropolitan area in the nation, and the region will not be able to realize its full economic potential if these disparities persist:

- In the Minneapolis-Saint Paul-Bloomington metropolitan area, 25.7% of all people of color are poor, compared with 6.4% of white non-Latino people.<sup>3</sup> This is the largest such disparity among the 25 largest metropolitan areas. The poverty rate for African Americans is 5.7 times greater than the poverty rate for white, non-Latino people—by far the largest such disparity among the 25 largest metropolitan areas.
- The per capita personal income for black and African American people (\$15,336) is just 40% of the per capita personal income for white, non-Latino people (\$37,943).
- The percentage of adults of color who lack a high school diploma is nearly six times that of white, non-Latino adults.
- The unemployment rate for people of color is more than twice that of white, non-Latino persons. The unemployment rate for blacks and African Americans is 2.9 times the unemployment rate for white, non-Latino people—the biggest such disparity among the 25 largest metropolitan areas.
- The homeownership rate among households of color is 37%, half of the comparable rate among white, non-Latino households. Just 22% of black or African American households own their homes.

For more information about the historical context of these disparities, see [Choice, Place and Opportunity: An Equity Assessment of the Twin Cities](#).

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<sup>3</sup> Data from the 2012 American Community Survey. To enable comparisons with other regions, numbers describe the 13-county Minneapolis-Saint Paul-Bloomington metropolitan statistical area.

## Disparities by Race and Ethnicity in the Twin Cities, 2012

Measure	White, non-Latino	Persons of color	Rank of disparity among 25 largest metro areas
Percentage of population age 25+ with a high school diploma	96.3%	78.3%	3
Percentage of civilian working-age population that is employed	79.4%	64.8%	1
Percentage above poverty threshold	93.6%	74.3%	1
Per capita income	\$37,943	\$18,078	4
Percentage of householders who own their homes	75.8%	37.0%	1

These disparities are growing at the same time the share of our region's population of color is growing. Eliminating these disparities and accessing the full potential of our region's residents of color could have dramatic benefits. If everyone in the Twin Cities in 2040 enjoyed the same socioeconomic profile as white non-Latino people do today, the social and economic impact would be significant. Compared to the disparities continuing unabated, there would be:

- 171,000 more people with a high school diploma
- 124,000 more people with jobs
- 274,000 fewer people in poverty
- \$31.8 billion in additional income
- 186,000 more homeowners<sup>4</sup>

The combined impact of increased employment, income, and homeownership would go far to close today's disparities in wealth by race and ethnicity. Nearly all of our region's net workforce growth over the next three decades will come from residents of color. In short, all residents of the Twin Cities region need access to opportunity if the region is to have a healthy and prosperous future.

<sup>4</sup> These figures are Metropolitan Council staff calculations based on 2007-2011 American Community Survey data for the seven-county Twin Cities region and the Metropolitan Council's Revised Regional Forecast to 2040 (February 2014).



## Using our influence and investments to build a more equitable region

The Metropolitan Council will use equity as a lens to evaluate its operations, planning, and investments, and explore its authority to use its resources and roles to mitigate the place-based dimension of disparities by race, ethnicity, income, and ability.

To meet the expectations of the federal Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant, the Council developed [Choice, Place and Opportunity: An Equity Assessment of the Twin Cities Region](#). This assessment examined the historical and current geography of race, poverty, and opportunity in the region. The Council is asking itself and its partners whether and how public investments can effectively address a legacy of private disinvestment in select neighborhoods.

This process also introduced a focus on Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty, defined for our region as census tracts where at least half of the residents are people of color and at least 40% of the residents live below 185% of the federal poverty line.<sup>5</sup> By 2010, nearly one in ten of our region's residents lived in Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty. Because Areas of Concentrated Poverty and Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty can both limit the economic mobility of their residents and discourage private investment, our region cannot afford to allow these areas to either persist or grow. The Council will:

- Work to mitigate Areas of Concentrated Poverty and Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty by better connecting their residents to opportunity and catalyzing neighborhood revitalization.
- Work with communities to create more income-diverse neighborhoods, including strategically targeted subsidies to develop market-rate housing in areas that lack market-rate options.
- Use Livable Communities Act resources to catalyze private investment in Areas of Concentrated Poverty and Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty.
- Actively partner in neighborhood revitalization efforts such as Penn Avenue Community Works in North Minneapolis.
- Conduct a regional inventory of industrial land that considers the location of industrial land relative to the potential workforce eager to access nearby higher-wage job opportunities.
- Work with our partners and stakeholders to identify indicators used to measure how projects, supported with Council resources, advance equity, including helping residents of Areas of Concentrated Poverty and Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty, lower-income households, or people with disabilities.

<sup>5</sup> \$42,589 in annual income for a four-person household in 2011.



### Homeownership

49%

HOUSEHOLDS OF COLOR  
are half as likely to own their  
home as white non-Latino  
households

For our region to thrive, all parts of our region must prosper. By using public resources to catalyze investment in areas that have seen chronic private disinvestment—specifically including Areas of Concentrated Poverty and Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty—the Council will seek to help the region grow and prosper more equitably.

Because the challenges of racial and economic equity require aligning efforts across multiple entities, the Council will convene multiple partners, including cities, counties, school districts, nonprofits, and philanthropy, to develop shared plans and investment strategies to address the issues of Areas of Concentrated Poverty and Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty. The Council will play a leadership role in this strategy, bringing data to the table and co-convening discussions with partner institutions to address both effects and underlying causes. Based on these conversations, the Council may explore funding set-asides or special investment resources to help create opportunities in Areas of Concentrated Poverty and Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty.



#### 2010 Population

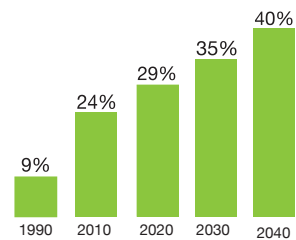
**24%**

people of color

#### 2040 Population

**40%**

people of color



The share of people of color in the region's population is growing.

## Creating real choices in where we live, how we travel, and where we recreate for all residents, across race, ethnicity, economic means, and ability

To advance racial and economic equity across the metropolitan area, the Council will work to create and protect viable housing, transportation, and recreation options for the region's residents, regardless of race, ethnicity, income, and ability. While different people will make different choices reflecting their own needs and preferences, the Council's priority will be expanding real choices for housing, transportation, and recreation.

The region needs to offer housing options that give people in all life stages and of all economic means viable choices for safe, stable, and affordable homes. Individual housing preferences vary as each household considers factors such as access to desirable schools, proximity to jobs, the availability of transit, and nearby community amenities, including cultural or religious institutions. The Council's goal is to expand housing options for all residents, whatever their choices may be. To help more households have real housing choices, the Council will:



- Use its resources, including investments in transit, infrastructure, and redevelopment, to help create and preserve mixed-income neighborhoods and housing choices across the region.
- Encourage preserving existing housing where rehabilitation is a cost-effective strategy to maintaining housing affordability.
- Invest in and encourage new affordable housing in higher-income areas of the region, particularly in areas that are well-connected to jobs, opportunity, and transit.
- Ensure that local comprehensive plans guide an adequate supply of land to meet each jurisdiction's fair share of housing for low- and moderate-income households.
- Develop and provide tools, including competitive rent limits in higher-cost communities, to enable Housing Choice Voucher holders to choose the location that best meets their needs.
- Encourage increased resources for affordable housing at the federal, state, regional, and local levels to help close the gap between the region's affordable housing need and the supply.
- Support efforts to expand the supply of affordable housing that is accessible to people with disabilities.
- Work with housing partners and local governments to expand the supply of affordable housing available at all income levels, including extremely low-income households earning less than 30% of the area median income (that is, \$24,850 for a family of four in 2014).
- Promote regional and local efforts to streamline the process and reduce the costs of developing housing, including affordable housing.
- Support research and other activities related to fair housing, residential lending, and real estate practices to determine if discriminatory practices are occurring and limiting housing choices.

Transportation choices are as important to lower-income households as housing choices and may be more important for people with disabilities. The Council will continue to strengthen bus and transitway connections between lower-income residents and opportunities such as jobs and education. To expand the transportation choices available to all households, including in some neighborhoods the choice to live without a car, the Council will:

- Include a measure of households who do not own private automobiles as one of the elements driving the Council's Transit Market Areas and defining the level of bus service neighborhoods expect to receive.
- Conduct Title VI service equity analyses—a federally prescribed process—to ensure that major changes in transit service do not lead to disparate impacts on low-income residents and communities of color.
- Complete environmental justice analyses that ensure no disproportionately high and adverse impacts of transportation projects to the region's people of color and low-income populations.
- Prioritize transportation investments that connect lower-income areas to job opportunities
- Provide accessible transit vehicles and facilities and offer Metro Mobility service to supplement regular-route transit service to create transportation choices for people with disabilities.
- Engage neighborhood residents in transit planning to understand how to most effectively use transit service and investments to promote access to opportunity.

Options for recreation in public open space contribute to vibrant communities and active living and thereby create positive health and well-being outcomes. While the Council encourages expanded recreational options by all partners, the Council's purview focuses on the Regional Parks System. To help more residents have real recreation choices, the Council will:

- Strengthen equitable usage of regional parks and trails by all our region's residents, such as across race, ethnicity, income, and ability.





## Investing in a mix of housing affordability along the region's transit corridors

As our region makes significant investments in transit, particularly transitways, we must also ensure that the inevitable changes in neighborhoods along transit do not displace existing low-income residents. The increased accessibility that transit investments provide can lead to rising housing costs, making it more important to take proactive steps to preserve housing affordability and protect housing options for existing low-income residents. To promote a mix of housing affordability along the region's transit corridors, the Council will:

- Align its resources and work with other partners to help preserve a mix of housing affordability along the region's transit routes and corridors to help low-income households benefit from transit investments.
- Promote transit-oriented development that ensures a mix of housing affordability in transit station areas.

## Engaging a full cross-section of the community in decision-making

To move toward equity, our region needs the full range of voices at the table so all affected parties understand the issues, explore alternative approaches, and proceed with action. This will require new approaches for the Council. Beyond convening regional stakeholders, the Council is strengthening its approach to outreach, public participation, and community engagement by developing a Council-wide Public Engagement Plan. In the development of this engagement plan, the Council will:

- Define consistent expectations of how the Council will engage with the region's residents and constituencies.
- Evaluate what types of policy, planning, and operational decisions need what levels of engagement, recognizing that not all decisions need and merit the same intensity of engagement.
- Collaborate and consult with members of the community, especially historically under-represented populations.
- Focus on developing lasting relationships with the region's residents and constituencies.
- Highlight best practices for engagement in our region.
- Work toward making decisions with people, not for people.





The commitment to address racial and economic disparities across neighborhoods demonstrates the necessity of ensuring that all residents live in a healthy, vibrant, and livable region.







## Livability ●

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Livability focuses on the quality of our residents' lives and experiences in our region, and how places and infrastructure create and enhance the quality of life that makes our region a great place to live. With abundant and beautiful open space, an active arts community, a range of housing options, and a reasonable cost of living, the Twin Cities region is widely recognized for its high quality of life.

The Metropolitan Council's focus on livability is on creating and renewing vibrant places and underlying infrastructure, investing in regional parks and affordable housing, and collaborating with partners to achieve the full range of possibilities that help our region thrive. Livability adds value to our region by helping to retain and attract a talented workforce, increasing living choices, building community identity, highlighting the unique qualities of local places, and supporting individual decisions that reinforce those qualities. The Council is committed to increasing livability for people of all ages, races, ethnicities, incomes, national origins, and abilities in the region through its authorities, its investments in infrastructure, and its collaboration with others to sustain and increase a high quality of life.

### Enhancing livability means:

- Increasing access to nature and outdoor recreation through regional parks and trails.
- Providing housing and transportation choices for a range of demographic characteristics and economic means.
- Supporting bicycle facilities to promote bicycling for transportation, recreation, and healthy lifestyles.
- Aligning resources to support transit-oriented development and walkable places.
- Promoting healthy communities and active living through land use, planning, and investments.

Livability

Livability helps attract and retain the people and businesses that our region needs to thrive and compete economically. People are increasingly choosing where they want to live—especially in urban areas that offer attractive amenities and lifestyles—and then looking for jobs there. Young, creative professionals today are highly mobile and can live anywhere they want. They are choosing high-amenity places that have a diverse population, a rich arts and entertainment culture, natural beauty, abundant recreation, and sufficient walkability and transit systems that allow them to travel without a car.

Attracting younger talent through high-quality communities is also an investment in the future market for our housing stock. Many young urbanites look for more space as they have children and their lifestyle preferences change. As existing residents age out of their homes, these younger residents will be ready to move in. Businesses also place a high value on livability. Whether a large company seeking a location for an office or a talented entrepreneur looking to grow an innovative business, decision-makers want to know their employees can get to work and are happy living here.

Every community can strive for better livability, but the needs and challenges for infrastructure and place-making vary widely by location. A neighborhood in the urban core may need wider sidewalks, shared open spaces, careful building detailing, and a mix of activities to be livable. A suburban neighborhood may need increased housing options and more bike trails to access parks and transit stops. A rural center may need a traffic-calmed main street that allows pedestrians to cross more safely or renovated downtown buildings to catalyze reinvestment.

Livability for all areas also requires the network of businesses—whether an ethnic restaurant owned by new immigrants or the small-town bar owned by the same family for generations—that makes our communities unique, both supporting local residents and attracting visitors from across the world. Each jurisdiction has a unique combination of natural landscape, built environment, and local culture; communities that recognize and value their particular character, needs, and opportunities can more effectively invest in their future.



## Increasing access to nature and outdoor recreation through regional parks and trails

Our regional parks are essential in keeping our region at the top of national livability rankings. The Twin Cities area's 59 regional parks, park reserves, and special recreation features plus over 300 miles of regional trails showcase the unique landscapes of the region and provide year-round recreation. Our residents have consistently singled out the region's parks, trails, and natural environment as the most attractive feature of the region.<sup>6</sup> Drawing nearly 46 million annual visits in 2012, the Regional Parks System provides access to natural space that contributes to physical and emotional well-being. Many of our region's most well-known and iconic sites—the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes, Como Zoo and Conservatory, Lebanon Hills Regional Park, Bunker Hills Regional Park, Elm Creek Park Reserve, and Lake Elmo Park Reserve—are part of the Regional Parks System. Regional parks, along with local, state and national parks, also provide valuable co-benefits that contribute to all of the regional outcomes, including transportation, carbon capture, heat island mitigation, water quality and recharge, active living and wellness, and many others. The Council will collaborate with the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, regional park agencies, and state partners to:

- Expand the Regional Parks System to conserve, maintain, and connect natural resources identified as being of high quality or having regional importance, as identified in the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*.
- Provide a comprehensive regional park and trail system that preserves high-quality natural resources, increases climate resiliency, fosters healthy outcomes, connects communities, and enhances quality of life in the region.
- Promote expanded multimodal access to regional parks, regional trails, and the transit network, where appropriate.
- Strengthen equitable usage of regional parks and trails by all our region's residents, such as across age, race, ethnicity, income, national origin, and ability.

<sup>6</sup> For more information, see the [Metro Residents Survey](#).





## Providing housing and transportation choices for a range of demographic characteristics and economic means

Over time, our region has grown into a variety of communities and neighborhoods with a wide range of housing. Single-family homes comprise 58% of our region's current housing stock. Demand for this housing stock is projected to continue, but the segments of our population that are growing will consist of households that may increasingly prefer alternative forms of neighborhoods. Recent trends support this shift. Since 2000, only 43% of our region's building permits have been for single-family detached homes; in both 2012 and 2013, the region issued more building permits for multifamily units than for all housing units in 2008, 2009, 2010 or 2011. The livability challenge around these shifts is to create communities that offer satisfying experiences and meet the daily needs for living, shopping, working, and recreation for each group, not simply housing developments that offer a place to own or rent.



As residents age, their needs, preferences, and travel behavior shift; some communities may be poorly designed to accommodate their residents' future needs. Growing cohorts of residents, including international immigrants and young professionals living alone, may need housing and transportation choices beyond what our region now offers. Going forward, each jurisdiction should examine whether it offers satisfying living options to attract and maintain a competitive workforce and meets the needs of current residents as they age.



Growing demographic groups that could define new housing needs include:

- Seniors—the “Silver Tsunami” of those age 65 and older—will be the fastest growing segment of our population, doubling in absolute numbers by 2030 and reaching one in five of our region’s residents by 2040. As people age, their housing preferences tend to change. Some seniors choose to move to a downtown condo. Other seniors want to age in place, close to their places of worship, friends, or family members (especially the grandchildren). Across these locational preferences, most seniors share common interests in less household maintenance, one-level or accessible living, and easy access to nearby goods and services, especially health care. Are there adequate housing choices, including age-integrated options, available for seniors to stay active, conveniently access goods and services, and/or be near friends and family?
- The Millennial generation, born in the 1980s and 1990s, is already the largest generation demographically and seems to have different lifestyle preferences. Millennials tend to favor urban amenities, access to transit and bicycling options, and more dense and active neighborhoods rather than the auto-oriented subdivisions of their youth. Between stagnant entry-level wages, higher student loan debt, and delayed marriage and child-rearing, Millennials are moving into homeownership at later ages than previous generations. Critical to the region’s future prosperity, will we have places that retain and attract these young individuals and households? If their living preferences continue to diverge from their parents’ generation’s, will our region’s communities continue to offer them satisfying living situations, particularly as they start to have children?
- New Americans move to our region from across the globe, bringing with them unique cultural histories that build the richness of our region. Some of these new Americans also bring preferences for more multigenerational living than our current housing stock supports. As these residents come to the region, will they find places that facilitate their settlement, provide affordability, community and employment, and offer opportunities to prosper?

To support the livability of our region for our changing demographics, the Council will:

- Continue to provide regional wastewater treatment services at rates that today are among the lowest in the country.
- Encourage and invest in a wide variety of housing options throughout the region to serve the increasingly diverse population, including viable housing choices for low- and moderate-income households and multigenerational households.
- Invest in bus service and transitways to expand the spectrum of transportation options, particularly to connect workers to jobs and opportunities throughout the region.
- Construct and support park-and-rides to expand access to transit as an alternative to driving in less dense residential areas.
- Support and encourage Complete Streets approaches to enhance transportation choices (in other words, highways, streets and roads designed to consider the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users and vehicles, motorists, and commercial and emergency vehicles, and to serve all ages and abilities. For more information about Complete Streets, see Minn. Stat. 174.75 and the Minnesota Department of Transportation’s Complete Streets policy.).
- Promote the preservation of existing housing, especially affordable housing, to cost-effectively maintain affordability and preserve the unique historical characteristics of the region’s housing stock.

## Supporting bicycle and pedestrian facilities to promote bicycling for transportation, recreation, and healthy lifestyles

Over the last 10 years, bicycling as a mode of transportation has increased as a result of growing interest in physically active lifestyles, concern about climate change, improved connections to transit, and the preferences of the Millennial generation. Our region has earned a national reputation for bike-friendliness, in large part due to the infrastructure investments made by local governments. Data from the 2010 Travel Behavior Inventory show that bicycling's share of work commute trips has grown by 70% over the past decade and now represents one in 11 work commutes in the central cities. Facilities for walking—which makes up 6% of all trips—are also important for transit ridership, healthy active lifestyles, and safety. The Council will collaborate with local communities, the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the Transportation Advisory Board, non-profit organizations, and other partners to connect and improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Specifically, the Council will:



- Focus its bicycle and pedestrian efforts on regional-scale issues and coordination among jurisdictions in the region, including:
  - Aggregating local bike plans into a shared regional format.
  - Identifying regionally important bicycle corridors in the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*.
  - Reducing gaps and barriers and improving links across jurisdictional borders.
- Work with its partners, including the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the Transportation Advisory Board and local jurisdictions, to expand the region's bicycle and pedestrian system and increase these modes' share of regional trips over the coming decades by:
  - Encouraging local jurisdictions to recognize planning and building of bicycle and pedestrian facilities as a component of new development.
  - Encouraging adoption of Complete Streets solutions by local communities where appropriate.
  - Encouraging local communities to include bicycle plans and pedestrian plans in their comprehensive plans.
- Work with partners to plan, construct, and maintain bicycle and pedestrian connections to regional systems (such as transit stations, highways, or regional parks).



## Aligning resources to support transit-oriented development and walkable places

Transit-oriented development (TOD) is walkable, moderate- to high-density development served by frequent transit that can include a mix of housing, retail, and employment choices designed to allow people to live and work with less or no dependence on a personal car. To promote these vibrant, mixed-income places, the Council will:

- Support local efforts and lead regional efforts to foster transit-oriented development through the Council's Office of Transit-Oriented Development, which will lead Council efforts to:
  - Prioritize transit-oriented development in the planning, engineering, and operation of transit and in the development of Council-owned land and facilities.
  - Pursue private sector and local government partnerships to accelerate development and land acquisition for transit-oriented development.
  - Develop and share technical resources and education materials to improve capacity in the region for transit-oriented development.
  - Provide clear policy guidance to local partners concerning the types of plans and local controls that will be needed to effectively implement transit-oriented development.
  - Collaborate with partners, including local governments and private sector stakeholders, in transit-oriented development activities including policy development, specific Council-led development projects, site-specific transit-oriented development resources and opportunities, and station area planning to enable transit-oriented development.
- Provide Livable Communities Act grants to local government to support transit-oriented development projects.
- Explore the expanded use of local planning assistance grants and loans for local station area planning efforts in support of transit-oriented development.
- Encourage transit-friendly development patterns, including increased density and concentration of uses, to expand walkability and lay the groundwork for future transit-readiness.



## **Promoting healthy communities and active living through land use, planning, and investments**

Land use and planning decisions can promote active living and healthy communities. Populations living in walkable places are more active and therefore healthier than populations living in car-dependent areas. Considering the immense costs of obesity and sedentary lifestyles to our health care system, promoting active living through land use decisions provides a key opportunity to improve livability, equity, and our region's health outcomes.

Land use decisions can create opportunities for people to walk or bike to their destinations rather than drive door-to-door, provide active outdoor recreational options, and offer access to open space. Achieving healthy communities also requires efforts by many sectors beyond land use decisions. Planning offers opportunities to coordinate actions and investments across multiple sectors. To promote healthy communities and active living through land use, planning, and public investments, the Council will work with its partners to:

- Incorporate active living considerations when evaluating competitive funding proposals, infrastructure investments, and operations.
  - Encourage local communities to conserve, protect, and interconnect the full range of local open spaces to provide seamless active living experiences across systems, including local parks, green corridors, and boulevards.
  - Promote walkable neighborhoods, pedestrian-oriented town centers, and compact development patterns to expand walkability.
  - Expand the region's bicycle infrastructure.
  - Encourage communities to adopt active living strategies across sectors and pursue partnerships to improve health outcomes.
  - Recognize opportunities for urban agriculture and small-scale local food production.
  - Encourage policies and investments that improve access to safe and healthy food.
-





People are increasingly choosing to live in urban areas that offer attractive amenities and lifestyles.





## Sustainability ●

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“Our greatest responsibility is to be good ancestors,” Dr. Jonas Salk once said. And that responsibility calls us to live and act sustainably. Sustainability means protecting our regional vitality for generations to come by preserving our capacity to maintain and support our region’s well-being and productivity over the long term. The region’s investments in prosperity, equity, and livability will fall short over the long term if the region exhausts its resources without investing in the future.

### Planning for sustainability means:

- Promoting the wise use of water through expanding water conservation and reuse, increasing groundwater recharge, and optimizing surface water and groundwater use.
- Providing leadership, information, and technical assistance to support local governments’ consideration of climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience.
- Operating the region’s wastewater treatment and transit systems sustainably.

Sustainability

## Promoting the wise use of water

The Twin Cities metropolitan area is endowed with a relative abundance of high-quality ground and surface water. Three major rivers, vast underground aquifers, and over 900 lakes make us the envy of urban areas the world over. Aside from the beauty and recreational value of the region's lakes and rivers, water is necessary to sustain our residents and our economic prosperity. The area's plentiful water supplies and the proximity of navigable rivers sustained indigenous communities and supported the development of the region's growing cities. The Mississippi River and the region's prolific aquifers continue to provide residents with a reliable water supply. Our rivers are natural highways that serve commerce. Our region's lakes, rivers, and streams nurture wildlife and offer people a variety of recreational opportunities.

Yet our water supplies are not limitless. Population growth, development, localized water shortages, contamination, drought and the impact of ground-water withdrawal on surface waters, are affecting our future water supply. Increasing reliance on groundwater as our main source of drinking water has become a significant issue. In parts of the region, groundwater levels are declining. In some cases, it is affecting, or has the potential to affect, lake and wetland levels. A pressing concern is the impact that current groundwater use and future development might have on the reliability of groundwater as a municipal water source.

In 2010, 70% of our region's drinking water came from groundwater, with the remainder coming from surface water sources. Groundwater analysis indicates that our aquifers are showing signs of depletion—water levels in some locations have declined by 40 feet in the last 40 years—which in turn has begun to have impacts on our lakes and wetlands in the region. Forecasts indicate that the region will add over 800,000 residents over the lifetime of this plan. Continuing current practices of using groundwater as a primary drinking water source will lead to continued depletion of groundwater supplies across the region. Conservation measures alone are inadequate to protect the region's water supply. Rather, the region needs to restore balance among

water sources, maintain and enhance groundwater recharge, and expand the use of conservation measures. To achieve our long-term vision of the region's prosperity and livability, our region's water resources must be sustainable, supported by a regional strategy that balances growth and protection to improve and maintain the quality and quantity of our water in our lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, and aquifers.



*In parts of the region, groundwater levels are declining.*



The Minnesota State Legislature uses the following definition of water sustainability:

“Water is sustainable when the use does not harm ecosystems, degrade water quality or compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

The Metropolitan Council is committed to collaborating with its partners to promote the long-term sustainability of the region’s water resources and water supply. This regional strategy will balance growth and protection to improve and maintain the quality and quantity of our lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, and groundwater supplies. The Council will work with state, local, and regional partners to provide for sustainable water resources through effective planning and management of water supply, surface water, and wastewater. To promote adequate and high-quality groundwater and surface water supplies, the Council will:

- Promote water sustainability in communities through the *2040 Water Resources Policy Plan* and the *Master Water Supply Plan*, and through the review of local water supply plans, surface water management plans, comprehensive plans, and comprehensive sewer plans.
- Promote the wise use of water through optimizing surface water and groundwater use, conservation, reuse, aquifer recharge, and other practices.
- Collaborate with partners, including providing technical assistance to local governments about wastewater, water supply, and surface water management.
- Address the reliability, resiliency, security, and cost-effectiveness of the region’s water supplies.
- Incorporate water sustainability considerations in all areas of Council policy and actions, including overall development patterns, water management, transportation, housing, and regional parks.
- Identify subregional and local water sustainability solutions that balance regional needs and local objectives.

The Council’s *2040 Water Resources Policy Plan* will advance water sustainability through specific policies for water supply, surface water management, and wastewater.



## Providing leadership to support climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience

Over the long term, climate change will be one of the greatest threats to our region's ongoing prosperity and livability. Climate change threatens our continued orderly and economical development. Our region is already seeing rising temperatures and increased severe weather events. Climate change looms large as an issue with the potential to adversely affect the region in the absence of intentional and proactive planning. Responding to climate

change takes three approaches: mitigation, adaptation, and resilience. Mitigation strategies focus on minimizing contributions to climate change—for example, reducing energy use that leads to greenhouse gas emissions. Adaptation strategies focus on how to change policies and practices to adjust to the effects of climate change. Resilience strategies recognize the difficulty of predicting what the impacts of climate change will be and emphasize increasing our flexibility to survive and thrive regardless of how climate change develops.

