

# Committee Report

Community Development Committee



**Committee Meeting Date:** August 7, 2023

**For the Metropolitan Council:** August 9, 2023

## Business Item: 2023-168 SW

City of St. Francis Serenity at Seelye Brook Comprehensive Plan Amendment, Review File 22287-6

### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council adopt the attached Advisory Comments and Review Record and take the following actions:

1. Authorize the City of St. Francis to place its comprehensive plan amendment into effect.
2. Find that the amendment does not change the City's forecasts.
3. Find that the amendment is inconsistent with Thrive MSP 2040 policies for residential density in the Diversified Rural portion of the City.
4. Find that the amendment is inconsistent with 2040 Water Resources Policy Plan policies for preserving natural resources outside the Long-Term Wastewater Service Area.
5. Strongly encourage the City to consider the application of ordinances that are consistent with the Council's Flexible Residential Development Ordinance Guidelines in cases in which the City may wish to consider densities greater than 4 units per 40 acres.
6. Advise the City to implement the advisory comments in the Review Record for Land Use and Water Resources.

### Summary of Community Development Committee Discussion/Questions

Planning Analyst Michael Larson presented the staff's report to the Committee. Chair Lilligren inquired about the consequences of such policy inconsistencies and possible remedies. Director Barajas discussed the Council's role in monitoring such development pressures to ensure that unplanned development does not lead to the premature provision or need for services. Councilmember Chamblis inquired about how the Council handled rural development pressure in the past and how that evolved over time. Director Barajas discussed various approaches including working with communities to accommodate future urban services or requiring communities to modify their plans. The Community Development Committee unanimously recommended approval of the proposed action at its meeting on August 7, 2023.

# Business Item

Community Development Committee



Committee Meeting Date: August 7, 2023

For the Metropolitan Council: August 9, 2023

## Business Item: 2023-168 SW

City of St. Francis Serenity at Seelye Brook Comprehensive Plan Amendment, Review File 22287-6

<b>District(s), Member(s):</b>	District 9, Diego Morales
<b>Policy/Legal Reference:</b>	Metropolitan Land Planning Act (Minn. Stat. § 473.175)
<b>Staff Prepared/Presented:</b>	Michael Larson, Planning Analyst (651-602-1407) Angela R. Torres, Senior Manager (651-602-1566)
<b>Division/Department:</b>	Community Development / Regional Planning

### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council adopt the attached Review Record and take the following actions:

1. Authorize the City of St. Francis to place its comprehensive plan amendment into effect.
2. Find that the amendment does not change the City's forecasts.
3. Find that the amendment is inconsistent with *Thrive MSP 2040* policies for residential density in the Diversified Rural portion of the City.
4. Find that the amendment is inconsistent with *2040 Water Resources Policy Plan* policies for preserving natural resources outside the Long-Term Wastewater Service Area.
5. Strongly encourage the City to consider the application of ordinances that are consistent with the Council's Flexible Residential Development Ordinance Guidelines in cases in which the City may wish to consider densities greater than 4 units per 40 acres.
6. Advise the City to implement the advisory comments in the Review Record for Land Use and Water Resources.

### Background

The City of St. Francis submitted the Serenity at Seelye Brook comprehensive plan amendment on May 24, 2023, with supplemental information received June 14, 2023. The amendment proposes to reguide 22.5 acres from Agriculture to Rural Residential. The purpose of the amendment is to support the development of single-family homes on rural lots. The area being reguided is located along the north and east side of Bridgestone Road south of its intersection with Ambassador Boulevard. This is the City's fifth amendment to its 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

### Rationale

The proposed amendment conforms to regional system plans. It is inconsistent with *2040 Water Resources Policy Plan* policies for preserving natural resources outside the Long-Term Wastewater Service Area and inconsistent with residential density policy in Diversified Rural areas. The amendment is consistent with all other Council policies and is compatible with the plans of other local communities and school districts.

### Thrive Lens Analysis

The proposed amendment is reviewed against the land use policies in *Thrive MSP 2040*. To achieve the outcomes identified in Thrive, the metropolitan development guide defines the Land Use Policy for the region and includes strategies for local governments and the Council to implement. These policies and strategies are interrelated and, taken together, serve to achieve the outcomes identified in Thrive.

### **Funding**

None.

