



DRAFT
FOR
PUBLIC REVIEW
AND COMMENT

The Metropolitan Council has released the comprehensive development guide for the Twin Cities metropolitan area, *Thrive MSP 2040*, for public comment.

The public is encouraged to view the plan and provide public comment, through **Monday, April 28**, as follows (**comments must be received by 5 p.m.**):

- Written comments: Metropolitan Council
390 N. Robert St., St. Paul, 55101
- Fax comments to: 651-602-1464
- Send TTY comments to: 651-291-0904
- Email: public.info@metc.state.mn.us
- Record comments on Council's Public Comment Line at 651-602-1500
- Submit comments through the Council's online Your Ideas site, at <http://yourideas.metrocouncil.org/>.

The Metropolitan Council will hold two public hearings on the *Thrive MSP 2040* plan:

- **Thursday, April 10, 5 p.m.**
F.T Heywood Office Building, Chambers
560 Sixth Avenue North, Minneapolis
Served by regional transit routes 5, 19, 22, and METRO Blue Line
- **Wednesday, April 16, 5 p.m.**
Metropolitan Council Chambers
390 Robert Street North, St. Paul
Served by many regional transit routes

All interested persons are encouraged to attend the public hearings and offer comments. Those attending may register in advance to speak by calling the Council at 651-602-1140. Upon request, the Metropolitan Council will provide reasonable accommodations to persons with disabilities. Advance notice, indicating the specific accommodation needed, is appreciated.

Staff will review public comment and evaluate changes to the document to address the comments submitted by the public. A recommendation for final adoption of the *Thrive MSP 2040* plan will be considered by the Metropolitan Council in May 2014.

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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, and natural resources; and*
- *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, raise a family 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 call the Twin Cities home—including the headquarters of 18 Fortune 500 companies—and benefit 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. Healthy residents enjoy active lifestyles 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.

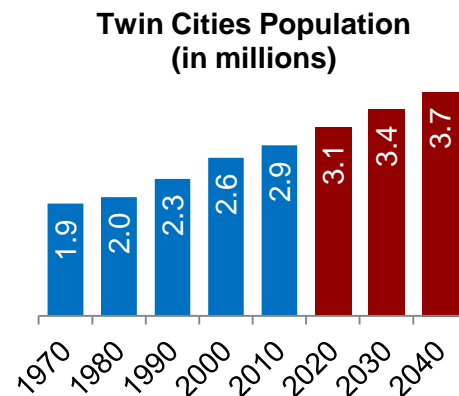
Above all, our region has embraced a civic tradition of shared action by government, nonprofit and philanthropic organizations, community groups and business leaders to enhance our communities and the region as a whole. The strengths that have made our region a success will help us meet the changes and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

Continued population and job growth through 2040

More people. Over the next thirty years, our region is projected to grow by 824,000 residents, 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 Minneapolis-Saint Paul region is the predominant economic center for Minnesota, western Wisconsin, the Dakotas and Montana and is the nation's 13th largest metropolitan economy. 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.



Over the next three decades, our region will see more infill development, investment and intensification in the older, urbanized, and most accessible parts of the region. Driving this change are our aging population, new residential preferences among younger households, and increasing interest in sustainable lifestyles. Suburban edge communities will continue to grow and fill in though more slowly than in decades past.

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.

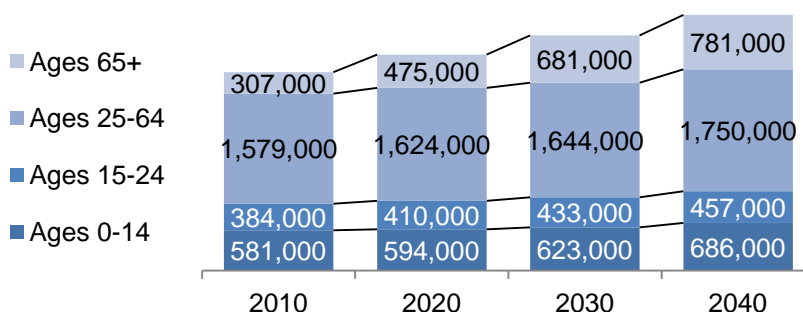
The growing need to **preserve and maintain our aging infrastructure** is an increasing burden on limited fiscal resources. For example:

- 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.
- The 2013 [Minnesota State Highway Investment Plan](#), prepared by the Minnesota Department of Transportation, shows that 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. From 2023 onward, all state transportation funding will be devoted to preservation of the existing system.

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.

Twin Cities Population by Age



- 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, often in 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.

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 the City of Duluth experienced in the aftermath of torrential rains in 2012.

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. This redevelopment more efficiently uses existing regional infrastructure, but the challenges

and opportunities of infill, higher densities, and redevelopment can be complex and costly for 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 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 over the decade. While our region was not alone losing jobs, regional leaders responded by strengthening our focus on a shared economic competitiveness strategy and creating the regional economic development partnership GREATER MSP.
- 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 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; or
- 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 non-profit 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, 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.

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—both for the Council's systems and policy plans and for 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

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 of 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 our infrastructure 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 and 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.”¹

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 for future generations 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, incorporating natural resources as a consideration 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 and Open Space System to conserve scarce natural

¹ Wilder Research, *The Economic Value of Open Space*, 2005

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 and open space 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.

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- 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 ecosystem while providing for recreational opportunities. To protect natural resources, the Council will:

- Fund ongoing acquisition of priority natural resources and the last best places into the Regional Parks and Open Space System.
- Encourage local governments to locate and design new developments in a way that preserves and benefits from the natural environment to reduce 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 as well as identifying 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 to 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 and maintenance. 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. Working with local governments, the Council has planned out the region's wastewater system through 2030, and forecasted population growth to 2040 suggests minimal need to expand the wastewater system's geographic footprint. 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.

Our region's highway investment strategy exemplifies the need and the opportunity for thoughtful and strategic stewardship of resources. While some gaps remain, the region's highway network is essentially complete and must now be rebuilt. The highway preservation and maintenance needs are increasing as federal, state, and local resources for roads and bridges continue to decline. For example, gas tax revenues are declining due to improved fuel efficiency, changing travel patterns, and lost purchasing power as costs rise over time. The 2013 Minnesota State Highway Investment Plan shows that the region will have only \$52 million available annually from 2014 to 2022 for highway mobility improvements, a reduction from 2030 Transportation Policy Plan projections and meeting one-fourth of the anticipated need. From 2023 onward, all state highway funding will be devoted to preservation of the existing system.

While the region must operate, maintain, and rebuild the existing highway system, these investments alone cannot accommodate the growing region. Regional roadway congestion is a sign of economic activity and occurs primarily during peak commuting hours. As a result, moving more people during these times requires different solutions than just addressing the congestion. With limited fiscal resources, smart highway capacity investments across the region must take a system-wide approach and create alternatives to driving alone in congestion, rather than project-by-project expansions that often simply move the congestion "down the road". Managed and priced lanes optimize overall highway capacity both for those who use the lanes and those who do not. Strategic capacity improvements, such as converting signaled intersections into interchanges and providing Interstate lane continuity, produce a smoother overall traffic flow from the existing system. The Council's policies will emphasize preserving existing highway assets and optimizing capacity through strategic investments that will be further defined in the [*2040 Transportation Policy Plan*](#):

- Preserve, manage, and optimize the capacity of the existing highway system to move more people and vehicles;
- Construct lower-cost/high-benefit safety and capacity improvement projects on highways across the region;
- Leverage preservation projects with lower-cost/high-benefit investments, such as the I-35E Cayuga bridge replacement project which is also adding capacity for managed lanes;
- Expand the regional system of managed lanes to provide a congestion-free option for those using transit, sharing rides, or willing to pay;

- Strategically enhance capacity such as converting signaled intersections into highway interchanges and providing Interstate lane continuity;
- Enhance transit projects;
- Offer transportation choices that do not involve single-occupant vehicles.

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.

Leveraging transit infrastructure investments with higher expectations of land use

The region has been building its highway system for more than 50 years, but we have only started to build new fixed-route transitways in the last decade 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 will be 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 transit 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 transit service 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, 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 transit 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 across the region.***

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 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 maintains 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, attracting and retaining businesses to 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 authority 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.

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 several multiple dimensions; sometimes the issue is north and east vs. southwest, other times the issue is suburban edge vs. suburban vs. urban center. 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, to provide economic opportunities for farmers, and to promote local food production.

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 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 determine how best to guide agricultural land within their borders.

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 \$65,000,000 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 critical to the construction industry, it is critical 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.²

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.
- Maintain and update the regional 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, and 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 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.

² Minnesota Geological Survey Information Circular 46, “Aggregate Resources Inventory of the Seven-County Metropolitan Area, Minnesota”, 2000.

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 Mississippi River, 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. 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 Mississippi River 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 exporting 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 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 overall region's 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. 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. We must compete with regions around the globe for attracting 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 and the emerging bicycle network, provides our residents options for commuting to their workplaces. Accessibility to transit is of particular interest to office-based employers because transit reduces both employer costs of providing parking and employee transportation costs. Employers are also interested in locations that are proximate to housing options affordable to their employees.

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

- Plan for the efficient and multimodal movement of freight globally, nationally and regionally to support the region's industries;
- Continue to provide cost-effective and efficient wastewater treatment at wholesale rates that are as much as 40% lower today than in comparable regions;
- Contribute to a quality of life and cost of living that attract and retain a talented workforce;
- Focus expansion of transit service to and within existing and emerging high-density job and activity centers;
- Construct and support park and rides to provide access to transit in less dense residential areas;
- Encourage workforce housing that is affordable to a variety of income levels across the region, especially in proximity to job centers and transit;
- 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;
- Investigate and assess cost-effective options for regional water supply infrastructure.

Encouraging redevelopment and infill development across the region

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 upfront, both in the direct costs of demolition and pollution remediation as well as the increased complexity of integrating a project 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 work with local and regional partners to develop investment and redevelopment strategies customized to the needs of different types of strong and weak markets, including concentrated and racially-concentrated areas of poverty;
- 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

Equity connects all residents to opportunity and creates viable housing and transportation 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 people live and how people travel for all our residents, across age, race and ethnicity, economic means, and ability;***
- ***Investing in a mix of housing affordability along the region's transitways;***
- ***Engaging a full cross-section of the community in decision-making.***

Our region has some of the largest disparities by race and ethnicity of any large metropolitan area in the nation. The region will not be able to realize its full economic potential if these disparities persist:

- In the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area, 25.7% of all people of color are poor, compared with 6.4% of white non-Latino people.³ 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 49% of the homeownership rate among white, non-Latino households. Just 22% of Black or African American households own their homes.

³ Data from the 2012 American Community Survey. To enable comparisons with other regions, numbers describe the 13-county Minneapolis-St. Paul 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 ⁴
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. 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 percent of residents under age 18 will be people of color in 2040. Eliminating these disparities, on the other hand, can 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;
- an additional \$31.8 billion in income; and
- 186,000 more homeowners.⁵

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.

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 racial, ethnic and income-based disparities.

⁴ The ranks account for certain differences across metropolitan areas to make them more comparable.

⁵ These figures are Metropolitan Council staff calculations based on 2007-2011 American Community Survey data for the 7-county Twin Cities region and the Metropolitan Council's Revised Regional Forecast to 2040 (February 2014).

To meet the expectations of the federal Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant, the Council has been developing *Choice, Place and Opportunity: An Equity Assessment of the Twin Cities Region*. The process of developing this assessment has to deeper understandings of 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.⁶ By 2010, nearly one in ten of our region's residents lived in racially-concentrated areas of poverty. Because racially-concentrated areas of poverty can both limit the economic mobility of their residents and discourage private investment, our region simply cannot afford to allow racially-concentrated areas of poverty to either persist or grow. The Council will:

- Work to mitigate concentrated 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 select areas;
- Use Livable Communities Act resources to catalyze private investment in concentrated and racially-concentrated areas of poverty;
- Actively partner in neighborhood revitalization efforts such as Penn Avenue Community Works;
- 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;
- Ask grant applicants to explain how their projects would advance equity, including helping residents of concentrated and racially-concentrated areas of poverty and/or lower-income households.

By using public resources to catalyze investment in areas that have seen chronic private disinvestment—specifically including the concentrated and racially-concentrated areas of poverty identified through *Choice, Place and Opportunity: An Equity Assessment of the Twin Cities Region*—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, non-profits and philanthropy, to develop shared plans and investment strategies to address the issues of concentrated 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 concentrated and racially-concentrated areas of poverty.

⁶ \$42,589 in annual income for a four-person household in 2011

Expanding choices in where we live and how we travel for all our residents, across age, race and 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 and transportation options for the region's residents, regardless of race, ethnicity, income, immigrant status or disability. While different people will make different choices reflecting their own needs and preferences, the Council's priority will be expanding real choices for housing and transportation.

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. 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 racially-integrated, mixed-income neighborhoods across the region;
- Encourage preserving existing affordable housing across the region and encourage new additions to the affordable housing stock in areas that have an inadequate supply of existing affordable housing and are experiencing new housing construction—particularly in areas that are well-connected to jobs and transit;
- Invest in affordable housing construction and preservation in higher-income areas of the region;
- Provide competitive rent limits to enable Housing Choice Voucher holders to choose the location that best meets their needs, including those opportunities in higher-cost communities;
- Encourage increased resources for preserving existing and producing more affordable housing opportunities at the federal, state, regional and local level to help close the gap between the region's affordable housing need and the supply;
- Support research and testing related to fair housing, discriminatory lending practices, and real estate steering to determine if these discriminatory practices are occurring and limiting housing choices.

Transportation choices are as important to lower-income households as housing choices. The Council will continue to strengthen transit 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—also known as “transit dependency” —as one of the elements driving the Council's Transit Market Areas and defining the level of transit 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;
- Prioritize transportation investments that connect lower-income areas to job opportunities;
- Engage neighborhood residents in transit planning to understand how to most effectively use transit service and investments to promote access to opportunity.