The nation has seen the risks and costs of not preparing for significant climatic events through the experiences of Duluth after its summer 2012 flooding, New York City after Superstorm Sandy, and, most recently, Colorado after the September 2013 rains. Hitting the most densely developed parts of the nation, Superstorm Sandy may cost the federal government \$60 billion. The total cost to the city of Duluth in infrastructure repair and replacement ran to \$80 million, or \$2,000 for each city household. While each event individually was impossible to predict, the growing frequency and large-scale impact of severe weather events demonstrate the necessity of planning for resilience.





The Council is committed to building a resilient region that minimizes its adverse contributions to climate and air quality and is prepared for the challenges and opportunities of a changing climate. Recognizing the importance of climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience, the Council will use climate impacts as a lens through which to examine all of its work. The Council will look for opportunities to use both its operational and planning authorities to plan for and respond to the effects of climate change, both challenges and opportunities. In addition to climate change, regional air quality factors (criteria pollutants) threaten both the quality of life and our economy as we may face severe additional regulations from the federal government.

The Council recognizes the State of Minnesota's goals for greenhouse gas reduction adopted in 2007's Next Generation Energy Act. By tracking regional greenhouse gas emissions, we will identify opportunities to reduce emissions in the region. Broadly, the Council's work supports the region's collective efforts to minimize greenhouse gas emissions by:



- Providing and promoting alternatives to single-occupant vehicle travel, including transit, carpooling, bicycling, and walking.
- Promoting compact, pedestrian-friendly development patterns and funding their development through the Livable Communities Act funds.
- Protecting industrial land with access to ports and rail to encourage carbon-efficient means of transporting freight.
- Supporting the Regional Parks System to protect open spaces and vegetative cover that mitigate the impact of the urban heat island and improve local wind circulation.
- Promoting more efficient water use and water conservation, which reduces the amount of energy used to pump and treat water, often one of a community's highest energy requirements.
- Protecting agricultural land for local food production and processing to reduce distance-to-market travel emissions.



The Council intends to expand its role supporting local governments in climate change planning to assist their efforts toward mitigation, adaptation, and resilience. The Council will:

- Expand the information and technical assistance it provides to local governments to support regional and local climate change planning.
- Work with partners to collaboratively identify and examine the feasibility of energy improvement opportunities, and pursue group purchasing to facilitate energy improvements where this might provide synergy and/or an improved economy of scale.
- Develop, collect, and disseminate information about climate change, including energy and climate data and the next generation of the Regional Indicators data.
- Work with the State of Minnesota on a greenhouse gas emissions inventory that informs regional discussion on emissions reduction.
- Provide technical assistance to the region's local governments, including identifying risks, best practices, and model ordinances for climate change mitigation and adaptation, and working in partnership with the Minnesota GreenStep Cities program.
- Assess the risks and opportunities presented to the region from a changing climate and the potential rewards from addressing those risks and opportunities.
- Provide information to local jurisdictions about the risks of not responding to or preparing for climate change, and encourage local governments to plan and prepare for climate change, including incorporating climate change planning into their local comprehensive plans.
- Explore incentives to reward local governments that set and make progress on local greenhouse gas reduction goals.

In addition to its ongoing efforts to promote compact development, provide alternatives to single-occupant automobile travel, and protect natural resources and open space through the Regional Parks System, the Council's approach to climate change will expand first into collaborative approaches—such as providing information, technical assistance, and incentives. Over 2014 and 2015, the Council will explore how to most effectively use its planning authorities to address climate change, including reducing vehicle miles traveled, regional greenhouse gas emissions, and the airborne fine particulate matter that threatens the region's air quality attainment status with the Environmental Protection Agency.

In addition, the Council will collaborate with regional leadership and convene local governments and the broader community to address climate change mitigation and adaptation within the region. These expanded roles in information and technical assistance will help the Council serve as a resource to both local jurisdictions and the region at large. The Council intends to be a prominent player in elevating this serious and important issue which affects the long-term viability of the Minneapolis-Saint Paul region.

## Operating wastewater treatment and transit systems sustainably

The Council will mitigate its own contributions to climate change by reducing its own greenhouse gas emissions. In 2012, the Council adopted a Sustainability Policy for Internal Operations and Management. This policy states that the Council will conduct its own operations in a sustainable manner, when economically feasible, specifically to:

- Increase energy efficiency and use of renewable energy sources.
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from Council operations.
- Conserve and protect water resources.
- Reduce solid waste generation.
- Reuse and recycle materials.

Furthermore, the Council will monitor and track energy use and, when economically feasible, pursue opportunities to reduce energy use. The Council also will identify and pursue renewable energy opportunities; purchase Energy Star products; manage energy costs; review tariffs and peak control options; and track and, when feasible, reduce carbon-dioxide-equivalent emissions.

Both the Environmental Services Division and Metro Transit have set goals to reduce their facility energy purchases by 50% by 2020 from a 2006 baseline. The Council will continue to adopt innovative technologies to improve operations and use resources more sustainably. The Council will:

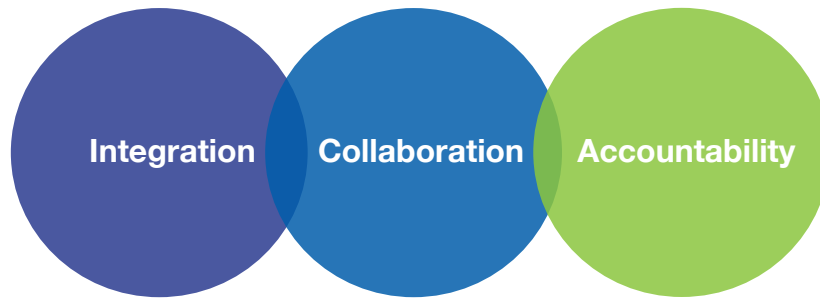
- Invest resources to continually reduce energy use in its buildings and operations and be among the efficiency leaders in the region.
- Pursue and invest in local generation of renewable energy at and for the Council's own operations, including large-scale solar facilities.
- Continue its program to reduce inflow and infiltration into the regional sewer system. Excess flows from wet weather into the system consume capacity that could otherwise be used to support future growth.
- Adopt technological advancements in the Metro Transit fleet to maximize operational efficiency and reduce fuel consumption through engine improvements, acceleration management, electrification, and other improvements.





## **Thrive:** Principles

The five outcomes of stewardship, prosperity, equity, livability, and sustainability describe the “why” of *Thrive MSP 2040*. Just as important is the “how” — the principles that guide how the Council carries out its policies, both internally and externally, to advance those outcomes. The Council has identified three principles to carry out its work:



These principles reflect the Council’s understanding of its roles in integrating policy areas, supporting local governments and regional partners, and promoting and implementing the *Thrive* regional vision. These principles govern how the Council will implement the *Thrive* systems and policy plans and how the Council advances these outcomes, both individually and collectively.



Integration ● ● ●

Integration is the intentional combining of related activities to achieve more effective results, leveraging multiple policy tools to address complex regional challenges and opportunities. The Metropolitan Council is committed to integrating its activities to pursue its outcomes, achieve greater efficiencies, and address problems that are too complex for singular approaches. The *Thrive* outcomes—stewardship, prosperity, equity, livability and sustainability—are lofty ideals that cut across the Council’s functions and responsibilities. Pursuing them demands that the Council use its full range of authorities and activities in more coordinated ways.

## Achieving integration means:

- Moving beyond organizational silos to leverage all of the Council's divisions, roles and authorities in addressing regional issues.
- Coordinating effectively with partners and stakeholders across and throughout the region.

## Moving beyond organizational silos

A growing challenge faced by the region is diminishing funding. As available funding decreases even as the region continues to grow, the Council will have to produce more efficiency with each dollar it invests. That efficiency increasingly lies at the intersections between different systems.

For example, the Environmental Services Division of the Council provides wastewater service, surface water quality planning and coordination, and water supply information and planning for the region. In the past, the Council has conducted each of these activities on its own, but today's challenges, especially emerging groundwater issues, have prompted the Council to incorporate all three water topics into a new, integrated approach: water sustainability. By considering all three as available tools, the Council will be able to do more with the same amount of water: increase groundwater recharge, provide clean wastewater discharge reuse options, and decrease demands on groundwater supplies.

The principle extends throughout Council activities. By integrating its activities, the Council can produce more benefit from each investment. The Council will pursue this approach in its activities and investments within and among its divisions to advance the five *Thrive* outcomes, find greater efficiencies in investments, and address problems that single approaches cannot address. This will include activities such as:

- Including regional trails, where appropriate, in designating regional bicycle transportation corridors.
- Exploring Council-wide activities to address the effects of climate change.
- Integrating water supply activities, surface water management, and wastewater management toward increased sustainability of the region's water resources.
- Requiring land use in transitway corridors, especially in station areas, to be commensurate with the level of transit investment.
- Identifying critical relationships between regional systems and local investments, such as local pedestrian systems to access regional transit.

## Coordinating effectively with partners and stakeholders

The *Thrive* outcomes—stewardship, prosperity, equity, livability and sustainability—are larger than the Council can achieve by itself. By setting out a regional vision, the *Thrive* outcomes define the foundation for the Council’s coordination with others. Much of this coordination is discussed in the next section—Collaboration—but the Council intends to more intentionally integrate its policy authorities and organizational structure. This approach will emerge through:

- The Council’s work with local cities, counties, and townships on comprehensive planning.
- The Council’s coordination with local, special-purpose units of government such as watershed districts, water management organizations, and parks districts.
- The Council’s collaboration with other regional transit providers, including the suburban transit providers, to deliver an effective, integrated regional transit system.
- The Council’s partnerships with state agencies and state boards, including:
  - Department of Agriculture
  - Department of Employment and Economic Development
  - Environmental Quality Board
  - Department of Health
  - Minnesota Housing
  - Department of Human Rights
  - Department of Natural Resources
  - Pollution Control Agency
  - Department of Transportation
- The Council’s funding decisions where one resource may advance multiple policy objectives





Collaboration recognizes that shared efforts advance our region most effectively toward shared outcomes. Addressing the region's issues—particularly the emerging challenges of climate change, economic competitiveness, racial disparities, and water sustainability—requires collaboration because no single entity has the capacity or the authority to do the work alone.

Even when one entity is the primary funder or investor in a project, success requires the coordinated collaboration of a range of public and private entities to fully realize the development potential—witness, for example, the extensive partnerships supporting development beyond the rails along the METRO Green Line (Central Corridor).

**For the Council, acting collaboratively means:**

- Being open to shared strategies, supportive partnerships, and reciprocal relationships.
- Convening the region's best thinkers, experts, and stakeholders to address complex regional issues beyond the capacity or authority of any single jurisdiction or institution.
- Providing additional technical assistance and enhanced information to support local planning and decision-making.

## Being open to shared strategies, supportive partnerships and reciprocal relationships

In implementing *Thrive* via the systems and policy plans and the next round of local comprehensive plans, the Metropolitan Council intends to be a collaborator first and a legal enforcer second. Technical or regulatory solutions led by a single entity cannot match the complex adaptive challenges now facing our region, driving the need for a collaborative stance.

For example, the need for broad collaborative approaches to maximizing the benefit of our region's transitway investments led the Council to a leading role and active participation in the Corridors of Opportunity partnership of government, philanthropy, business, community development, and advocacy. The Corridors of Opportunity transitioned in 2014 into the Partnership for Regional Opportunity, an ongoing effort to grow a prosperous, equitable, and sustainable region.

Another example is the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board's Climate Subcommittee, established in 2013. This group, which includes representation from the Council, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and the Minnesota Departments of Commerce and Health, is developing plans to help Minnesota meet the climate goals of the Next Generation Energy Act.

The Council will continue to seek out opportunities for collaborative partnerships to address complex challenges in the region. As the Council takes on new challenges—for example, the complex physical, economic, and social issues underlying the region's Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty—the Council is prepared to engage with new partners, such as school districts.



## Convening to address complex regional issues

As a regional entity, the Metropolitan Council was formed to address issues that transcend local government boundaries and cannot be adequately addressed by any single governmental unit. As it developed this plan, the Council heard a desire from stakeholders for the Council to play a larger role as a regional convener around issues that the Council alone cannot resolve, ranging from economic competitiveness to regional poverty to water supply.

The Council will use its regional role to be a convener of regional conversations, both in areas where the Council has statutory authority and around issues with regional significance. The Council can make a significant contribution by bringing the best thinkers, experts, and stakeholders together to collectively develop regional or subregional solutions. This includes fostering collaboration among cities or among organizations working on similar issues. For example, in 2013 the Council, working with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Minnesota Geological Survey, hosted regional meetings in the northeast metro area about the issues related to the decline in water levels in White Bear Lake. This effort is a good example of where the Council has joined interested parties to help analyze problems and ultimately to develop solutions.

While the challenges of the next decade may vary, the Council intends to play a role as a regional convener to advance conversations around:

- Promoting affordable housing within the region.
- Addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation within the region and elevating this important issue that affects the long-term viability of the Minneapolis-Saint Paul region.

- Developing integrated plans and investment strategies to transform Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty into thriving mixed-income neighborhoods.
- Promoting the wise use of our region's water through rebalancing surface water and groundwater use, conservation, reuse, aquifer recharge, and other practices.

As new issues emerge—such as the groundwater and surface water interaction issues in White Bear Lake—the Council is prepared to play a convening role.

The Council will collaborate with regional partners to develop a shared vision and strategic priorities to advance regional economic competitiveness. At the regional level, the Council will continue to grow its partnership with cities, counties, [GREATER MSP](#), and other partners in economic competitiveness, including possible development of a shared economic competitiveness strategy that outlines the roles and responsibilities of each partner, as well as a process for identifying select development or redevelopment opportunities whose location, scale, and complexity justify a regional focus. The Council will leverage its research and analysis function to examine and analyze the land use and infrastructure needs of the region's leading industry clusters and thereby inform city and county discussions about land use strategies that support economic development.

Beyond convening regional stakeholders, the Council will strengthen its approach to outreach, public participation, and community engagement by developing a Council-wide Public Engagement Plan.



## Providing additional technical assistance and enhanced information to support local planning

The Metropolitan Land Planning Act and the Council's review authority give the Council a unique role with local governments. The Council already provides technical assistance to local jurisdictions to support the local comprehensive planning process and the effective implementation of regional policies. This technical assistance addresses issues as diverse as preserving natural resources, ensuring that land uses are compatible with airport operations, and reducing the excess flow of clear water into the regional wastewater collection system to save capacity for future growth.



To supplement its traditional role of reviewing local comprehensive plans, the Council intends to expand this technical assistance and its information resources to support local government in advancing regional outcomes and addressing today's complex adaptive challenges. In addition, the Council will provide expanded technical assistance to local units of government around:

- Stronger housing elements and/or implementation plans of local comprehensive plans.
- Local government support of housing development projects (e.g., site selection, funding options, or design recommendations).
- Identifying risks, best practices, and model ordinances for climate change mitigation and adaptation in partnership with the statewide Minnesota GreenStep Cities program.
- Providing enhanced information and analysis on economic competitiveness, helping local jurisdictions better understand their contributions to the regional economy and therefore focus on leveraging their strengths, including through the local comprehensive planning process
- Understanding market forces associated with economic development and leveraging local economic development authority into a broader regional vision for economic competitiveness.
- Transit-supportive land use, urban form and zoning; creating pedestrian-friendly public places; understanding and attracting transit-oriented development (TOD) within the constraints of the market; and cultivating neighborhood support for transit-supportive development.
- Surface water planning and management, including assistance in preparing local surface water plans, identifying the appropriate tools to use and ordinances needed to implement those plans with the goal of maintaining and improving the region's valued water resources.

In addition to technical assistance, the Council also collects, analyzes and disseminates information, including data and maps, about the region to support local government decision-making. Key highlights of the Council's existing portfolio of information include forecasting of future population, households, and employment; tracking of regional trends on affordable housing production; mapping existing land use; and providing water quality data for over 200 lakes and numerous streams and rivers within the region. The Council's regional perspective allows for data collection and analysis at economies of scale across the region. As new priorities have emerged through the *Thrive* planning process, the Council will expand its information resources in the following areas:

- Aggregating local bike plans into a shared regional map of bicycle infrastructure
- Developing, collecting, and disseminating information about climate change, including energy and climate data and the next generation of the Regional Indicators data
- Working with the State of Minnesota on a greenhouse gas emissions inventory that informs regional discussion on emissions reduction
- Analyzing the land use and infrastructure needs of the region's leading industry clusters
- Aggregating local redevelopment priorities identified through local comprehensive plans into a shared regional map
- Supporting research and testing related to fair housing, discriminatory lending practices, and real estate steering
- Maintaining an up-to-date regional natural resources inventory and assessment in partnership with the Department of Natural Resources



## Accountability

**Results matter.** For the Council, accountability includes a commitment to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of our policies and practices toward achieving shared outcomes and a willingness to adjust course to improve performance. *Thrive MSP 2040* aspires to be the foundation for regional policy that is accountable to the hopes, dreams, and vision expressed by the region’s residents, local governments, and the Council’s regional partners throughout the development of this document.

### Acting accountably means:

- Adopting a data-driven approach to measure progress.
- Creating and learning from Thrive indicators.
- Providing clear, easily accessible information.
- Deploying the Council's authority.



## Adopting a data-driven approach to measure progress

Accountability focuses on managing to outcomes—how our region is better—not tasks or outputs. For example, an outcome-oriented approach measures how effectively and efficiently our regional transportation system delivers people to their destinations—not the miles of highway built. Outputs without outcomes waste public resources.

With *Thrive*, the Council is adopting an outcomes-orientation to its regional policy and is challenging itself, local governments, and its regional partners and stakeholders to describe how their work advances the five *Thrive* outcomes. Outcomes describe how our investments and our policies are improving the region for our residents and businesses, not how much money we are investing or how many miles of interceptor pipe we are building. Managing to outcomes helps us ask not only “Are we effectively implementing our policies?” but also “Are we implementing the most effective policies, the policies that will help our region and our residents thrive today and tomorrow?”

*One of the great mistakes is to judge policies and programs by their intentions rather than their results.*

— Milton Friedman

## Creating and learning from *Thrive* indicators

With the formal adoption of *Thrive*, the Council is now beginning a process to collaboratively develop a set of *Thrive* indicators to assess regional progress on the *Thrive* outcomes and strategies. This collaborative process will engage a cross-section of the region and include voices from local government, advocacy organizations, and the region’s residents to build consensus on *Thrive* indicators. The *Thrive* indicators should be understandable, maintainable, and meaningful over time, and reflective of regional progress and the *Thrive* outcomes. The Council will adopt *Thrive* indicators separately in late 2014 to allow for flexibility in refining the indicators over the lifetime of *Thrive*.

The Council will use the *Thrive* indicators as a foundation for continuous improvement and public accountability—what do the indicators tell us about the state of the region and the Council’s policies? Which policies are working well? How might we revise our policies where performance is less than our expectations? The Council will use the insights that emerge from analyzing the *Thrive* indicators to guide the Council’s future decisions, including adjusting policies and priorities as needed to more effectively advance the outcomes.

In addition, systems and policy plans will contain indicators and measures that align with the specific policy areas. Together, these indicators will build upon the 2004 *Regional Development Framework*’s benchmarks to create a stronger foundation for data-driven decision-making.

## Providing clear, easily accessible information

The Council will prepare and share annual updates of the indicators, providing clear, easily accessible information about regional progress and Council policies. The focus on outcomes allows us to be transparent and accountable to our partners and stakeholders—what does success look like? What kind of region do we want to create? Most importantly, the focus on the *Thrive* outcomes creates the foundation for dialogue with partners and stakeholders—what can and will the Council do to advance these outcomes, what will others do to advance these outcomes? And where are the gaps, overlaps, and opportunities? The Council will work with any local governments interested in developing similar indicators at a subregional level.

## Deploying the Council's authority

The Council will continue to seek partnerships with residents, businesses, and stakeholders to effectively advance the *Thrive* outcomes. The Council is willing to use its authorities and roles, where necessary, to ensure accountability toward stewardship, prosperity, equity, livability, and sustainability.

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## Special Features

### Applying policies to specific places:

Moving beyond one size fits all

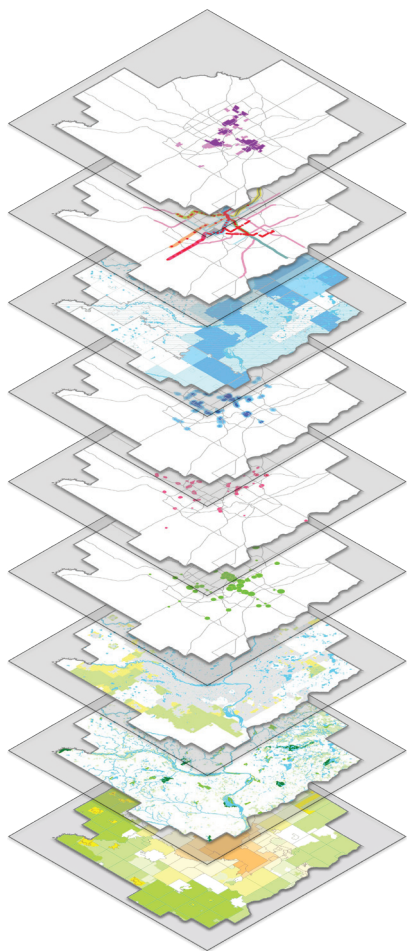
The previous sections outlined the outcomes and principles that describe the *Thrive MSP 2040* vision for the Twin Cities area. Within our region, communities are growing, developing, and redeveloping in different ways as they respond to their unique histories and local aspirations. The Council recognizes that one size does not fit all and has identified several place-based features that have special policy implications.

These Special Features show fine-grained variation within jurisdictions or shared characteristics across borders. Special Features allow the Council to apply policy consistently to similar places, such as where there are specific levels of infrastructure or service, certain demographic traits, similar urban form, or particular geological or topographical characteristics.

Some Special Features are static, describing fixed topographical characteristics; others are dynamic, reflecting changing infrastructure or socioeconomic characteristics. The Council's policies will be stable over the lifetime of this plan while the geographies that they affect are expected to change.

Maps in this section illustrate the general locations of each Special Feature. Details, including current maps and GIS layers, are available from the definitive sources identified in the text.

The Special Features discussed in this section collectively shape how the region is growing and developing. Local comprehensive planning will address the cumulative impact of Special Features on each community; for clarity, this section discusses each Special Feature independently.

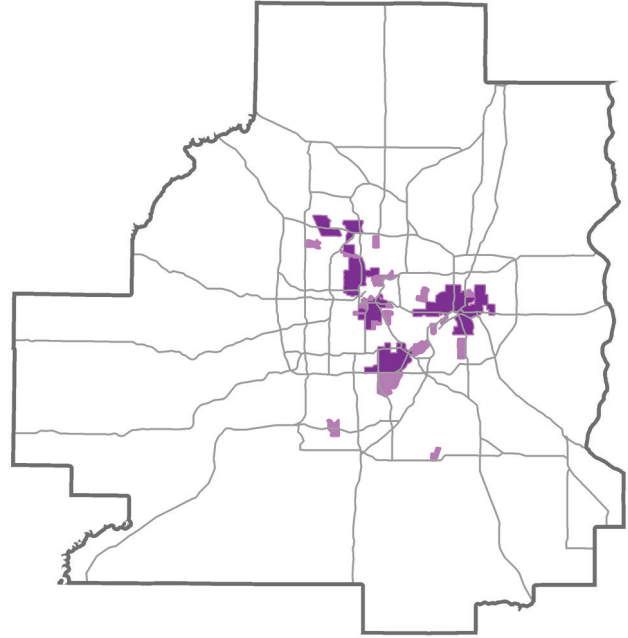




## Areas of Concentrated Poverty and Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty

Areas of Concentrated Poverty and Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty are neighborhoods characterized by private disinvestment, falling property values, and lower socioeconomic outcomes for their residents. These neighborhood conditions may limit the economic mobility of their residents and discourage private investment.

Areas of Concentrated Poverty (in lighter purple) are contiguous areas of one or more census tracts in which at least 40% of the residents live in households with incomes below 185% of the federal poverty line (\$42,589 in annual income for a four-person household in 2011). Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty (in darker purple) are Areas of Concentrated Poverty where at least 50% of the residents are people of color.



**Census tracts with concentrated poverty**

In 2010, one in nine of our region's residents lived in an Area of Concentrated Poverty, and one in 11 of our region's residents lived specifically in a Racially Concentrated Area of Poverty. While their borders—shaped by census tracts and specific thresholds—are artificial and imprecise, Areas of Concentrated Poverty and Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty depict neighborhoods with persistent high poverty. Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty are particularly entrenched as they do not rebound as quickly with improved economic conditions as other Areas of Concentrated Poverty.

The Council will work with partners and use its investments and actions to improve opportunity for residents in these areas, increasing their access to success, prosperity, and quality of life. By using public resources to catalyze investment in these areas, the Council will help the region grow and prosper more equitably.

The image above illustrates general locations of Areas of Concentrated Poverty and Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty. Visit the Council's website for the most current delineation of Areas of Concentrated Poverty and Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty. For specific approaches, policies, and additional analysis, see:

- The Equity section of the *Thrive* "Outcomes"
- [Choice, Place and Opportunity: An Equity Assessment of the Twin Cities Region](#)

## Station Areas on Existing and Planned Transitways

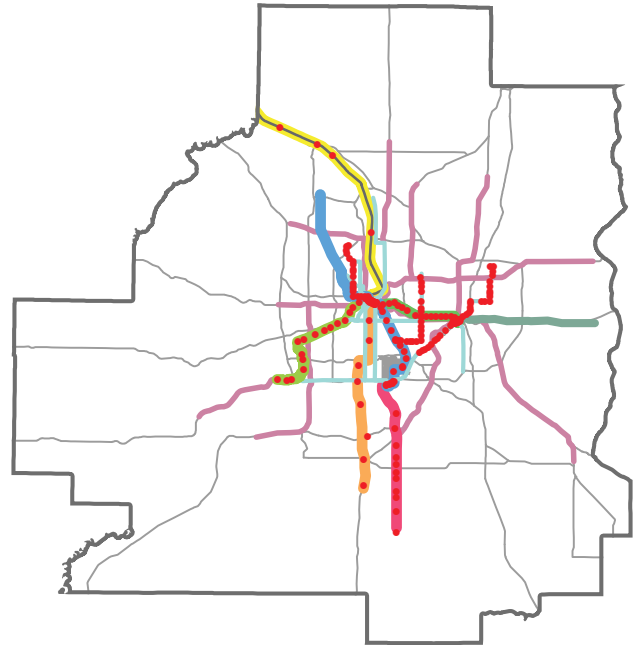
Transitways are major investments that provide frequent, reliable transit service in high-demand corridors, improve the transit rider experience, and offer permanence and attraction to developers, residents, and businesses to support new high-density development with a variety of uses. Based on policy in the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*, transitways can be commuter rail, light rail transit, bus rapid transit, arterial bus rapid transit, or potentially streetcars. The land around transitway stations can support regional growth; offer expanded living, working and shopping choices; increase the efficiency of existing infrastructure; and contribute to climate change mitigation and resiliency.

Because the investment required to construct transitways is both significant and long term, good stewardship requires that the region maximize their value, cost-effectiveness, and performance by clearly outlining land use expectations. The *2040 Transportation Policy Plan* is defining expectations for transit-supportive land use near stations, including higher levels of residential density, a healthy mix of housing affordability, and well-connected development patterns. These land use patterns will create and strengthen the transit-orientation and pedestrian friendliness of these areas. The Council will provide technical assistance and grant opportunities to support transit-oriented development in station areas.

In addition to attracting growth and development, the prospect of future transitway corridors also provides an incentive for communities to cooperate and collaborate across jurisdictional borders.