### **Known Support / Opposition**

There is no known opposition.



# REVIEW RECORD

CITY OF ST. FRANCIS

Seelye Brook Comprehensive Plan Amendment

Review File No. 22287-6, Business Item No. 2023-168

## BACKGROUND

The City of St. Francis (City) is located along the northwestern border of Anoka County, bordered by Stanford Township, Athens Township, City of East Bethel, City of Bethel, City of Oak Grove, City of Nowthen, City of Elk River, and Livonia Township.

*Thrive MSP 2040* (Thrive) designates St. Francis with both Rural Center and Diversified Rural community designations. The Council forecasts from 2020 to 2040 that the City will grow from 8,200 to 12,600 population and 3,100 to 5,100 households. The Council also forecasts that between 2020 and 2040, the City's employment will increase from 2,200 to 2,900 jobs.

The Metropolitan Council reviewed the City of St. Francis 2040 Comprehensive Plan ([Business Item 2019-352 JT](#), Review File No. 22287-1) on January 8, 2020. This is the fifth comprehensive plan amendment since the 2040 Plan was reviewed.

## REQUEST SUMMARY

The City of St. Francis submitted the Serenity at Seelye Brook comprehensive plan amendment on May 24, 2023, with supplemental information received June 14, 2023. The amendment proposes to reguide 22.5 acres from Agriculture to Rural Residential. The purpose of the amendment is to support the development of single-family homes on rural lots. The area being reguided is located along the north/east side of Bridgestone Road south of its intersection with Ambassador Boulevard. This is the City's fifth amendment to its 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

## OVERVIEW

### Conformance with Regional Systems

The amendment conforms to the Regional System Plans for Parks, Transportation (including Aviation), and Wastewater, with no substantial impact on, or departure from, these plans.

### Consistency with Council Policies

The amendment is inconsistent with *2040 Water Resources Policy Plan* policies for preserving natural resources outside the Long-Term Wastewater Service Area and inconsistent with residential density policy in Diversified Rural areas. The amendment is consistent with the remaining policies in *Thrive MSP 2040*, with the *Housing Policy Plan*, and is consistent with Council forecasts.

### Compatibility with Plans of Adjacent Jurisdictions

The amendment will not have an impact on adjacent communities, school districts, or watershed districts, and is compatible with the plans of those districts.

## PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTIONS

- The Council acted on the 2040 Plan on January 8, 2020 ([Business Item 2019-352 JT](#), Review File No. 22287-1).
- The Council administratively reviewed the Vista Prairie Senior Housing amendment on September 2, 2021 (Review File No. 22287-2). The amendment reguided 18 acres of vacant land from Medium Density Residential (11.4 acres) and Business Park/Light Industrial (6.5 acres) to Medium/High Density Residential to allow for a senior housing



development on the site.

- The Council authorized the Platinum Land amendment on October 26, 2022 ([Business Item 2022-271](#), Review File No. 22287-3). The amendment regulated 69.57 acres to Medium Density Residential to allow for project that included 113 single family detached homes, 82 townhomes, 105 apartment units, and 3.1 acres of commercial uses.
- The Council administratively reviewed the DeGardner Circle amendment on March 16, 2023 (Review File No. 22287-4). The amendment regulated 2.1 acres from Park/Open Space to High Density Residential to correct an error in guiding for existing apartment buildings.
- The Council administratively reviewed the Patriot Parkway amendment on April 24, 2023 (Review File No. 22287-5). The amendment regulated 1.2 acres of Medium/High Density Residential (MHDR) to Commercial and 2.8 acres of MHDR to High Density Residential for future commercial and residential development.

## ISSUES

- I. Does the amendment conform to the regional system plans?
- II. Is the amendment consistent with Thrive MSP 2040 and other Council policies?
- III. Does the amendment change the City's forecasts?
- IV. Is the amendment compatible with the plans of adjacent local governmental units and affected jurisdictions?

## ISSUES ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

### Conformance with Regional Systems

The amendment conforms to the regional system plan for Regional Parks, Transportation, and Wastewater, with no substantial impact on, or departure from, these system plans. Additional review comments are included below.