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. 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;
- Require that local jurisdictions applying for Livable Communities transit-oriented development grants adopt local policies reflecting equity in the proposed grant area;
- Promote transit-oriented development that expands affordable housing 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 Public Engagement Plan, the Council will:

- Define consistent expectations of how the Council will engage;
- 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;
- Consult with members of the community, especially historically under-represented populations;
- Focus on developing lasting relationships;
- 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

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 make our region a great place to live. 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 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:

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

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 metro 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 it is 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.

Promoting healthy communities and active living through 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 planning decisions provides a key opportunity to improve both livability 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. To promote healthy communities and active living through 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 access to safe and healthy food.

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.⁷ Drawing 45.8 million annual visits, 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. The Council will collaborate with the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, regional park agencies and State partners to:

- Expand the regional park system to conserve, maintain and connect natural resources identified as being of high quality or having regional importance;
- Provide a comprehensive regional park and trail system that preserves high-quality natural resources, increases climate resiliency, fosters healthy communities, and enhances quality of life in the region;
- Promote expanded multimodal access to regional parks, regional trails and the transit network, where appropriate.

⁷ For more information, see the [Metro Residents Survey](#).

- Strengthen equitable usage of regional parks and trails by all our region’s residents, such as across race, ethnicity, class, age, ability and immigrant status.

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 2012, the region issued building permits for more multifamily units than all housing units in any of the previous three years. 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 are 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. As infrastructure ages, rebuilding will be necessary. Going forward, each jurisdiction will have to examine whether it offers satisfying living options for its current and future residents.

Some of the larger groups and the experiences they may value include:

- Seniors—the “Silver Tsunami” —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. While some choose to move to a downtown condo and others want to stay close to their places of worship, friends or family members (especially the grandchildren), most seniors share common interests in less household maintenance, smaller housing units, and easy access to nearby goods and services, especially health care. Are there adequate housing choices available for seniors to stay active, conveniently access goods and services, and/or be near friends and family?
- The Millennial generation, already the largest generation demographically, 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 less likely to move into homeownership at the same ages as their predecessors. 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, will our region’s communities continue to offer them satisfying living situations?
- New Americans move to our region from across the globe, bringing with them unique cultural histories that build the richness of our region. 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 households with low and moderate incomes;
- Invest in transit to expand transportation options, particularly to connect workers to jobs throughout the region;
- Construct and support park and rides to expand access to transit as a transportation alternative in less dense residential areas;
- Support complete streets approaches to enhance transportation choices;
- 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 the region's bicycle and pedestrian facilities to promote bicycling for transportation, recreation and healthy lifestyles

Over the last ten 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% percent 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, MnDOT, 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 MnDOT, the Transportation Advisory Board and local jurisdictions, to expand the region's bicycle and pedestrian system and increase these modes' share of the 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

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 the small businesses that would attract those pedestrians. Livability for all areas also requires a 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. The Council will:

- In areas with density suitable for transit, support transit-oriented development that creates vibrant, mixed-income, places where people can live without an automobile;
- In areas where density is not yet suitable for transit, encourage transit-friendly development patterns and coordination across jurisdictional boundaries to lay the groundwork for future transit-readiness and improve livability in the interim;
- In areas where low density or low connectivity does not support transit, promote walkable neighborhoods and town centers to enhance livability.

Sustainability

“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.***

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, the impact of groundwater withdrawal on surface waters, contamination, and drought 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 future development might have on the reliability of groundwater as a drinking 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.

The Minnesota State Legislature defines water sustainability as, "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 ground and surface water supplies, the Council will:

- Promote water sustainability in communities through the [2040 Water Resources Policy Plan](#) and the Water Supply Master 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 start from the premise that, despite mitigation strategies, climate change is already occurring and focus on how to change policies and practices to adjust. 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;
- Investing in and pursuing local renewable energy generation for operations, including large scale solar facilities;
- 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 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, the next generation of the Regional Indicators data, and a regional greenhouse gas emissions inventory;
- 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 Pollution Control Agency's 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;
- Create incentives to reward local governments that set and make progress on local greenhouse gas reduction goals.

The Council's approach to climate change will focus on softer approaches – such as providing information, technical assistance and incentives – unless and until the lack of action poses a threat to orderly and economical development or portends a significant collective financial cost. In this event, the Council will take a stronger approach. Parallel to the potential impact of greenhouse gas emissions, the region may be approaching the foreseeable yet avoidable risk of failing to maintain air quality attainment status with the Environmental Protection Agency over fine particulate matter; the costs of air quality non-attainment would justify a stronger regional approach.

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 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 which 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; and
- 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 of reducing their facility energy purchases by 50% from a 2006 baseline by 2020. 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 building and operations and be among the efficiency leaders in the region;
- Pursue and invest in local generation of renewable energy for 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 up 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:

Integration ∞ Collaboration ∞ Accountability

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, greater 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 ever-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 re-use 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 resource;
- Requiring land use in transit 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 Council's 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 partnerships with state agencies and state boards, including:
 - Department of Agriculture,
 - Department of Employment and Economic Development,
 - Department of Health,
 - Department of Human Rights,
 - Department of Natural Resources,
 - Environmental Quality Board,
 - Minnesota Housing,
 - Minnesota Department of Transportation, and
 - Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.
- The Council's funding decisions where one resource may advance multiple policy objectives.

Collaboration

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, which includes representation from the Council, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and the Minnesota Departments of Commerce and Health; this effort 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.

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, in both areas where the Council has statutory authority and 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 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, which 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, multi-racial 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 around issues as diverse as aviation-compatible land uses, natural resource preservation, and inflow/infiltration mitigation.

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 Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's 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 a 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 format;
- Developing, collecting and disseminating information about climate change, including energy and climate data; the next generation of the Regional Indicators data; and a regional greenhouse gas emissions inventory;
- Analyzing the land use and infrastructure needs of the region's leading industry clusters;
- Aggregating local redevelopment priorities 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.

While the Council will lead with its collaborative role, the Council will continue to exercise its authority and roles when appropriate to promote the regional outcomes of stewardship, prosperity, equity, livability and sustainability.

The Council will continue to seek partnerships and relationships with residents, businesses, and stakeholders to most effectively advance the *Thrive* outcomes.

Accountability

Results matter. Milton Friedman remarked, “One of the great mistakes is to judge policies and programs by their intentions rather than their results.” For the Council, accountability represents 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 toward the outcomes;**
- **Learning from the results of measures and indicators to guide future refinements of our policies;**
- **Providing clear, easily accessible information about our progress;**
- **Deploying the Council’s authority when necessary.**

Adopting a data-driven approach to measure progress⁸

Accountability focuses on managing to outcomes – how our region is better – not tasks or outputs. 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 and tasks are the day-to-day work that moves toward outcomes, but outputs without outcomes are a waste of 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. Outcomes create the why and the rationale for tasks and outputs. 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?”

Learning from indicators

The Council will create a set of indicators, parallel to *Thrive* but adopted separately to allow for flexibility in refining the indicators over the lifetime of *Thrive*. The Council will use the indicators to assess and monitor regional progress toward the five outcomes. Rather than using the

⁸ Special thanks to Performance Accountability: The Five Building Blocks and Six Essential Practices by Shelley H. Metzenbaum, published by the IBM Center for The Business of Government in 2006, available at <http://www.businessofgovernment.org/report/performance-accountability-five-building-blocks-and-six-essential-practices>, for defining some of the key concepts in this section.

indicators and accountability structure punitively, the Council will use the indicators as the foundation for inquiry – what do the indicators tell us about the state of the region and our policies? How do we leverage what’s working well? How do we effectively address areas where progress towards outcomes is less than our expectations? To borrow from Shelley Metzzenbaum, the Council will use “measurement to motivate, illuminate and communicate.” The Council will use the insights that emerge from these questions to guide future decisions, including adjusting policies and priorities as needed to more effectively advance the outcomes. We will actively review our measures and indicators as the basis of continuous improvement for both ourselves and our policies, striving to be the best region, providing infrastructure in a coordinated and economically feasible way.

Providing clear, easily accessible information

The Council will share the annual updates of the indicators, providing clear, easily accessible information about the progress of the region and Council policies. The focus on outcomes allows us to be transparent with our partners and stakeholders – what does success look like? What kind of region do we want to create? Most importantly, the focus on outcomes creates the foundation for collaborative dialogue with partners and stakeholders – what can and will the Council do to advance these outcomes? What will other organizations do to advance these outcomes? What role will local governments play? And where are the gaps, overlaps and opportunities?

The Thrive indicators will focus on the Thrive outcomes and will reflect the intentional integration of policy areas into the Thrive 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.

Deploying the Council’s authority

While the Council will lead with its collaborative role, the Council will continue to use its authority and roles to advance the regional outcomes of stewardship, prosperity, equity, livability and sustainability. Nonetheless, the Council will continue to seek partnerships and relationships with residents, businesses, and stakeholders to most effectively advance the *Thrive* outcomes.

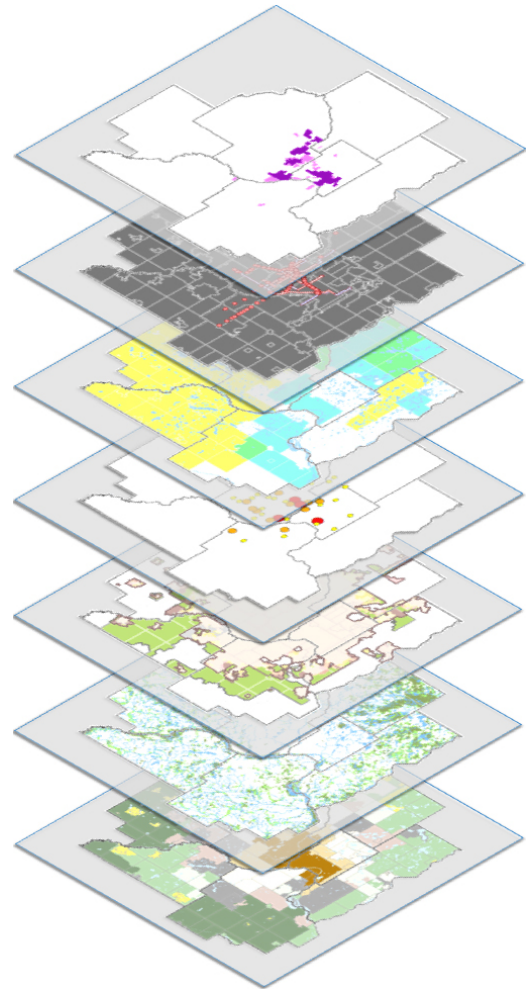
Special Features

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. Recognizing that one size does not fit all, the Council has identified key places that situate the Council's priorities in specific geographies and that require specific place-based policies. While some of the Council's policies apply throughout each jurisdiction's borders, the policies outlined in this section recognize both granular variation within communities and commonalities that transcend community borders. When local communities begin their own comprehensive planning process, they will address the intersection of and integration across these special features; for simplicity of description, this section discusses each special feature independently.

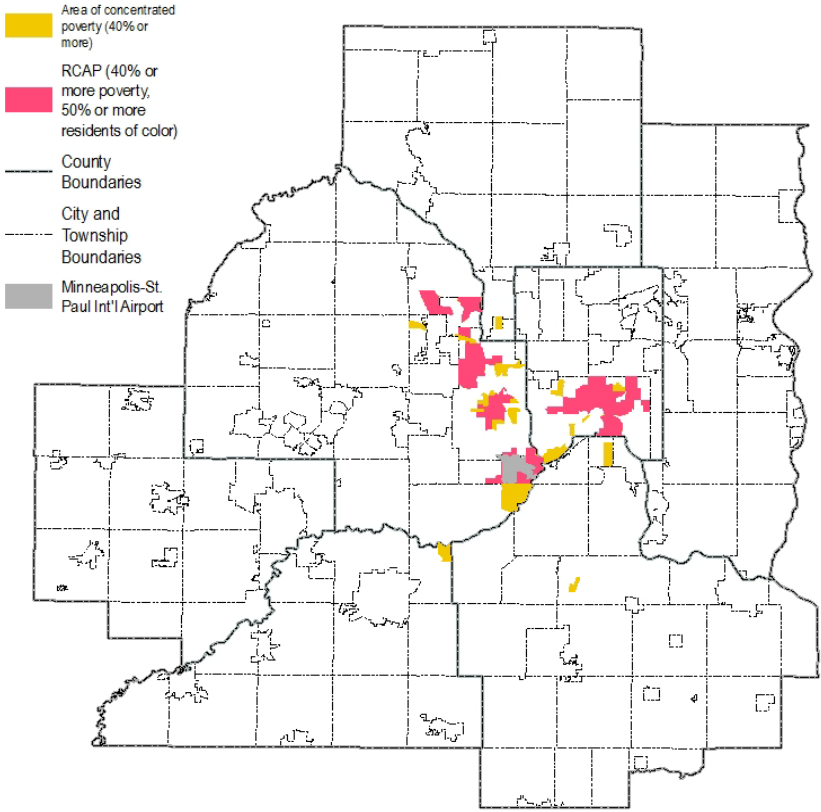
Special features provide enhanced granularity for policies that vary within jurisdictional boundaries; others focus policy implementation on features that transcend local borders. Special features allow the Council to apply policy consistently to land with specific levels of infrastructure or service, certain demographic traits, similar urban form, or particular geological or topological characteristics whether within or across jurisdictional borders. 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 may change.

This section discusses four special features to emphasize the strong roles they play shaping how the Council wants the region to grow and develop. In addition, several long-standing Council priorities that strongly shape regional planning are described. When updating their local comprehensive plans, the region's communities will address both "special features" and "community-wide" policies into its own unique situation.



Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty and Areas of Concentrated Poverty

The Council's *Choice, Place and Opportunity: An Equity Assessment of the Twin Cities Region* (2014) identified Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty (RCAPs), contiguous areas of one or more census tracts in which at least 50 percent of the residents are people of color and at least 40 percent of the residents live in households with incomes below 185 percent of the federal poverty line. (\$42,589 in annual income for a four-person household in 2011) By 2010, nearly one in ten of our region's residents lived in racially concentrated areas of poverty. While statistical sampling means that the borders of RCAPs and areas of concentrated poverty are imprecise, the cores of these areas demonstrate remarkable and unwelcome persistence over time.