The image above illustrates general locations of transitways. See the most recent *Transportation Policy Plan* for a formally adopted map of planned transitways and station areas. For specific approaches, policies, and additional analysis related to station areas along transitways, see:

- The Stewardship section of the *Thrive* “Outcomes”
- The Orderly and Efficient Land Use Policy
- The Access, Mobility, and Transportation Choice Land Use Policy
- The *Transit Oriented Development Strategic Action Plan*
- The *2040 Transportation Policy Plan* and its technical appendices

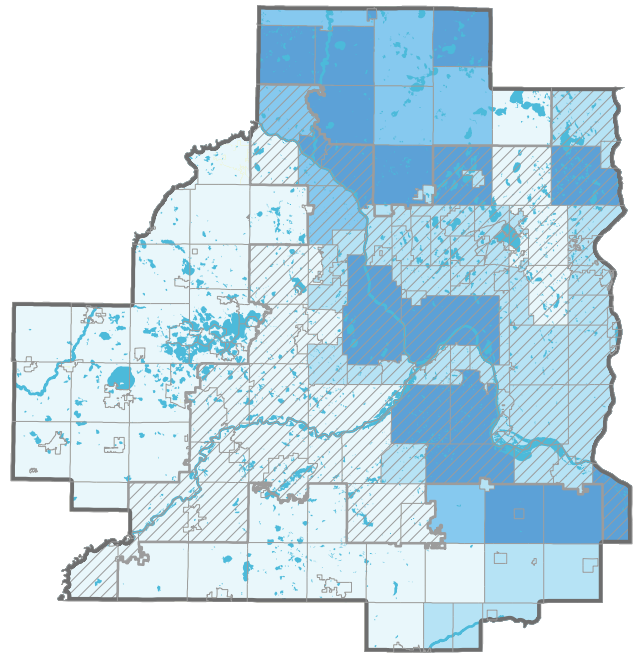


**Existing and planned transitways**

## Water Supply Considerations

The Mississippi River supplied water to early development in the region, but groundwater wells have been used to accommodate the region's outward growth. This increasing reliance on groundwater over time has become a significant issue. In parts of the region, groundwater levels are declining. In some cases, it is affecting, or has the potential to affect, lake levels. A pressing concern is the impact that future development could have on the reliability of groundwater as a water source.

In 2005, the Minnesota State Legislature authorized the Metropolitan Council to take on planning activities to address regional water supply resources. The Council's goal, articulated in the *Master Water Supply Plan*, is a sustainable water supply for current and future generations. Three important issues shape how this goal is achieved: the increased use of groundwater to meet regional demand versus other water sources (especially surface water); the unplanned modification of important groundwater recharge areas; and the efficiency of water use at the individual, business, and community levels. The image above identifies communities where more sustainable water use can be re-established through a better balance of groundwater and surface water supply (hatched areas) and where source water can be protected and enhanced through better management of vulnerable recharge areas (darker blues have more potential).



**Water supply issues and opportunities**

Cities are responsible for planning their land use and local water supply and for obtaining permits from state agencies. Agencies which protect the state's water resources and ensure safe drinking water include the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Minnesota Department of Health. Because of the Metropolitan Council's ongoing work completing and periodically updating the *Master Water Supply Plan*, the region now has a better understanding of the impact of development and water use on aquifers, as well as potential solutions to long-term sustainability. As communities plan for the future, they should consider both the implications of their water supply for future growth and how their land use patterns affect water supply.

The image above illustrates general locations of water supply considerations. See the Council's website and the *Master Water Supply Plan* for up-to-date maps of groundwater recharge potential. For specific approaches, policies, and additional analysis related to groundwater, visit:

- The Sustainability section of the *Thrive* "Outcomes"
- The Orderly and Efficient Land Use Policy
- The Water Sustainability Land Use Policy
- The *2040 Water Resources Policy Plan*
- The *Master Water Supply Plan*



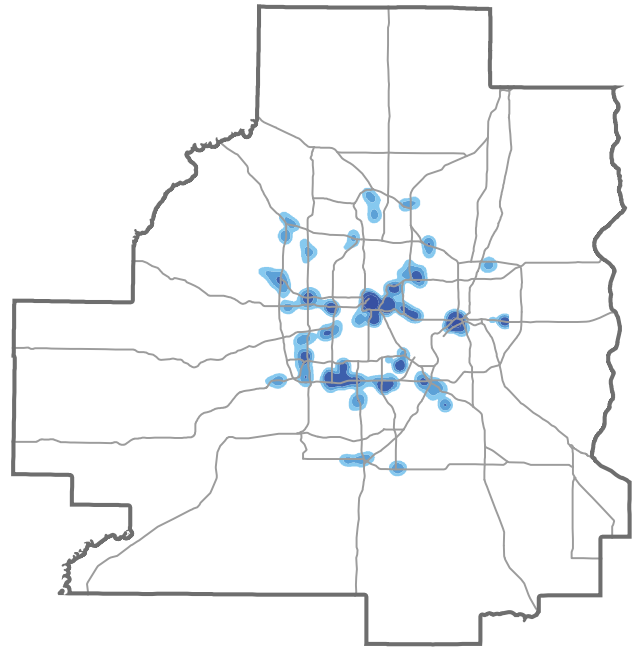
## Job Concentrations

Job Concentrations are focused areas of employment defined as having:

- at least 7,000 jobs; and
- at least 10 jobs per acre.

In 2010, one in six of the region's jobs was located in one of the four largest job centers: downtown Minneapolis, downtown Saint Paul, the University of Minnesota, and the airport/ Mall of America.

Job Concentrations are more likely to attract employers that need small square footages per employee or that can benefit from proximity to similar and complementary businesses. These include but are not limited to financial services, professional and business services, some educational institutions, and larger-scale retail centers.



**Jobs concentrate along transportation**

Job Concentrations benefit from significant existing regional and local infrastructure investments such as wastewater, highways, transit, and water. Building on opportunities to expand, adapt, re-use, or redevelop properties in Job Concentrations supports the continued orderly and economical development of the region and effective stewardship of our regional investments.

Containing half of the region's jobs, Job Concentrations are travel and commuting destinations that support higher levels of both transit service and highway infrastructure. Employers that value transit access for their workforce should locate in Job Concentrations. Communities that aspire to higher levels of transit service for job access should build toward the thresholds of Job Concentrations.

This inventory of Job Concentrations describes current conditions. Looking ahead, the Council encourages future job growth in existing and future concentrated centers where appropriate to meet employer needs.

The Council will monitor new development, redevelopment, or job growth at specific sites and annually identify new Job Concentrations that meet the thresholds of job count and job density. The image above illustrates general locations of Job Concentrations. See the Council's website for annually updated maps of Job Concentrations.

For specific approaches, policies, and additional analysis related to Job Concentrations, visit:

- The Prosperity section of the *Thrive* "Outcomes"
- The Economic Competitiveness Land Use Policy
- The *2040 Transportation Policy Plan* and its technical appendices

## Manufacturing/Distribution Locations

Manufacturing/Distribution Locations are defined by densities of employment in manufacturing, distribution and warehousing of at least 2 jobs per acre.

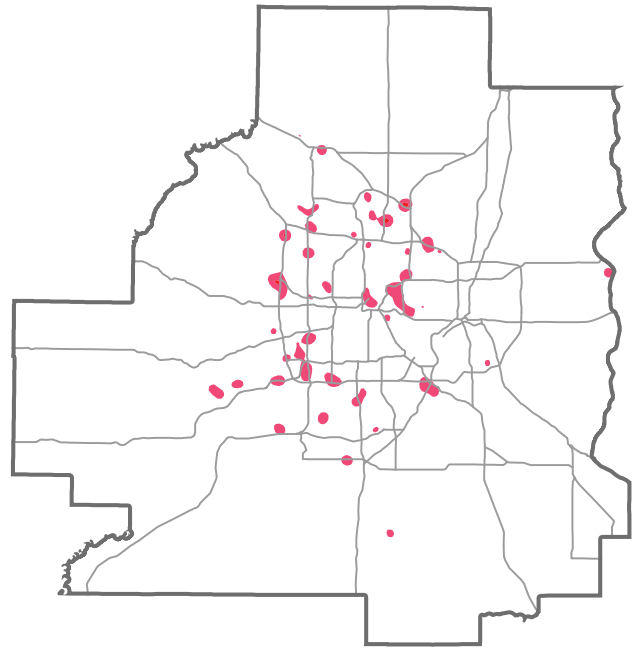
These jobs are more likely to locate in areas with access to freight-supporting facilities, especially highways, and in places with adequate and affordable land for the horizontal nature of much large-scale industry and warehousing.

Manufacturing/Distribution Locations benefit from significant existing regional infrastructure such as wastewater, highways, and rail. Building on opportunities to expand, adapt, reuse, or redevelop properties in Manufacturing / Distribution Locations supports the continued orderly and economical development of the region and effective stewardship of our regional investments.

As new Manufacturing/Distribution Locations emerge—whether through new development, re-development or job growth at specific sites—the Council will update the map. See the Council’s website for annually updated maps of Manufacturing/Distribution Locations.

The image above illustrates general locations of manufacturing and distribution centers. For specific approaches, policies, and additional analysis related to Manufacturing/Distribution Locations, visit:

- The Prosperity section of the *Thrive* “Outcomes”
- The Economic Competitiveness Land Use Policy
- The *2040 Transportation Policy Plan* and its technical appendices



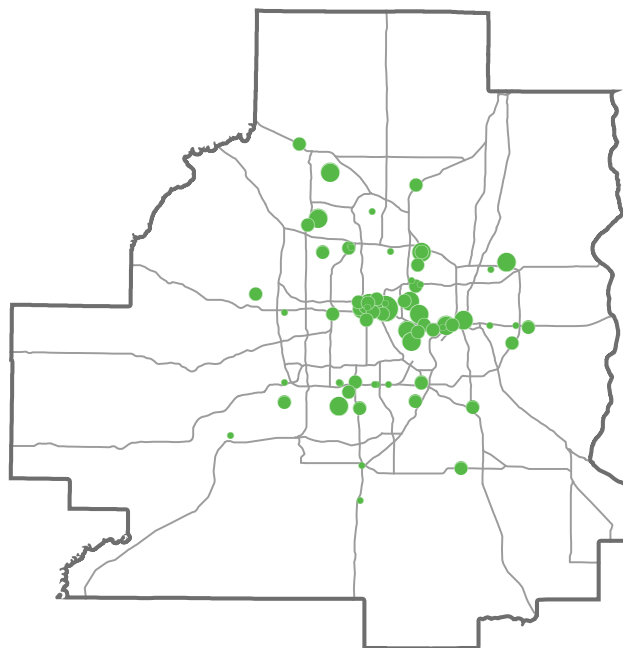
**Manufacturing/Distribution Locations in the region**

## Educational Institutions

Educational Institutions generate trips beyond those measured by employee counts as students regularly travel to campuses to attend class. This map portrays post-secondary educational institutions, both public and private; some high schools, not included on this map, also attract significant student travel beyond school buses.

Students attending Educational Institutions travel on the regional and local transportation infrastructure, including roads, transit, bicycle routes, trails and sidewalks. Local planning should consider each institution's schedule of in-person classes in analyzing the impact on the transportation system.

Because of the importance of Educational Institutions as destinations, the Council will regularly update this map. The image above illustrates general locations and relative enrollments of educational institutions. See the Council's website for annually updated maps of Educational Institutions.



**Educational Institutions in the region**

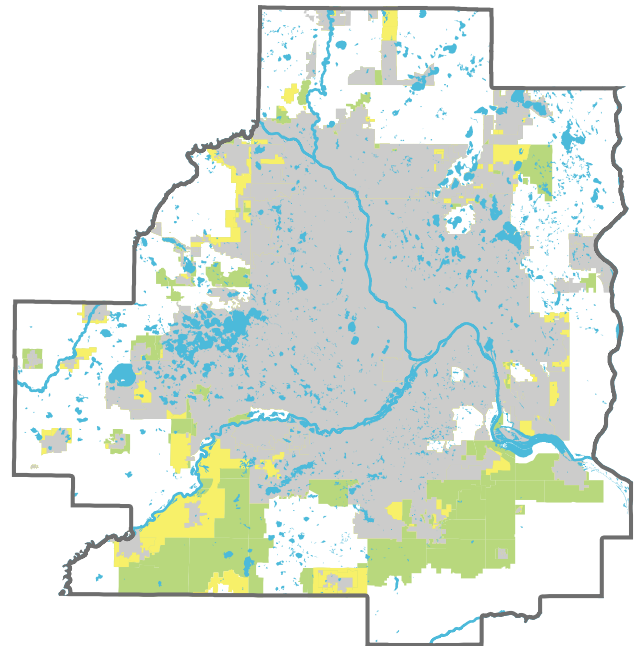


## Wastewater Service Areas

The Council has a long history of aligning land development with the staging of new connections to regional wastewater service. This helped the Council provide efficient and affordable service; create predictability for landowners, cities, and developers; and protect public health, and groundwater and surface water quality. The Council's new water sustainability approach will further align wastewater operations and investments with other water-related activities.

Many Council policies relate to a community's level of wastewater service:

- *Wastewater Service Area* is land currently served by the regional wastewater treatment system (in grey).
- *Planned Wastewater Service Area* includes land that is not currently served but is planned and staged to receive regional wastewater treatment service by 2040 (this area is also known as the 2040 Metropolitan Urban Services Area (in yellow)).
- *Long-term Wastewater Service Area* represents land that is planned to receive wastewater treatment service sometime after 2040 (in green).



**Existing and planned Wastewater Service Areas in the region**

To further the stewardship of the region's water and financial resources, the Council will continue to apply established wastewater policies. Although it has reduced 30-year population forecasts for some jurisdictions, the Council will continue to honor existing commitments for land to be included in the planned wastewater service area by 2040.

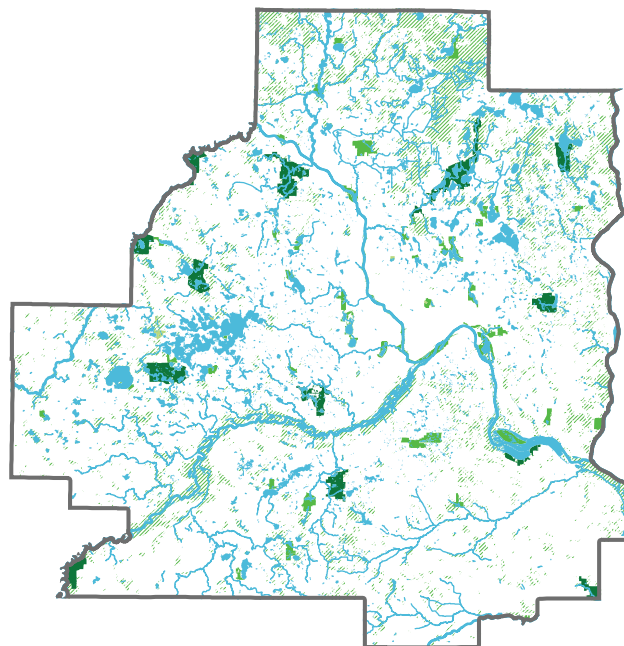
As a longstanding responsibility of the Council, wastewater service policies are woven into the next sections, "Community Designations" and "Land Use Policy." In order to ensure efficient use of regional wastewater infrastructure, the Council defines minimum residential density levels in areas planned for regional wastewater service by 2040. In areas planned for post-2040 regional wastewater service, the Council defines maximum residential densities.

The image above illustrates general locations of wastewater service areas. See the Council's website and adopted amendments to the *2040 Water Resources Policy Plan* for up-to-date maps of the *Long-term Wastewater Service Area* and the Metropolitan Urban Services Area. For specific approaches, policies, and additional analysis related to wastewater service policies, visit:

- The Stewardship and Sustainability sections of the *Thrive* "Outcomes"
- The Orderly and Efficient Land Use Policy
- The Water Sustainability Land Use Policy
- The *2040 Water Resources Policy Plan*

## Regionally Significant Ecological Resources

An abundance of natural resources helps make our region vibrant and desirable. The Twin Cities region is home to a wide variety of natural habitats, ranging from wooded riverine areas along the Minnesota and St. Croix Rivers to large wetland complexes like that in Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area in Anoka County to upland prairies and forests throughout the region. Ecological resources and a healthy natural environment bring the region many benefits, including economic activity, health and psychological benefits, quality of life, and valuable eco-services, such as filtering and slowing stormwater runoff, recharging groundwater, and reducing the effects of the urban heat island.



**Ecological Resources in the region**

The health of these natural systems depends on active protection and management by a wide variety of agencies, local governments, and private individuals. The Council plays several roles in this network: collaborating with state and local partners to protect and improve water availability and quality, preserving and protecting high quality environments in regional parks in partnership with local parks agencies, and coordinating land use planning by local units of government.

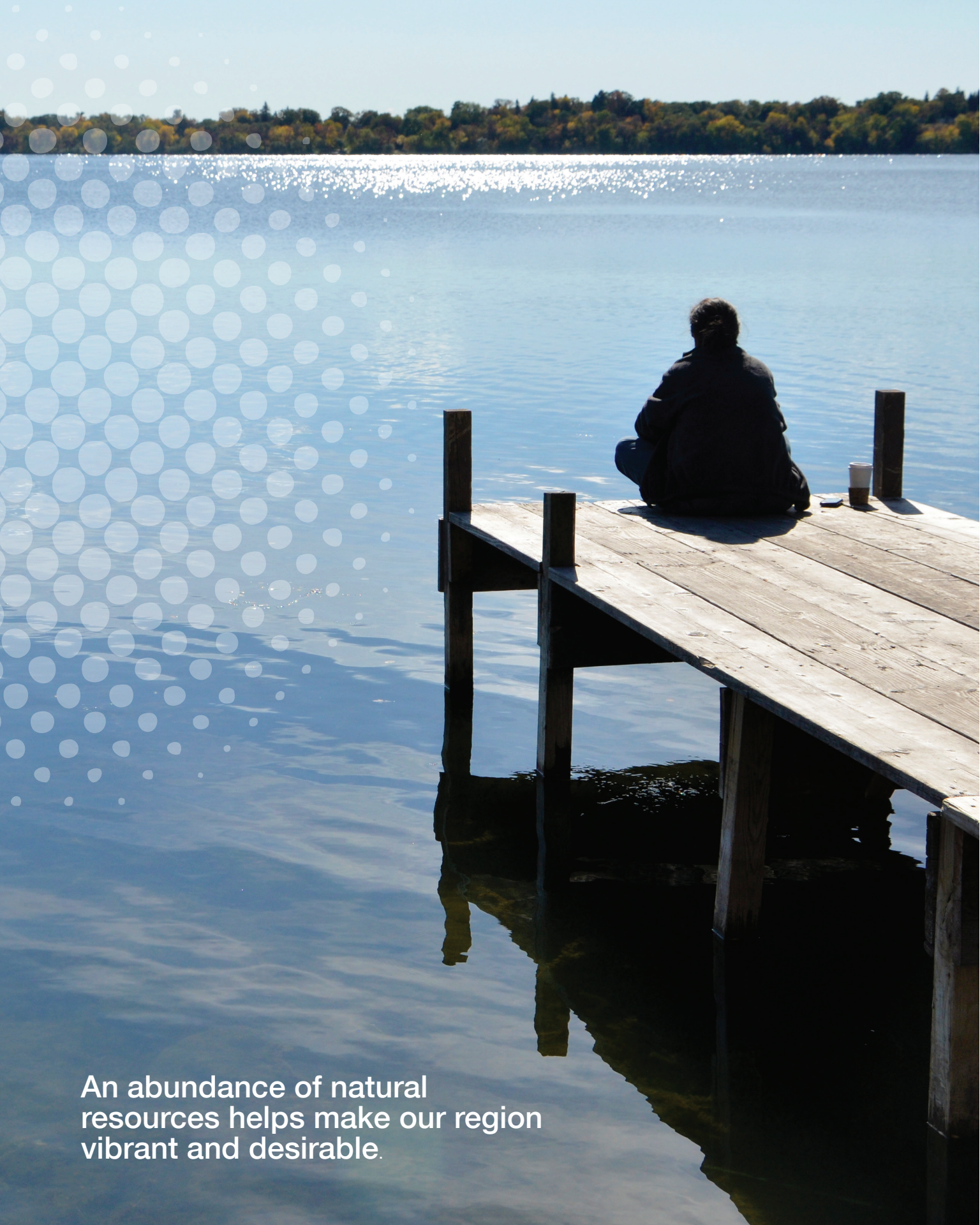
Integrating natural resources into our development patterns helps to create livable neighborhoods and desirable places to visit. Incorporating natural areas and trees into neighborhoods adds to a community's sense of place and gives residents daily opportunities to interact with the natural environment. Some natural areas can also increase opportunities for outdoor recreation and exercise, especially when integrated into the neighborhood.

As communities embark on their comprehensive plan updates, the Council will provide technical assistance and information on natural resources, as well as best practices for protection and integration into development.

The image above illustrates general locations of a variety of natural features—including lakes, rivers, creeks, wetlands, and upland areas. The Council will continue to partner with agencies and stakeholders to compile and distribute such information and will assist local communities with finding and incorporating this information in their local planning processes. For specific approaches, policies, and additional analysis related to regionally significant ecological areas, visit:

- The Stewardship and Sustainability sections of the *Thrive* “Outcomes”
- The Natural Resources Protection Land Use Policy





An abundance of natural  
resources helps make our region  
vibrant and desirable.





## Community Designations

The previous sections of *Thrive MSP 2040* set forth outcomes and principles to guide regional policies, investment, and activities. This section translates those overall ideas into specific land use policies and strategies tailored to different groups of communities. These community designations are used to plan and implement regional policies at the local level through comprehensive plans.

The seven-county region contains a wide range of communities, from farming-based townships to densely developed downtown neighborhoods. Recognizing that one size does not fit all, the Council uses community designations to group communities with similar characteristics in order to more effectively target its policies.

### The Council uses these community designations to:

- Guide regional growth and development to areas that have urban infrastructure in place and the capacity to accommodate development and redevelopment.
- Establish land use expectations, including overall densities and development patterns, for different community designations.
- Outline the respective roles of the Council and the individual communities and strategies for planning for forecasted growth.

The Council assigns a community designation to each city and township on the basis of existing development patterns, common challenges, and shared opportunities. Specific characteristics used to define the community designations include:

- Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA)
- The percentage of developable land committed to urban uses
- The age of the housing stock, which is a proxy for age of infrastructure and general development patterns
- Intersection density, which indicates connectivity, urban form, and accessibility
- The Long-term Wastewater Service Area

Intersection density and the age of housing together describe the character of the overall development patterns.

Although the characteristics of a community designation may not apply to every part of every community, the designation represents the dominant character of each community. Some communities have more than one designation because land use policies differ for the portions of the community with and without current or planned regional sewer service.

Community designations describe the predominant character, development challenges and opportunities in each community—all of which may evolve as development patterns change. The Council encourages communities to plan and build towards the development patterns of the community designation they aspire to be. The Council will consider requests to redesignate communities through the local comprehensive planning process.



## Metropolitan Urban Service and Rural Service Areas

The Council designates the Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA) as distinguished from the Rural Service Area. Communities and land within the MUSA receive a higher level of regional services. In return, the Council expects these jurisdictions to plan for and build the higher levels of development that economically support those regional services. Conversely, in the Rural Service Area, the Council discourages higher development densities to ensure the orderly development of the region, promote the efficient use of regional investments, and protect agricultural land, water resources, and the rural landscape. At the region's developing edge, some communities are split between the Metropolitan Urban Service Area and the Rural Service Area.

While the Metropolitan Urban Service Area constitutes about half of the land in the region, more than 90% of the population lives in this area. The Metropolitan Urban Service Area includes a diverse set of communities ranging from the urban cores of downtown Minneapolis and Saint Paul to edge communities planning for staged growth and expansion. Developing at different times in the region's history, these communities include a variety of residential neighborhoods, housing types, and densities, as well as a varying mix of commercial and industrial areas. The Council supports the Metropolitan Urban Service Area through investments such as regional wastewater services, regional highways, transit service, the Regional Parks System, and programs that support redevelopment. In turn, the Council works with local communities to support growth that best capitalizes on regional infrastructure and systems. To respond to this variation in development patterns, the Metropolitan Urban Service Area is divided into five community designations:

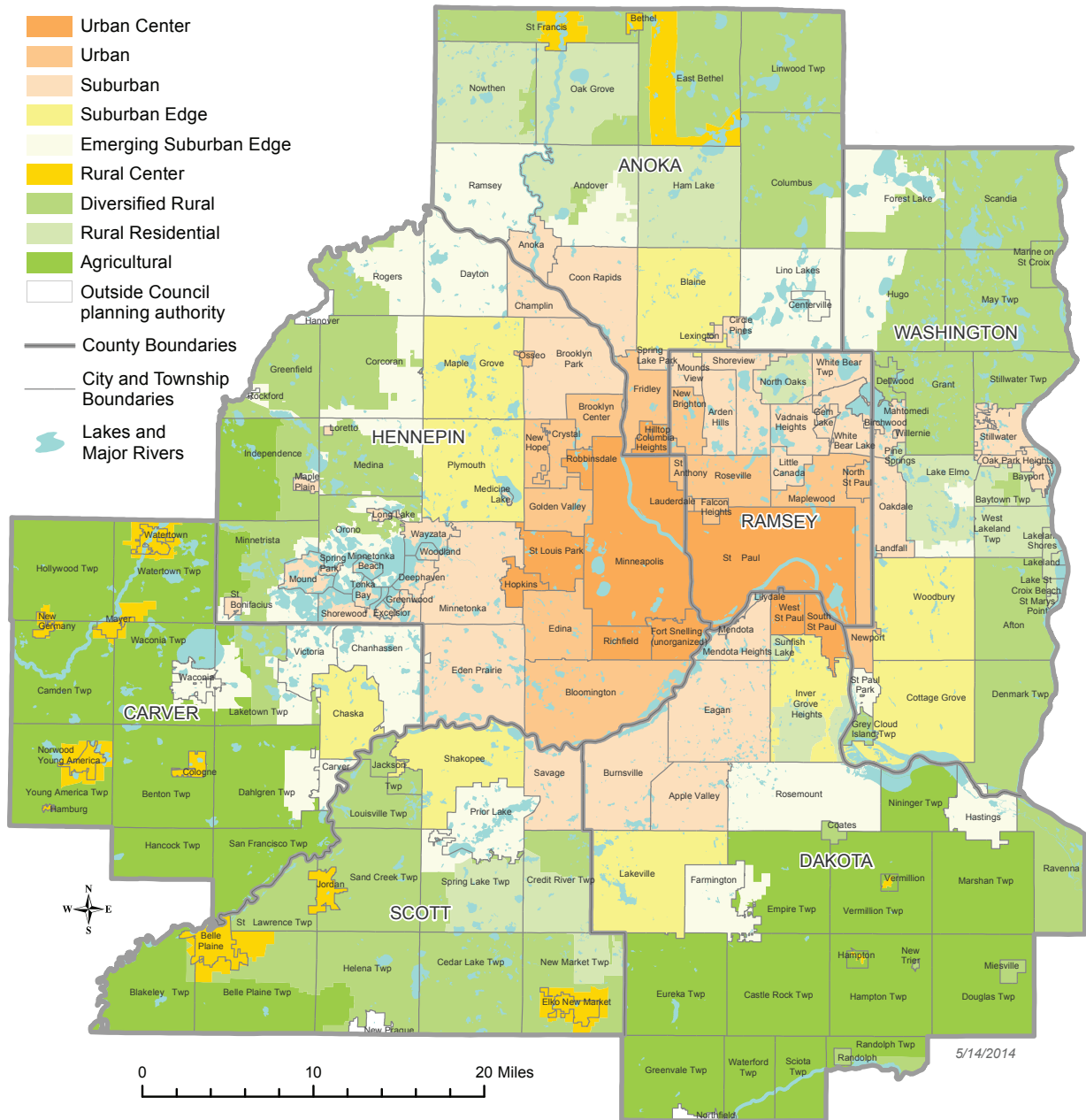
- Urban Center
- Urban
- Suburban
- Suburban Edge
- Emerging Suburban Edge

About half of the land in the Twin Cities region is in the Rural Service Area. This area includes a range of uses including cultivated farmland, vineyards, hobby farms, gravel mines, woodlands, small towns, scattered and clustered housing, open spaces, and significant expanses of the region's natural resources. Aside from the investments in the Regional Parks System, investments in regional service and infrastructure are limited in the Rural Service Area. To protect the vital agricultural lands and natural amenities and accommodate desires for rural and small-town residential choices, the Rural Service Area is divided into four community designations:

- Rural Center
- Rural Residential
- Diversified Rural
- Agricultural



# Community Designations



## Urban Center: Growing vitality in the region's core



The Urban Center includes the largest, most centrally located, and most economically diverse cities of the region. Anchored by Minneapolis and Saint Paul, the Urban Center also includes adjoining cities that share similar development characteristics such as street grids planned before World War II.