#### Wastewater Service

*Reviewer: Roger Janzig, Environmental Services (ES) – Wastewater Planning and Community Programs ([roger.janzig@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:roger.janzig@metc.state.mn.us))*

The proposed amendment conforms to the *2040 Water Resources Policy Plan (WRPP)*, except that it is inconsistent with policies to preserve areas outside the Long-Term Wastewater Service Area for agricultural and rural uses, protecting significant natural resources, supporting groundwater recharge, protecting source-water quality, and allowing limited unsewered development. This inconsistency is related to residential density. Please see additional discussion under sections on Land Use and Natural Resources.

The City of St. Francis owns and operates its own wastewater treatment facility and collection system. The City recently reconstructed their original treatment facility, and the facility now has more than enough capacity to accommodate all projected household, population, and employment growth through 2040. The amendment site is not located in the City's Urban Service Area nor is it part of the City's Urban Reserve where future urbanization is planned (post 2040). Consequently, this change does not represent a departure from the wastewater system plan.

### Consistency with Council Policy

The amendment is consistent with Council policies for forecasts, land use, housing, sub-surface sewage treatment systems, and water supply. Additional review comments are detailed below.

#### Thrive MSP 2040 and Land Use

*Reviewer: Michael Larson, CD – Local Planning Assistance (651-602-1407)*

The City of St. Francis has two *Thrive MSP 2040* (Thrive) Community Designations: Rural Center and Diversified Rural (Figure 2). The location of the proposed amendment is in the western portion of the City with the designation of Diversified Rural. The amendment proposes to regulate 22.5



acres from Agricultural to Rural Residential. The amendment is associated with a proposal for four new single-family homes. This change is not consistent with Thrive policies for residential density in the Diversified Rural portion of the City.

The Diversified Rural Community Designation includes parts of the region that should be protected for rural lifestyles and, in some cases, long-term urbanization. They are home to a variety of farm and nonfarm land uses including very large lot residential, clustered housing, and hobby farms. Thrive directs Diversified Rural communities to plan for development and redevelopment at an overall average net density of 4 units per 40 acres. This includes a range of outcomes that include 10-acre lots as well as clusters of homes where open space and natural features are preserved, either in perpetuity or to facilitate future urbanization.

The City's 2040 Plan, authorized by the Council on January 8, 2020, includes relatively contiguous areas guided either as Agriculture (1 unit per 10 acres) or as Rural Residential (1 unit per 5 acres). The latter designation, though inconsistent with Thrive policy for residential density, reflects largely established development patterns and previous policy guidance included in the City's 2030 comprehensive plan. According to the City's Plan, most land guided as Rural Residential has been developed at lower densities. In the case of this amendment, parcels to the north, west, and east are also guided as Rural Residential. Nevertheless, the Council discourages further expansion of rural designations at densities greater than 4 units per 40 acres.

Thrive supports the clustering of homes to meet the demand for rural and small town living, designed in a manner that protects high-quality and locally prioritized natural areas and open spaces, and also preserves land in areas identified for future post-2040 urban development. The Flexible Development Ordinance Guidelines (included in the policy guidance for Diversified Rural Areas in Thrive) describe factors communities should consider, including clustering and platting to support future subdivision when urban services are available and/or the long-term preservation of natural features. While the amendment site is not located in the City's Urban Service Area or is designated as a part of the City's Urban Reserve where future urbanization is planned (post-2040), Thrive still encourages the clustering of homes, particularly when communities are considering densities greater than 4 per 40 acres in areas outside of the long-term wastewater service area (Thrive, p. 165). The proposed development, however, also does not propose to utilize clustering as a strategy for preserving natural features that are a part of the property. Rather, each of the lots in the preliminary plat show frontage on Ambassador Road as well as Seelye Brook, and range in size from 4.55 acres to 8.28 acres. The preliminary plat shows wetland delineation and setbacks for each lot, which may serve to protect the forested riparian conditions along the Brook and on the site. The additional density included in the proposal does not promote the preservation of natural features.

### *Advisory Comments*

The Council discourages the City from further reguiding of Agricultural guided land to Rural Residential. The Council strongly encourages the City to consider the application of ordinances that are consistent with the Council's Flexible Residential Development Ordinance Guidelines in cases in which the City may wish to consider densities greater than 4 units per 40 acres.