Because both racially concentrated areas of poverty and areas of concentrated poverty limit the economic mobility of their residents and discourage private investment, our region simply cannot afford to allow these areas to persist or grow. Using public resources to catalyze investment these areas, the Council will seek to help the region grow and prosper more equitably. The Council will work with partners and use its investments and actions to improve access to opportunity for residents and attract private investment so that all people live in communities that provide them access to success, prosperity, and quality of life.

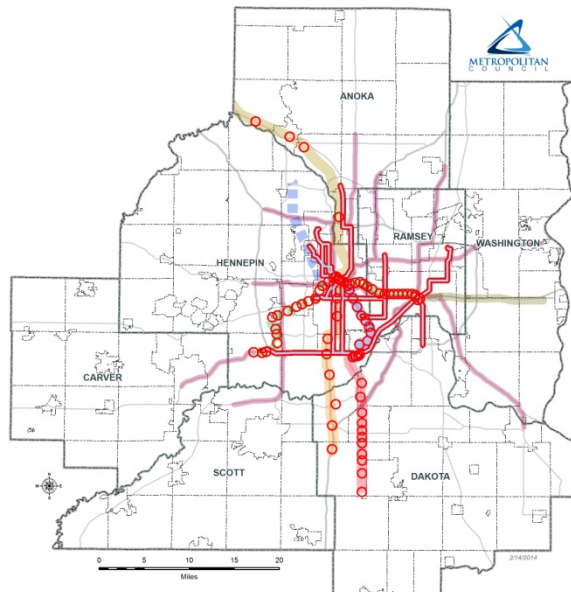
Visit the Council's website for the most current delineation of racially concentrated areas of poverty and areas of concentrated poverty. For specific approaches, policies and additional analysis related to racially concentrated areas of poverty and areas of concentrated poverty, see:

- the Equity section of the *Thrive Outcomes* (starting on p. 19);
- *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 faster service than regular-route buses, better customer experience, and more certainty to the city and investors that can attract development. Transitways can be commuter rail, light-rail transit, bus rapid transit, arterial bus rapid transit, or potentially streetcars. The areas around transitway stations can accommodate regional growth; offer expanded living, working and shopping choices; increase the efficiency of existing infrastructure, and contribute to climate change mitigation and resiliency.

However, the investment required to construct transitways is both significant and long term. As the region expands its network of transitways in the coming years, good stewardship requires that the region maximize their value, cost-effectiveness and performance. To this end, the Council will prioritize locations that have city and corridor commitment to transit-supportive development patterns near stations, including higher levels of density and development. The Council will provide technical assistance to support transit-oriented development in station areas.



Transitway corridors are able to provide transportation access to more residents and employers, especially in higher density areas, and therefore accommodate more of the region's expected growth and development. In addition to their role attracting growth and development, the prospect of future transitway corridors also provides an incentive for communities to cooperate and collaborate across jurisdictional borders.

The map above is intentionally illustrative. 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:

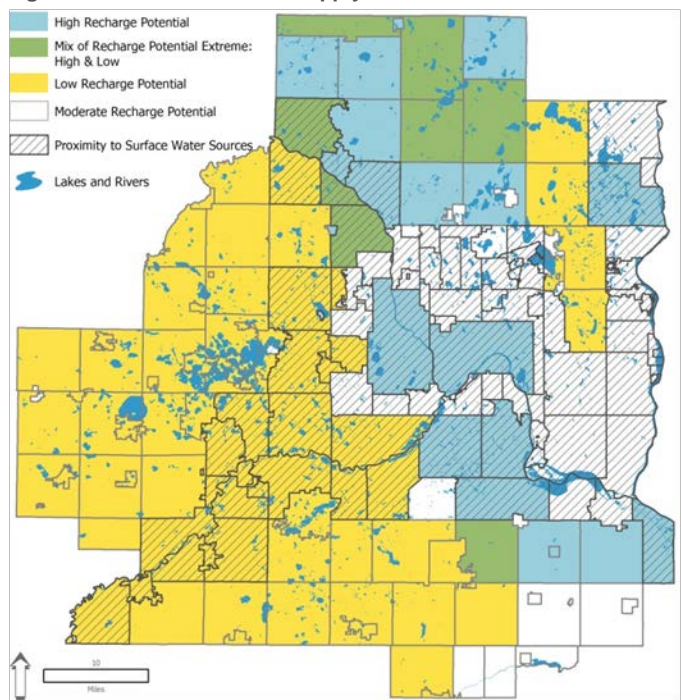
- the Stewardship section of the *Thrive Outcomes* (starting on p. 9)
- the Orderly and Efficient Land Use policy (p. 64)
- the Access, Mobility and Transportation Choice Land Use policy (p 74)
- the Transit Oriented Design Strategic Action Plan
- the [2040 Transportation Policy Plan](#) and its supporting technical appendices.

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 and management of regional water supply issues. The Council's goal, articulated in the Master Water Supply Plan, is a sustainable water supply for current and future generations. To achieve this goal, the Plan identified two important issues to address: the unbalanced use of groundwater versus surface water resources, and the unplanned modification of important groundwater recharge areas. Figure 1 identifies the communities that sustainable water use can be re-established through a better balance of groundwater and surface water supply, and through better management of vulnerable recharge areas.

Figure 1. Sustainable Water Supply



Cities are responsible for planning their local water supply and obtaining permits from state agencies. These 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 planning work completed with the *Master Water Supply Plan*, the region now has a better understanding of the impact of development and water use on underground 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.

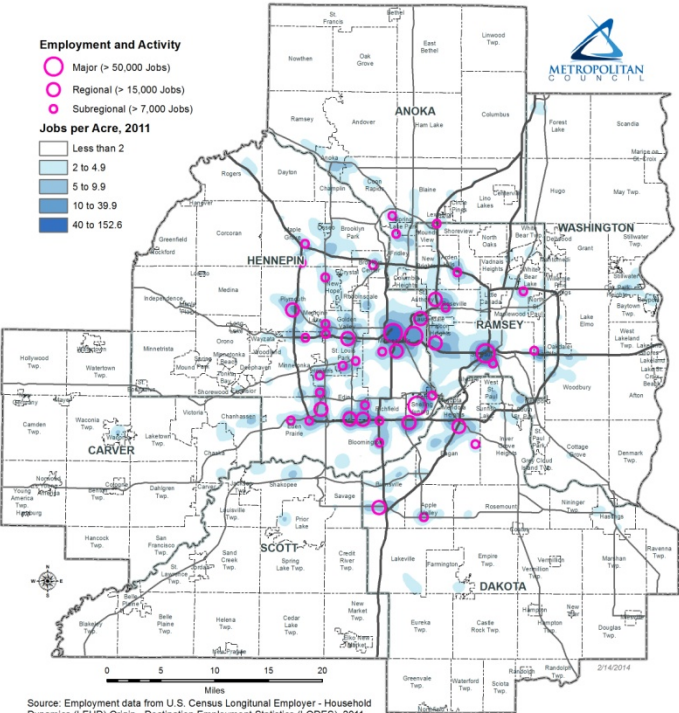
The map above is intentionally illustrative. See the Council's website and the *Master Water Supply Plan* for up-to-date maps of groundwater recharge potential. For specific approaches, policies and additional analysis related to groundwater, visit:

- the Sustainability section of the *Thrive Outcomes* (p. 29)
- the Orderly and Efficient Land Use policy (p. 64)
- the Water Sustainability Land Use policy (p. 69)
- the [2040 Water Resources Policy Plan](#)
- the metropolitan area Master Water Supply Plan.

Job and Activity Centers

Job and Activity Centers are areas of focused economic activity. Job Centers are contiguous areas that have at least 7,000 jobs at a net density of at least 10 jobs per acre. In 2010, half of the region’s jobs were located in one of 42 Job Centers; one in six of the region’s jobs was in the four largest job centers: downtown Minneapolis, downtown Saint Paul, the University of Minnesota and the airport/Mall of America. Activity Centers are concentrated nodes of other activity, such as major educational institutions, shopping and airports.

Job and Activity Centers benefit from significant existing regional infrastructure such as wastewater, highways, and transit, as well as local infrastructure investments in access and connectivity like sidewalks, parking, water, parks, and trails. Building on these investments to take advantage of new opportunities to adapt, reuse, or redevelop properties will maximize the benefit of our regional investments and support the continued orderly and economical development of the region.



Job and Activity Centers are significant travel destinations and support higher levels of transit service and highway infrastructure. Employers that value transit access for their workforce should locate in Job Centers. Due to the advantages and efficiencies that these locations provide, the Council will partner with key stakeholders to promote job placement and growth in Job Centers.

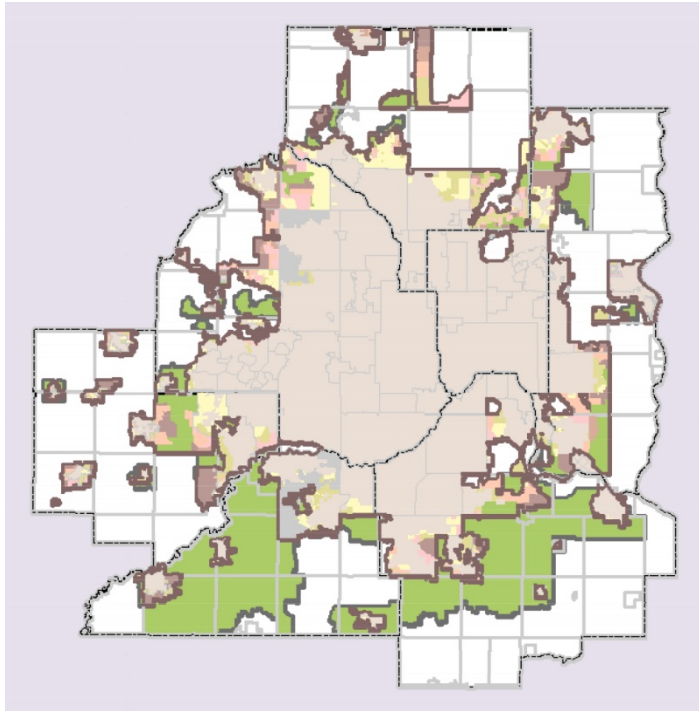
As new job concentrations emerge—whether through new development, redevelopment or job growth at specific sites—the Council will identify Job Centers that meet the thresholds of job number and density. The map above reflects 2011 data. See the Council’s website for annually-updated maps of Job and Activity Centers. For specific approaches, policies and additional analysis related to Job and Activity Centers, visit:

- the Prosperity section of the *Thrive Outcomes* (p. 13)
- the Economic Competitiveness Land Use policy (p.77)
- the **2040 Transportation Policy Plan** and its technical appendices.

Wastewater Service Areas

The Council has a long history of aligning land development with the staging of new connections to regional wastewater service. This has helped the Council to provide efficient and affordable service; to create predictability for landowners, cities and developers; to ensure that future revenues cover the expense of the infrastructure; and to protect ground- and surface-water quality. 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.
- *Planned Wastewater Service Area* includes land that is not currently served but is staged to receive regional wastewater treatment service by 2040.
- *Long-term Wastewater Service Area* represents land that is planned to receive wastewater treatment service sometime after 2040.



To further stewardship of the region's water and financial resources, the Council will continue to apply established wastewater policies. Additionally, wastewater operations and investments will be aligned with other activities as part of the Council's new water sustainability approach.

As a long-standing responsibility of the Council, wastewater service policies are woven into the community designations outlined in the next sections. In order to ensure efficient use of regional 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 map above is intentionally illustrative. See the Council's website and adopted amendments to the [Water Resources Policy Plan](#) for up-to-date maps of the long-term wastewater 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* (p. 9 and 29)
- the Water Sustainability Land Use policy (p. 69)
- the Orderly and Efficient Land Use policy (p. 64)
- the [2040 Water Resources Policy Plan](#).

Regionally Significant Ecological Resources

An abundance of natural resources is one of the many reasons that our region is so vibrant and desirable. The 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 to upland prairies and forests throughout the region.

Ecological resources are important to the Council because of the many benefits that come from a healthy natural environment, including economic activity, health and psychological benefits, quality of life and valuable eco-services.

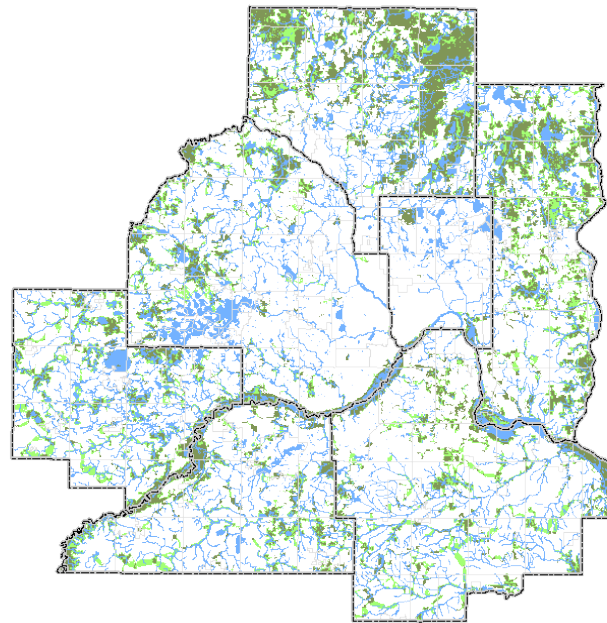
The health of these natural systems depends on active protection and management by a wide variety of agencies, communities and individuals. The Council plays several roles in this network: collaborating with state and local partners to protect and improve water availability and quality, preserving and protecting high quality environments in regional parks in partnership with local parks agencies, and coordination of 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, as well as providing opportunities to interact with the natural environment on a daily basis. 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, best practices for protection and integration into development.