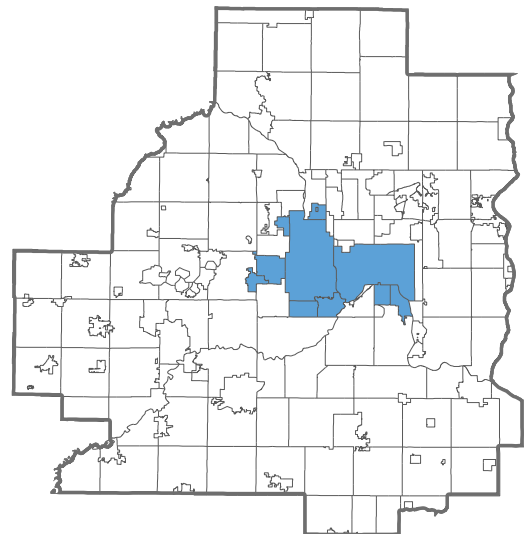
Downtown Minneapolis is a significant regional center of finance and business services; downtown Saint Paul is the seat of state government; and the University of Minnesota attracts tens of thousands of students, faculty and staff to its three campuses in the Urban Center. Centrally located industrial concentrations in the Urban Center are well-connected to export markets by river, railroad, highway, and air travel. Investments in transit and amenities have strengthened the Urban Center as an attractive place to invest, live, and do business.

The Urban Center also includes the most visited regional parks, such as the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes and Como Regional Park, and is home to the region's premier cultural resources. While the Urban Center includes some of the region's wealthy and historically notable areas, like Summit Avenue, it also includes areas with significant

challenges, including many of the region's Areas of Concentrated Poverty and Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty.

Neighborhoods throughout the Urban Center grew outward along a system of streetcars. Because of more limited automobile use during their initial development, neighborhoods are more conducive to transit use and walking for daily needs. Streets are narrow and interconnected, sidewalks are relatively common, and buildings are oriented toward pedestrians, with smaller-scale commercial uses often within a short walking distance. Travel by transit, walking, and bicycling remains common here. Redevelopment, reinvestment, and intensification are occurring in areas where people have multiple transportation options and commercial, cultural, and recreational amenities are nearby.

Urban Center communities are experiencing redevelopment attracted to their vitality and amenities, often at significant densities. However, they face many challenges including pollution cleanup costs, land availability for development and infrastructure improvements, congestion, conflicting or competing land uses, and the costs of retrofitting, replacing, or new infrastructure.



As of May 2014, the Council forecasts that the Urban Center area will add 162,000 residents, 80,000 households, and 142,000 jobs between 2010 and 2040. This represents growth of 19% in population, 23% in households, and 25% in employment over the three decades.

As of May 2014, designated Urban Center communities are: Columbia Heights, Fort Snelling, Hilltop, Hopkins, Minneapolis, Richfield, Robbinsdale, South St. Paul, St. Louis Park, Saint Paul, and West St. Paul.

## Urban: Redeveloping to meet the needs of new generations



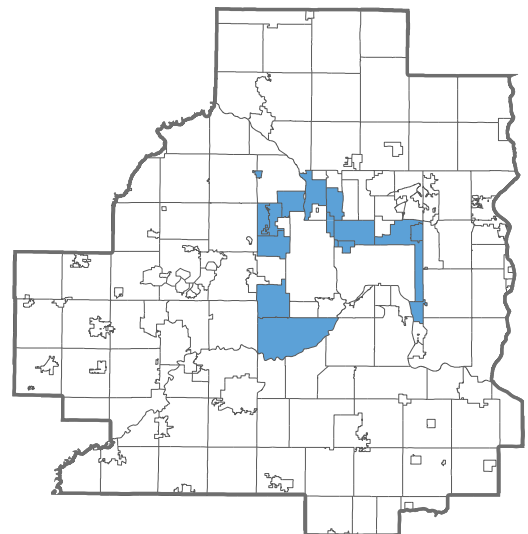
Urban communities developed primarily during the economic prosperity between the end of World War II and the economic recession of 1973-75. These cities, adjacent to the Urban Center communities, experienced rapid development to house the growing families of the Baby Boom era.

Highway accessibility led to the development of Urban communities as centers of office, commercial, institutional, and industrial uses, including many of the region's early major indoor shopping malls. Many Urban communities are served by highways that predate the interstate system (e.g., Highways 100 and 36).

The development patterns of Urban communities show the growing influence of the automobile as miles and miles of new limited-access highways accelerated further automobile-oriented growth. After World War II, the region's two-lane roads that extend out from the Urban Center were improved and expanded, and new roads and highways were built, making large tracts of land available for development. Streets are wider and include more curves. Lots are larger, parking is plentiful, alleys and sidewalks are less common, and residential parking is accessed via streets instead of alleys. In many cases, local streets do not intersect with higher volume roadways as more emphasis is placed on traffic movement and circulation.

Over time, transit service has been extended into these communities from local routes originating in the Urban Center. Some new services were introduced such as circulator services often centered on the regional malls and express buses serving major park-and-rides that transport commuters to the downtowns of Minneapolis and Saint Paul.

Urban communities face the challenge of redeveloping in ways that accommodate a greater mix of uses, incorporate better





facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists, and lay the groundwork for pedestrian-friendly districts and improved transit services. Examples include the Penn-American district in Bloomington and the I-394 mixed-use district in Golden Valley.

As of May 2014, the Council forecasts that the Urban area will add 56,000 residents, 29,000 households, and 87,000 jobs between 2010 and 2040. This represents growth of 15% in population, 18% in households, and 29% in employment over the three decades.

As of May 2014, designated Urban communities are: Bloomington, Brooklyn Center, Crystal, Edina, Falcon Heights, Fridley, Golden Valley, Lauderdale, Maplewood, New Brighton, New Hope, Newport, North St. Paul, Osseo, Roseville, and St. Anthony.

## Suburban: Cultivating places where people can gather

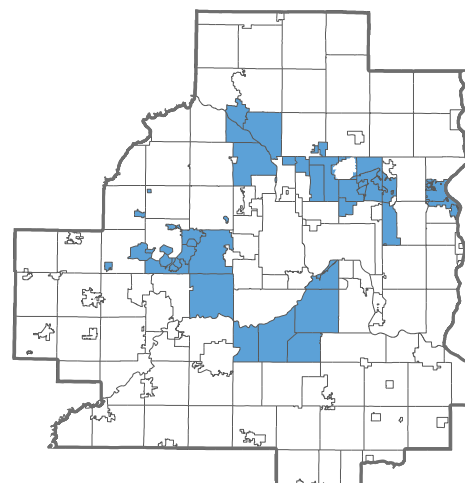


Suburban communities saw their primary era of development in the 1980s and into the early 1990s as the Baby Boomers formed families and entered their prime earning years. Many of these cities fall along freeway corridors and include growth along and outside the I-694/I-494 beltway. This development pattern also reached and incorporated places

that were once resort destinations connected from Minneapolis and Saint Paul by streetcar, such as communities along Lake Minnetonka and White Bear Lake. Similarly, communities along the St. Croix River, such as Stillwater, have development patterns in their downtown and core areas that are similar to other communities settled early in the region's history. Like other Suburban communities, these cities experienced continued growth and expansion during the 1980s and early 1990s.

Many of the region's corporate headquarters are located in the Suburban area. These include Thomson Reuters in Eagan, UnitedHealth Group in Minnetonka, and Land O'Lakes in Arden Hills.

Development in Suburban communities occurred at significantly lower densities than in previous eras. Many residential subdivisions include cul-de-sacs. Retail areas often include big-box stores and multi-tenant retail developments. Because of the automobile-orientation of this area's development patterns and high automobile ownership, walking or bicycling for daily travel is less common, but trails are often used for recreation and commuting. Suburban area cities include large regional parks such as Bunker Hills Regional Park in Coon Rapids and Andover and regional assets like the



Minnesota Zoo in Apple Valley. Regular-route bus service is generally less cost-effective in the Suburban communities than in the Urban Center and Urban communities, but express bus service connects Suburban area park-and-rides to Job Concentrations in the Urban Center, such as downtown Minneapolis, downtown Saint Paul, and the University of Minnesota.

As the Suburban communities have grown and as market preferences have evolved, many of these cities are focusing attention on developing places where people can gather. These include town centers like downtown Stillwater, Burnsville's Heart of the City, Minnetonka's Village Center, downtown White Bear Lake, and Apple Valley's downtown. These locations are intended to be more walkable and include a mix of retail, higher density housing, and civic, institutional, and open space amenities.

Another new challenge for some Suburban communities is realigning development patterns around existing and emerging transitways.

As of May 2014, the Council forecasts that the Suburban area will add 159,000 residents, 76,000 households, and 161,000 jobs between 2010 and 2040. This represents growth of 22% in population, 27% in households, and 43% in employment over the three decades.

As of May 2014, designated Suburban communities are: Anoka, Apple Valley, Arden Hills, Bayport, Birchwood Village, Brooklyn Park, Burnsville, Champlin, Circle Pines, Coon Rapids, Deephaven, Eagan, Eden Prairie, Excelsior, Gem Lake, Greenwood, Landfall, Lexington, Lilydale, Little Canada, Long Lake, Loretto, Mahtomedi, Maple Plain, Medicine Lake, Mendota, Mendota Heights, Minnetonka, Minnetonka Beach, Mound, Mounds View, North Oaks\*, Oak

Park Heights, Oakdale, Savage, Shoreview, Shorewood, Spring Lake Park, Spring Park, St. Bonifacius, Stillwater, Tonka Bay, Vadnais Heights, Wayzata, White Bear Lake, White Bear Township, Willernie, and Woodland.

\*Listed in this designation but also has areas in other designations.

## Suburban Edge: Managing rapid growth and change



The Suburban Edge includes communities that have experienced significant residential growth beginning in the 1990s and continuing to the 2010s. At least 40% of the land in these cities is developed, but significant amounts of land remain for future development. These communities generally no longer contain large-scale agricultural areas.

The Suburban Edge includes region-serving retail centers, like Maple Grove's The Shoppes at Arbor Lakes, as well as more local and small scale centers, like downtown Chaska, that serve the local population.

The Suburban Edge tends to have auto-oriented development and transportation patterns. Neighborhoods are often self-contained subdivisions characterized by cul-de-sacs and limited access to major thoroughfares for traffic movement. Recent development has included both subdivisions of single-family detached

homes, as well as townhome developments offering more options for housing affordability. Most cities in the Suburban Edge have access to regional trails and include some existing residential neighborhoods with sidewalks and connection to trails. Suburban Edge cities are seeing increasing demand for transit service from park-and-rides to regional destinations.

An emerging challenge for some Suburban Edge communities is aligning today's development patterns in preparation for future transit expansions and potential transitways.

The balance of proximity to more developed areas and a significant supply of developable land presents an opportunity for the Suburban Edge to develop new workforce housing. Locating future development close to existing urban services and infrastructure will use regional investments efficiently. Connections via roadway, transit, and trails to centers in adjacent Suburban and Urban communities will further integrate the Suburban Edge into the regional fabric. Addressing walkability and expanding local trail networks is important for residential neighborhoods in order to increase connectivity in existing and new neighborhoods.

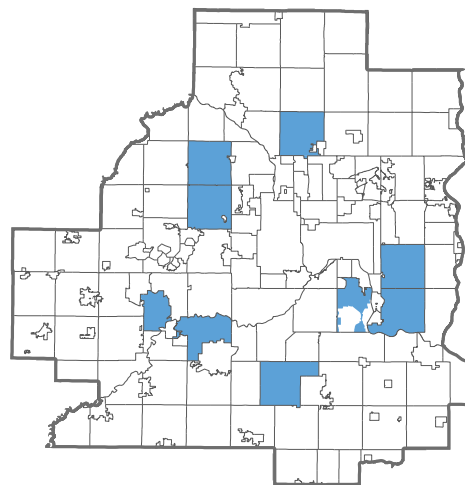
With water supply issues facing many Suburban Edge communities, planning efforts should focus on how to protect water supply resources and identify viable alternative sources of water. Similarly, with much of their development yet ahead, Suburban Edge communities can protect and preserve open spaces, natural areas, and water recharge capacity within future development patterns.

As of May 2014, the Council forecasts that the Suburban Edge area will add 181,000 residents, 79,000 households, and 92,000 jobs between 2010 and 2040. This represents growth of 42% in population, 49% in households, and 52% in employment over the three

decades.

As of May 2014, designated Suburban Edge communities are: Blaine, Chaska, Cottage Grove, Inver Grove Heights\*, Lakeville, Maple Grove, Plymouth, Shakopee, and Woodbury.

\*Listed in this designation but also has areas in other designations.





## Emerging Suburban Edge: Transitioning from rural to developed



The Emerging Suburban Edge includes cities, townships, and portions of both that are in the early stages of transitioning into urbanized levels of development. Strategically located between Suburban Edge and Rural communities, the Emerging Suburban Edge communities offer both connections to urban amenities and the proximity to open spaces that characterizes a rural lifestyle. Often, the cities and townships in the Emerging Suburban Edge are in more than one Community Designation. In the majority of Emerging Suburban Edge communities, less than 40% of the land has been developed.

Communities in the Emerging Suburban Edge have a mix of residential, rural, and agricultural areas, often including lower-density single-family neighborhoods and small downtown service centers. The growth patterns in these communities demonstrate the challenges of changing from rural to suburban. New developments are typically built in a traditional suburban pattern, characterized by large curving streets, limited through-roadways, and auto-oriented street design. Emerging Suburban Edge communities have access to regional

wastewater services (either municipally owned or regional services), access to the metropolitan highway system, and include existing or planned Regional Parks System facilities.

The Emerging Suburban Edge communities provide a variety of commercial activities along the main transportation corridors, and most encompass historic small downtowns with small town characteristics. These communities benefit from their proximity to more developed areas while retaining their local rural character and protecting natural resources. Commercial areas in the Emerging Suburban Edge tend to be individual large employers and smaller-scale commercial centers serving the local population.

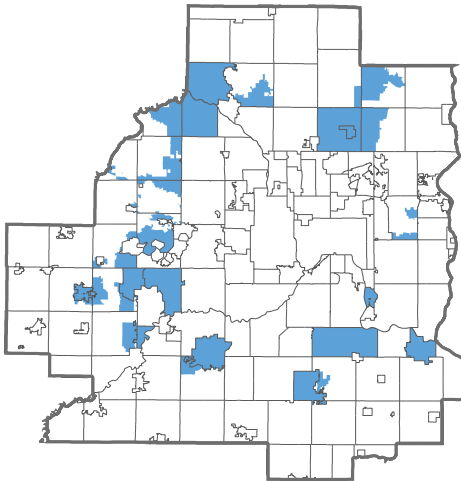
Although these communities have some redevelopment potential in older areas such as historic downtown districts, the focus in the Emerging Suburban Edge is on greenfield development. Greenfields present opportunities to integrate natural resource preservation into site planning prior to development. Some of these communities have land available within their jurisdiction staged for future development, while others are expanding through orderly annexation agreements with neighboring townships. This mix of uses, availability of undeveloped land, and rich access to natural resources is a characteristic unique to Emerging Suburban Edge communities.

As of May 2014, the Council forecasts that the Emerging Suburban Edge area will add 201,000 residents, 93,000 households, and 58,000 jobs between 2010 and 2040. This represents growth of 66% in population, 87% in households, and 66% in employment over the three decades. Because most Emerging Suburban Edge communities also have areas designated as rural, these numbers are approximations. These numbers may change during the upcoming comprehensive planning process, which will more precisely delineate

how much community growth belongs inside the Metropolitan Urban Service Area.

As of May 2014, designated Emerging Suburban Edge communities are: Andover\*, Carver, Centerville, Chanhassen, Columbus\*, Corcoran\*, Dayton, Empire Township\*, Farmington, Forest Lake\*, Greenfield\*, Hastings, Hugo\*, Independence\*, Lake Elmo\*, Lino Lakes, Medina\*, Minnetrista\*, Orono\*, Prior Lake, Ramsey, Rogers\*, Rosemount, St. Paul Park, Victoria, and Waconia.

\*Listed in this designation but also has areas in other designations.



## Rural Centers: Serving the rural area as small town centers of commerce



Rural Centers are local commercial, employment, and residential activity centers serving rural areas in the region. These small towns are surrounded by agricultural lands and serve as centers of commerce to those surrounding farm lands and the accompanying population. Although smaller in scale than more urban communities, Rural Centers provide similar development patterns and locally accessible commercial services for the surrounding area.

Rural Centers have wastewater treatment services, some municipally owned and others connected to the regional system provided by the Council. The availability of either local or regional wastewater treatment supports denser land uses and development patterns in these cities and distinguishes them from neighboring rural townships and other small towns.

Rural Centers provide a range of services appropriate to serve a limited population within a compact geographical area. Rural Centers generally have a mix of housing densities, strong commercial service districts in a traditional downtown district or along

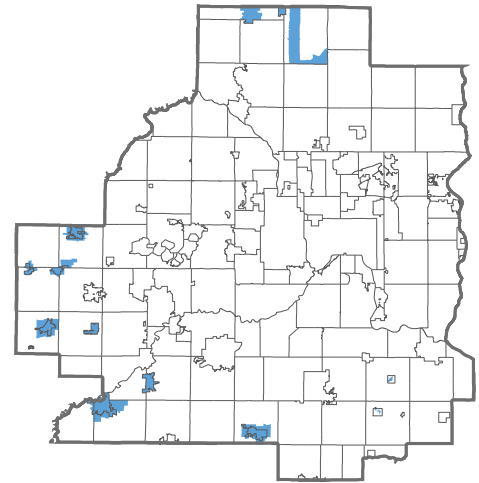
transportation corridors, and residential neighborhoods surrounded by farmland and agribusinesses. Growth in Rural Centers should be orderly and economical so as to best utilize existing infrastructure and investment prior to extension of new services outside of Rural Centers.

At times, Rural Centers can connect travelers and residents to other communities in and outside the region, particularly those that are well-served by existing transportation infrastructure such as in Scott County along U.S. Highway 169. Largely situated along the edges of the seven-county region, these Rural Centers are often visited by travelers with a destination in another part of the region. This spatial connection to other locations in the region supports the commercial and activity functions of Rural Centers and provides growth opportunities unique to these communities.

As of May 2014, the Council forecasts that Rural Centers will add 45,000 residents, 21,000 households, and 9,000 jobs between 2010 and 2040. This represents growth of 93% in population, 123% in households, and 95% in employment over the three decades. These numbers may change during the upcoming comprehensive planning process, which will more precisely delineate how much community growth belongs inside the Metropolitan Urban Service Area and inside each rural designation.

As of May 2014, designated Rural Centers are: Belle Plaine, Bethel, Cologne, East Bethel\*, Elko New Market, Hamburg, Hampton\*, Jordan, Mayer, New Germany, Norwood Young America, St. Francis\*, Vermillion\*, and Watertown.

\*Listed in this designation but also has areas in other designations.





## Diversified Rural: Protecting land for rural lifestyles and long-term urbanization



Diversified Rural communities are home to a variety of farm and non-farm land uses including very large-lot residential, clustered housing, hobby farms and agricultural uses. Located adjacent to the Emerging Suburban Edge of the Metropolitan Urban Service Area, the Diversified Rural Area protects rural land for rural lifestyles today and potential urbanized levels of development sometime after 2040.

Large areas of high-quality natural resources are located in these communities with some of these natural areas protected in state lands and regional parks, like Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area in Anoka County and Carver Park Reserve in Carver County.

While these communities contain a mix of uses, large portions of communities in the Diversified Rural area contain prime agricultural soils, located primarily in Scott and Washington counties. Although these communities are not designated Agricultural communities, the Council supports the preservation of agricultural land in these areas. Agricultural uses in Diversified Rural communities benefit from their proximity to the Metropolitan Urban Service Area and Rural Centers, but face challenges to their

long-term continued use, including incompatible uses developing nearby and increased development pressures.

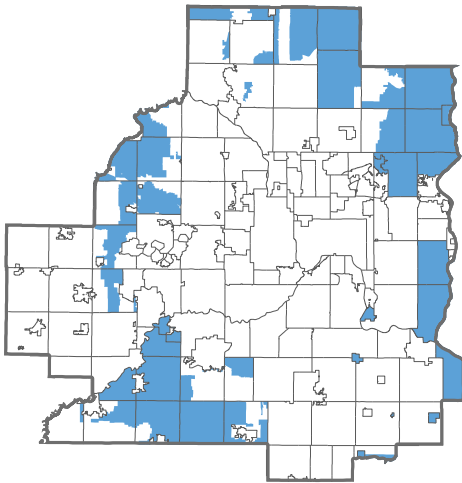
The Council discourages urbanized levels of residential development in Diversified Rural communities to avoid the premature demand for expansion of metropolitan systems and other urban public services. Regional investments in infrastructure, such as roads, focus on rural levels of service, while recognizing the need to include transportation infrastructure consistent with market access and the business needs of the area. Some Diversified Rural communities are also located within the Long-term Wastewater Service Area. These areas are designated to ensure land availability to accommodate growth post-2040 at the edge of the urbanizing area. The remaining Diversified Rural communities are considered long-term rural areas.

There is a portion of the region's population that is interested in rural and small-town living. For communities in the Diversified Rural area, the Council supports the clustering of homes to meet that demand, designed in a manner that protects high-quality and locally prioritized natural areas and open spaces and also preserves lands in areas identified for potential post-2040 urban development.

As of May 2014, the Council forecasts that the Rural Service Area outside of Rural Centers—including Diversified Rural, Rural Residential, and Agricultural areas—will add 16,000 residents, 12,000 households, and 7,000 jobs between 2010 and 2040. This represents growth of 14% in population, 31% in households, and 50% in employment over the three decades. These numbers may change during the upcoming comprehensive planning process, which will more precisely delineate how much community growth belongs inside the Metropolitan Urban Service Area and inside each rural designation.

As of May 2014, designated Diversified Rural communities are: Afton, Andover\*, Baytown Township\*, Belle Plaine Township\*, Blakeley Township\*, Cedar Lake Township, Coates, Columbus\*, Corcoran\*, Credit River Township\*, Dellwood, Denmark Township, East Bethel\*, Forest Lake\*, Grant, Greenfield\*, Grey Cloud Island Township, Helena Township\*, Hugo\*, Independence\*, Jackson Township, Laketown Township\*, Linwood Township, Louisville Township, Marine on St. Croix, May Township, Medina\*, Miesville, Minnetrista\*, New Market Township\*, New Trier, Nowthen\*, Oak Grove\*, Orono\*, Randolph, Randolph Township\*, Ravenna Township, Rogers\*, Sand Creek Township, Scandia, Spring Lake Township\*, St. Francis\*, St. Lawrence Township, and Stillwater Township\*.

\*Listed in this designation but also has areas in other designations.



## Rural Residential: Limiting unsustainable growth patterns



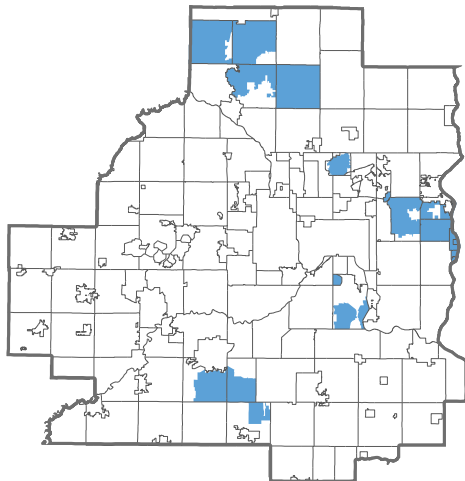
Rural Residential communities have residential patterns characterized by large lots and do not have plans to provide urban infrastructure, such as centralized wastewater treatment.

Many of the communities in the Rural Residential Area have topographic development limitations and a historic development pattern with lot sizes that generally ranged from 1 to 2.5 units per acre. These residential densities do not support economical extension of wastewater services. In Anoka County, the Rural Residential Area includes communities that have a large number of wetlands and existing lot sizes of 2.5 acres or less. These areas are typically portions of a community, while the remaining part of the community is usually Emerging Suburban Edge, Suburban Edge, or Diversified Rural. Some communities are split between community designations where wastewater services are available (typically Suburban Edge and Emerging Suburban Edge) and the Rural Residential area where neither the Council nor the city plans to provide wastewater services. In most cases, the Rural Residential area is existing single-family residential housing within a residential portion of a community. If the Rural Residential area includes the whole community, other uses

typically have developed such as agricultural uses, including sod farming and horticulture, commercial uses to serve local needs, and commercial and light industrial along transportation corridors.

Rural Residential development precludes providing urbanized infrastructure in an effective, connected, and efficient manner. Rural Residential development does not advance the Council mission of ensuring orderly and economical development and in some cases increases the potential for damage to the environment. These areas need to accommodate minimal growth while protecting natural areas, water quality and quantity, and ensuring sufficient public infrastructure. The Council discourages the expansion of the Rural Residential areas.

As of May 2014, the Council forecasts that the Rural Service Area outside of Rural Centers—including Diversified Rural, Rural Residential, and Agricultural areas—will add 16,000 residents, 12,000 households, and 7,000 jobs between 2010 and 2040. This represents growth of 14% in population, 31% in households, and 50% in employment over the three decades. These numbers may change during the upcoming comprehensive planning process, which will more precisely delineate how



much community growth belongs inside the Metropolitan Urban Service Area and inside each rural designation.

As of May 2014, designated Rural Residential communities are: Andover\*, Baytown Township\*, Credit River Township\*, Ham Lake, Inver Grove Heights\*, Lake Elmo\*, Lake St. Croix Beach, Lakeland, Lakeland Shores, New Market Township\*, North Oaks\*, Nowthen\*, Oak Grove\*, Pine Springs, Spring Lake Township\*, St. Mary's Point, Sunfish Lake, and West Lakeland Township.

\*Listed in this designation but also has areas in other designations.

## Agricultural: Preserving large swaths of farmland



Agricultural communities encompass areas with prime agricultural soils that are planned and zoned for long-term agricultural use. These communities are home to the bulk of contiguous lands enrolled in the Metropolitan Agricultural Preserves and Green Acres programs or cultivated for commercial agricultural purposes.

In the Agricultural area, agriculture is the development. The Council supports the preservation of agricultural land to protect the region's agricultural economy, provide economic



opportunities for farmers, and to promote local food production. These long-term uses support the region's economic competitiveness as they provide opportunities for local agricultural- and food-based industry clusters and production for local food consumption.

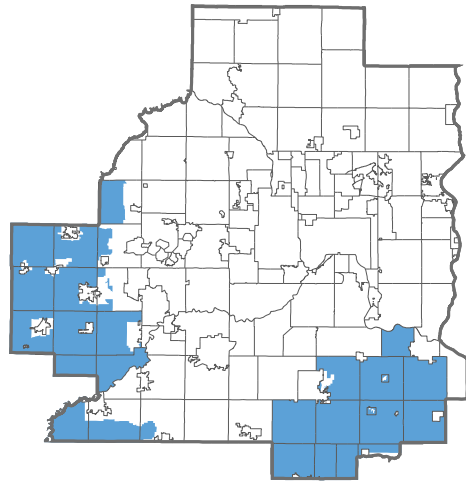
The preservation of long-term agricultural uses and the integration of best management practices in farm operations also contribute to regional sustainability. The incorporation of best management practices, such as conservation tillage and carbon sequestration, can improve soil fertility, reduce soil erosion, and improve overall soil and water quality. Long-term agricultural uses can also contribute to the region's air quality by reducing local food transportation distances and related greenhouse gas emissions.