### **Water Resources**

*Reviewer: Maureen Hoffman, Environmental Services – Water Resources (651-602-8026)*

The proposed amendment is inconsistent with policies of the *2040 Water Resources Policy Plan* (WRPP) to preserve areas outside the Long-Term Wastewater Service Area for agricultural and rural uses. These policies relate to protecting significant natural resources, supporting groundwater recharge, protecting source-water quality, and allowing only limited unsewered development. This inconsistency is related to proposed residential densities greater than 4 units per 40 acres.

Seelye Brook, which is adjacent to the amendment location, is impaired for E. coli. The City should work closely with the Upper Rum Watershed Management Organization and developers to ensure that development does not cause Seelye Brook additional harm. The City should limit impacts to wetlands to the best extent possible. If impacts cannot be avoided, we recommend the developer bank wetland credits within the same subwatershed/watershed if possible.





### *Advisory Comments*

The Council discourages the City from further regarding of Agricultural guided land to Rural Residential. .

The Council strongly encourages the City to work closely with the Upper Rum Watershed Management Organization and developers to ensure that development does not cause Seelye Brook additional harm. Further, the Council recommends that the City limit impacts to wetlands to the best extent possible. If impacts cannot be avoided, we recommend the developer bank wetland credits within the same subwatershed/watershed if possible.

### **Compatibility with Plans of Adjacent Governmental Units and Plans of Affected Special Districts and School Districts**

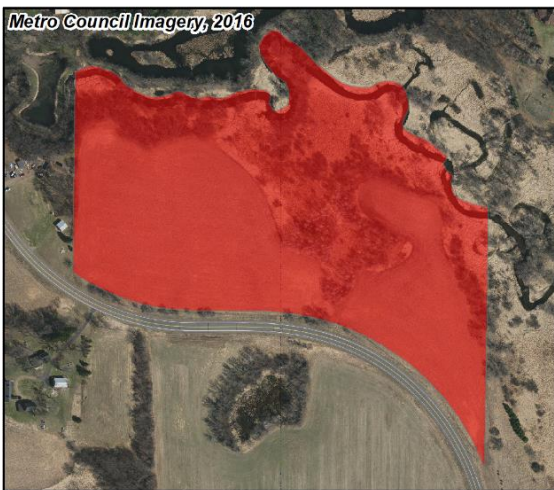
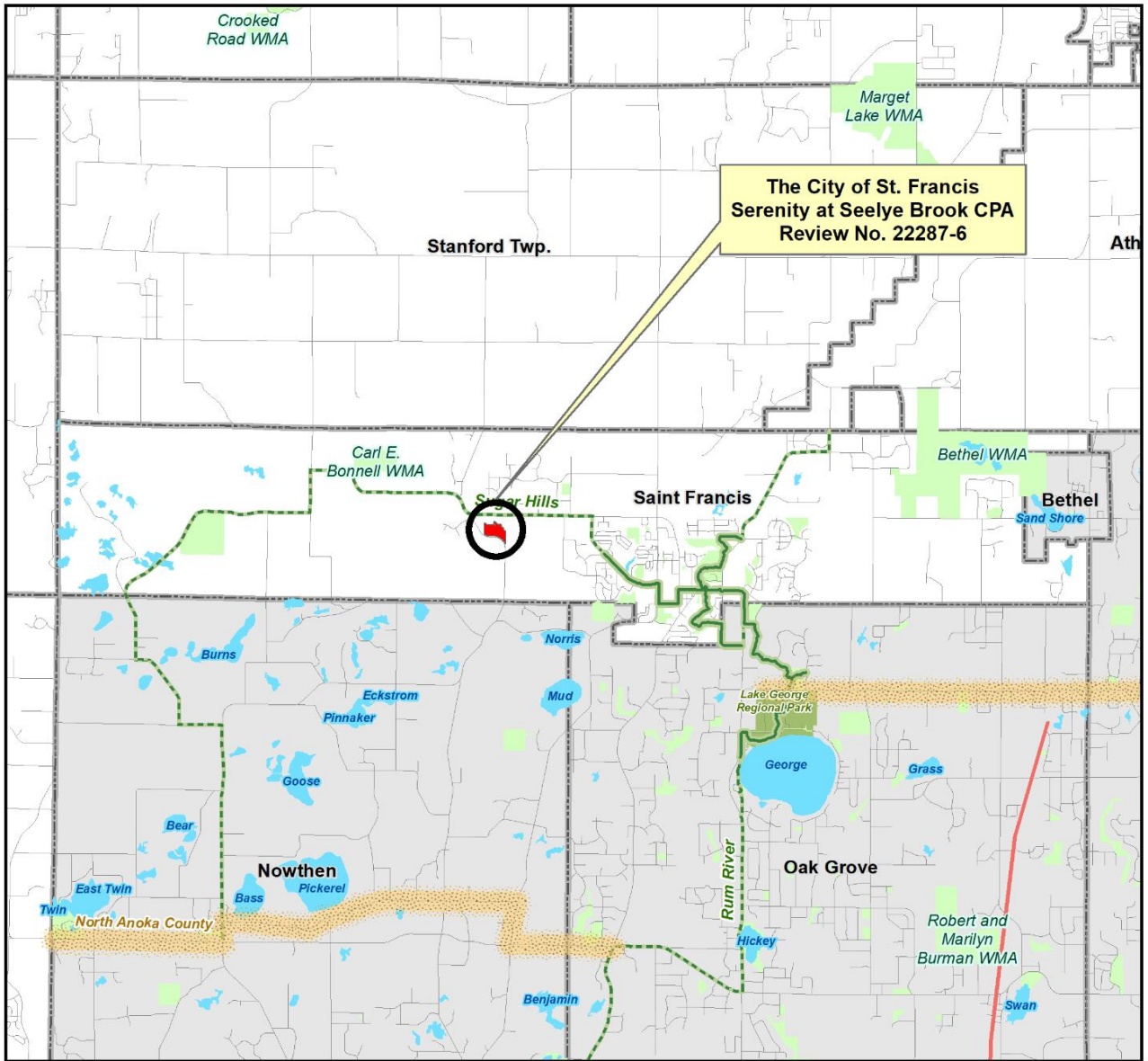
The proposed amendment is compatible with the plans of adjacent jurisdictions. No compatibility issues with plans of adjacent governmental units and plans of affected special districts and school districts were identified.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