The map above is intentionally illustrative and contain information about the 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* (p. 9 and 29)
- the Natural Resources Protection Land Use policy (p. 66).



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 to help local communities incorporate regional needs into local comprehensive plans.

The seven-county region contains a wide range of communities, from Agricultural areas to the Urban Center. Development patterns, neighborhoods, and land uses vary across communities. To advance the Thrive Outcomes, the Council is articulating specific land use and development strategies and policies tailored for communities with shared development opportunities and challenges. This approach allows each local jurisdiction the flexibility to determine how to best work toward achieving both the regional outcomes and their local goals.

The Council assigns a community designation to each city and township based on the overall state of development and regional issues faced by that community. Although the characteristics of the community designation may not apply to every neighborhood of a community, the designation represents the dominant character of the community. 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 planning areas;
- outline the respective roles of the Council and the individual communities and strategies for planning for projected levels of growth.

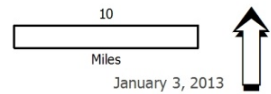
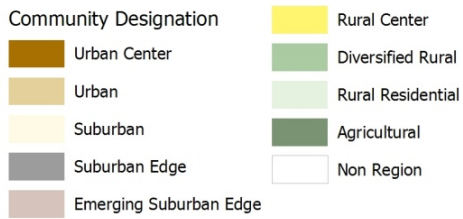
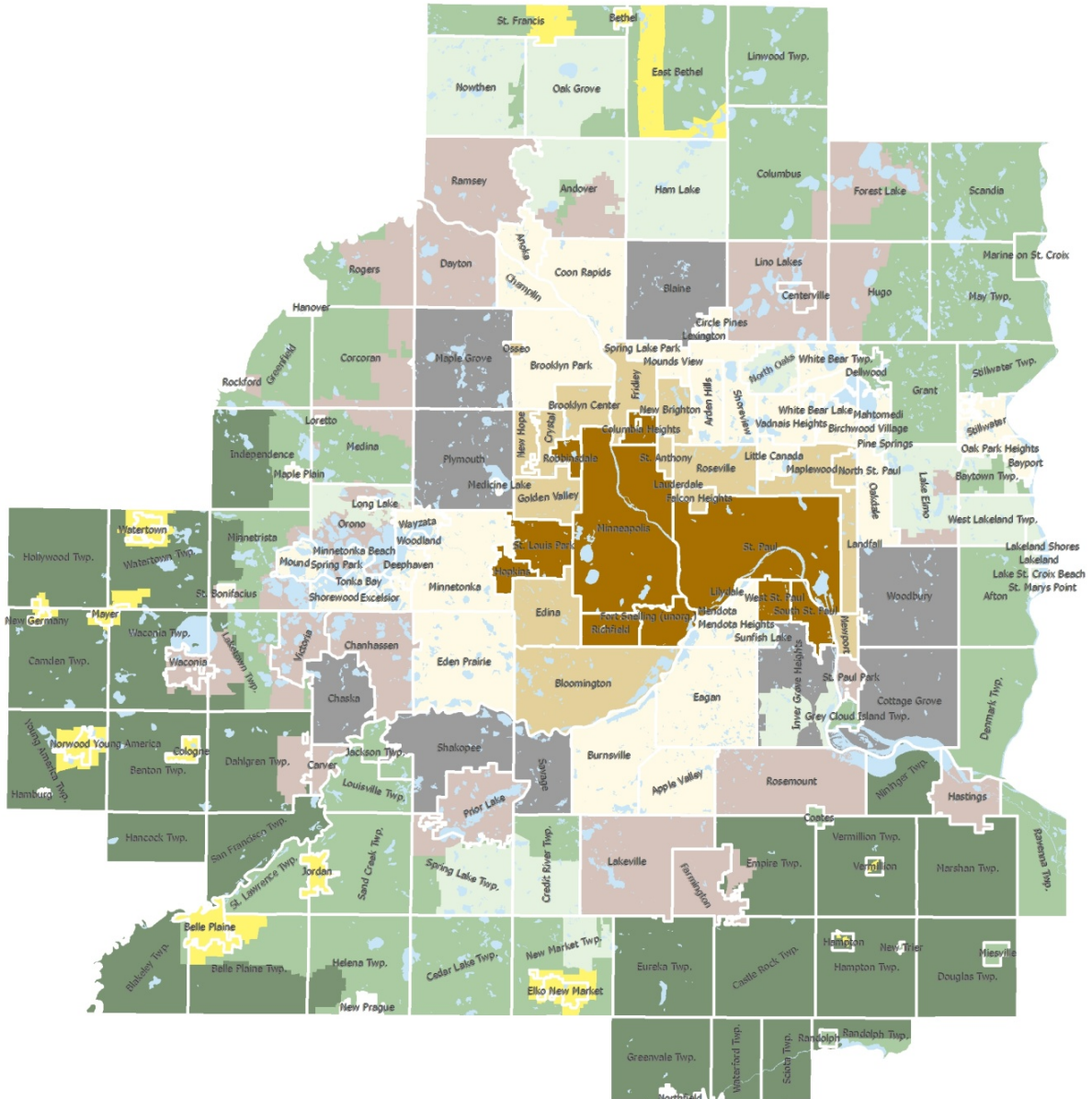
Urban and Rural Service Areas

The Council designates the Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA) to distinguish between the Urban Service Area and the Rural Service Area. Communities within the Urban Service Area receive a higher level of regional services such as metropolitan wastewater services, regional highways, and the regular route transit. 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 to protect agricultural land, water resources, and the rural landscape.

While the Urban Service Area constitutes about half of the land in the region, about xx% of the population lives in this area. The Urban Service Area includes a diverse set of communities ranging from the urban cores of downtown Minneapolis and St. Paul to suburban 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 Urban Service Area through investments in transit infrastructure, transit services, highways, regional sewer systems, 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

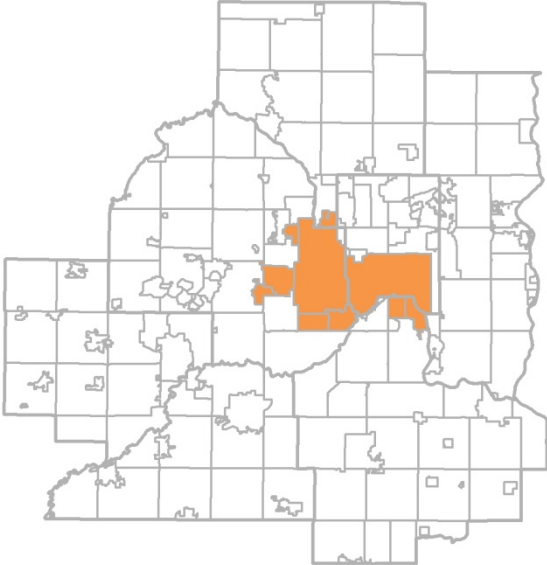
patterns, the Metropolitan Urban Service Area is divided into five community designations: Urban Center, Urban, Suburban, Suburban Edge, and Emerging Suburban Edge.

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 are limited in the Rural Area. To protect the vital agricultural lands and natural amenities and accommodate desires for rural and small-town residential choices, the Rural Area is divided into four community designations: Rural Center, Rural Residential, Diversified Rural, and Agricultural.



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 St. Paul, the Urban Center also includes adjoining cities that share similar development characteristics such as street grids planned before World War Two.



Downtown Minneapolis is a significant regional center of finance and business services; downtown St. 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 premiere 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 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 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 introducing new infrastructure.

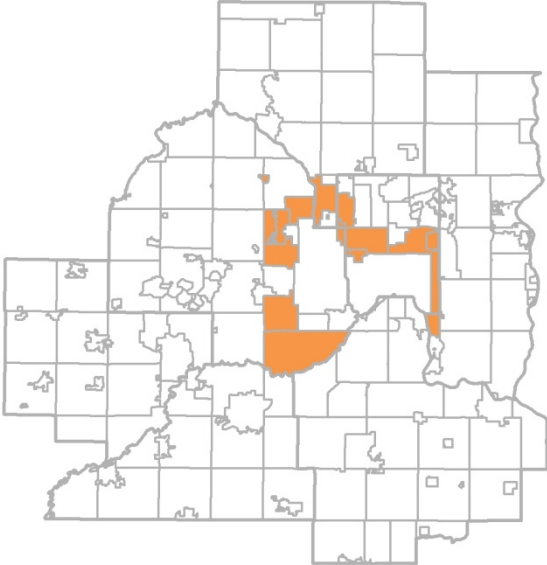
The Council forecasts that the cities in the Urban Center will add xx,000 residents, xx,000 households and xx,000 jobs between 2010 and 2040. This represents growth of xx percent in population, xx percent in households and xx percent in employment over the three decades.

Urban Center communities are: [add list here]

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.

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 Area 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, 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, streets no longer have alleys, 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 St. Paul.

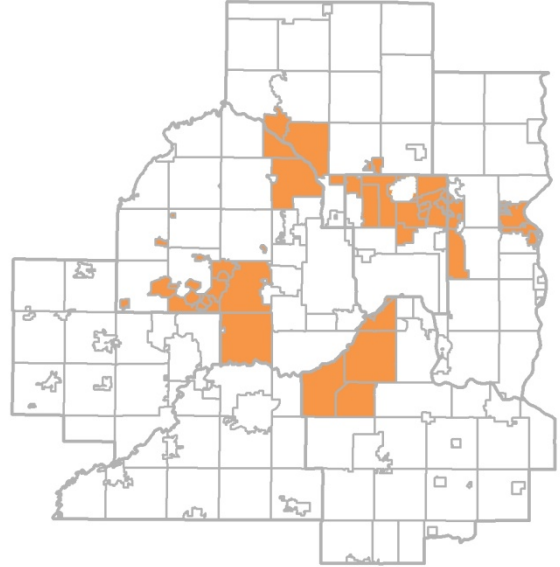
Urban communities face the challenge of redeveloping in ways that accommodate a greater mix of uses, incorporate better facilities for pedestrian and bicyclists, and lay the groundwork for pedestrian-friendly districts and improved transit services. Examples include the Penn-American District in Bloomington and the I-394 Mixed Use District in Golden Valley.

The Council forecasts that the Urban communities will add xx,000 residents, xx,000 households and xx,000 jobs between 2010 and 2040. This represents growth of xx percent in population, xx percent in households and xx percent in employment over the three decades.

Urban communities are: [add list here]

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 outside the I-694/494 beltway. This development pattern also reached and incorporated places that were once resort destinations connected from the Twin Cities by streetcar, such as communities along Lake Minnetonka, White Bear Lake, and the St. Croix River.



Many of the region's corporate headquarters are located in the Suburban Area. These include Thomson Reuters in Eagan, United Health 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 some of the large regional parks such as Bunker Hills Regional Park in Coon Rapids and Andover, and Lebanon Hills Regional Park in Eagan and Apple Valley. Transit service is generally less cost-effective in the Suburban communities than in the Urban Center and Urban communities, but there is demand for express bus service from park-and-rides to regional destinations.

As the Suburban communities have grown and as market preferences have evolved, many of these cities are now 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. They often incorporate suburban transit circulator buses and park-and-rides for express service to downtown.

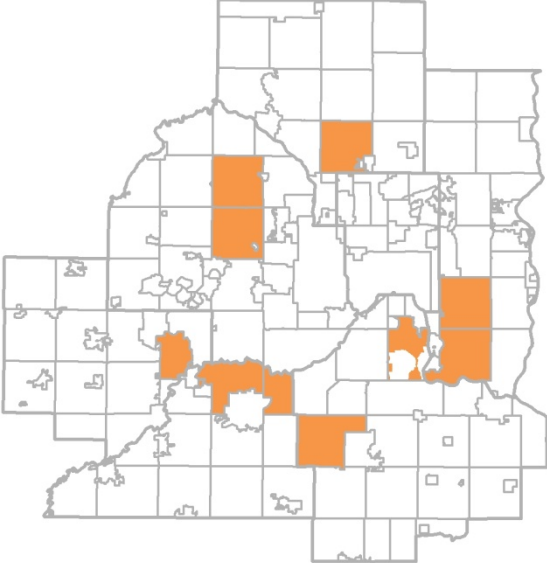
The Council forecasts that the Suburban communities will add xx,000 residents, xx,000 households and xx,000 jobs between 2010 and 2040. This represents growth of xx percent in population, xx percent in households and xx percent in employment over the three decades.

Suburban communities are: [add list here]

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 do not have large-scale agricultural areas.

The Suburban Edge includes regional and sub-regional job and activity 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.

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 regional fabric. Addressing walkability and expanding local trail networks is important for residential neighborhoods in order to increase connectivity in existing and new neighborhoods.

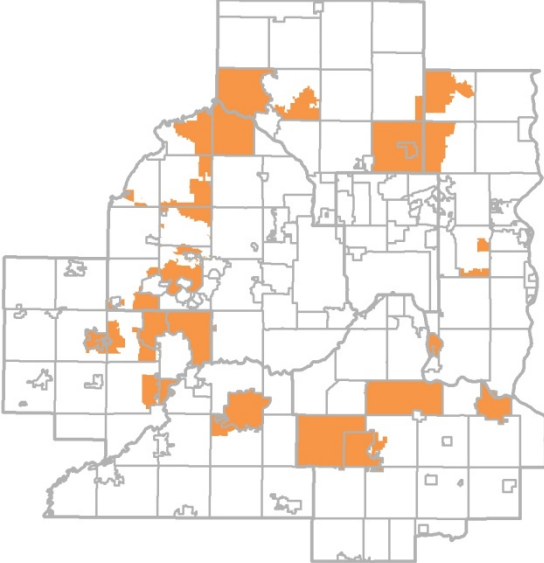
With water supply issues facing many Suburban Edge communities, planning efforts should focus on how to protect water supply resources and identify viable alternative sources of water. Similarly, with much of their development yet ahead, Suburban Edge communities can protect and preserve open spaces,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

The Council forecasts that the cities in the Suburban Edge will add xx,000 residents, xx,000 households and xx,000 jobs between 2010 and 2040. This represents growth of xx percent in population, xx percent in households and xx percent in employment over the three decades.