The Council discourages urban levels of development in rural areas to reduce development pressure on agricultural lands and to avoid the premature demand for expansion of metropolitan systems and other urban public services. Regional investments in infrastructure such as roads and wastewater treatment will focus on rural levels of service, while recognizing the need to include transportation infrastructure consistent with market access and the agricultural needs of the area.

As of May 2014, the Council forecasts that the Rural Service Area outside of Rural Centers—including Diversified Rural, Rural Residential, and Agricultural areas—will add 16,000 residents, 12,000 households, and 7,000 jobs between 2010 and 2040. This represents growth of 14% in population, 31% in households, and 50% in employment over the three decades. These numbers may change during the upcoming comprehensive planning process, which will more precisely delineate how much community growth belongs inside the Metropolitan Urban Service Area and inside each rural designation.

As of May 2014, designated Agricultural communities are: Belle Plaine Township\*, Benton Township, Blakeley Township\*, Camden Township, Castle Rock Township, Dahlgren Township, Douglas Township, Empire Township\*, Eureka Township, Greenvale Township, Hampton\*, Hampton Township, Hancock Township, Helena Township\*, Hollywood Township, Independence\*, Laketown Township\*, Marshan Township, Minnetrista\*, Nininger Township, Randolph Township\*, San Francisco Township, Sciota Township, Vermillion\*, Vermillion Township, Waconia Township, Waterford Township, Watertown Township, and Young America Township.

\*Listed in this designation but also has areas in other designations.



2040





## Land Use Policy

### Setting the Stage

The Twin Cities metropolitan area is a thriving region of interconnected places with a shared future. The Metropolitan Council intends to be a good steward of the region's assets and to capitalize upon them in our efforts toward prosperity, equity, livability, and sustainability. Among those assets are a diversified economy and numerous educational institutions; healthy downtown and suburban business centers; a vibrant arts and cultural community; abundant open space and natural resources; and a diversity of urban, suburban, and rural communities.

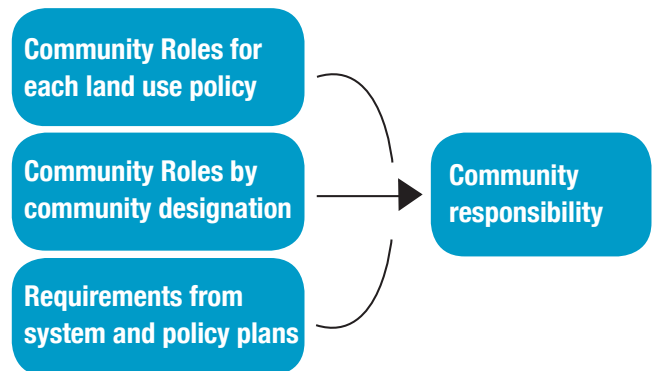
Over the last 40 years, the region has made significant investments in the regional systems of parks and trails, transportation, and wastewater collection and treatment that support the built environment we have in place. Today, however, new issues are pressing on our development choices. Because of fiscal, environmental, and political forces at all levels of government, the region is moving from a period of infrastructure expansion to one of maintenance, strategic investments, and getting more out of what we already have.

As a result of demographic and market changes, investment and intensification is occurring in the urbanized area; and though more slowly than in decades past, suburban communities on the edge are continuing to fill in. More communities are taking on the challenges and opportunities related

to reuse, infill, and redevelopment; development along mixed-use corridors; and the creation of walkable districts centered on transit.

The 2007 Next Generation Energy Act called for a 15% reduction in Minnesota's greenhouse gas emissions by 2015 and a 30% reduction by 2025. As a part of achieving these goals, the region will need to address our transportation and land use patterns. The Council will contribute toward the reduction of regional greenhouse gas emissions by ensuring the orderly and economic development of the region, making investments in transit, and convening regional discussions on the relationship between land use patterns and energy consumption.

Advancing both the regional vision and local perspective, these land use policies balance both urban and rural qualities in our metropolitan area. By responsibly managing the region's natural and financial resources, these policies support the *Thrive* vision of building a prosperous, equitable, and livable region for today and generations to come.



*Policy language that applies to a community is located in several places. System Statements, which will be issued in late 2015, will provide individualized guidance to help communities update their comprehensive plans.*



## Land Use Policies

To build the foundation for a prosperous, equitable, livable, and sustainable future, the Council has identified seven policies to guide land use and regional development:

**Orderly and Efficient Land Use:** Align land use, development patterns, and infrastructure to make the best use of public and private investment.

**Natural Resources Protection:** Conserve, restore, and protect the region's natural resources to ensure availability, support public health, and maintain a high quality of life.

**Water Sustainability:** Conserve, restore, and protect the quality and quantity of the region's water resources to ensure ongoing availability, support public health, and maintain a high quality of life.

**Housing Affordability and Choice:** Promote housing options to give people in all life stages and of all economic means viable choices for safe, stable, and affordable homes.

**Access, Mobility, and Transportation Choice:** Sustain and improve a multi-modal transportation system to support regional growth, maintain regional economic competitiveness, and provide choices and reliability for the system's users.

**Economic Competitiveness:** Foster connected land use options to provide businesses and industries with access to materials, markets, and talent.

**Building in Resilience:** Promote sensitive land use and development patterns to achieve Minnesota's adopted greenhouse gas emissions goals at the regional scale, and to develop local resiliency to the impacts of climate change.

To implement these policies, the Council has identified land use strategies for local communities, including counties, and the Council to implement. While each strategy is linked to a specific policy in this document, in practice strategies serve multiple purposes. For example, a strategy of focusing development around centers on transit corridors aligns land uses to make the best use of public and private investments, reduces the development pressures in areas with high quality natural resources, grows transit ridership, and expands options for urban living. We cannot focus on one policy alone to attain the outcomes identified in this plan. Instead, a combination of strategies addressing all of the policies is necessary to set the stage for a successful future. All of the land use policies are interrelated, and implementation must be integrated to achieve the outcomes.

The next section details land use policies for the region, followed by strategies that are common among all communities. In recognition of the opportunities and challenges unique to different communities, additional strategies to implement these policies are tailored to suit the different community types in the region (see "Land Use Policies by Community Designations").



## Orderly and Efficient Land Use

**Align land use, development patterns, and infrastructure to make the best use of public and private investment.**

Orderly and efficient land uses lay the foundation for a prosperous region. The Council sets the framework for land use patterns and guides the overall development of the region, as directed by the Metropolitan Land Planning Act (Minn. Stat. 473.145). To be fiscally responsible, the Council guides land uses and development patterns that leverage the region's infrastructure investments and private development to the benefit of both. Directing growth where infrastructure already exists also reduces the need to add roads and expand the regional wastewater system to support the same growth elsewhere.

OVERALL DENSITY EXPECTATIONS FOR NEW GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT, AND REDEVELOPMENT	
Metropolitan Urban Service Area: Minimum Average Net Density	
Urban Center	20 units/acre
Urban	10 units/acre
Suburban	5 units/acre
Suburban Edge	3-5 units/acre
Emerging Suburban Edge	3-5 units/acre
Rural Service Area: Maximum Allowed Density, except Rural Centers	
Rural Center	3-5 units/acre minimum
Rural Residential	1-2.5 acre lots existing, 1 unit/10 acres where possible
Diversified Rural	4 units/40 acres
Agricultural	1 unit/40 acres

Making efficient use of land and capitalizing upon existing infrastructure also reduce outward development pressures in rural and natural resource areas. Planning for and supporting growth where infrastructure is already in place allows these rural areas to continue to maintain large tracts of natural resources, agricultural production, and a sparsely developed rural environment.

Aligning land uses, development patterns, and infrastructure is important at the local level, too. Orderly and efficient does not just mean wise use of regional infrastructure; it also means planning livable neighborhoods connected to places of work and play. While planning has traditionally separated residential neighborhoods from commercial and industrial areas, residents still need to access these places to meet their daily needs and get to work. Communities should continue to consider strategic locations for integrating different uses into neighborhoods and make it easier for people to access parks and pick up groceries without a car. Compact development patterns, integrated natural resources, and interconnected local street networks all add to the livability of our communities.

The region is able to provide cost-effective infrastructure and services when it is able to anticipate where, when, and to what extent growth will occur. The Council establishes overall density expectations for communities based on their community designation with additional expectations near transit stations. Density thresholds are based on an understanding of future regional growth, market demand in different parts of the region, existing development patterns and redevelopment opportunities, existing planned land uses in local comprehensive plans, and regional policies to support the concentration of higher density growth around transit stations.

Because each community and its values are unique, precisely how and where density is guided is determined by each community consistent with regional policies. Communities in the Metropolitan Urban Services Area (MUSA) and Rural Center communities are expected to plan for achieving the overall minimum average density expectations in their community across all areas that a community identifies for new growth, development, and redevelopment. The Council measures minimum net density across all areas identified to support forecasted growth by taking the minimum number of planned housing units and dividing by the net acreage. Net acreage does not include land covered by wetlands, water bodies, public parks and trails, public open space, arterial road rights-of-way, and other undevelopable acres identified in or protected by local ordinances such as steep slopes.

The Council recognizes that not all new development may meet the minimum standards and conversely many other new developments may exceed the minimum standards. Setting minimum average densities for new development provides communities with the flexibility to determine which areas are best suited for higher or lower density development under the framework of meeting that overall minimum on available developable lands. All other communities in the Rural Service Area are expected to set maximum allowable densities. Additional detail regarding density and development patterns is contained in the “Land Use Policy by Community Designation.”

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Advance the Council mission of ensuring orderly and economical development.
- Develop and update regional plans to manage forecasted growth by using regional systems and land efficiently and effectively.
- Coordinate major regional investment projects with local infrastructure and planning for development and redevelopment.
- Promote development patterns that protect natural resources, the quality and quantity of our water resources, and our water supply.
- Promote land use patterns that differentiate between urban and rural uses.
- Promote interconnected, compact development patterns.
- Coordinate wastewater conveyance projects with Regional Parks System improvements where appropriate.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Plan for development to support forecasted growth at appropriate densities as articulated in the following land use policies by community designation.
- Plan and develop interconnected and well-connected local streets, adequate stormwater infrastructure, adequate water supply, and properly managed subsurface sewage treatment systems to support local growth forecasts.
- Develop plans to improve conditions for and encourage walking and bicycling where appropriate.
- Maintain, replace, or expand local facilities and infrastructure to meet growth and development needs.
- Adopt and implement the local comprehensive plan following Council review.



## Natural Resources Protection

**Conserve, restore, and protect the region's natural resources to ensure their ongoing availability, to support public health, and to maintain a high quality of life.**

An abundance of natural resources has long contributed to the vibrancy of our region. The region is home to a variety of natural habitats, ranging from wooded riverine habitats along the Minnesota and St. Croix Rivers to trout streams like Valley Creek in Washington County. As discussed earlier in *Thrive*, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has identified Regionally Significant Ecological Areas, which designate the high quality natural habitats around the region. This identification is a useful tool to guide agencies and local governments in coordinating their conservation and protection efforts.



Integrating natural resources into our development patterns helps create livable neighborhoods and desirable places to visit. Incorporating natural areas and trees into neighborhoods adds to a community's sense of place and provides opportunities to interact with the natural environment on a daily basis. Some of the natural areas can also increase opportunities for outdoor recreation and exercise, especially when planned as part of the neighborhood fabric.

This integrated method of development and redevelopment, or incorporating green infrastructure, can provide other benefits, such as assisting in the management of stormwater and reducing flood damage. Trees in the urban area not only provide shade for neighborhoods and pedestrians, but also help to ameliorate the effects of the urban heat island, slow stormwater runoff, and filter the air we breathe.

## Soil Resources

Agriculture has been an important shaper and supporter of the development of the region. The abundance of rich soils close to the Mississippi River led to the development of early food milling companies like Pillsbury. Many of these early companies have grown to include some of the largest food and agricultural businesses in the world, including Cargill and General Mills. The Twin Cities region is a soil-rich environment, with prime agricultural soils dominating the rural landscape, particularly in Carver, Dakota, and Scott Counties. (For more information on prime agricultural soils, see the Land Capability Classification from the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Classes I, II, and III of this eight-class system are considered prime for cultivation.)

As in other metropolitan regions, farmland in the Twin Cities has experienced development pressures as the region has grown. Both the total number of farms and the total acreage in farms in the seven counties has declined over the last 30 years though there has been some leveling in both the acreage and number of farms since the late 1990s. This may be the result of reduced outward pressures for development, enrollment in programs like the Agricultural Preserves Program and the Green Acres Program, and/or increased profitability from farming.

The Legislature created the Agricultural Preserves Program in 1980 to maintain “viable productive farm operations in the metropolitan area” (Minn. Stat. 473H). This program provides tax benefits for landowners with properties of at least 40 acres along with long-range planning protections in local comprehensive plans and ordinances to protect farming. The Green Acres Program, established in the late 1960s, provides similar landowner tax benefits, particularly to those with small parcels (at least 10 acres), but does not include the restrictions in local land use plans and ordinances for properties to be eligible. Enrollment in these programs varies by county but largely mirrors the locations of prime agricultural lands.

## Aggregate Resources

As development expanded, the region found that a key ingredient for development was under threat. Access to deposits of aggregate resources—crushed rock, gravel, and sand—was being lost due to new development on or near the deposits. Aggregate resources are needed for not only construction of new roads and buildings but also maintenance and repair. Accessing these resources locally reduces the costs for local construction projects compared to shipping resources in from outside of the region. In staging areas for new development, local communities should plan for aggregate resource extraction prior to development where viable deposits remain accessible, as mapped in Minnesota Geological Survey Information Circular No. 46 (Minn. Stat. 473.859). Where Regionally Significant Ecological Areas or other locally protected natural resource areas overlay aggregate deposits, the Council prioritizes habitat preservation over aggregate extraction.



## Role of Regional Parks

It is difficult to overstate how much the Regional Parks System supports the region's quality of life and protects high-quality natural resources. In the 2012 Metropolitan Residents Survey, nearly half of respondents identified parks, trails, or the natural environment as the most attractive feature of the region. The Regional Parks System provides recreational opportunities, and resources such as the Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Regional Park in Lino Lakes or Lebanon Hills Regional Park in Dakota County contribute to the preservation of important ecological and natural features. Increasingly, the Regional Parks System is an amenity to retain and attract new businesses and residents, and many people use regional trails for commuting.

The *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* sets the direction for protection and growth of the Regional Parks System. The Council does not own or operate parks and trails but supports 10 regional park implementing agencies through a variety of funds. This collaborative partnership has created a system of regional recreational open space that has been, and will continue to be, an important tool for the region in protecting high quality natural areas.

### COUNCIL ROLE

- Integrate natural resource protection strategies into metropolitan system plans for infrastructure investments.
- Collaborate with local, regional, and state partners to expand the Regional Parks System, as appropriate, to conserve, maintain, and connect natural resources identified as of high quality or of regional importance, consistent with the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*.
- Collaborate and convene with state, regional, and local partners to protect, maintain, and enhance natural resources protection.
- Maintain an up-to-date regional Natural Resources Inventory and Assessment in partnership with the Department of Natural Resources.
- Provide technical assistance and tools for natural resources protection, conservation, and restoration.
- Promote the implementation of best management practices for habitat restoration and natural resource conservation.

### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Include goals, priorities, and natural resource conservation strategies in the local comprehensive plan to protect and enhance natural resources identified in regional and local natural resource inventories.
- Conserve, protect, and interconnect open space to enhance livability, recreational opportunities and habitats.
- Adopt and implement ordinances for the conservation and restoration of natural resources within the community.
- Work with regional partners and regional park implementing agencies to identify, plan for, and acquire natural areas and resources prime for preservation and protection.
- Plan for aggregate resource extraction where viable deposits remain accessible, as required by the *Metropolitan Land Planning Act*.

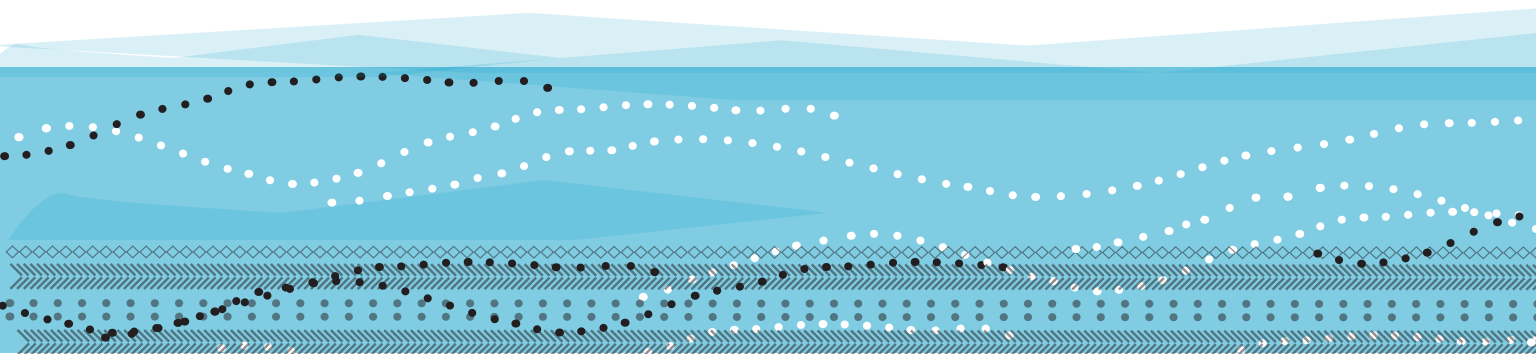


## Water Sustainability

**Conserve, restore, and protect the quality and quantity of the region's water resources to ensure ongoing availability, support public health, and maintain a high quality of life.**

The prosperity, quality of life, and continued development of our region all depend on the sustainability of the quality and quantity of our region's water resources. As discussed earlier, an abundance of natural resources, particularly water, has long contributed to the vibrancy of our region. Early in the region's history, the Mississippi River provided an important source of energy and transportation for the milling industries, shaping the region's development. The region is also home to two other major rivers, the Minnesota and the St. Croix, an expansive network of streams, including high-quality trout streams, and over 900 lakes and numerous wetlands. In addition to the surface waters, the region also boasts access to a multi-layered aquifer system capable of yielding a large supply of good-quality water. These water resources are the foundation for growth and vitality in the region, and we must care for these resources wisely and sustainably in order to prosper.

Sustaining the quality of our region's water bodies is necessary to support the livability of the region and continued natural habitat function. Effective stewardship of our water resources cannot be accomplished through parkland protection alone. As a region, we also need to manage our use of our aquifers for water supply and our region's land use patterns. Land use patterns can impact the quality of both our surface water and groundwater, both through the quantity of stormwater generated from development entering those water bodies and pollutants contained in that stormwater (non-point source pollution). Land use patterns that integrate natural areas into development at the site level add to livability and help avoid costly projects needed to alleviate environmental impacts of development, such as infrastructure to assist in the management of stormwater. Protecting natural areas can help recharge the region's aquifers for water supply, filter and slow stormwater runoff, and reduce flood damage.



## Surface Waters

Water resources have shaped the region's growth and development, as evidenced by the locations of the region's two major downtowns in Minneapolis and Saint Paul to the cities that developed around Lake Minnetonka and White Bear Lake. Our region's waters have also been recognized for not only their beauty and recreational value but also their roles sustaining life and economic activities.

Some of our resources are protected as parks and public lands by levels of government from federal to local. Vadnais-Snail Lakes Regional Park in Ramsey County, Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area in Anoka County, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Louisville Swamp in Scott County are just a few examples of how various public entities have protected some of our surface waters. The St. Croix River, considered one of the most pristine riverways in the nation, is a federally designated National Scenic Riverway with management coordinated among local governments, the National Park Service, and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. The Mississippi River is a state-designated Critical Area<sup>7</sup> and federally designated National River and Recreation Area, with its protection and preservation coordinated among local governments, the Department of Natural Resources, the National Park Service, and the Council. State shoreland rules (Minn. Rules 6120.2500-3900) provide statewide standards that local governments must adopt to manage development along lakeshores to protect lake quality. The Wetland Conservation Act is implemented through local land use controls with oversight from the Board of Water and Soil Resources.



<sup>7</sup> Executive Order No. 79-19 designated the Mississippi River Corridor as a Critical Area in 1979. The Mississippi National River and Recreational Area (MNRRA) was established by Congress as a unit of the National Park Service in 1988. In 1991, Minn. Stat. 116G.15 designated the MNRRA corridor as a state critical area in the *Critical Areas Act*.

## Groundwater Resources

While the Mississippi River supported the initial development of the region, plentiful groundwater accommodated the region's outward growth. Increasing reliance on groundwater over time, however, has become a significant issue. In parts of the region, groundwater levels are declining as described in the "Special Features" section of this document. In some cases, it is affecting, or has the potential to affect, lake levels. A pressing concern is the possible impact of future development on the reliability of groundwater as a water source. Consideration of impacts to our groundwater resources is important during the planning and development processes to ensure that we are not negatively affecting those resources and that we are taking advantage of any opportunities to recharge our groundwater.

## Managing Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems

There are approximately 75,000 individual subsurface sewage treatment systems (SSTS) as well as several more private community systems serving clustered developments in use within the region. Both individual and community systems largely serve portions of the region where wastewater collection and treatment is not available. The Council will work with local governments—including counties, cities, and townships—to ensure that SSTS do not cause surface or groundwater quality problems in areas where collective sanitary sewer service is not available.

As directed under the Metropolitan Land Planning Act, the Council will continue to work with local governments that permit the construction of individual and private wastewater treatment systems to demonstrate through the comprehensive planning process that they have the capability to ensure that these systems are operated effectively consistent with the standards required by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). Local communities and counties must incorporate current MPCA regulations (Minn. Rules Chapters 7080-7083) into their local ordinances and programs for managing subsurface sewage treatment systems.



## COUNCIL ROLE

- Collaborate and convene with state, regional, and local partners to protect, maintain, and enhance natural resources protection and the protection of the quality and quantity of the region's water resources and water supply.
- Work to maintain and improve the quality and availability of the region's water resources to support habitat and ecosystem health while providing for recreational opportunities, all of which are critical elements of our region's quality of life.
- Update regional plans for water supply and pursue environmentally sound and cooperative water reuse practices, conservation initiatives, joint planning, and implementation efforts to maximize surface water infiltration to recharge groundwater supplies.
- Support economic growth and development by promoting the wise use of water through a sustainable balance of surface and groundwater use, conservation, reuse, aquifer recharge and other practices.
- Provide efficient and high-quality regional wastewater infrastructure and services.
- Pursue wastewater reuse where economically feasible as a means to promote sustainable water resources.
- Reduce the excess flow of clear water into the regional wastewater collection system (inflow and infiltration) to protect capacity for future growth.
- Require proper management of subsurface treatment systems, consistent with Minn. Rules Chapters 7080-7083, to minimize impacts on surface water, groundwater, and public health.
- Assure adequate and high quality groundwater and surface water supplies to protect public health and support economic growth and development by promoting the wise use of water through a sustainable balance of surface water and groundwater use, conservation, reuse, aquifer recharge, and other practices.
- Review watershed management plans in coordination with the Board of Water and Soil Resources.
- Review local water plans in partnership with the watershed organizations that approve the local water plans.
- Support implementation of volume reduction techniques such as infiltration or filtration for stormwater management.
- Promote the implementation of best management practices for stormwater management.
- Collaborate with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to provide technical assistance to local governments in implementing the Mississippi River Critical Area Program, and coordinate with the DNR in review of those plans and ordinances.

## COMMUNITY ROLE

- Collaborate and convene with state, regional, and local partners to protect, maintain, and enhance natural resources protection and the protection of the quality and quantity of the region's water resources and water supply.
- Prepare and implement local water supply plans and source water (wellhead) protection ordinances, consistent with Minnesota Rules part 4720, in all communities with municipal water supply.
- Plan land use patterns that facilitate groundwater recharge and reuse, and reduce per capita water use to protect the region's water supply.
- Plan for sustainable water supply options and groundwater recharge areas to promote development in accordance with natural resources protection and efficient use of land.
- Partner with other water supply providers to explore options to reduce dependence on groundwater.
- Prepare and implement local surface water plans as required by Minnesota Rules Chapter 8410, the Metropolitan Land Planning Act, and the *2040 Water Resources Policy Plan*.
- Reduce the excess flow of clear water into the local wastewater collection system (inflow and infiltration). Participate in inflow / infiltration grant programs as available.
- Incorporate current MPCA regulations (Minn. Rules Chapters 7080-7083) as part of a program for managing subsurface sewage treatment systems (SSTS) in the comprehensive plan and local ordinances, and implement the standards in issuing permits. Describe the conditions under which the installation of SSTS will be permitted and the areas not suitable for public or private systems.
- Adopt and enforce ordinances related to stormwater management and erosion control.
- Adopt and implement best management practices for abating, preventing, and reducing point and nonpoint source pollution.
- Develop and adopt critical area plans and ordinances consistent with Executive Order 79-19 and Critical Area Program rules in all communities with affected lands in the Mississippi River Critical Area Corridor.
- Integrate drinking water source protection into local land use decisions, particularly in Drinking Water Supply Management Areas.
- Develop programs that encourage stormwater management, treatment, and infiltration.

## Housing Affordability and Choice

**Promote housing options to give people in all life stages and of all economic means viable choices for safe, stable, and affordable homes.**

Communities throughout the region recognize the significance of housing quality, choice, and affordability. The region is expecting 391,000 new households by 2040. In addition to population growth, other factors influence housing need such as the changing composition of families, household income, and an aging population. Recent years have seen a surge in the demand for multifamily housing, particularly in the central cities, fueled by demographic changes and market interest in areas well-served by transit and amenities.



Housing is an important issue for not only individuals and families, but also businesses; a range of housing options with convenient access to jobs helps attract and retain workers in the region. Housing in close proximity to job opportunities can not only reduce or improve commute times, but also reduce carbon emissions because of shorter travel distances and travel choices other than the automobile.

Opportunities to address housing needs are not limited to new development and redevelopment. Maintenance and preservation of existing housing stock addresses many local housing needs and can offer housing choices closer to many job locations. Selective infill, historic preservation, live/work units, appropriately designed accessory dwellings, and adaptive reuse are also strategies to protect and expand the region's housing stock. Housing affordability and diversification are strongly connected to higher levels of residential density; as a result, unsewered areas are generally inappropriate for new affordable housing.

Because housing and residential land use patterns are durable, often lasting generations, it is critical that residential development advances the broader policy of orderly and efficient land use, including connectivity to jobs, services, amenities, and transportation networks. As further detailed in the *2040 Housing Policy Plan*, communities should plan for a range of housing types to meet the housing needs of all of the region's residents.



## COUNCIL ROLE

- Provide guidance to communities regarding their share of the regional affordable housing need in order to implement the Metropolitan Land Planning Act.
- Provide technical assistance to communities to establish, encourage, expand, and preserve affordable housing options and expand local knowledge of and access to funding assistance for housing, whether public, private, or philanthropic.
- Negotiate lifecycle and affordable housing goals with communities that participate in the Livable Communities Act.
- Strategically invest Council resources to assist community efforts to increase the variety of housing types and costs, attract and retain residents, create and preserve mixed-income neighborhoods, appropriately mix land uses, increase transportation choices, and leverage private investment.
- Encourage the use of sustainable building techniques in housing to promote livability and health, increase energy efficiency, create longer lasting and more durable housing, and benefit the regional environment.
- Promote the preservation of existing housing, especially affordable housing, to maintain the most affordable housing stock.
- Calculate housing performance scores that reflect each community's existing affordable housing stock and new affordable housing opportunities created.
- Collaborate with partners to expand the supply of affordable housing available at all income levels, including extremely low-income households who earn less than 30% of the area median income (that is, \$24,850 for a family of four in 2014).
- Support research and other activities related to fair housing, residential lending, and real estate practices to determine if discriminatory practices are occurring and limiting housing choices.
- Convene regional and local housing stakeholders, including practitioners, funders, and advocates, to refine policies and develop programs to respond to the housing needs of low- and moderate-income households throughout the region.