- Figure 1: Location Map Showing Regional Systems
- Figure 2: Location Map Showing Community Designations
- Figure 3: Current Land Use Guiding
- Figure 4: Proposed Land Use Guiding



Figure 1. Location Map Showing Regional Systems

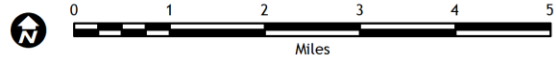
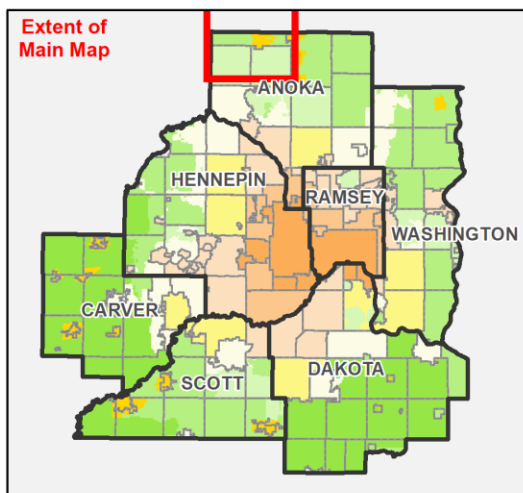
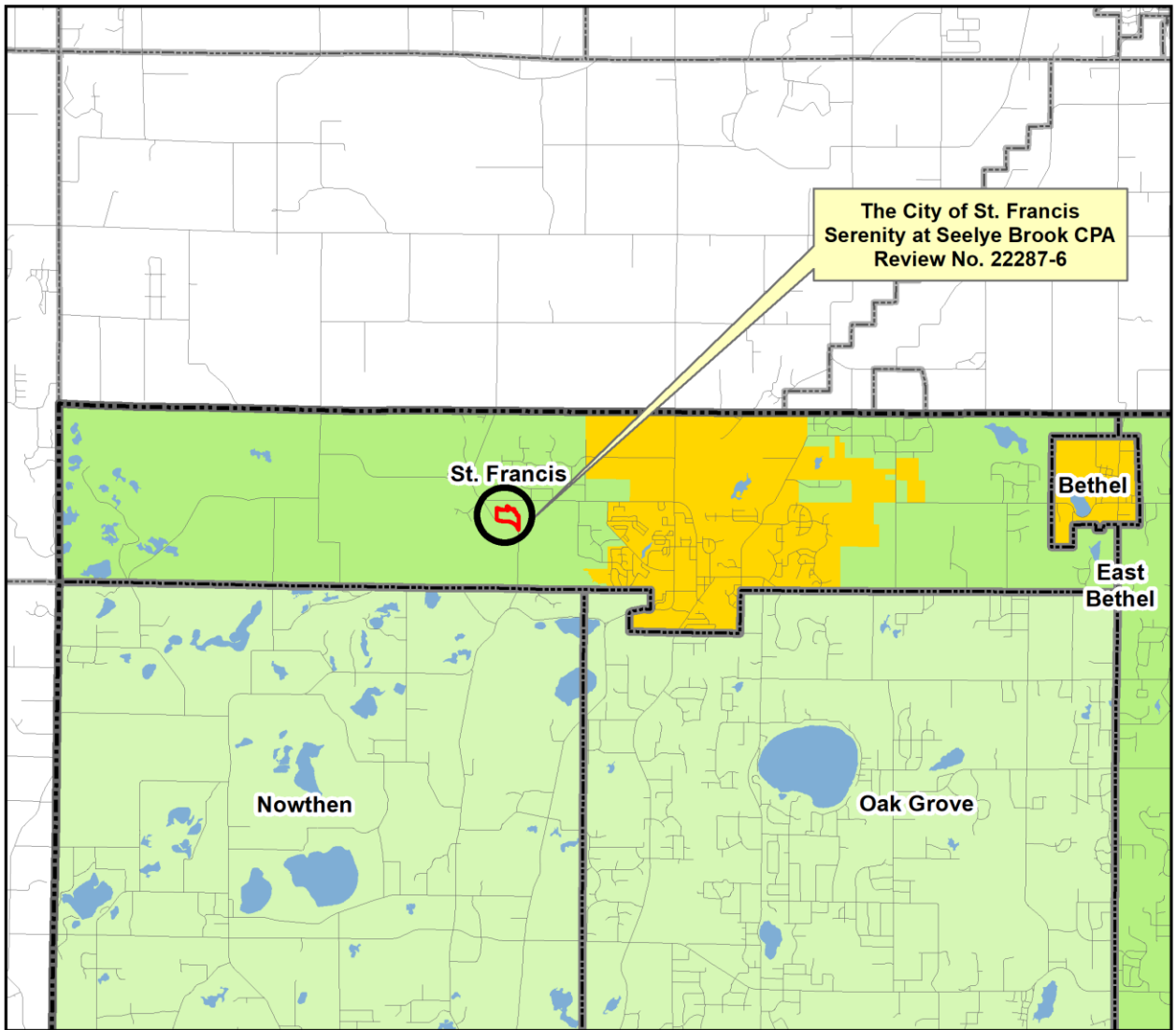


- Regional Systems**
- Regional Transitways**
  - Existing
  - Planned Current Revenue Scenario
  - Planned Current Revenue Scenario - CTIB Phase 1 Projects
  - Potential Increased Revenue Scenario
- Wastewater**
  - Meters
  - MCES Interceptors
  - Lift Stations
  - MCES Treatment Plants (WTP)
- Regional Highway System**
  - Interstates
  - US Highways
  - State Highways
  - County Roads
  - Road Centerlines
- Regional Parks**
  - Existing (Open to Public)
  - In Master Plan (Not Open to Public)
  - Planned Units
  - Other Parks, Preserves, Refuges and Natural Areas
- Regional Trails**
  - Existing (Open to Public)
  - Existing (Not Open to Public)
  - Planned Regional Trails
  - Regional Trail Search Corridors

Metropolitan Council



**Figure 2. Location Map Showing Community Designations**

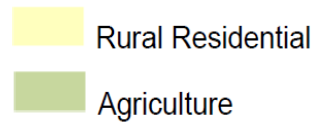


**ThriveMSP 2040 Community Designations**

- Agricultural
- Rural Residential
- Diversified Rural
- Rural Center
- Emerging Suburban Edge
- Suburban Edge
- Suburban
- Urban
- Urban Center
- Ncompass Street Centerlines



**Figure 3. Current Land Use Guiding**



**Figure 4. Proposed Land Use Guiding**