Suburban Edge communities are: [add list here]

**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 the 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. Commercial areas in the Emerging Suburban Edge tend to be individual large employers and smaller scale activity centers serving the local population. These communities benefit from the proximity to more developed areas while retaining their local rural character and protecting natural resources.

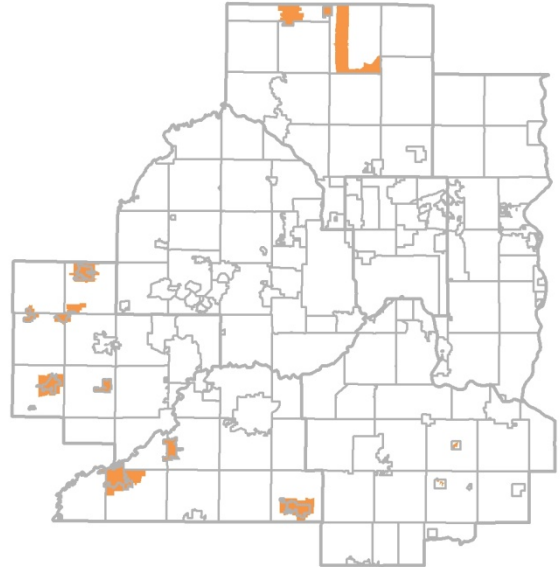
Although these communities have some redevelopment potential in older areas such as historic downtown districts, the focus in the Emerging Suburban Edge is on greenfield development. Greenfields present opportunities to integrate natural resource preservation into site planning prior to development. 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.

The Council forecasts that Emerging Suburban Edge communities will add xx,000 residents, xx,000 households and xx,000 jobs between 2010 and 2040. This represents growth of xx percent in population, xx percent in households and xx percent in employment over the three decades.

Emerging Suburban Edge communities are: [add list here]

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 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 Metropolitan 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 agri-businesses. 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.

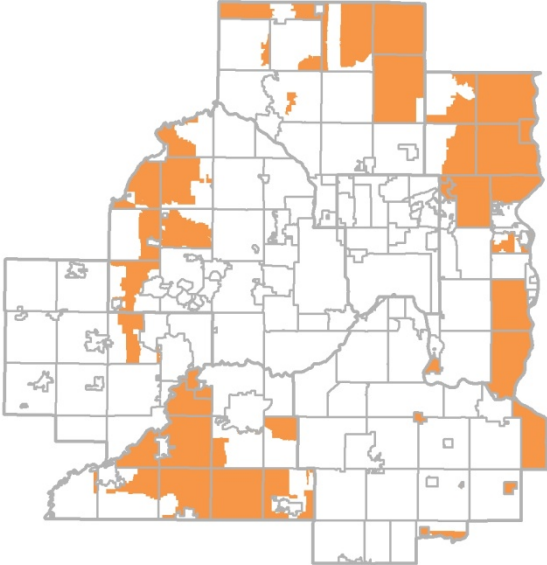
At times, Rural Centers can connect travelers and residents to other communities in and outside the region, particularly those that are well served by existing transportation infrastructure such as in Scott County along US 169. Largely situated along the edges of the seven-county region, these Rural 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.

The Council forecasts that Rural Center communities will add xx,000 residents, xx,000 households and xx,000 jobs between 2010 and 2040. This represents growth of xx percent in population, xx percent in households and xx percent in employment over the three decades.

Rural Centers are: [add list here]

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 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 also 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. Agricultural uses in Diversified Rural communities benefit from their proximity to the 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 Service Area for the regional wastewater system. 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, but done in a manner that protects high quality and locally-prioritized natural areas and open spaces, and also preserves lands for potential post-2040 urban development.

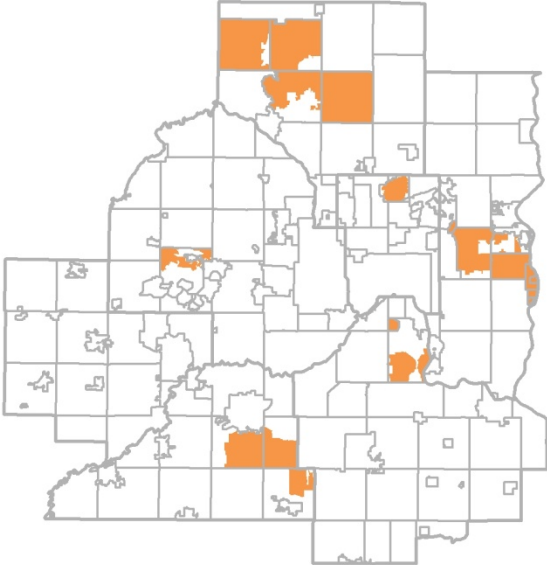
The Council forecasts that Diversified Rural communities will add xx,000 residents, xx,000 households and xx,000 jobs between 2010 and 2040. This represents growth of xx percent in population, xx percent in households and xx percent in employment over the three decades.

Diversified Rural Area communities are: [add list here]

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 in the Rural Residential Area have topographic development limitations and an historic development pattern with lot sizes that generally ranged from 1- 2.5 units/acres. These residential densities do not support economical extension of wastewater services. In Anoka County, the Rural Residential Area includes communities which have a large number of wetlands and existing densities of 2.5 acres of 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 agricultural uses, including sod farming and horticulture, as well as 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 Metropolitan 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 and water quality and quantity and ensuring sufficient public infrastructure. The Council discourages the expansion of the Rural Residential areas.

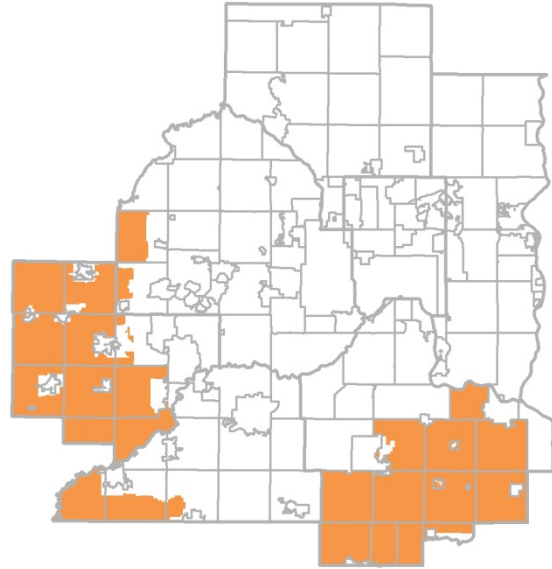
The Council forecasts that the cities and townships in the Rural Residential Area will add xx,000 residents, xx,000 households and xx,000 jobs between 2010 and 2040. This represents growth of xx percent in population, xx percent in households and xx percent in employment over the three decades.

Rural Residential Area communities are: [add list here]

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.

The Council forecasts that Agricultural communities will add xx,000 residents, xx,000 households and xx,000 jobs between 2010 and 2040. This represents growth of xx percent in population, xx percent in households and xx percent in employment over the three decades.

Agricultural communities are: [add list here]

Land Use Policies

Setting the Stage

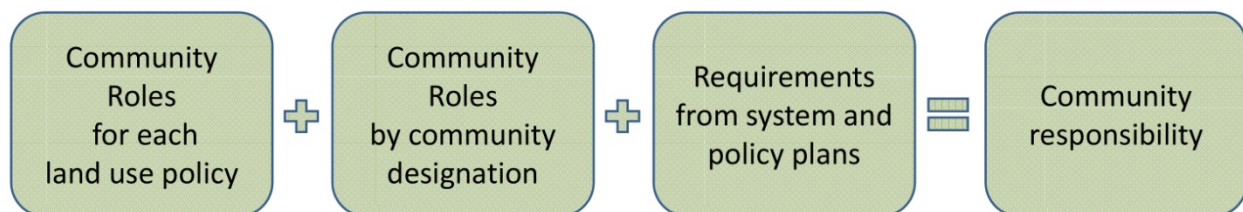
The Twin Cities metropolitan area is a thriving region of interconnected places with a shared future. The Council intends to be a good steward of the region's assets, and to capitalize upon them in our efforts toward prosperity, equity, livability, and sustainability. Among those assets are a diversified 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 today. 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.

In 2007, the Legislature passed a law calling for a 15 percent reduction in the state's greenhouse gas emissions by 2015, and 30 percent reduction by 2025.⁹ As a part of achieving these goals, the region will need to address our transportation and land use patterns.

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 filling 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 around transit.

The land use policies set forth in this section balance both urban and rural qualities to create the most viable atmosphere for a successful metropolitan community. The goal is to achieve a prosperous future for everyone in a region that is equitable, livable, and sustainable. The vision within Thrive can only succeed through local and regional partnerships. Regional perspective does not displace local efforts, it depends on them. It is this integrated focus on which Thrive relies. The land use policies in this chapter are intended to support the *Thrive* vision, to maximize opportunities, achieve growth, and strengthen the region's economic competitiveness.



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.

⁹ Next Generation Energy Act of 2007.

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, to support public health, and to 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, to support public health, and to 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 overall policies the Council has identified land use strategies for local communities and the Council to implement. While each strategy is linked to a specific policy in this document, in practice strategies can serve multiple purposes. For example, a strategy of focusing development around centers on transit and transportation corridors supports the policy of aligning land uses to make the best use of public and private investments, among other policies. Guiding development to targeted areas can reduce the development pressures in areas with high quality natural resources. This focus of development along transportation and transit corridors can also improve the efficiency of our transit system by building housing within easy access to the existing system. This method of development can also support specialized housing types to meet the lifestyle needs of a segment of the population seeking more urban living options.

We cannot focus on one policy alone to attain the outcomes identified in this plan. Instead, it will take a combination of strategies addressing all of the policies to set the stage for a successful future. While a policy may appear to directly support some of the Council's desired outcomes more than others, 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 Strategies for 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 guide development in the region, as directed by the Metropolitan Land Planning Act.¹⁰ This means being fiscally responsible by guiding land uses and development patterns that make the most of the region's investments in infrastructure. 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.

Making efficient use of land and capitalizing upon existing infrastructure also reduces 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 to work and play. While traditionally planning has separated residential neighborhoods from commercial and industrial areas, residents still need to access these places to meet their daily needs and to get to work. Communities should continue to consider strategic locations for integrating different uses into neighborhoods and to make it easier for more people to access parks and provide places to pick up a bag of groceries without needing to rely on a car. Compact development patterns, integrating natural resources, and local interconnected 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 regional growth will occur. The region establishes overall density expectations for communities based on their community designation, as well as 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, 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

Table 1. Overall Density Expectations for New Growth, Development, and Redevelopment

<i>Metropolitan Urban Service Area</i>	
<i>Minimum Average Net Density</i>	
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
<i>Rural Service Area</i>	
<i>Maximum Allowed Density, except Rural Centers</i>	
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

¹⁰ Minn. Stat. 473.145

regional policies. As shown in Table 1, communities in the MUSA and the Rural Center communities are expected to plan for achieving the overall minimum average density expectations in their community across areas where new growth, development, and redevelopment. 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 to achieve provides communities with the flexibility to determine which areas might be most suited for higher and lower density developments, 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 as summarized in Table 1. Additional detail regarding density and development patterns is contained in each of the community designation strategy sections.

Council Role

- Advance the Metropolitan 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.
- 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 ground water 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.
- Coordinate wastewater conveyance projects with regional park and trail system improvements where appropriate.

Community Role

- Plan for development to support forecasted growth at appropriate densities, as articulated in the following community designation sections, focusing growth along nodes on corridors.
- Plan and develop interconnected local streets, adequate stormwater infrastructure, adequate water supply, and properly managed subsurface sewage treatment systems to support local growth forecasts.
- Adopt and implement the local comprehensive plan following Council review.

- Maintain, replace, or expand local facilities and infrastructure to meet growth and development needs.
- Prepare local water supply, wellhead protection, wastewater, and local surface water plans as required by the Metropolitan Land Planning Act.
- Plan land use patterns that facilitate groundwater recharge, 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.
- Develop plans to improve conditions for and encourage walking and bicycling where appropriate.