## COMMUNITY ROLE

- Prepare a local comprehensive plan that addresses the affordable housing planning requirements of the Metropolitan Land Planning Act, including guiding sufficient land to support a community's share of the regional affordable housing need and an implementation section that identifies the programs, fiscal devices, and official controls to be employed to address a community's share of the regional need for affordable housing.
- Review local ordinances, policies, and partnerships to ensure they encourage and facilitate the opportunity for the development or preservation of affordable and lifecycle housing.
- Identify and analyze local markets, location, condition, and availability of affordable units, both publicly subsidized and naturally occurring, to inform the housing element of the local comprehensive plan.
- Participate in Livable Communities Act programs by negotiating affordable and lifecycle housing goals that support regional and local housing needs, and prepare a Housing Action Plan to address those goals and become eligible to access grant funding to address local development and redevelopment objectives.
- Direct new affordable housing development to land with sewer service or adequate community septic systems.
- Collaborate with partners, especially counties, to rehabilitate and preserve existing housing, including in rural areas.

## Access, Mobility, and Transportation Choice

**Sustain and improve a multi modal transportation system to support regional growth, maintain regional economic competitiveness, and provide choices and reliability for the system's users.**

Transportation is pivotal to the region's economy and quality of life. *Thrive MSP 2040* recognizes that a competitive economy, and the economic and social well-being of the region's residents, require a multi-modal transportation system that provides choice and reliability. The Council has a leadership role with regard to investments and services that enhance the mobility of people and freight, improve multi-modal access to regional destinations, and support reuse, infill, and redevelopment efforts. Concern about climate change is also pushing the region to address how we might reduce carbon emissions from transportation.

The community designations described in the previous section reflect the transportation system and the land use patterns that developed alongside it. Most of the region's Job Concentrations as described earlier in *Thrive* are located at the confluence of regional highways, transit, and/or rail service. In the more urbanized communities, transit use and bicycling represent significant shares of travel because destinations are closer and often easier to reach by those modes than by car. In suburban areas, transit use is less common but plays an important role in commuting to the downtowns from park-and-ride facilities.

Geographic patterns of development mean that different areas experience different challenges and opportunities with each transportation mode. The region has a significant investment in the regional highway system. More recently, the region has been developing a system of transitways, including light rail transit (LRT), bus rapid transit (BRT), and arterial bus rapid transit. To ensure that the region prospers and responds to the economic

needs of households and businesses, the Council will be a good steward of these regional investments. As described in the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*, this includes detailing land use development expectations to leverage and support transit investments, identifying cost-effective means of improving multi-modal access to regional destinations, and improving mobility and reliability on the regional highway system, especially when it benefits movement and accessibility for freight, transit, carpools, and MnPASS users.

Managing regional growth and travel demand requires a partnership between the region and its communities. Regional highways, including principal and A-minor arterials, and transitways are planned and designed to provide faster travel over longer distances. Local transportation systems, on the other hand, play an important role at the beginning and end of all trips whether for automobiles, freight movement, bicycling, or walking. A critical piece of local transportation planning is the development of interconnected local street networks. In many cases, the regional highway system, including county minor arterial roadways, are serving short trips that should be made on local roadways. Interconnected local streets with more direct routes also lay the foundation for better conditions for walking and bicycling. More direct routes, route alternatives, and a wider distribution of traffic also create opportunities for greater sharing of public right-of-way among different modes.

In particular, the development of the regional transit system is enhanced by the development of local bicycle and pedestrian systems. Transit patrons may not own cars, and

transit trips typically end on foot even if they began at a park-and-ride. Local pedestrian and bicycle planning is also critical for the development of local and regional centers, where intensification and diversification of land uses create economies of scale and an opportunity to make shorter local trips on foot or by bike. Local bicycle and pedestrian planning is also critical in more automobile-oriented parts of the region where sidewalk networks are essential for people who are transit-dependent to reach jobs. Regardless of the development pattern, communities can identify cost-effective opportunities to make biking and walking a more attractive alternative over time as redevelopment occurs and as roadways and rights-of-way are planned, improved, or reconstructed.

### COUNCIL ROLE

- Oversee the planning of a multimodal, interconnected regional transportation system in cooperation with state agencies, counties, local governments, and suburban transit providers.
- Invest in and operate transit services commensurate with efficient and effective standards established by Transit Market Areas defined in the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*. Coordinate other regional transit services to ensure a consistent and convenient user experience.
- Support investments to safely operate, preserve and improve the regional highway system, which includes principal and A-minor arterials, by providing transit advantages, MnPASS lanes, and implementing cost-effective, management, spot mobility, and strategic capacity improvements.
- Support the management of access points to state and county road systems and emphasize construction of an interconnected local public street system.
- Support the development of regional bicycle corridors as defined in the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan* to provide viable transportation options.
- Invest in the development and improvement of regional trails as defined in the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* to better connect communities with regional parks and to provide recreational opportunities. Encourage communities to plan and develop local trail connections to the Regional Parks System where appropriate.
- Work with local, regional, and state partners to coordinate transportation, pedestrian, bicycle, and trail connections across jurisdictional boundaries.
- Use Council investments and policies to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and carbon per unit of fuel, which are key drivers of the region's generation of greenhouse gas emissions.
- Ensure that transportation elements of local comprehensive plans provide for pedestrian and bicycle access to regional transit services, regional trails, and regional bicycle corridors.
- Invest in transportation improvements that support the export and mobility of freight by truck, rail, air, and barge.
- Coordinate with the Metropolitan Airports Commission, the Federal Aviation Administration, Minnesota Department of Transportation Office of Aeronautics, and local communities to ensure that land uses and air space adjacent to the system of regional airports is protected from incompatible uses.





## COMMUNITY ROLE

- Consider travel modes other than the car at all levels of development (site plan, subdivision, comprehensive planning) to better connect and integrate choices throughout all stages of planning.
- Plan for and construct an interconnected system of local streets, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities that is integrated with the regional system to minimize short trips on the regional highway system.
- Adopt access management standards that support state and county highway access and mobility needs.
- Plan for compatible land uses and air space adjacent to the system of regional airports.
- Participate in regional transportation planning activities to ensure that the metropolitan planning process and regional transportation system reflect local needs.
- Work with partners in communities, counties, and the region at large to coordinate transportation, pedestrian, bicycle, and trail connections within and between jurisdictional boundaries.

## Economic Competitiveness

### **Foster connected land use options to provide businesses and industries with access to materials, markets, and talent.**

Just as the region's residents need housing, so do the region's businesses and institutions need land to locate their enterprises and jobs. Commercial, industrial and institutional land uses comprise only 6% of the region's land area compared to 22% for housing. More than half of the region's 1.5 million jobs are located in Job Concentrations, which consume less than 2% of the land area of the region. Though a small portion of the region's overall land supply, these land uses provide the locations for the jobs and economic activity that lead to prosperity.

The Twin Cities region is expecting 550,000 new jobs between 2010 and 2040, and businesses want to site those jobs in locations with access to materials, markets, and talent. Freight transportation networks, whether river, rail, air, or road, transport raw materials and finished goods to and from state, national, and international markets. Proximity to workers—particularly via attractive commute modes—increases employers' desirability as places to work and minimizes the negative impact of travel time delays.

Businesses seeking to locate or expand in the region want viable location options—whether defined by accessibility to transportation or talent. To maintain the region's economic competitiveness, communities should ensure that local land use provides location choices that can meet business needs. To achieve this, communities should engage business voices early and often in the local comprehensive planning process.

While housing tends to last for generations, commercial and industrial buildings often have short life spans and turn over quickly to meet new locational needs. As these commercial and industrial uses change and move, cleaning up the contaminated land creates opportunities for new industry in places that have already benefited from prior infrastructure investment. More broadly, cleaning up contaminated land facilitates bringing underutilized and abandoned properties back on the tax rolls for a variety of uses, whether prior uses were industrial, commercial, or residential.



### COUNCIL ROLE

- Prioritize regional investments that improve access to national and international markets by regional and state businesses.
- Ensure that regional growth is managed in efficient ways that allow for a variety of choices in location and transportation for businesses and residents.
- Support a variety of freight transport to better connect the region with state, national, and international markets.
- Support the cleanup of contaminated land for new industry, including manufacturing and other sectors that are export industries for the region.
- Promote the intensification of existing and emerging Job Concentrations.
- Provide technical assistance to help local communities better understand their contributions to the regional economy; provide information, research, and analysis on economic competitiveness.
- Support cost-effective subregional infrastructure investments in efforts to promote sustainable water use and protect the region's water supplies.
- Support local and regional efforts to develop climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies to remain economically competitive.

### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Plan for the further development of and intensification of existing and emerging Job Concentrations.
- Consider completing a community-based market analysis to better understand real estate needs for commercial and industrial land.
- Consider addressing economic competitiveness in the local comprehensive plan.
- Preserve sites for highway-, river-, and rail-dependent manufacturing and freight transportation.
- Engage with businesses and other employers to ensure their input is provided to the local comprehensive plan.



## Building in Resilience

**Promote sensitive land use and development patterns to contribute toward achieving Minnesota's adopted greenhouse gas emission goals at the regional scale, and to develop local resiliency to the impacts of climate change.**

The effects of climate change transcend community boundaries and are felt throughout our region, whether as flooded farmlands, modified growing seasons, rising energy costs, or storm sewer systems overloaded from large summer storms. The built environment is a primary contributor to climate change, resulting from the energy used in homes and businesses and our travel behaviors that result from our pattern of regional land use development. The Minnesota Climate Change Advisory Group Final Report found that transportation contributed 24% of the state's total greenhouse gas emissions in 2005, with the use of fossil fuels in residential, commercial, and industrial sectors adding another 20%. As such, the region's response to climate change must include measures to reduce both greenhouse gas emissions and the vulnerability of our local systems to climate change impacts.

The Council's land use direction is rooted in our mission to guide the orderly and economical growth of the region, but changes to our region's land use patterns can also help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Compact development and redevelopment near Job Concentrations or transit will result in fewer emissions from transportation. Redevelopment or renovation of existing buildings for new uses is more energy-efficient than new development and takes advantage of existing infrastructure. Growth at the edge of the region that includes interconnected streets and walkable/bikeable destinations nearby will also result in fewer emissions from local trips.

The Council is reducing its own energy consumption and emissions through multifaceted initiatives. For example, Metropolitan Council Environmental Services has reduced its energy purchases at its wastewater treatment plants by 21% from 2006 to 2013, an energy equivalent of 2,500 households. By 2020, the Council aims to reduce its energy purchases by 50%. In 2008, Metro Transit worked with Xcel Energy to perform a comprehensive energy audit of bus garages, followed by \$8.8 million in energy-saving improvements, expected to be recouped through utility savings by the end of 2014.

Communities are choosing to reduce their contributions to climate change and attempting to mitigate its impacts through a variety of energy reduction measures, developing in a more compact land use pattern, and reducing automobile dependency, to name a few. Integrating natural resources into our development patterns, or green infrastructure, can also serve to improve the resiliency of the existing built environment, considering that many plant communities can help manage stormwater. Improving urban forestry can mitigate emissions and provide additional benefits, such as an improved pedestrian experience and reduction of urban heat island effects. Taking these measures ensures that communities are better prepared to deal with more frequent extreme weather events and other expected climate impacts that can drain limited local resources and threaten the region's competitiveness and viability.

Because of the related benefits, many communities are responding to climate change by reducing their energy use. Local government budgets are leaner than ever, and addressing

climate change can cut energy costs. For example, the City of Falcon Heights began with implementing improvements to its solid waste operations, instituting lighting retrofits throughout the city, adopting a new recycling program, and exploring solar power, all implemented or to be implemented as cost saving measures. Another resource focusing on the built environment for communities is Minnesota's B3 Sustainable Building 2030 (SB 2030) Energy Standard, which is a conservation program designed to significantly reduce energy use in commercial, institutional, and industrial buildings.

Effective land use planning provides a community with the tools needed to better address climate change locally. Encouraging land use policies that create a more compact land use pattern can reduce energy consumption, protect public investments in infrastructure, lessen development pressures on habitat and open space, provide benefits to public health, and create more sustainable communities. Innovative land use policies can create a more compact region resulting in more efficient use of our infrastructure investments, cost-effective extension of urban services, and preservation of natural and agricultural areas within the region.



## COUNCIL ROLE

- Substantially reduce energy consumption at Council facilities, improve the efficiency of the Council's vehicle fleets including Metro Transit buses, and provide information to the public and partners to lead by example.
- With regional infrastructure, planning, and operations, increase efforts to reduce water use and energy consumption.
- Identify and address potential vulnerabilities in regional systems as a result of increased frequency and severity of storms and heat waves. Maintain dikes, emergency generators, and response plans for Council facilities facing extreme weather.
- Use the Council's investments and planning authorities to contribute toward meeting statutory goals for reductions in the generation of regional greenhouse gas emissions.
- Convene regional discussions about goals for climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Encourage the preparation of adaptation, mitigation, and resiliency responses to climate change as part of the comprehensive plan update.
- Develop, collect, and disseminate information about climate change, including energy and climate data, GreenStep Cities best practices, and the next generation of the Regional Indicators data.
- Work with the State of Minnesota on a greenhouse gas emissions inventory that informs regional discussion on emissions reduction.
- Provide technical assistance and toolkit resources to communities in integrating climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies as part of local comprehensive plans.
- Develop and strengthen partnerships with experts in climate change to better assist and inform local communities on how best to evaluate and develop local climate changes strategies.

*continued*

## COUNCIL ROLE

- Encourage communities to participate in regional programs which support efforts to inform, plan for, mitigate, adapt, and respond to climate change issues of local significance such as water conservation, stormwater infrastructure adaptation, greenhouse gas reduction, use of alternative energy sources, infrastructure planning, and hazard mitigation planning.
- Provide technical references and resources for communities seeking to mitigate and adapt to climate change in their own facilities and in their communities. Examples of these resources include stormwater, wastewater, and water supply management practices, and transit and land use planning.
- Provide, or collaborate with partners to provide, technical references, and resources for communities seeking to mitigate and adapt to climate change, in their own facilities and in their communities, including, but not limited to, stormwater, wastewater, and water supply management practices, and transit, and land-use planning.

## COMMUNITY ROLE

- Address climate change mitigation and adaptation in locally meaningful ways in the local comprehensive plan.
- Identify local measures that would result in reductions in water use, energy consumption, and emission of greenhouse gases.
- Ensure that local comprehensive plans and ordinances protect and enable the development of solar resources, as required by the Metropolitan Land Planning Act, and consider the use of other alternative energy sources as part of the planning process.
- Consider the development or use of community solar gardens (CSGs) by public and private entities to enable fuller and more economic use of the community's solar resource, including participating as subscribers, assisting in marketing community solar garden opportunities for economic development, and providing sites for gardens to be developed.
- Identify local measures to address impacts to local economies, local resources, and infrastructure systems as a result of more frequent or severe weather events.
- Identify local initiatives as cost-saving measures that may, as a result, lower energy consumption, reduce the generation of greenhouse gas emissions, preserve water supply, reduce municipal waste, or increase participation in recycling programs.
- Participate in programs that evaluate and share city practices and provide technical support, such as the GreenStep Cities program and the Regional Indicators Initiative.



Land use policies balance both  
urban and rural qualities in our  
metropolitan area.









## Land Use Policies by Community Designation

As discussed earlier in *Thrive MSP 2040*, the Council assigns a community designation to each city and township. This designation indicates the overall state of development and regional issues faced by that community. Recognizing that one size does not fit all, the Council uses community designations to group communities with similar characteristics to more effectively target its policies. This section describes land use policy specific to each community designation to supplement the Land Use Policy common to all communities found in the previous section of *Thrive*.

### Urban Center: Growing vitality in the region's core

Urban Center communities include the largest, most centrally located and most economically diverse cities of the region. Anchored by Minneapolis and Saint Paul, the Urban Center also includes adjoining cities that share similar development characteristics such as street grids planned before World War II.

#### Orderly and Efficient Land Use

##### COUNCIL ROLE

- Maintain and improve regional infrastructure to support adaptive reuse, infill development, and redevelopment.
- Support local planning and implementation efforts to focus growth in and around regional transit as articulated in the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*.
- Coordinate regional infrastructure and program funding with other efforts designed to mitigate Areas of Concentrated Poverty and Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty and better connect the residents of these areas with opportunity.
- Partner with local communities to improve land use patterns to reduce the generation of carbon emissions.

##### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Plan for forecasted population and household growth at average densities of at least 20 units per acre for new development and redevelopment. Target opportunities for more intensive development near regional transit investments at densities and in a manner articulated in the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*.
- Identify areas for redevelopment, particularly areas that are well-served by transportation options and nearby amenities and that contribute to better proximity between jobs and housing.
- Identify opportunities for land assembly to prepare sites that will attract future private reinvestment, especially in Areas of Concentrated Poverty and Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty.
- In collaboration with other regional partners, lead major redevelopment efforts, such as at the former Ford Plant site.
- Lead detailed land use planning efforts around regional transit stations and other regional investments.
- Plan for and program local infrastructure needs (for example, roads, sidewalks, sewer, water, surface water), including those needed for future growth and to implement local comprehensive plans.
- Recognize opportunities for urban agriculture and small-scale food production.

## Urban Center

### Natural Resources Protection

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Support the reclamation of lands, including contaminated land, for redevelopment and the restoration of natural features and functions.
- Promote multimodal access to regional parks, trails, and the transit network, where appropriate.
- Support the continued development of the regional trail system.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Integrate natural resource conservation and restoration strategies into the comprehensive plan and in local infrastructure projects where appropriate.
- Identify lands for reclamation, including contaminated land, for redevelopment and the restoration of natural features and functions.

### Water Sustainability

#### COUNCIL ROLE

See policy discussion on Water Sustainability in the “Land Use Policy” section.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Implement best management practices to control and treat stormwater as redevelopment opportunities arise.

### Housing Affordability and Choice

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Invest in and expand regional systems to support redevelopment in communities that partner in the preservation and expansion of housing choices.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Designate land in the comprehensive plan to support household growth forecasts and address the community’s share of the region’s affordable housing need through development and redevelopment at a range of densities.
- Plan for a mix of housing affordability in station areas along transitways.
- Use state, regional, and federal sources of funding and/or financing and development tools allowed by state law to facilitate the development of new lifecycle and affordable housing.
- Plan for affordable housing that meets the needs of multigenerational households.

## Urban Center

### Access, Mobility, and Transportation Choice

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Ensure that local roadway systems are planned in ways that minimize short trips on the regional highway system.
- Ensure that local infrastructure and land uses are planned in ways that are consistent with managing access along the regional highway system and capitalizing on investments in the regional transit system.
- Invest in transit improvements in corridors that serve existing transit demand and that can effectively guide a significant level of future growth.
- Ensure that local comprehensive plans accommodate growth in and around transit stations and near high-frequency transit services, commensurate with planned levels of transit service and station typologies identified in the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*.
- Support access to, and the future growth of, regional intermodal freight terminals as identified in the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Develop comprehensive plans that target growth in and around regional transit stations and near high-frequency transit services, commensurate with planned levels of transit service and the station typologies (for example, land use mix, density levels) identified in the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*.
- Develop local policies, plans, and practices that improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation, including access to regional transit services, regional trails, and regional bicycle corridors.
- Consider implementation of travel demand management (TDM) policies and ordinances that encourage use of travel options and decrease reliance on single-occupancy vehicle travel.
- Engage private sector stakeholders who depend on or are affected by the local transportation system to address local business needs such as routing, delivery, and potential land use conflicts.
- Adopt development standards that improve the user experience, circulation, and access for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Adopt Complete Streets policies that improve safety and mobility for all road users.



## Urban Center

### Economic Competitiveness

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Invest in regional amenities and services, including transit, regional parks and trails, and bikeways to reinforce the Urban Center as an attractive place to locate and do business.
- Coordinate regional infrastructure and program funding with other efforts designed to mitigate Areas of Concentrated Poverty and Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty and better connect the residents of these areas with opportunity.
- Invest Council resources to clean up contaminated properties and facilitate reinvestment, including infill, adaptive reuse, and redevelopment.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Identify appropriate areas for business and industrial expansion, considering access by rail, truck, plane, and barge.
- Protect sites for highway-, river- and rail-dependent manufacturing and freight transportation needs from incompatible uses and identify local land supply and transportation needs for effective use of those sites.
- Plan for land uses that support the growth of businesses that export goods and services outside the region, important regional economic clusters, and living wage jobs.
- Support the cleanup and re-use of contaminated land by utilizing regional, county, and local funding programs and financing tools.
- Preserve, remediate contamination, and repurpose the industrial base for higher-intensity employment and new industries.
- Conduct small area planning efforts to preserve locations for employment, manage growth, and minimize land use conflicts.

### Building in Resilience

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Invest in regional transportation infrastructure and services that increase the share of trips made by transit, carpools, and nonmotorized means and guide development patterns that support this.
- Explore developing an urban forestry assistance program.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Identify and address potential vulnerabilities in local infrastructure as a result of increased frequency and severity of storms and heat waves.
- Participate in federal, state, and local utility programs that incentivize the implementation of wind and solar power generation.
- Consider making a property-assessed clean energy (PACE) program available for conservation and renewable energy.
- Consider promoting the development or use of community solar gardens (CSGs) by public and private entities to enable fuller and more economic use of the community's solar resource, including participating as subscribers, assisting in marketing CSG opportunities for economic development, or providing sites for gardens.
- Adopt local policies and ordinances that encourage land development that supports travel demand management (TDM) and use of travel options.
- Consider development standards that increase vegetative cover and increase the solar reflective quality of surfaces.
- Participate in urban forestry assistance programs as available.

## Urban: Redeveloping to meet the needs of new generations

Urban communities developed primarily during the economic prosperity between the end of World War II and the economic recession of 1973-1975. These cities, adjacent to the Urban Center communities, experienced rapid development to house the growing families of the baby boom era. With considerable growth and development along highways, the Urban communities exhibit the transition toward the development stage dominated by the influence of the automobile.

### Orderly and Efficient Land Use

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Maintain and improve regional infrastructure to support adaptive reuse, infill development, and redevelopment.
- Support local planning and implementation efforts to target growth in and around regional transit, as articulated in the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*.
- Coordinate regional infrastructure and program funding with other efforts designed to mitigate Areas of Concentrated Poverty and Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty, and better connect the residents of these areas with opportunity. Provide technical assistance to communities undertaking planning efforts around regional transit stations and other regional investments.
- Partner with local communities to improve land use patterns to reduce the generation of carbon emissions.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Plan for forecasted population and household growth at average densities of at least 10 units per acre for new development and redevelopment. Target opportunities for more intensive development near regional transit investments at densities and in a manner articulated in the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*.
- Identify areas for redevelopment, particularly areas that are well-served by transportation options and nearby amenities and that contribute to better proximity between jobs and housing.
- In collaboration with other regional partners, lead major redevelopment efforts, as at the Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant (TCAAP) site.
- Lead detailed land use planning efforts around regional transit stations and other regional investments.
- Plan for and program local infrastructure needs (for example, roads, sidewalks, sewer, water, and surface water), including those needed for future growth and to implement the local comprehensive plan.
- Recognize opportunities for urban agriculture and small-scale food production.

## Urban

### Natural Resources Protection

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Integrate natural resource conservation and restoration strategies into regional system plans and capital projects.
- Support the reclamation of lands, including contaminated land, for redevelopment and the restoration of natural features and functions.
- Promote multimodal access to regional parks, trails, and the transit network, where appropriate.
- Support the continued development of the regional trail system.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Integrate natural resource conservation and restoration strategies into the local comprehensive plan.
- Identify lands for reclamation, including contaminated land, for redevelopment and the restoration of natural features and functions.
- Develop programs that encourage the implementation of natural resource conservation and restoration.

## Urban

### Water Sustainability

#### COUNCIL ROLE

See policy discussion on Water Sustainability in the “Land Use Policy” section.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Implement best management practices to control and treat stormwater as redevelopment opportunities arise.
- Explore alternative water supply sources to ensure adequate water resources beyond 2040.

### Housing Affordability and Choice

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Invest in and expand regional systems to support redevelopment in communities that partner in the preservation and expansion of housing choices.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Designate land in the comprehensive plan to support household growth forecasts and address the community’s share of the region’s affordable housing need through redevelopment at a range of densities.
- Plan for a mix of housing affordability in station areas along transitways.
- Plan for affordable housing that meets the needs of multigenerational households.
- Use state, regional, and federal sources of funding and/or financing and development tools allowed by state law to facilitate the development of new lifecycle and affordable housing.

## Urban

### Access, Mobility, and Transportation Choice

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Ensure that local roadway systems are planned in ways that minimize short trips on the regional highway system.
- Ensure that local infrastructure and land uses are planned in ways that are consistent with managing access along the regional highway system and capitalizing on investments in the regional transit system.
- Invest in transit improvements in corridors that serve existing transit demand and that can effectively guide a significant level of future growth.
- Ensure that local comprehensive plans accommodate growth in and around transit stations and near high-frequency transit services, commensurate with planned levels of transit service and station typologies identified in the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*.
- Provide regional transit services to serve dense corridors and nodes where local communities are adapting local policies to improve the success of transit.
- Support access to, and the future growth of, regional intermodal freight terminals as identified in the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Develop comprehensive plans that focus growth in and around regional transit stations and near high-frequency transit services, commensurate with planned levels of transit service and the station typologies (for example, land use mix, density levels) identified in the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*.
- Develop local policies, plans, and practices that improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation, including access to regional transit services, regional trails, and regional bicycle corridors.
- Consider implementation of travel demand management (TDM) policies and ordinances that encourage use of travel options and decrease reliance on single-occupancy vehicle travel.
- Engage private sector stakeholders who depend on or are affected by the local transportation system to address local business needs such as routing, delivery, and potential land use conflicts.
- Adopt development standards that improve the user experience, circulation, and access for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Adopt Complete Streets policies that improve safety and mobility for all road users.



## Economic Competitiveness

### COUNCIL ROLE

- Invest in regional amenities and services, including transit, regional parks and trails, and bikeways to reinforce the Urban area as an attractive place to locate and do business.
- Coordinate regional infrastructure and program funding with other efforts designed to mitigate Areas of Concentrated Poverty and Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty and better connect the residents of these areas with opportunity.
- Invest Council resources to clean up contaminated properties and facilitate reinvestment, including infill, adaptive reuse, and redevelopment.

### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Identify appropriate areas for business and industrial expansion, considering access by rail, truck, plane, and barge.
- Support the cleanup and reuse of contaminated land by utilizing regional, county, and local funding programs and financing tools.
- Preserve, remediate contamination, and repurpose the industrial base for higher-intensity employment and new industries.
- Protect sites for highway-, river-, and rail-dependent manufacturing and freight transportation needs from incompatible uses and identify local land supply and transportation needs for effective use of those sites.
- Plan for land uses that support the growth of businesses that export goods and services outside the region, important regional economic clusters, and living wage jobs.
- Conduct small area planning efforts to preserve locations for employment, manage growth, and minimize land use conflicts.

## Building in Resilience

### COUNCIL ROLE

- Invest in regional transportation infrastructure and services that increase the share of trips made by transit, carpools, and nonmotorized means and guide development patterns that support this.
- Explore developing an urban forestry assistance program.

### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Identify and address potential vulnerabilities in local infrastructure as a result of increased frequency and severity of storms and heat waves.
- Participate in federal, state, and local utility programs that incentivize the implementation of wind and solar power generation.
- Consider making a property-assessed clean energy (PACE) program available for conservation and renewable energy.
- Consider promoting the development or use of community solar gardens (CSGs) by public and private entities to enable fuller and more economic use of the community's solar resource, including participating as subscribers, assisting in marketing CSG opportunities for economic development, or providing sites for gardens.
- Adopt local policies and ordinances that encourage land development that supports travel demand management (TDM) and use of travel options.
- Consider development standards that increase vegetative cover and increase the solar reflective quality of surfaces.
- Participate in urban forestry assistance programs as available.

## Suburban: Cultivating places where people can gather

Suburban communities saw their primary era of development during the 1980s and early 1990s as the Baby Boomers formed families and entered their prime earning years. Suburban communities also include places that were once resort destinations along Lake Minnetonka and White Bear Lake as well as communities along the St. Croix River settled early in the region's history.

### Orderly and Efficient Land Use

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Maintain and improve regional infrastructure to support adaptive reuse, infill development, and redevelopment.
- Support local planning and implementation efforts to target growth in and around regional transit as articulated in the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*.
- Coordinate regional infrastructure and program funding with other efforts designed to mitigate Areas of Concentrated Poverty and Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty and better connect the residents of these areas with opportunity.
- Provide technical assistance to communities undertaking planning efforts around regional transit stations and other regional investments.
- Partner with local communities to improve land use patterns to reduce the generation of carbon emissions.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Plan for forecasted population and household growth at overall average densities of at least 5 units per acre, and target opportunities for more intensive development near regional transit investments at densities and in a manner articulated in the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*.
- Identify areas for redevelopment, particularly areas that are well-served by transportation options and nearby amenities and that contribute to better proximity between jobs and housing.
- In collaboration with other regional partners, lead major redevelopment efforts.
- Lead detailed land use planning efforts around regional transit stations and other regional investments.
- Plan for and program local infrastructure needs (for example, roads, sidewalks, sewer, water, and surface water), including those needed to accommodate future growth and implement local comprehensive plans.

### Natural Resources Protection

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Support the reclamation of lands, including contaminated land, for redevelopment and the restoration of natural features and functions.
- Promote multimodal access to regional parks, trails, and the transit network, where appropriate. Support the continued development of the regional trail system.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Integrate natural resource conservation and restoration strategies into the comprehensive plan.
- Identify lands for reclamation, including contaminated land, for redevelopment and the restoration of natural features and functions.
- Integrate natural resources restoration and protection strategies into local development ordinances.
- Develop programs that encourage the implementation of natural resource conservation and restoration.

## Suburban

### Water Sustainability

#### COUNCIL ROLE

See policy discussion on Water Sustainability in the “Land Use Policy” section.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Implement best management practices to control and treat stormwater as redevelopment opportunities arise.
- Explore alternative water supply sources to ensure adequate water resources beyond 2040.

### Housing Affordability and Choice

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Invest in and expand regional systems to support redevelopment in communities that partner in the preservation and expansion of housing choices.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Designate land in the comprehensive plan to support household growth forecasts and address the community’s share of the region’s affordable housing need through development and redevelopment at a range of densities.
- Plan for a mix of housing affordability in station areas along transitways.
- Use state, regional, and federal sources of funding and/or financing and development tools allowed by state law to facilitate the development of new lifecycle and affordable housing.
- Plan for affordable housing that meets the needs of multigenerational households.

## Suburban

### Access, Mobility, and Transportation

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Ensure that local roadway systems are planned in ways that minimize short trips on the regional highway system.
- Ensure that local infrastructure and land uses are planned in ways that are consistent with managing access along the regional highway system and capitalizing on investments in the regional transit system.
- Invest in transit improvements in corridors that serve existing transit demand and that can effectively guide a significant level of future growth.
- Ensure that local comprehensive plans guide growth in and around transit stations and near high-frequency transit services, commensurate with planned levels of transit service and station typologies identified in the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*.
- Provide regional transit services to serve dense corridors and nodes where local communities are adapting local policies to improve the success of transit.
- Support access to, and the future growth of, regional intermodal freight terminals as identified in the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Develop comprehensive plans that focus growth in and around regional transit stations and near high-frequency transit services, commensurate with planned levels of transit service and the station typologies (for example, land use mix, density levels) identified in the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*.
- Develop local policies, plans, and practices that improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation, including access to regional transit services, regional trails, and regional bicycle corridors.
- Seek opportunities to improve local street and pedestrian connections to improve access for local trips.
- Consider implementation of travel demand management (TDM) policies and ordinances that encourage use of travel options and decrease reliance on single-occupancy vehicle travel.
- Engage private sector stakeholders who depend on or are affected by the local transportation system to address local business needs such as routing, delivery, and potential land use conflicts.
- Adopt development standards that improve the user experience, circulation, and access for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Adopt Complete Streets policies that improve safety and mobility for all road users.



## Suburban

### Economic Competitiveness

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Invest in regional amenities and services, including transit, regional parks and trails, and bikeways to support the Suburban area as an attractive place to locate and do business.
- Coordinate regional infrastructure and program funding with other efforts designed to mitigate Areas of Concentrated Poverty and Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty and better connect the residents of these areas with opportunity.
- Support the development of workforce housing to provide nearby housing options for employees of local employers.
- Invest Council resources to clean up contaminated properties and facilitate reinvestment, including infill, adaptive reuse, and redevelopment.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Identify appropriate areas for business and industrial expansion, considering access by rail, truck, plane, and barge.
- Support the cleanup and reuse of contaminated land by utilizing regional, county, and local funding programs and financing tools.
- Preserve, remediate contamination, and repurpose the industrial base for higher-intensity employment and new industries.
- Protect sites for highway-, river-, and rail-dependent manufacturing and freight transportation needs from incompatible uses and identify local land supply and transportation needs for effective use of those sites.
- Plan for land uses that support the growth of businesses that export goods and services outside the region, important regional economic clusters, and living wage jobs.
- Conduct small area planning efforts to preserve locations for employment, manage growth, and minimize land use conflicts.

### Building in Resilience

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Invest in regional transportation infrastructure and services that increase the share of trips made by transit, carpools, and nonmotorized means and guide development patterns that support this.
- Explore developing an urban forestry assistance program.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Identify and address potential vulnerabilities in local infrastructure as a result of increased frequency and severity of storms and heat waves.
- Participate in federal, state, and local utility programs that incentivize the implementation of wind and solar power generation.
- Consider making a property-assessed clean energy (PACE) program available for conservation and renewable energy.
- Consider promoting the development or use of community solar gardens (CSGs) by public and private entities to enable fuller and more economic use of the community's solar resource, including participating as subscribers, assisting in marketing CSG opportunities for economic development, or providing sites for gardens.
- Adopt local policies and ordinances that encourage land development that supports travel demand management (TDM) and use of travel options.
- Consider development standards that increase vegetative cover and increase the solar reflective quality of surfaces.
- Participate in urban forestry assistance programs as available.

## Suburban Edge: Managing rapid growth and change

The Suburban Edge includes communities that have experienced significant residential growth beginning in the 1990s and continuing to the 2010s. At least 40% of the land in these cities is developed, but significant amounts of land remain for future development. These communities generally no longer contain large-scale agricultural areas.

### Orderly and Efficient Land Use

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Support local efforts and policies to plan for growth that efficiently uses transportation and transit infrastructure and regional services.
- Promote land use patterns with clear distinctions between urban and rural areas to protect natural resources and land for agricultural viability.
- Provide technical assistance to communities on land use strategies and staged development to inform the local comprehensive planning process.
- Partner with local communities to improve land use patterns to reduce the generation of carbon emissions.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Plan and stage development for forecasted growth through 2040 and beyond at overall average net densities of at least 3-5 dwelling units per acre in the community. Target higher-intensity developments in areas with better access to regional sewer and transportation infrastructure, connections to local commercial activity centers, transit facilities, and recreational amenities.
- Ensure the efficient use of land when planning for and approving new developments and redevelopment projects.

### Natural Resources Protection

#### COUNCIL ROLE

See policy discussion on Natural Resources Protection in the “Land Use Policy” section.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Complete local natural resources inventories, prioritize areas to protect, and integrate natural resources conservation into local ordinances.
- Conserve natural resources and protect vital natural areas when designing and constructing local infrastructure and planning land use patterns.
- Encourage site planning that incorporates natural areas as part of site development and redevelopment.

## Suburban Edge

### Water Sustainability

#### COUNCIL ROLE

See policy discussion on Water Sustainability in the “Land Use Policy” section.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Incorporate best management practices for stormwater management in planning processes and implement best management practices to control and treat stormwater with development and redevelopment.
- Integrate water sustainability and protection of groundwater recharge areas into local plans. Consider how development, irrigation, reductions in infiltration and inflow, and increased surface runoff impact groundwater recharge and consider conservation strategies and best management practices to mitigate these impacts.
- Adopt and implement best management practices for protection of natural resources, the quality and quantity of our water resources, and the preservation of water supply.
- Explore alternative water supply sources to ensure adequate water resources beyond 2040.

### Housing Affordability and Choice

#### COUNCIL ROLE

See policy discussion on Housing Affordability and Choice in the “Land Use Policy” section.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Designate land in the comprehensive plan to support household growth forecasts and address the community’s share of the region’s affordable housing need through development and redevelopment at a range of densities.
- Use state, regional, and federal sources of funding and/or financing and development tools allowed by state law to facilitate the development of new lifecycle and affordable housing.
- Plan for affordable housing that meets the needs of multigenerational households.
- Develop or use programs to preserve the existing stock of naturally occurring affordable housing.

### Building in Resilience

#### COUNCIL ROLE

See policy discussion on Building in Resilience in the “Land Use Policies” section.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Identify local measures that would result in reductions in water use, energy consumption, and emission of greenhouse gases.
- Identify local mitigation and adaptation strategies and infrastructure resiliency plans to protect against potential negative impacts to local economies, local resources, and infrastructure systems that result from more frequent or severe weather events.
- Implement compact development patterns and create more connected places to reduce auto-dependency and related generation of greenhouse gas emissions.

## Suburban Edge

### Access, Mobility, and Transportation Choice

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Invest in strategic transit and transportation improvements that support more reliable access to and from Suburban Edge communities.
- Plan park-and-ride capacity in parts of the region where there is significant demand for access to regional destinations, but where it is currently not cost-effective to provide local bus connections.
- Plan transit facilities to better incorporate alternative mode connections, such as trails and sidewalks, for facilities serving locations where commuters have to travel greater distances to complete their trip.
- Encourage communities to develop at densities and in ways that could eventually support local transit service, including walking and bicycling connections to transit.
- Invest in the development and improvement of regional trails and regional bicycle corridors to better connect communities and provide viable transportation options for commuting via alternative modes.
- Work with state agencies, counties, and local governments to provide assistance in planning for freight transportation to connect the rural and urban areas' markets and resources.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Develop local policies, plans, and practices that improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation, including access to regional transit services, regional trails with improved pedestrian connections, and regional bicycle corridors.
- Target opportunities for intensive development in nodes along corridors with existing or strong potential for future transit investment, consistent with the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*, to create the transit-supportive land use patterns necessary for efficient future transit service and investment.
- Work with partners in communities and counties to overcome barriers to transportation and to improve pedestrian and bicycle connections across jurisdictional boundaries.

### Economic Competitiveness

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Invest in regional amenities and services, including transit (where supported by land use), regional parks and trails, and bikeways to support the Suburban Edge area as an attractive place to locate and do business.
- Promote local planning around key intersections, regional infrastructure, and business needs.
- Support the development of workforce housing to provide nearby housing options for employees of local employers.
- Convene interested partners to further strategies toward increasing regional competitiveness and include discussion of how Suburban Edge communities can contribute to the region's overall economic growth.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Consider how local efforts to focus economic development strategies along existing commercial centers (historic downtowns or commercial corridors) can contribute to the region's overall economic competitiveness through enhanced integration of local and regional planning efforts.
- Protect sites for highway-, river- and rail-dependent manufacturing and freight transportation needs from incompatible uses and identify local land supply and transportation needs for effective use of those sites.
- Identify important multimodal intersections, alternative freight routes, key intersections, and other existing opportunities that may contribute to local and regional economic competitiveness.



## Emerging Suburban Edge: Transitioning from rural to developed

The Emerging Suburban Edge includes cities, townships and portions of both that are in the early stages of transitioning into urbanized levels of development. Strategically located between Suburban Edge and Rural communities, the Emerging Suburban Edge communities offer both connections to urban amenities and the proximity to open spaces that characterizes a rural lifestyle. Often, the cities and townships in the Emerging Suburban Edge are in more than one Community Designation. In the majority of Emerging Suburban Edge communities, less than 40% of the land has been developed.

### Orderly and Efficient Land Use

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Promote land use patterns with clear distinctions between urban and rural areas to protect natural resources and land for agricultural viability.
- Provide technical assistance to communities on land use strategies and staged development to inform the local comprehensive planning process.
- Partner with local communities to improve land use patterns to reduce generation of carbon emissions.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Plan and stage development for forecasted growth through 2040 and beyond at overall average net densities of at least 3-5 dwelling units per acre in the community. Target higher-intensity developments in areas with better access to regional sewer and transportation infrastructure, connections to local commercial activity centers, transit facilities, and recreational amenities.
- Identify and protect an adequate supply of land to support growth for future development beyond 2040, with regard to agricultural viability and natural and historic resources preservation.
- Incorporate best management practices for stormwater management and natural resources conservation and restoration in planning processes.
- Plan for local infrastructure needs including those needed to support future growth.

### Natural Resources Protection

#### COUNCIL ROLE

See policy discussion on Natural Resources Protection in the “Land Use Policy” section.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Complete local natural resources inventories, prioritize areas to protect, and integrate natural resources conservation into local ordinances.
- Conserve natural resources and protect vital natural areas when designing and constructing local infrastructure and planning land use patterns.
- Encourage site planning that incorporates natural areas as part of site development and redevelopment.

## Emerging Suburban Edge

### Water Sustainability

#### COUNCIL ROLE

See policy discussion on Water Sustainability in the “Land Use Policy” section.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Incorporate best management practices for stormwater management in planning processes and implement best management practices with development and redevelopment to control and treat stormwater.
- Integrate water sustainability and protection of groundwater recharge areas into local plans. Consider how development, irrigation, reductions in infiltration and inflow, and increased surface runoff impact groundwater recharge and consider conservation strategies and best management practices to mitigate these impacts.
- Adopt and implement best management practices for protection of natural resources, the quality and quantity of our water resources, and the preservation of water supply.
- Explore alternative water supply sources to ensure adequate water resources beyond 2040.

### Housing Affordability and Choice

#### COUNCIL ROLE

See policy discussion on Housing Affordability and Choice in the “Land Use Policy” section.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Designate land in the comprehensive plan to support household growth forecasts and address the community's share of the region's affordable housing need through development and redevelopment at a range of densities.
- Use state, regional, and federal sources of funding and/or financing and development tools allowed by state law to facilitate the development of new lifecycle and affordable housing.
- Plan for affordable housing that meets the needs of multigenerational households.
- Plan for future staged growth through 2040 and beyond to accommodate a variety of housing choices based on local needs.

## Emerging Suburban Edge

### Access, Mobility, and Transportation Choice

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Invest in strategic transit and transportation improvements that support more reliable access to and from Emerging Suburban Edge communities.
- Plan park-and-ride capacity in parts of the region where there is significant demand for access to regional destinations, but where it is currently not cost-effective to provide local bus connections.
- Plan transit facilities to better incorporate alternative mode connections, such as trails and sidewalks, for facilities serving locations where commuters have to travel greater distances to complete their trip.
- Encourage communities to develop at densities and in ways that could eventually support local transit service, including walking and bicycling connections to transit.
- Invest in the development and improvement of regional trails and regional bicycle corridors to better connect communities and provide viable transportation options for commuting via alternative modes.
- Work with state agencies, counties, and local governments to provide assistance in planning for freight transportation to connect the rural and urban areas' markets and resources.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Develop local policies, plans, and practices that improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation, including access to regional transit services, regional trails with improved pedestrian connections, and regional bicycle corridors.
- Target opportunities for intensive development in nodes along corridors with strong potential for future transit investment, consistent with the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*, to create the transit-supportive land use patterns necessary for efficient future transit service and investment.
- Work with partners in communities and counties to overcome barriers to transportation and to improve pedestrian and bicycle connections across jurisdictional boundaries.

### Economic Competitiveness

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Invest in regional amenities and services, including transit, regional parks and trails, and bikeways to support the Emerging Suburban Edge area as an attractive place to locate and do business.
- Promote local planning around key intersections, regional infrastructure, and business needs.
- Support the development of workforce housing to provide nearby housing options for employees of local employers.
- Convene interested partners to further strategies towards increasing regional competitiveness and include discussion of how Emerging Suburban Edge communities can contribute to the region's overall economic growth.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Consider how local efforts to focus economic development strategies along existing commercial centers (historic downtowns or commercial corridors) can contribute to the region's overall economic competitiveness through enhanced integration of local and regional planning efforts.
- Protect sites for highway-, river- and rail-dependent manufacturing and freight transportation needs from incompatible uses and identify local land supply and transportation needs for effective use of those sites.
- Identify important multimodal intersections, alternative freight routes, key intersections, and other existing opportunities that may contribute to local and regional economic competitiveness.

## Emerging Suburban Edge

### Building in Resilience

#### COUNCIL ROLE

See policy discussion on Building in Resilience in the “Land Use Policy” section.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Identify local measures that would result in reductions in water use, energy consumption, and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Identify local mitigation and adaptation strategies and infrastructure resiliency plans to protect against potential negative impacts to local economies, local resources, and infrastructure systems that result from more frequent or severe weather events.
- Implement compact development patterns and create more connected places to reduce auto-dependency and related generation of greenhouse gas emissions.



## Rural Centers: Serving the rural areas as small town centers of commerce

Rural Centers are local commercial, employment, and residential activity centers serving rural areas in the region. These small towns are surrounded by agricultural lands and serve as centers of commerce to those surrounding farm lands and the accompanying population. Although smaller in scale than urbanized communities, Rural Centers provide similar development patterns and locally accessible commercial services for the surrounding area.

### Orderly and Efficient Land Use

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Partner with local jurisdictions to work toward the orderly expansion of Rural Centers in a manner that efficiently uses infrastructure and guides growth where infrastructure capacity exists while preserving prime agricultural soils and surrounding low-density residential uses.
- Consider long range potential for improvements to regional infrastructure to support expected growth at average residential densities of at least 3-5 units per acre or more.
- Encourage innovative approaches to development where existing infrastructure and capacity are able to support increased residential densities.
- Attain a balance of urban and rural uses to retain the viability of the agricultural economy and direct growth towards Rural Centers as is appropriate.
- Partner with local communities to improve land use patterns to reduce carbon emissions.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Plan for forecasted population and household growth at overall average densities of at least 3-5 units per acre.
- Strive for higher-density commercial uses and compatible higher-density residential land uses in the commercial core of the community to ensure efficient uses of existing infrastructure investments.
- Work with adjacent jurisdictions to execute orderly annexation agreements where forecasted growth exceeds land capacity within existing city boundaries.
- Work to focus forecasted growth in areas with existing infrastructure capacity to protect existing farm land and prime agricultural soils for the long term.
- Adopt ordinances that coordinate development with infrastructure availability.
- Identify areas that will accommodate post-2040 growth forecasts and implement strategies to preserve these areas for future growth. Plan for necessary infrastructure improvements.

## Rural Centers

### Natural Resources Protection

#### COUNCIL ROLE

See policy discussion on Natural Resources Protection in the “Land Use Policy” section.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

See policy discussion on Natural Resources Protection in the “Land Use Policy” section.

### Housing Affordability and Choice

#### COUNCIL ROLE

See policy discussion on Housing Affordability and Choice in the “Land Use Policy” section.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Designate land in the comprehensive plan to support household growth forecasts and address the community’s share of the region’s affordable housing need through development and redevelopment at a range of densities.
- Use state, regional, and federal sources of funding and/or financing and development tools allowed by state law to facilitate the development of new lifecycle and affordable housing.
- Plan for future staged growth through 2040 and beyond to accommodate a variety of housing choices based on local needs.

### Water Sustainability

#### COUNCIL ROLE

See policy discussion on Water Sustainability in the “Land Use Policy” section.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

See policy discussion on Water Sustainability in the “Land Use Policy” section.

### Access, Mobility, and Transportation Choice

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Plan regional infrastructure consistent with a rural level of service.
- Explore transit links to urban areas based on demand and the availability of resources.
- Plan transit facilities to better incorporate alternative mode connections for facilities serving locations where commuters have to travel greater distances to complete their trip.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Plan for and construct an interconnected system of local streets, pedestrian facilities, and bicycle facilities.
- Plan and develop local trail connections to the regional parks and trails system where appropriate.

## Rural Centers

### Economic Competitiveness

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Encourage communities to support a range of housing opportunities for those interested in a more rural lifestyle.
- Support the development of workforce housing to provide nearby housing options for employees of local employers.
- Convene interested partners to further strategies toward increasing regional competitiveness and include discussion of how Rural Center communities can contribute to the region's overall economic growth.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Consider best practices for providing housing opportunities to support local employment and community needs.
- Consider identifying key intersections that accommodate connections between rail and highway infrastructure that could serve an intermodal purpose.
- Consider how land uses adjacent to key intersections could provide access for trucking, freight, barge, shipping, or warehousing purposes that may strengthen or bolster the local economy.
- Consider how local efforts to focus economic development strategies along existing commercial centers (historic downtowns or commercial corridors) can contribute to the region's overall economic competitiveness through enhanced integration of local and regional planning efforts.
- Identify important multimodal intersections, alternative freight routes, key intersections, and other existing opportunities that may contribute to local and regional economic competitiveness.

### Building in Resilience

#### COUNCIL ROLE

See policy discussion on Building-in Resilience in the "Land Use Policy" section.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

See policy discussion on Building in Resilience in the "Land Use Policy" section.

## Diversified Rural: Protecting land for rural lifestyles and long-term urbanization

Diversified Rural communities are home to a variety of farm and nonfarm land uses including very large-lot residential, clustered housing, hobby farms and agricultural uses. Located adjacent to the Emerging Suburban Edge of the Urban Service Area, Diversified Rural designation protects rural land for rural lifestyles today and potential urbanized levels of development sometime after 2040. Large portions of communities in the Diversified Rural area also contain prime agricultural soils, located primarily in Scott and Washington Counties.

There is a portion of the region's population that is interested in rural and small town living. For communities in the Diversified Rural area, the Council supports the clustering of homes to meet that demand, designed in a manner that protects high-quality and locally prioritized natural areas and open spaces, and also preserves lands in areas identified for potential future post-2040 urban development. In August 2008, the Council adopted Flexible Residential Development Ordinance Guidelines for the Diversified Rural Area that describe the factors that communities should take into account if they are considering allowing residential development at densities greater than 4 units per 40 acres. These guidelines include the following points:

1. Include the need to reserve land resources for efficient future urban development as part of the ordinance purpose.
2. Identify the land characteristics required to support future urbanization.
3. Allow no more than 25% of the developable land in a project to be developed, reserving larger future urbanization parcels.
4. Protect future urbanization parcels with temporary development agreements, easements, or deed restrictions.
5. Provide for the rezoning of the future urbanization parcels to a residential zoning classification at densities consistent with Council policy at such time that urban services are available.
6. Encourage the use of community wastewater treatment systems to serve the temporary cluster.

For those communities on the edge of the urbanizing area, designated as part of the Long-term Wastewater Service Area, a cluster ordinance should be developed and implemented to provide for interim land uses without precluding the opportunity for future urban-density development. For areas outside of the Long-term Wastewater Service Area, the Council also encourages the clustering of homes, particularly when communities are considering densities greater than 4 units per 40 acres. Similar to the guidelines applicable to areas within the Long-term Wastewater Service Area, communities should consider implementing conservation subdivision ordinances or other similar development ordinances to protect natural resources, preserve open spaces, and address other local priorities.



## Diversified Rural

### Orderly and Efficient Land Use

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Work with communities to plan development patterns that will protect natural resources, preserve areas where post-2040 growth can be provided with cost-effective and efficient urban infrastructure, and support forecasted growth through 2040 without the provision of regional urban services.
- Promote development practices and patterns that protect the integrity of the region's water supply and the quality and quantity of water resources.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Plan for growth not to exceed forecasts and in patterns that do not exceed 4 units per 40 acres.
- Preserve areas where post-2040 growth can be provided with cost-effective and efficient urban infrastructure.
- Manage land uses to prevent the premature demand for extension of urban services, and so that existing service levels (such as on-site wastewater management, gravel, and other local roads) will meet service needs.

### Natural Resources Protection

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Provide technical assistance and tools for resource protection, such as best practices regarding the use of conservation easements and clustered development ordinances.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Plan development patterns that incorporate the protection of natural resources. Consider implementing conservation subdivision ordinances, cluster development ordinances, or environmental protection provisions in local land use ordinances.

### Water Sustainability

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Support the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's regulatory approach to private treatment systems, which requires permits for systems designed to treat an average flow greater than 10,000 gallons per day of wastewater (approximately 35 homes).
- Advocate that the local community be the permit holder for private wastewater treatment systems to ensure long-term accountability for the proper functioning and maintenance of systems.
- Provide technical assistance regarding private wastewater treatment systems and share information about the performance of these systems in the region.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Protect the rural environment through local oversight of the management and maintenance of subsurface sewage treatment systems (SSTS) to avoid the environmental and economic costs of failed systems. Proactively explore options to address failing septic systems.
- Ensure financial and environmental accountability for installation, maintenance, remediation, and management of any permitted private wastewater system.
- Adopt subsurface sewage treatment system (SSTS) management ordinances and implement maintenance programs, consistent with current Minnesota Pollution Control Agency rules (Minn. Rules 7080-7083).
- Encourage the use of environmentally sensitive development techniques, such as surface water management best management practices that capture, filter, and infiltrate stormwater where possible.

## Diversified Rural

### Housing Affordability and Choice

#### COUNCIL ROLE

See policy discussion on Housing Affordability and Choice in the “Land Use Policy” section.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Promote a balanced housing supply and a mix of housing affordability to ensure long-term community vitality.

### Access, Mobility, and Transportation Choice

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Plan regional transportation infrastructure consistent with a rural level of service.
- Support the management of access points to state and county road systems and emphasize construction of a local public street system where needed.
- Encourage communities to plan and develop local trail connections to the Regional Parks System where appropriate.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Plan for and construct local transportation infrastructure, including trails, sufficient to meet local needs.
- Plan and develop local trail connections to the Regional Parks System where appropriate.

### Economic Competitiveness

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Where appropriate, promote the use of the Green Acres and Agricultural Preserves programs to preserve prime agricultural soils and maintain agricultural uses as a long-term primary land use.
- Support agriculture as a primary long-term use to protect the region’s agricultural economy, to provide economic opportunities for farmers, and to promote local food production.
- Support connections between the Diversified Rural communities and other areas both within and outside of the region that promote safe travel and ensure efficient transportation of agricultural products.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Identify and protect locally important agricultural areas, in addition to prime agricultural lands, to provide a range of economic opportunities.
- Support existing agricultural uses as primary long-term land uses and consider allowing agricultural-supportive land uses in local comprehensive plans.
- Support local property enrollment in the Agricultural Preserves and Green Acres programs.
- Consider opportunities for smaller-acreage agricultural operations to support food production for local markets.

### Building in Resilience

#### COUNCIL ROLE

See policy discussion on Building in Resilience in the “Land Use Policy” section.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

See policy discussion on Building in Resilience in the “Land Use Policy” section.

## Rural Residential: Limiting unsustainable growth patterns

Rural Residential communities have residential patterns characterized by large lots and do not have plans to provide urban infrastructure, such as centralized wastewater treatment. Many of these communities have topographic development limitations and a development pattern with lot sizes that generally ranged from 1-2.5 units per acre. Therefore, these residential densities do not support economical extension of wastewater services.

### Orderly and Efficient Land Use

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Encourage rural development patterns that will protect natural resources and preserve areas where post-2040 growth can be provided with cost-effective and efficient urban infrastructure.
- Discourage future development of rural residential patterns (unsewered lots of 2.5 acres or less) and encourage rural development at densities that are not greater than 1 unit per 10 acres.
- Work with communities to plan development patterns that will protect natural resources and water quality and quantity, and maintain existing contiguous lots that are 10 or more acres in size.
- Encourage the use of the Council's flexible residential development guidelines and adoption of ordinances that provide for residential clustering and protection of sensitive natural resources.
- Provide technical assistance to communities to plan for adequate land availability to address current needs and forecasted growth using development practices that protect the quantity and quality of the region's surface and groundwater resources and natural resources identified in regional or local inventories.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Discourage future development of rural residential patterns (unsewered lots of 2.5 acres or less) and where opportunities exist, plan for rural development at densities that are not greater than 1 unit per 10 acres.
- Implement conservation subdivision ordinances, cluster development ordinances, and environmental protection provisions in local land use ordinances, consistent with the Council's flexible residential development guidelines.
- Promote best management practices for stormwater management, habitat restoration, and natural resource conservation in development plans and projects.

### Natural Resources Protection

#### COUNCIL ROLE

See policy discussion on Natural Resources Protection in the "Land Use Policy" section.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Accommodate growth while protecting the environment and natural resources. Encourage the placement of housing that protects significant natural resources.
- Adopt conservation subdivision ordinances, cluster development ordinances, flexible development ordinances, and include environmental protection in land use ordinances.

## Rural Residential

### Water Sustainability

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Support the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's regulatory approach to private treatment systems, which requires permits for systems designed to treat an average flow greater than 10,000 gallons per day of wastewater approximately 35 homes).
- Advocate that the local community be the permit holder for private wastewater treatment systems to ensure long-term accountability for the proper functioning and maintenance of systems.
- Provide technical assistance regarding private wastewater treatment systems and share information about the performance of these systems in the region.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Protect the rural environment through local oversight of the management and maintenance of subsurface sewage treatment systems (SSTS) to avoid the environmental and economic costs of failed systems. Proactively explore options to address failing septic systems.
- Ensure financial and environmental accountability for installation, maintenance, remediation, and management of any permitted private wastewater system.
- Adopt subsurface sewage treatment system (SSTS) management ordinances and implement maintenance programs, consistent with current Minnesota Pollution Control Agency rules (Minn. Rules 7080-7083).
- Encourage the use of environmentally sensitive development techniques, such as surface water management best management practices that capture, filter, and infiltrate stormwater where possible.

### Housing Affordability and Choice

#### COUNCIL ROLE

See policy discussion on Housing Affordability and Choice in the "Land Use Policy" section.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

See policy discussion on Housing Affordability and Choice in the "Land Use Policy" section.

### Access, Mobility, and Transportation Choice

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Plan for regional transportation infrastructure consistent with a rural level of service.
- Support the limiting of access points to state and county road systems and emphasize construction of an interconnected local public street system.
- Encourage communities to plan and develop local trail connections to the Regional Parks System.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Plan for and construct local transportation infrastructure, including trails, sufficient to meet local needs.
- Plan and develop an interconnected local street system.
- Adopt improved design techniques for access management that meets access and mobility needs.



## Rural Residential

### Economic Competitiveness

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Support connections between the Rural Residential areas and other areas within and outside the region that promote safe travel and ensure efficient distribution of freight.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

See policy discussion on Economic Competitiveness in the “Land Use Policy” section.

### Building in Resilience

#### COUNCIL ROLE

See policy discussion on Building in Resilience in the “Land Use Policy” section.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

See policy discussion on Building in Resilience in the “Land Use Policy” section.

## Agricultural: Preserving large swaths of farmland

Agricultural communities encompass areas with prime agricultural soils that are planned and zoned for long-term agricultural use. These communities are home to the bulk of contiguous lands enrolled in the Metropolitan Agricultural Preserves and Green Acres Programs or cultivated for commercial agricultural purposes.

### Orderly and Efficient Land Use

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Promote the use of the Agricultural Preserves and Green Acres programs to preserve prime agricultural soils and land uses by supporting local efforts that maintain agricultural land uses through 2040.
- Partner with communities to plan for post-2040 development growth in a manner that protects farmland and the regional agricultural economy while accommodating efficient expansion of regional urban infrastructure in areas where forecasts project market demand.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Limit residential development and adopt zoning ordinances and/or other official controls to maintain residential densities no greater than 1 housing unit per 40 acres.
- Support enrollment in the Agricultural Preserves and Green Acres programs to preserve prime agricultural soils and agricultural land uses.
- Maintain agricultural land uses through at least 2040 as a primary long-term use to preserve prime agricultural lands and to preserve land for efficient expansion of post-2040 regional infrastructure where appropriate.
- Manage land uses to prevent the premature demand for extension of urban services, and so that existing service levels (such as on-site wastewater management, gravel, and other local roads) will meet service needs.
- Develop and implement strategies for protecting farmlands, such as exclusive agricultural zoning, agricultural security districts, and lower residential densities such as 1 housing unit per 80 acres.

## Agricultural

### Natural Resources Protection

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Promote agricultural practices that protect the region's water resources, including both surface water resources and groundwater resources.
- Provide information to communities about how to incorporate environmentally sensitive development techniques into farm-related construction.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

See policy discussion on Natural Resource Protection in the "Land Use Policy" section.

### Water Sustainability

#### COUNCIL ROLE

See policy discussion on Water Sustainability in the "Land Use Policy" section.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Promote best management practices for agricultural activities in order to protect the integrity of the region's water supply and the quality and quantity of water resources, including both surface water and groundwater resources.
- Encourage the use of environmentally sensitive development techniques, including in farm-related construction, such as surface water management best management practices that capture, filter, and infiltrate stormwater where possible.
- Adopt subsurface sewage treatment system (SSTS) management ordinances and implement maintenance programs, consistent with current Minnesota Pollution Control Agency rules (Minn. Rules 7080-7083).

### Housing Affordability and Choice

#### COUNCIL ROLE

See policy discussion on Housing Affordability and Choice in the "Land Use Policy" section.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

See policy discussion on Housing Affordability and Choice in the "Land Use Policy" section.

## Agricultural

### Access, Mobility, and Transportation Choice

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Support the Minnesota Department of Transportation and counties in planning regional highway infrastructure consistent with market access and the agribusiness needs of the area.
- Support the management of access points to state and county road systems and construction of a local public street system where needed.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Plan for and construct local transportation infrastructure sufficient to serve local and agricultural needs.
- Adopt access management standards that meet state and county highway access and mobility needs.

### Economic Competitiveness

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Support agriculture as a primary long-term use to protect the region's agricultural economy, to provide economic opportunities for farmers, and to promote local food production.
- Support connections between the Agricultural areas and other areas within and outside the region that promote local agribusiness, promote safe travel, and ensure efficient distribution of freight.
- Promote the use of the Green Acres and Agricultural Preserves programs to preserve prime agricultural soils and maintain agricultural uses as a long-term primary land use.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Support agricultural uses as primary long-term land uses and consider allowing agricultural-supportive land uses in local comprehensive plans.
- Consider opportunities for smaller-acreage agricultural operations to support food production for local markets.
- Implement programs and best management practices that conserve and enhance soil and water resources to ensure their long-term quality and productivity.
- Identify and protect locally important agricultural areas, in addition to prime agricultural lands, to provide a range of economic opportunities.

### Building in Resilience

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Partner with state agencies to identify potential impacts to systems and economies resulting from increased occurrences of extreme weather events.
- Collaborate with regional experts on climate change to identify and communicate potential adaptation and mitigation measures to reduce impacts and preserve and protect the region's agricultural resources.
- Provide resources and information on carbon emission reductions, best practices, and climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies for Agricultural Areas.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Assess potential challenges and opportunities of climate change in the Agricultural communities as well as opportunities for reducing the generation of greenhouse gas emissions. Implement changes as feasible.







## Implementing Thrive

### Next steps

*Thrive* establishes the policy foundation used to complete regional systems and policy plans, development policies, and implementation strategies that together form the comprehensive development guide. Detailed policies implementing the *Thrive* policy direction and advancing the five *Thrive* outcomes will emerge and be formally adopted in the *Thrive* systems and policy plans:

- *Housing Policy Plan* (fall 2014)
- *Transportation Policy Plan* (late 2014)
- *Water Resources Policy Plan* (late 2014)
- *Regional Parks Policy Plan* (early 2015)

In addition to the *Thrive* systems and policy plans, the Council will consider how to advance the *Thrive* outcomes through:

- Making investments through Livable Communities Act grants (Livable Communities Demonstration Account, Local Housing Incentives Account, and Tax Base Revitalization Account)
- Working with the Transportation Advisory Board on the regional solicitation for transportation funds
- Investigating the use of the Council's current funding mechanisms as tools to aid in promoting the *Thrive* outcomes

## Local Planning Process

The policy direction in *Thrive*, and the systems and policy plans that follow, assist local governments to create consistent, compatible, and coordinated local comprehensive plans that together strive to reach a common purpose. System statements explain how *Thrive* and the systems and policy plans affect each individual community. The Council will distribute system statements to local jurisdictions in the fall of 2015, beginning this decade's round of local comprehensive plan updates; updates are due back to the Council in 2018. Local governments use system statement information to develop their comprehensive plans to achieve local visions within the regional policy framework (Minn. Stat. 473.856-857; 473.864-865). Local governments that disagree with any item in their system statement may request a hearing to resolve any issues (Minn. Stat. 473.857).

Local governments share their updated local comprehensive plans with adjacent and affected jurisdictions so they may consider the plan's impact, consistency, and coordination with their own plans. Then, the local governments send its plan to the Council for review based on the requirements of the Metropolitan Land Planning Act, state and federal guidelines referenced in this document, and the comprehensive development guide. The Council considers each local comprehensive plan's compatibility with the plans of other local governments, consistency with adopted Council policies, and conformance with metropolitan system plans (Minn. Stat. 473.175). If the Council finds that a local government's local comprehensive plan is more likely than not to have a substantial impact on or contain a substantial departure from metropolitan system plans, the Council can require the local government to modify its local plan to assure conformance with the metropolitan system plans (Minn. Stat. 473.175).

Once the Council completes its review and authorizes a local government to place its plan into effect, the local government adopts its plan and then proceeds to update its zoning ordinances, fiscal devices, and other official controls to be consistent with the newly adopted comprehensive plan (Minn. Stat. 473.858; 473.865). Any local ordinance or other local control that conflicts with the local comprehensive plan or metropolitan system plans must be brought into conformance with the plan within nine months of comprehensive plan adoption (Minn. Stat. 473.865).

## Technical Assistance

The Council offers assistance to local governments as they update, amend, and implement their local comprehensive plans.

### Sector Representative Program

Sector representatives are experienced and knowledgeable planners familiar with the Council, its programs, and with local planning processes. Sector representatives provide planning and technical assistance to cities, townships, and counties across the region and are the main point of contact for local staff for their planning needs. They keep abreast of local governmental and agency activities and participate in meetings, technical advisory committees, and other working groups to provide regional perspective. Sector representatives also foster cooperative relationships with governmental units and other organizations in the region to achieve local and regional goals. Sector representatives are also available to assist local governments in completing some of the statutorily required elements of local comprehensive plans.

### Tools and Resources

The Council's *Local Planning Handbook* guides cities and counties through the Council's comprehensive plan review process. The Council will update this handbook to incorporate new *Thrive* and systems and policy plan directions. In addition, the updated handbook will incorporate a variety of tools and resources developed both internally and by other organizations, such as best practices, model ordinances, development guides, and local examples.

### Workshops

As was offered for the 2008 comprehensive planning process, the Council will again offer a workshop series for local planners on incorporating regional policy and system plans into local comprehensive plans. This workshop series will include a range of topics including planning for water resources, transit, transportation, and affordable housing.

### Planning Grants and Loans

The Council has established a planning assistance fund to make grants and loans available to local governments to assist them in their preparation of local comprehensive plans (Minn. Stat. 473.867). The Council will work through its Land Use Advisory Committee to develop eligibility criteria, funding availability, and an application process to assist in the 2018 round of local comprehensive planning. The Council will communicate with local governments about the availability of those funds and the application procedures and deadlines.

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## Analysis of Local Forecasts:

### A Vision of our Future

The Metropolitan Council develops forecasts of when, where, and how much population, household, and job growth the region and its communities can expect. Reflecting the varied choices and needs of households and businesses, these forecasts anticipate where growth is most likely to occur, given shifting demographics, land use capacity, and local policy. Looking ahead to 2040, the Council forecasts robust growth across a range of communities in various stages of development.

Following World War II, the construction of the modern highway network revolutionized accessibility and opened up a supply of new land viable for development. Historically, the region's urbanized footprint has expanded as far as the new accessibility allowed. However, the trend appears to have limits, and a new balance of regional growth is emerging with substantial redevelopment in the Urban Center.

The maps describe the communities seeing the most household growth by decade since 1970. Eden Prairie, Maple Grove and Plymouth have remained among the 10 highest-growth communities in all four decades. Maple Grove and Plymouth are the only two from the lists of the 1970s and 1980s that remain designated Suburban Edge; other growth hotspots, including Eden Prairie, have progressed into the Suburban or Urban Community Designations that describe more fully developed cities. Of the top 10 highest-growth communities from the 2000s, all but Eden Prairie are in the Suburban Edge or the Emerging Suburban Edge.

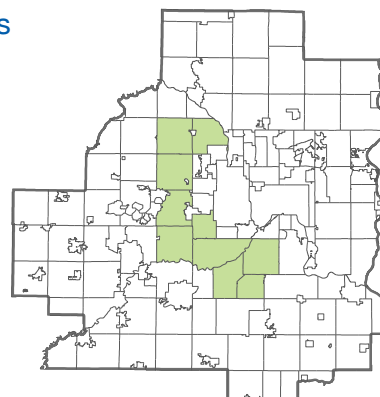
The Council's forecasts to 2040 anticipate that significant growth in households will continue in the Suburban Edge and Emerging Suburban Edge. Communities in these two designations have ample supplies of undeveloped land and will attract almost half of the region's forecasted household growth. At the same time, Council forecasts project a significant pivot of growth back into Urban and Urban Center communities.

Demographic shifts will influence the changing real estate demand. Three-quarters of net new households will be older households, headed by individuals age 65 and older. This group's needs and preferences will shape the location and type of real estate added over the next three decades. Only one in five net new households will be households with children.

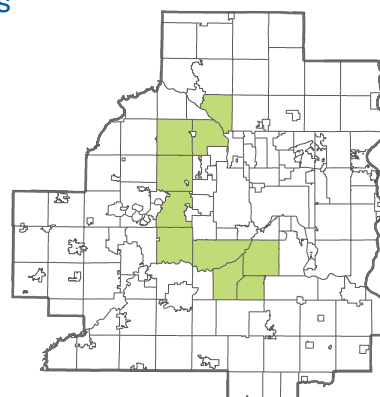
Older households and households without children (whether young or old) are more likely to prefer attached housing in walkable, amenity-rich neighborhoods. While many senior households want to age in place, the massive increase in the senior population will magnify the impact of those seniors who choose to move. Senior households are likely to want smaller, easy-maintenance housing products, and easy access to services and amenities. Most senior

## Top 10 growing communities by decade

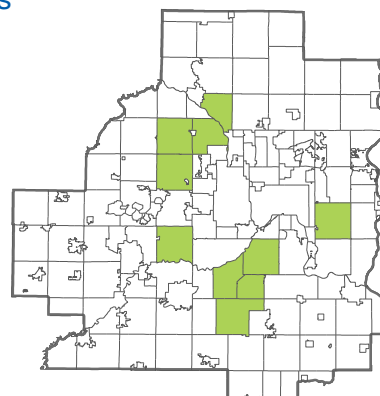
### 1970s



### 1980s



### 1990s



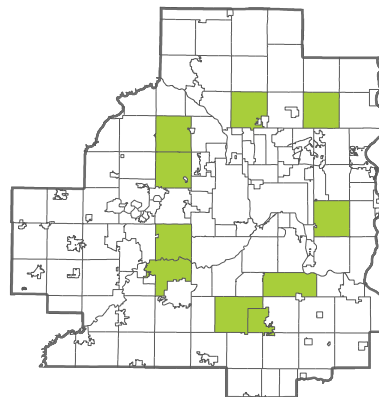
households live on fixed incomes and have greater interest in or need of rental housing options; this propensity increases with age.

While these demographic shifts affect real estate demand, the region's land supply is also changing and adjusting to limits. Land costs are lower in Emerging Suburban Edge communities than more centrally located sites. However, the minimal growth anticipated in regional highways will limit the expansion of the region's urbanized area. As households weigh the tradeoffs between cost and location, the land cost advantages on the developing edge will diminish, and the real estate market will rebalance. Demand for central location and accessibility will create opportunities that exceed the costs and challenges of redevelopment, and more growth will be in areas with higher levels of urban services.

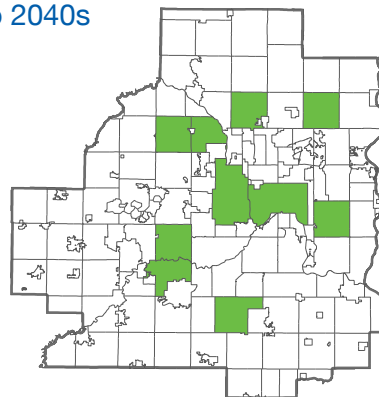
Both Minneapolis and Saint Paul are well-positioned to take advantage of this increased interest in urban living. The region's two central cities' density and street patterns work well with transit and benefit from investments in amenities, parks, and livability. Minneapolis and Saint Paul experienced minimal household growth from 1980 to 2010, but have seen significant building since the end of the recent recession. From 2010 to 2040, the Council is forecasting that these cities will be the top two in the region for household growth, capturing 17% of net new households, 10 times their share of the last three decades.

Collectively, Urban Center and Urban communities accounted for 10% of household growth from 1980 to 2010. The Council forecasts that these communities will capture 28% of household growth from 2010 to 2040. The Urban Center and Urban communities benefit from higher demand for attached and small-lot (less than  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre) detached housing in walkable, amenities-rich neighborhoods—characterized by a mix of housing types, higher housing

2000s:



2010 to 2040s



density, interconnected urban street networks, and mixed land use. Some neighborhoods in the oldest parts of the region may need to address resident concerns about crime, schools, and amenities to fully benefit from their good urban design and central location.

Central locations will continue to draw the region's employment growth. The Council forecasts that communities in the Urban Center will add 141,700 new jobs over the next 30 years, and will continue to account for the plurality of the region's employment. Cities with existing concentrations of employment and good accessibility to workers and customers will see further job growth over the next 30 years. Minneapolis and Saint Paul are expected to gain 74,000 and 42,000 new jobs, respectively.

While Minneapolis and Saint Paul are well-situated financially and institutionally to support redevelopment, other cities face larger challenges. The Council's forecasts indicate demand for housing in more-centrally located places, but many cities are concerned about the desirability and feasibility of accommodating growth beyond these forecasts. For some smaller cities, the challenges are financial—what tools are available to support redevelopment, particularly of commercial sites and apartment buildings that no longer meet market needs? For other cities, the challenge is the prospect of change as additional growth would require the replacement of existing housing or the introduction of unfamiliar housing types.

Increased interest in connected locations will also benefit established communities in the Suburban area. Three of the suburbs forecasted to see the most household growth over the next 30 years—Eden Prairie, Brooklyn Park and Apple Valley—are or are expected to be on transitways that provide greater access and connectivity to jobs and

opportunity across the region. Benefiting from both highway and transitway connections, Suburban communities are expected to attract over 161,400 new jobs from 2010 to 2040. Many communities in the Suburban area are already employment centers that are home to many of the region's corporate headquarters. Accessibility and job density will continue to draw employment growth over the next decades.

The Council anticipates no expansion of the planned 2030 Metropolitan Urban Service Area by 2040. With the round of local 2030 comprehensive plans, communities guided land for 1,492,000 households. The Council now forecasts reaching 1,509,000 households in 2040—only slightly more households than the previous 2030 forecast. With increased demand for housing in more central locations, communities on the developing edge of the region have already guided enough land within the 2030 Metropolitan Urban Service Area to meet the housing needs of 2040.



## The production of local forecasts

The Council’s forecasts facilitate shared expectations of when, where and how much growth will occur in local communities. These shared expectations provide a basis for coordinated regional and local planning and investment in regional and local infrastructure.

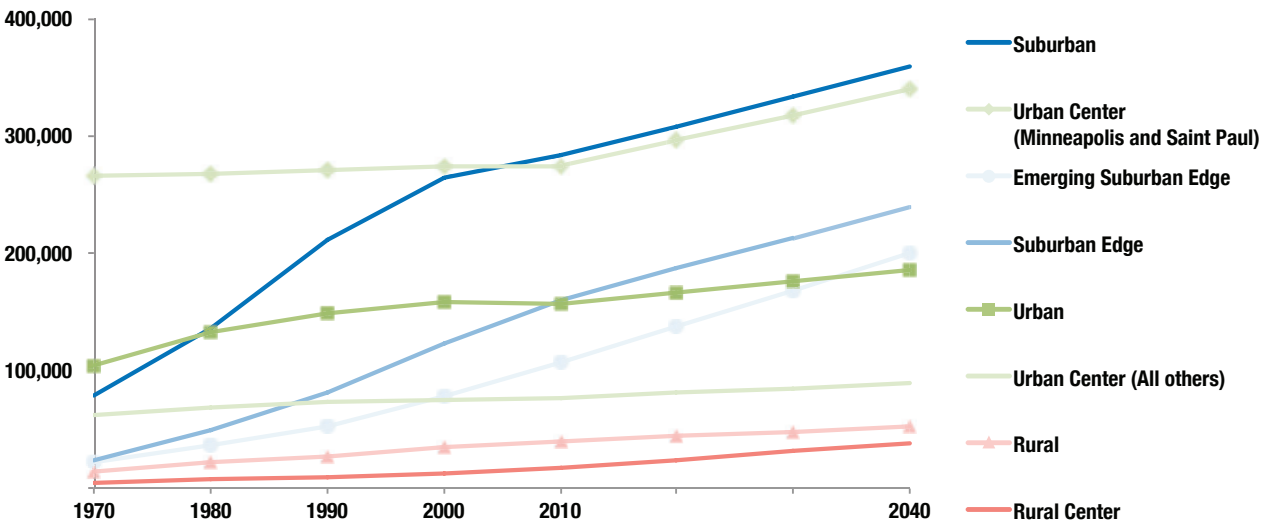
To develop local forecasts, the Council uses a land use model, simulating real estate development possibilities, and predicting growth patterns responsive to the region’s future industry mix and future demographics. Local data—including planned land use from each community’s 2030 comprehensive plan—inform the model about land supply and allowable land uses.

Future transportation networks also influence the local forecasts. The Council’s land use model and transportation models are run in tandem to assess the impact of transportation investments programmed for the next three decades. The land use model provides the spatial distributions of households and employment in the region; in turn, the transportation model returns results on accessibility and the planned transportation network, which can inform land use decisions.

These forecasts reflect the array of growth policies, investment priorities, infrastructure plans, and redevelopment tools that currently exist. Any changes that influence the relative costs and feasibility of development and redevelopment in different locations within the region could affect the distribution of growth in the Council’s forecasts.

The Council will update local forecasts as new land use and transportation policies emerge and as new data become available. The Council will prepare and publish forecasts for the decennial milestones 2020 and 2030 for local discussion and subsequent Council adoption later in 2014.

### Household Growth by Community Designation



## Forecasted Growth by Community Designation

		2010	2040	Absolute Growth	Percent Growth	Percent Regional Growth
Urban Center	Population	839,757	1,001,950	162,193	19%	20%
	Households	350,656	430,250	79,594	23%	20%
	Employment	574,662	716,360	141,698	25%	25%
Urban	Population	377,392	433,100	55,708	15%	7%
	Households	157,495	186,100	28,605	18%	7%
	Employment	301,771	388,880	87,109	29%	16%
Suburban	Population	723,015	881,730	158,715	22%	19%
	Households	282,898	358,920	76,022	27%	19%
	Employment	376,922	538,340	161,418	43%	29%
Suburban Edge	Population	436,559	617,900	181,341	42%	22%
	Households	160,667	239,300	78,633	49%	20%
	Employment	175,845	268,000	92,155	52%	17%
Emerging Suburban Edge	Population	304,803	506,000	201,197	66%	24%
	Households	106,744	200,000	93,256	87%	24%
	Employment	88,141	146,350	58,209	66%	10%
Rural Center	Population	48,566	93,770	45,204	93%	5%
	Households	17,075	38,070	20,995	123%	5%
	Employment	9,014	17,570	8,556	95%	2%
Rural	Population	113,013	128,790	15,777	14%	2%
	Households	39,802	51,950	12,148	31%	3%
	Employment	14,775	22,220	7,445	50%	1%

## ABOUT THE METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

The Metropolitan Council is the regional planning agency serving the Twin Cities seven-county metropolitan area and providing essential services to the region. The Council works with local communities to provide these critical services:

- Operates the region's [largest bus system](#)
- Collects and treats [wastewater](#)
- Engages communities and the [public](#) in planning for future growth
- Provides [forecasts](#) of the region's population and household growth
- Provides affordable [housing](#) opportunities for low- and moderate-income individuals and families
- Provides planning, acquisitions and funding for a regional system of [parks and trails](#)
- Provides a [framework](#) for decisions and implementation for regional systems including aviation, transportation, parks and open space, water quality, and water management

The Council is committed to [environmental stewardship, sustainable solutions, and reduced energy use](#).

The 17-member [Metropolitan Council](#) has 16 members who each represent a [geographic district](#) and one chair who serves at large. They are all appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the governor. The State Senate confirms Council member appointments.




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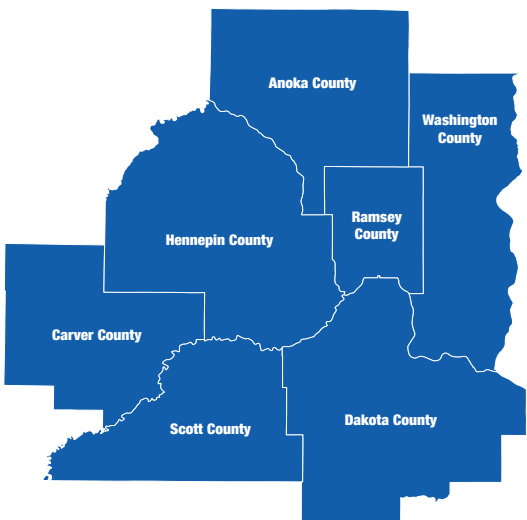
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The Council’s mission is to foster efficient and economic growth for a prosperous metropolitan region

**Metropolitan Council Members**

Susan Haigh	Chair	Edward Reynoso	District 9
Katie Rodriguez	District 1	Marie McCarthy	District 10
Lona Schreiber	District 2	Sandy Rummel	District 11
Jennifer Munt	District 3	Harry Melander	District 12
Gary Van Eyll	District 4	Richard Kramer	District 13
Steve Elkins	District 5	Jon Commers	District 14
James Brimeyer	District 6	Steven T. Chávez	District 15
Gary L. Cunningham	District 7	Wendy Wulff	District 16
Adam Duininck	District 8		



The Metropolitan Council is the regional planning organization for the seven-county Twin Cities area. The Council operates the regional bus and rail system, collects and treats wastewater, coordinates regional water resources, plans and helps fund regional parks, and administers federal funds that provide housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income individuals and families. The 17-member Council board is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the governor.

On request, this publication will be made available in alternative formats to people with disabilities. Call Metropolitan Council information at 651-602-1140 or TTY 651-291-0904.