Natural Resources Protection

Conserve, restore, and protect the region's natural resources to ensure 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 large wetland complexes like that in Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area 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 designates 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 to create livable neighborhoods and desirable places to visit. Incorporating natural areas and trees into neighborhoods adds to a community's sense of place, as well as providing 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 assist 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

Figure 2. Prime Agricultural Land

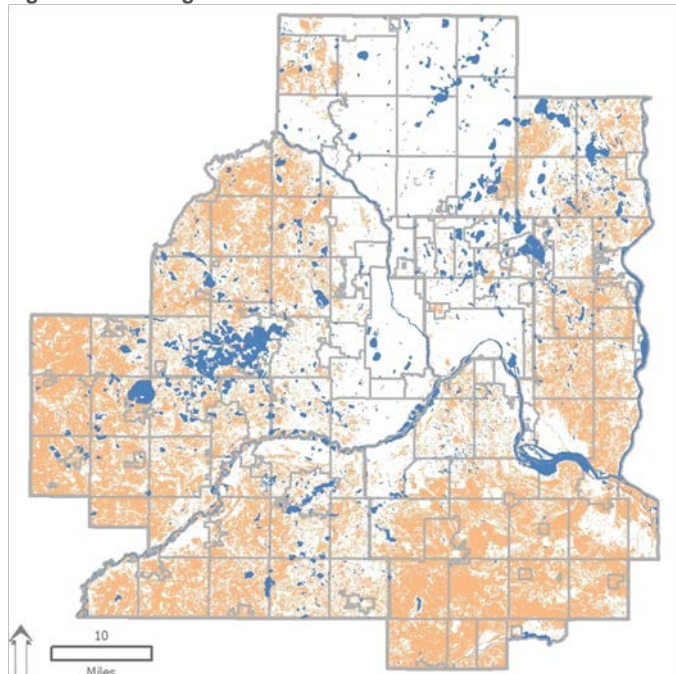
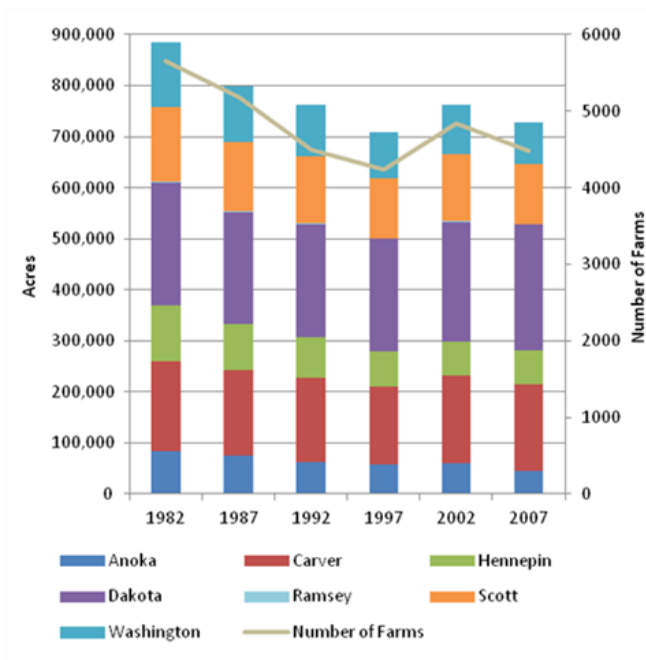


Figure 2. Total Farm Acreage & Number of Farms

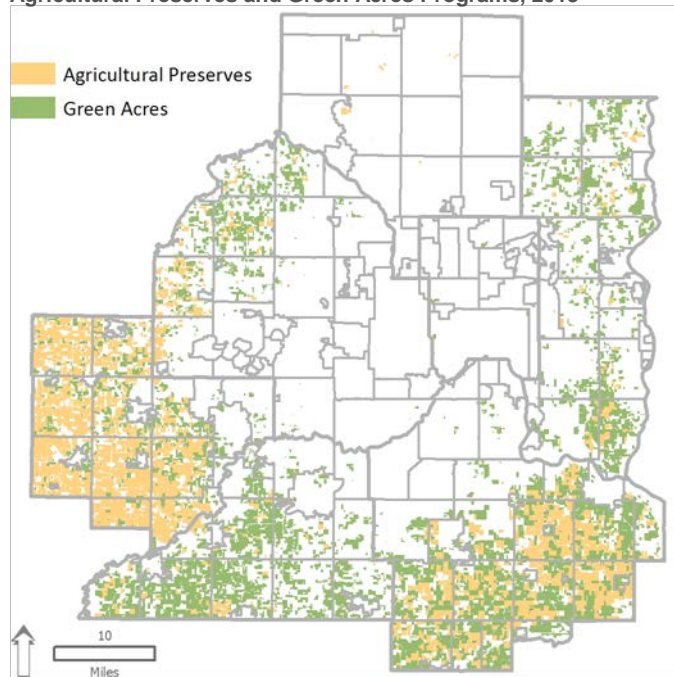


ameliorate the effects of the urban heat island, slow stormwater runoff, and help filter the air we breathe.

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. As shown in Figure 4, the region is a soil-rich environment, with prime agricultural soils dominating the rural landscape, particularly in Carver, Dakota, and Scott Counties. Prime agricultural soils are defined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, a division of the United States Department of Agriculture, in the Land Capability Classification. The Land Capability Classification designates soils as part of one of eight classes based on their characteristics including soil type, slope, location, depth, and texture among others. Classes I, II, and III are considered prime for cultivation.

Figure 4. ILLUSTRATIVE MAP: Example of Lands Enrolled in Agricultural Preserves and Green Acres Programs, 2013



Like 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.¹¹ There appears to be some leveling in both the acreage and number of farms since the late 1990s. This could be attributed to a number of reasons, including reduced outward pressures for development due to the

¹¹ Census of Agriculture. United States Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service. www.agcensus.usda.gov Accessed November 2013.

downturn in the economy, enrollment in programs like the Agricultural Preserves Program and the Green Acres Program, and increase in profitability for farming.

The Agricultural Preserves Program (Minn. Stat. 473H) was enacted by the Legislature in 1980 with the purpose of maintaining “viable productive farm operations in the metropolitan area.”¹² This program provides tax benefits for the land owners with properties of at least 40 acres in size, along with long-range planning protections in the comprehensive plans and ordinances from local governments to protect farming operations. The Green Acres Program, established in the late 1960s, provides similar land owner 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 (Figure 4), but otherwise largely mirrors the locations of prime agricultural lands shown in Figure 2.

Aggregate Resources

As development expanded, the region found that a key ingredient for development was under threat.¹³ 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 construction not just of new roads and buildings, but also for 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 considering staging areas for new development, it will be important for local communities to continue to plan for aggregate resource extraction prior to development where viable deposits remain accessible, as mapped in Minnesota Geological Survey Information Circular No. 46.¹⁴ Where deposits are overlain by Regionally Significant Ecological Areas, or other locally protected natural resource areas, the Council prioritizes habitat preservation over aggregate extraction.

Role of Regional Parks

It is difficult to overstate how much the regional park system supports the region’s quality of life and protection of high quality natural resources. In the 2012 annual survey of metropolitan residents, nearly half 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 park system is seen as an amenity to retain and attract new businesses and residents; and many people are using regional trails for commuting.

The ***2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*** sets the direction for protection and growth of the regional parks and trails system. The Metropolitan Council does not own or operate parks and trails, but through a variety of funds dedicated to regional parks, supports ten regional park implementing agencies. This collaborative partnership has created a system of regional

¹² Laws of Minnesota 1980, chapter 566, sec. 1.

¹³ In 2001, the Minnesota Legislature amended the Metropolitan Land Planning Act (M.S. 473.859) to require local comprehensive plans to address aggregate deposits where they remain available.

¹⁴ The Council provides this information in digital format for use in GIS for local planning and analysis purposes.

recreational open space 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 regional 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 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 (NRI/A) 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.
- Adopt and enforce 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, to support public health, and to 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, and 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

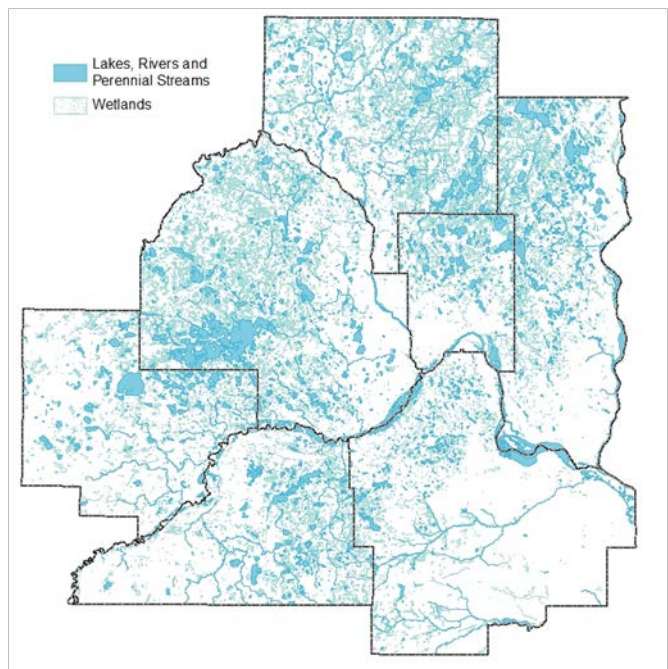
are the foundation for growth and vitality in the region, and we must care for these resources wisely and sustainably in order to prosper.

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 and ground water bodies, both through the quantity of stormwater generated from development entering those water bodies, and pollutants that are 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 to 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 to 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 St. Paul to the cities that developed around Lake Minnetonka and White Bear Lake. Our region's waters have also been recognized not only for their beauty and recreational value, but also for sustaining life and economic activities.

Figure 5. Rivers, Lakes, and Wetlands



Some of our resources are protected as parks and public lands by all levels of government from federal to local. Vadnais-Snail Lakes Regional Park, Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Louisville Swamp 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 Area¹⁵ and federally designated National River and Recreation Area, with its protection and preservation coordinated among the local governments, the Department of Natural

¹⁵ 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 designates the MNRRA corridor as a state critical area in the Critical Areas Act.

Resources, the National Park Service, and the Metropolitan 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.

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 impact that future development might have on the reliability of groundwater as a water source. Considerations of impacts to our groundwater resources is important during the planning and development processes to ensure that we are not negatively impacting our resources and that we are taking advantage of opportunities to recharge our groundwater where those opportunities exist.

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's intent is to work with local governments to ensure that SSTS do not cause surface or groundwater quality problems in areas where collective sanitary sewer service is not available.

The Council will continue to employ its review authority under the Metropolitan Land Planning Act to ensure that local governments that permit the construction of individual and private wastewater treatment systems, demonstrate through the comprehensive planning process that they have the capability to ensure that these individual and private systems are operated effectively within the standards required by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Local communities must incorporate current MPCA regulations (Minn. Rules Chapters 7080-7082) 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.
- Reduce inflow and infiltration in the regional wastewater collection system.
- Require proper management of subsurface treatment systems (SSTS), consistent with Minn. Rules Chapters 7080-7082, to minimize impacts on surface water, ground water, and public health.
- Assure adequate and high quality ground 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 and ground water use, conservation, reuse, aquifer recharge, and other practices.

- 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.
- 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 infiltration and inflow (I/I) into the local wastewater collection system. Participate in I/I grant programs as available.
- Incorporate current MPCA regulations (Minn. Rules Chapters 7080-7082) 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 multi-family housing, particularly in the central cities, fueled by demographic changes, challenges presented by the foreclosure crisis, and market interest in areas well-served by transit and amenities.

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

One of the most pressing ongoing challenges the region faces, however, is racial concentrations of poverty in the region's urban areas. In these areas, a history of racial segregation, private disinvestment, and limited access to quality educational and employment opportunities work against livability and prosperity for many families. The region needs a trained, productive workforce in order for the region to remain economically competitive, including workers of all income levels and backgrounds, which in turn demands a variety of housing options to suit their family, earnings cycle, and life-stage needs.

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 can also play a potential role in protecting and expanding the region's housing stock. Because housing affordability and diversification is strongly connected to the ability of to increase residential density, and to the availability of an array of services, unsewered areas of the region where increased density is discouraged and services are unavailable are inappropriate places for the development of new affordable housing.

Because housing and residential land use patterns are durable, often lasting generations, creation of new housing through new construction, redevelopment and other strategies offers the opportunity not only to address market demands and unmet residential needs, but also to improve development patterns, generate and reinforce critical linkages between housing and services, provide opportunity to traditionally underserved populations, increase economic and social integration, and boost connectivity for walking and bicycling. As further detailed in the [*2040 Housing Policy Plan*](#), communities should plan for a range of housing types to meet the needs of residents at varying income levels and life stages.

Council Role

- Provide guidance to communities regarding their share of the regional affordable housing need in order to implement the Metropolitan Land Planning Act (MLPA).
- Negotiate lifecycle and affordable housing goals with communities that participate in the Livable Communities Act (LCA).
- Provide guidance and 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.

- Strategically invest Council resources to assist community efforts to increase the variety of housing types and costs, attract and retain residents, appropriately mix land uses, increase transportation choices, and leverage private investment.
- Encourage sustainability in housing, whether new construction or rehabilitation, to promote livability and health, 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.
- 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 local Housing Action Plan as part of the local comprehensive plan.
- Participate in the Livable Communities Act (LCA) 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.
- Unsewered rural places should not attract or promote new affordable housing development. Housing rehabilitation and preservation efforts in these places should be supported by the county-level housing and community development entities.

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, requires a multi-modal transportation system that provides choice and reliability. The Metropolitan 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 geographic planning areas described in the following section reflect the transportation system and the land use patterns that developed alongside it. Most of the region's job and activity centers 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, but communities experience congestion and the economic and social costs of highway building. In suburban areas, transit use is less common, but plays an important role in commuting to the downtowns from park-and-ride facilities. In post-war suburban areas, shopping centers are evolving toward mixed-use concentrations of housing and jobs, which are easier to serve by transit.

Geographic patterns of development mean that different areas will have different challenges and opportunities related to each transportation mode. The region has a significant investment in the regional highway system and the areas that it serves. More recently, the region has been making significant investments in the development of a system of dedicated transitways including light rail transit (LRT). To ensure that the region prospers and responds to the economic needs of households and businesses, the Metropolitan Council will be a good steward of these regional investments. As described in the [2040 Transportation Policy Plan](#), this will include detailing land use development expectations to 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, transitways, and bikeways 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 these trips whether for automobiles, freight movement, bicycling and/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 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 regional job and activity 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 to reach jobs for people who are transit-dependent. 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 right-of-way are planned, improved or reconstructed.

Council Role

- Oversee the planning of a multi-modal, interconnected regional transportation system in cooperation with state agencies, counties, and local governments.

- 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.
- Invest in the regional highway system in ways that improve safety, address bottlenecks, and better manage peak periods through managed lanes (e.g., HOV/HOT lanes) and transit service improvements.
- Support the management of access points to state and county road systems and emphasize construction of an interconnected local public street system.
- Invest in the development and improvement of regional trails and regional bicycle corridors as defined in the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan to better connect communities and provide viable transportation options for commuting via alternative modes.
- 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.
- Encourage communities to plan and develop local trail connections to the regional parks system where appropriate. 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 Metropolitan Airports Commission, the Federal Aviation Administration, MnDOT 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.
- Adopt access management standards that support state and county highway access and mobility needs.
- Plan local roadway systems to minimize short trips on the regional highway system.
- Plan for compatible land uses and air space adjacent to the system of regional airports.
- Participate on the Transportation Advisory Board and other forums 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 businesses and jobs. Commercial, industrial and institutional land uses comprise only 6% of the region's land area compared to 22% for housing. 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 place to work and minimizes the negative impact of travel time delays.

More than half of the region's 1.5 million jobs are located in job and activity centers, which consume less than 2% of the land area of the region.¹⁶ Job and major activity centers (such as major shopping) are more concentrated in nodes than other land uses. While half of the region's jobs are located in these larger job centers, most of the remaining jobs are in community-scale commercial centers and key industrial sites scattered throughout the region. Community centers meet local shopping and convenience needs. Many industrial uses are less likely to be concentrated or located within centers due to their transportation accessibility and space needs.

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 lifespans and turn over quickly to meet new locational needs. The cleanup of contaminated land creates opportunities for new industry in places that have already benefited from prior infrastructure investment.

Council Role

- Prioritize regional investment in places that are drivers of economic innovation and growth for the region.
- Prioritize regional investments that improve access to national and international markets by regional and state businesses.

¹⁶ Analysis using data from Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW, 2012) and the Metropolitan Council Generalized Land Use, 2010.

- 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 job and activity centers and the creation and growth of regional job clusters.
- Provide technical assistance to help local communities better understand their contributions to the regional economy; provide information, research, and analysis on economic competitiveness.
- Provide technical assistance to communities undertaking planning efforts around job and activity centers and regional investments.
- Support cost-effective sub-regional 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 existing job and activity centers, and for further development of centers consistent with the overall regional economy.
- Consider completing a community-based market analysis to better understand the market conditions.
- Consider addressing economic competitiveness in the comprehensive plan, acknowledging both locally and regionally significant economic places.
- Preserve sites for river and rail-dependent manufacturing and freight transportation.
- Engage with businesses and other employers to ensure their input is provided to the community's 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 it's flooded farmlands, modified growing seasons, rising energy costs, or storm sewer systems overloaded from a large summer storm. Studies have also shown that the built environment is a primary contributor to climate change, resulting both from the energy used in homes and businesses and from our travel behaviors resulting from our pattern of regional land

use development.¹⁷ As such, the region's response to climate change must include both measures to reduce emissions and to improve our local systems to make them less vulnerable 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 drive emissions reductions. Compact redevelopment near regional job and activity centers 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.

Communities in the region are choosing to reduce their contributions to climate change and attempt 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, as many plant communities can help manage stormwater. Improving urban forestry can mitigate emissions and provide co-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 as a means to reduce energy costs is an approach more and more common by communities faced with fiscal constraints. This can mean many things and some innovative ideas have surfaced on how and where to reduce costs. For example, the City of Falcon Heights began with implementing improvements to its solid waste operations, then 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.

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 ultimately reduce energy consumption, protect public investments in infrastructure, reduce development pressures on habitat and open space, provide benefits to public health, and create a more sustainable community. 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.

¹⁷ The *Minnesota Climate Change Advisory Group Final Report*, April 2008, found that of the principal sources of the state's green house gas emissions from 2005 data, transportation made up 24% of the state's total emissions, and the use of fossil fuels in residential, commercial, and industrial sectors added another 20% of the state's emissions in 2005.

Council Role

- Substantially reduce energy consumption at Metropolitan 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, and 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, GreenSteps best practices, the next generation of the Regional Indicators data, and potentially a regional greenhouse gas inventory.
- 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.
- 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, 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 throughout the local comprehensive plan.
- Identify local measures that would result in reductions in water use, energy consumption, and emission of greenhouse gases.
- Ensure access to solar energy by addressing it in local comprehensive plans and ordinances, as required by the Metropolitan Land Planning Act, and consider the use of other alternative energy sources as part of the planning process.
- Identifying 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, and increase participation in recycling programs, for example.

- Participate in programs that evaluate and share city practices and provide technical support, such as GreenSteps program and the Regional Indicators Initiative.

Strategies for Community Designations

As discussed earlier in Thrive, the Council assigns a community designation, or planning area, to each city and township. This designation indicates the overall state of development and regional issues faced by that community. Strategies addressing issues specific to different types of communities are grouped under the community designations, while strategies common to all communities are found earlier in this section. The following sections contain more detailed strategies to address in response to the opportunities and challenges unique to different groups of communities.

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 Two.

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 address racially concentrated areas of poverty.
- 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, 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 which contribute to better proximity between jobs and housing.
- Identify opportunities for land assembly to prepare sites that will attract future private reinvestment, especially in racially concentrated areas of poverty.
- In collaboration with other regional partners, lead major redevelopment efforts, such as the former Ford Plant site.
- Lead detailed land use planning efforts around regional transit stations, job and activity centers, and other regional investments.

- Plan for and program local infrastructure needs (e.g., roads, sidewalks, sewer, water, surface water), including those needed for future growth and to implement local comprehensive plans.
- Consider the role of railroads in promoting economic activity and identify an adequate supply of land in comprehensive plans to meet existing and future demand for users requiring rail access.

Natural Resources Protection

Council Role

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

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 Water Sustainability policy discussion in the Land Use Policy introduction.

Community Role

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

Housing Affordability and Choice

Council Role

- Re-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 an adequate supply of affordable housing along regional transitways at station areas. Address the relationship of local industries to the affordability of housing in the community.
- Use state, regional, and federal sources of funding and/or financing and development tools allowed by state law to assist the feasibility of the development of new lifecycle and affordable housing.

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 (e.g., 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 that depend on or are affected by the local transportation system.
- Adopt development requirements 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 Center as an attractive place to locate and do business.
- Invest in regional transportation improvements that better connect workers in racially concentrated areas of poverty with job training and living wage employment.

Community Role

- Identify appropriate areas for business and industrial expansion, considering access by rail, truck, plane, and barge.
- Protect sites for 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, where appropriate, that support the growth of export-oriented businesses, 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 re-purpose industrial base for higher intensity employment and new industries.
- Conduct small area planning efforts to preserve locations for employment, to manage growth, and to 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 non-motorized 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 subscribing to community solar gardens for municipal electric load, 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 grant 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.

They exhibit the transition toward the development age dominated by the influence of the automobile. Urban communities include considerable growth and development along highways, with the most significant concentrations along I-494 in Bloomington and Edina.

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 address regional concentrations of poverty.
- Provide technical assistance to communities undertaking planning efforts around job and activity centers and 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, 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 which contribute to better proximity between jobs and housing.
- In collaboration with other regional partners, lead major redevelopment efforts, such as the Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant (TCAAP) site.
- Lead detailed land use planning efforts around regional transit stations, job and activity centers, and other regional investments.
- Plan for and program local infrastructure needs (e.g., roads, sidewalks, sewer, water, surface water), including those needed for future growth and to implement the local comprehensive plan.
- Consider the role of railroads in promoting economic activity and identify an adequate supply of land in comprehensive plans to meet existing and future demand for users requiring rail access.

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 function.
- Promote multi-modal 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 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.

Water Sustainability

Council Role

See Water Sustainability policy discussion in the Land Use Policy introduction.

Community Role

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

Housing Affordability and Choice

Council Role

- Re-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 an adequate supply of affordable housing along regional transitways at station areas. Address the relationship of local industries to the affordability of housing in the community.
- Use state, regional, and federal sources of funding and/or financing and development tools allowed by state law to assist the feasibility of the development of new lifecycle and affordable housing.
- Develop or use programs to preserve the existing stock of naturally-occurring affordable housing.

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 (e.g., 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 that depend on or are affected by the local transportation system.
- Adopt development requirements 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.
- Invest in regional transportation improvements that better connect workers in racially concentrated areas of poverty with job training and living wage employment.

Community Role

- Identify appropriate areas for business and industrial expansion, considering access by rail, truck, plane, and barge.
- 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 industrial base for higher intensity employment and new industries.
- Protect sites for 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 where appropriate that support the growth of export-oriented businesses, 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 non-motorized 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 subscribing to community solar gardens for municipal electric load, 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 grant 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 includes places that were once resort destinations connected from the Twin Cities by streetcar, along Lake Minnetonka, White Bear Lake, and the St. Croix River.

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 address racially concentrated areas of poverty.
- Provide technical assistance to communities undertaking planning efforts around job and activity centers and 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 which contribute to better proximity between jobs and housing. Lead major redevelopment efforts.
- Lead detailed land use planning efforts around regional transit stations, job and activity centers, and other regional investments.
- Plan for and program local infrastructure needs (e.g., roads, sidewalks, sewer, water, surface water), including those needed to accommodate future growth and implement local comprehensive plans.
- Consider the role of railroads in promoting economic activity and identify an adequate supply of land in comprehensive plans to meet existing and future demand for users requiring rail access.

Natural Resources Protection

Council Role

- Support the reclamation of lands, including contaminated land, for redevelopment and the restoration of natural features and function.

- Promote multi-modal 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 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.

Water Sustainability

Council Role

See Water Sustainability policy discussion in the Land Use Policy introduction.

Community Role

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

Housing Affordability and Choice

Council Role

- Re-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 an adequate supply of affordable housing along regional transitways at station areas. Address the relationship of local industries to the affordability of housing in the community.
- Use state, regional, and federal sources of funding and/or financing and development tools allowed by state law to assist the feasibility of the development of new lifecycle and affordable housing.
- Develop or use programs to preserve the existing stock of naturally-occurring affordable housing.

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 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 (e.g., 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 that depend on or are affected by the local transportation system.
- Adopt development requirements 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 support the Suburban area as an attractive place to locate and do business.

- Invest in regional transportation improvements that better connect workers in racially concentrated areas of poverty with job training and living wage employment.

Community Role

- Identify appropriate areas for business and industrial expansion, considering access by rail, truck, plane, and barge.
- Support the cleanup and re-use of contaminated land by utilizing regional, county, and local funding programs and financing tools.
- Preserve, remediate contamination, and re-purpose industrial base for higher intensity employment and new industries.
- Protect sites for 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 where appropriate that support the growth of export-oriented businesses, 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 non-motorized 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 subscribing to community solar gardens for municipal electric load, 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 grant 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. No large-scale agricultural areas remain in the Suburban Edge.

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 Natural Resources policy discussion in Land Use Policy introduction.

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.
- 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.

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

Water Sustainability

Council Role

See Water Sustainability policy discussion in the Land Use Policy introduction.

Community Role

- Incorporate best management practices for stormwater management in planning processes.
- 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 Housing Affordability and Choice policy discussion in the Land Use Policy introduction.

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.
- Address the relationship of local industries to the affordability of housing in the community.
- Use state, regional, and federal sources of funding and/or financing and development tools allowed by state law to assist the feasibility of the development of new lifecycle and affordable housing.
- Develop or use programs to preserve the existing stock of naturally-occurring affordable housing.

Access, Mobility, and Transportation Choice

Council Role

- Invest in high capacity transit and transportation improvements that support more reliable access to and from Suburban Edge communities.

- Plan transit facilities in areas where land use is not sufficiently intense to support transit, such as park and rides, to accommodate growth and encourage the use of public transportation to regional centers.
- 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 corridors or nodes along corridors, consistent with the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan.
- 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.
- 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

- Promote local planning around key intersections, regional infrastructure, and business needs.
- Support the development of workforce housing to provide options for lifecycle and affordable housing.
- Convene interested partners to further strategies towards 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 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 multi-modal intersections, alternative freight routes, key intersections, and other existing opportunities that may contribute to local and regional economic competitiveness.

- Partner with adjacent communities and businesses to strengthen economic among subregional employment centers.
- Consider best practices for workforce housing to retain employees of local employment centers within the Suburban Edge communities.

Building in Resilience

Council Role

See Building in Resilience policy discussion in Land Use Policy introduction.

Community Role

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

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 the 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 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 Natural Resources Protection policy discussion in Land Use Policy introduction.

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.

Water Sustainability

Council Role

See *Natural Resources Protection policy discussion in Land Use Policy introduction.*

Community Role

- Incorporate best management practices for stormwater management in planning processes.
- 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.
- 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.
- Implement best management practices to control and treat stormwater as development and redevelopment opportunities arise.

Housing Affordability and Choice

Council Role

See *Housing Affordability and Choice policy discussion in the Land Use Policy introduction.*

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.
- Address the relationship of local industries to the affordability of housing in the community.
- Use state, regional, and federal sources of funding and/or financing and development tools allowed by state law to assist the feasibility of the development of new lifecycle and affordable housing.
- Develop or use programs to preserve the existing stock of naturally-occurring affordable housing.
- Plan for future staged growth through 2040 and beyond to accommodate a variety of housing choices based on local needs.

Access, Mobility, and Transportation Choice

Council Role

- Invest in high capacity transit and transportation improvements that support more reliable access to and from Suburban Edge communities.
- Plan transit facilities in areas where land use is not sufficiently intense to support transit, such as park and rides, to support growth and encourage the use of public transportation to regional centers.
- 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 corridors or nodes along corridors, consistent with the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan.
- 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.
- 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

- Promote local planning around key intersections, regional infrastructure, and business needs.
- Support the development of workforce housing to provide options for lifecycle and affordable housing.
- 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 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 multi-modal intersections, alternative freight routes, key intersections, and other existing opportunities that may contribute to local and regional economic competitiveness.
- Consider development of local employment, community, and activity centers that complement Subregional employment centers in adjacent or nearby communities and work with adjacent jurisdictions and businesses to strengthen economic relationships.
- Consider best practices for developing workforce housing to attract employees of employment centers within, near, or adjacent to Emerging Suburban Edge communities.

Building in Resilience

Council Role

See Building in Resilience policy discussion in Land Use Policy introduction.

Community Role

- Identify local measures that would result in reductions in water use, energy consumption, and greenhouse gas emissions.
- 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 mitigation and adaptation strategies and infrastructure resiliency plans to protect against potential negative impacts of events associated with more frequent or severe weather events.
- Implement compact development patterns and creating 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 urban 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 towards 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.

Natural Resources Protection

Council Role

See Natural Resources Protection policy discussion in the Land Use Policy introduction.

Community Role

See *Natural Resources Protection policy discussion in the Land Use Policy introduction.*

Water Sustainability

Council Role

See *Water Sustainability policy discussion in the Land Use Policy introduction.*

Community Role

See *Water Sustainability policy discussion in the Land Use Policy introduction.*

Housing Affordability and Choice

Council Role

See *Housing Affordability and Choice policy discussion in the Land Use Policy introduction.*

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.
- Address the relationship of local industries to the affordability of housing in the community.
- Adopt lifecycle and affordable housing goals as a participant in the Livable Communities Act (LCA).
- Use state, regional, and federal sources of funding and/or financing and development tools allowed by state law to assist the feasibility of the development of new lifecycle and affordable housing.
- Develop or use programs to preserve the existing stock of naturally-occurring affordable housing.
- Plan for future staged growth through 2040 and beyond to accommodate a variety of housing choices based on local needs.

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.

Economic Competitiveness

Council Role

- Encourage communities to support a range of housing opportunities for those interested in a more rural lifestyle.

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 completing a community-based market analysis to better understand the market conditions.

Building in Resilience

Council Role

See Building in Resilience policy discussion in Land Use Policy introduction.

Community Role

See Building in Resilience policy discussion in Land Use Policy introduction.

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 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, but done in a manner that protects high quality and locally-prioritized natural areas and open spaces, and also preserves lands 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. Including 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 a Long-Term Service Area for the Regional Wastewater System, a cluster ordinance should be developed and implemented to provide for interim land uses without precluding the opportunity for future urban-density development.

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 (i.e. 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

- Provide technical assistance regarding alternative wastewater treatment systems and share specific information about the performance of such systems in the region.
- Support the MPCA's regulatory approach to community treatment systems, which requires permits for systems that generate at least 10,000 gallons per day of wastewater (about 35 homes).
- Advocate that the local community be the permit holder for alternative wastewater treatment systems to ensure long-term accountability for the proper functioning and maintenance of systems.

Community Role

- Protect the rural environment through local oversight of the management and maintenance of alternative wastewater treatment systems to avoid the environmental and economic costs of failed systems.
- Ensure financial and environmental accountability for installation, maintenance, remediation, and management of any permitted private wastewater system.

Housing Affordability and Choice

Council Role

See Housing Affordability and Choice policy discussion in the Land Use Policy introduction.

Community Role

See Housing Affordability and Choice policy discussion in the Land Use Policy introduction.

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 Building in Resilience policy discussion in the Land Use Policy introduction.

Community Role

See Building in Resilience policy discussion in the Land Use Policy introduction.

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 development pattern with lot sizes that generally range from 1- 2.5 units/acres and therefore, do not support economical extension of wastewater services.

Orderly and Efficient Land Use

Council Role

- Encourage rural development patterns that will protect natural resources, 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 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 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 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 Natural Resources Protection policy discussion in Land Use Policy introduction.

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.

Water Sustainability

Council Role

- Support the MPCA's regulatory approach to community treatment systems, which requires permits for systems that generate at least 10,000 gallons per day of wastewater (~35 homes).
- Require that the local community be the permit holder for alternative wastewater treatment systems to ensure long-term accountability for the proper functioning and maintenance of systems;
- Provide technical assistance regarding alternative 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 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 7080.
- 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 Housing Affordability and Choice policy discussion in Land Use Policy introduction.

Community Role

See Housing Affordability and Choice policy discussion in Land Use Policy introduction.

Access, Mobility, and Transportation Choice

Council Role

- Plan for regional transportation infrastructure consistent with 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.

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 Economic Competitiveness policy discussion in Land Use Policy introduction.

Building in Resilience

Council Role

See Building in Resilience policy discussion in Land Use Policy introduction.

Community Role

See Building in Resilience policy discussion in Land Use Policy introduction.

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 the 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 (i.e. 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.

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 Natural Resource Protection policy discussion in the Land Use Policy introduction.

Water Sustainability

Council Role

See *Water Sustainability policy discussion in the Land Use Policy introduction.*

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.
- Promote best management practices for agricultural activities in order to protect the quality of the local and regional surface and groundwater resources.
- Encourage the use of environmentally-sensitive development techniques in farm-related construction, such as surface water management best management practices that capture, filter, and infiltrate stormwater where possible.

Housing Affordability and Choice

Council Role

See *Housing Affordability and Choice policy discussion in Land Use Policy Introduction.*

Community Role

See *Housing Affordability and Choice policy discussion in Land Use Policy Introduction.*

Access, Mobility, and Transportation Choice

Council Role

- Support MnDOT 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 (agricultural) 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:

- Water Resources Policy Plan (late 2014);
- Housing Policy Plan (fall 2014);
- Transportation 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. The Council will distribute Systems Statements to local jurisdictions in the fall of 2015, beginning this decade's round of local comprehensive plan updates due back to the Council in 2018. The Systems Statements explains how *Thrive* and the systems and policy plans affect that individual community. If a community disagrees with any item of the System Statement, they may request a hearing to resolve any issues (Minn. Stat. 473.857). The local governments use the 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).

Once a community updates its plan, the community then shares it with adjacent and affected jurisdictions for them to consider the plan's impact, consistency, and coordination with their own plans. After completing that process, the community then sends their plan to the Council for its 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 that plan's compatibility with the plans of other communities, consistency with adopted Council policies, and conformance with metropolitan system plans (Minn. Stat. 473.175). If the Council finds that a community's 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).

Once the Council completes its review and authorizes a community to place its plan into effect, the local community 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 community's 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 communities as they update, amend, and implement their local comprehensive plans.

Sector Representative Program

This program is staffed by 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 communities in completing some of the statutorily required elements of local comprehensive plans.

Tools and Resources

The Council's *Local Planning Handbook* guides communities 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. These workshop series, coordinated by the Council's Sector Representatives, will include a range of topics including, but not limited to, 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 preparation of local comprehensive plan (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.

2040 Draft Forecasts
Released for Public Comment, February 19, 2014



Note: These are preliminary and have not been adopted by the Council.
(pt) denotes part of a city; remainder of city is in neighboring county.

◇ = Rogers annexed Hassan Township in 2012; forecasts have been combined.
† = Laketown Township will be fully annexed before 2030; forecast has been reassigned to neighboring cities.

	POPULATION			HOUSEHOLDS			EMPLOYMENT		
	2000	2010	2040	2000	2010	2040	2000	2010	2040
ANOKA COUNTY									
Andover	26,588	30,598	40,700	8,107	9,811	15,400	3,583	4,669	6,200
Anoka	18,076	17,142	20,100	7,262	7,060	8,900	13,489	12,840	14,600
Bethel	443	466	580	149	174	250	229	86	530
Blaine (pt)	45,014	57,186	86,000	15,926	21,077	33,000	16,757	19,668	26,600
Centerville	3,202	3,792	4,200	1,077	1,315	1,700	363	409	500
Circle Pines	4,663	4,918	5,300	1,697	2,006	2,300	2,150	790	1,450
Columbia Heights	18,520	19,496	21,700	8,033	7,926	9,300	6,397	3,484	4,640
Columbus	3,957	3,914	5,300	1,328	1,416	2,200	507	1,172	1,850
Coon Rapids	61,607	61,476	72,500	22,578	23,532	29,300	21,682	23,260	35,700
East Bethel	10,941	11,626	18,200	3,607	4,060	7,400	1,374	1,123	2,200
Fridley	27,449	27,208	29,400	11,328	11,110	12,800	26,257	21,333	29,800
Ham Lake	12,710	15,296	17,300	4,139	5,171	7,100	3,194	2,931	4,480
Hilltop	766	744	1,100	400	380	550	257	314	360
Lexington	2,142	2,049	2,300	819	787	1,000	634	467	700
Lino Lakes	16,791	20,216	29,000	4,857	6,174	10,600	2,671	3,313	6,000
Linwood Township	4,668	5,123	4,700	1,578	1,884	2,000	154	219	430
Nowthen	3,557	4,443	5,400	1,123	1,450	2,100	337	318	720
Oak Grove	6,903	8,031	10,200	2,200	2,744	4,100	359	741	1,010
Ramsey	18,510	23,668	32,800	5,906	8,033	13,000	4,008	4,779	7,600
St. Francis	4,910	7,218	12,500	1,638	2,520	5,100	1,247	1,537	2,070
Spring Lake Park (pt)	6,667	6,234	6,800	2,676	2,597	3,100	4,401	2,934	3,670
Anoka County Total	298,084	330,844	426,080	106,428	121,227	171,200	110,050	106,387	151,110
CARVER COUNTY									
Benton Township	939	786	740	307	297	300	282	274	350
Camden Township	955	922	830	316	329	330	15	56	60
Carver	1,266	3,724	14,200	458	1,182	5,300	176	187	700
Chanhassen (pt)	20,321	22,952	36,200	6,914	8,352	14,000	8,366	9,746	16,240
Chaska	17,603	23,770	34,900	6,169	8,816	14,200	10,955	11,123	16,300
Cologne	1,012	1,519	4,600	385	539	1,900	294	270	470
Dahlgren Township	1,453	1,331	720	479	494	300	203	202	200
Hamburg	538	513	600	206	201	250	117	109	150
Hancock Township	367	345	410	121	127	170	35	10	10
Hollywood Township	1,102	1,041	1,200	371	387	500	100	90	150
Laketown Township †	2,331	2,243	-	637	660	-	355	116	-
Mayer	554	1,749	3,000	199	589	1,200	92	151	200
New Germany	346	372	1,400	143	146	600	50	46	90
Norwood Young America	3,108	3,549	8,800	1,171	1,389	3,900	1,559	1,165	2,300
San Francisco Township	888	832	960	293	307	400	61	46	100
Victoria	4,025	7,345	15,000	1,367	2,435	5,700	932	1,502	2,270
Waconia	6,814	10,697	20,900	2,568	3,909	8,400	4,082	5,578	9,000
Waconia Township	1,284	1,228	1,500	429	434	600	72	98	400
Watertown	3,029	4,205	3,900	1,078	1,564	1,700	682	556	1,220
Watertown Township	1,432	1,204	1,100	478	468	500	207	392	400
Young America Township	838	715	760	267	266	300	105	119	120
Carver County Total	70,205	91,042	151,720	24,356	32,891	60,550	28,740	31,836	50,730

	POPULATION			HOUSEHOLDS			EMPLOYMENT		
	2000	2010	2040	2000	2010	2040	2000	2010	2040
DAKOTA COUNTY									
Apple Valley	45,527	49,084	64,400	16,344	18,875	26,000	12,106	14,279	17,700
Burnsville	60,220	60,306	69,800	23,687	24,283	29,000	31,765	31,593	44,100
Castle Rock Township	1,495	1,342	1,300	514	504	520	344	356	360
Coates	163	161	150	64	66	70	252	109	110
Douglas Township	760	716	790	235	259	320	96	92	100
Eagan	63,557	64,206	80,200	23,773	25,249	32,000	42,750	49,526	70,200
Empire Township	1,638	2,444	5,300	515	792	2,000	217	255	300
Eureka Township	1,490	1,426	1,700	496	518	700	196	460	460
Farmington	12,365	21,086	31,500	4,169	7,066	12,000	3,986	4,438	7,200
Greenvale Township	684	803	890	227	275	350	68	49	630
Hampton	434	689	780	156	245	300	178	127	160
Hampton Township	986	903	1,100	320	329	450	186	85	90
Hastings (pt)	18,201	22,172	30,100	6,640	8,735	12,900	8,872	8,532	11,300
Inver Grove Heights	29,751	33,880	47,600	11,257	13,476	19,900	8,168	9,442	14,000
Lakeville	43,128	55,954	82,900	13,609	18,683	30,500	10,966	13,862	23,400
Lilydale	552	623	1,000	338	375	600	354	355	420
Marshan Township	1,263	1,106	1,300	404	403	520	220	117	370
Mendota	197	198	320	80	78	130	266	270	300
Mendota Heights	11,434	11,071	13,400	4,178	4,378	5,300	8,549	11,550	14,400
Miesville	135	125	130	52	52	60	97	116	140
New Trier	116	112	150	31	41	50	30	35	60
Nininger Township	865	950	950	280	372	400	165	149	340
Northfield (pt)	557	1,147	2,100	216	414	900	79	470	500
Randolph	318	436	440	117	168	180	123	122	130
Randolph Township	536	659	650	192	246	280	130	113	120
Ravenna Township	2,355	2,336	2,500	734	780	1,000	115	38	60
Rosemount	14,619	21,874	36,300	4,742	7,587	14,000	6,356	6,721	11,500
Sciota Township	285	414	500	92	140	190	21	33	500
South St. Paul	20,167	20,160	22,500	8,123	8,186	9,600	7,697	8,557	11,000
Sunfish Lake	504	521	520	173	183	210	23	8	10
Vermillion	437	419	410	160	156	170	221	93	210
Vermillion Township	1,243	1,192	1,700	395	424	660	280	90	90
Waterford Township	517	497	560	193	193	240	461	679	820
West St. Paul	19,405	19,540	23,900	8,645	8,529	10,500	8,905	7,471	10,600
Dakota County Total	355,904	398,552	527,840	131,151	152,060	212,000	154,242	170,192	241,680
HENNEPIN COUNTY									
Bloomington	85,172	82,893	93,600	36,400	35,905	41,000	104,548	86,530	111,000
Brooklyn Center	29,172	30,104	34,700	11,430	10,756	13,600	16,698	11,001	15,400
Brooklyn Park	67,388	75,781	95,500	24,432	26,229	35,500	23,692	24,084	42,000
Champlin	22,193	23,089	25,500	7,425	8,328	10,000	2,734	4,012	5,600
Chanhassen (pt)	-	-	-	-	-	-	979	1,159	1,160
Corcoran	5,630	5,379	11,400	1,784	1,867	4,500	1,792	1,093	2,100
Crystal	22,698	22,151	23,300	9,389	9,183	10,000	5,638	3,929	5,500
Dayton (pt)	4,693	4,617	10,600	1,546	1,619	4,500	1,057	921	2,500
Deephaven	3,853	3,642	3,900	1,373	1,337	1,400	1,021	688	820
Eden Prairie	54,901	60,797	84,800	20,457	23,930	34,000	51,006	48,775	70,000
Edina	47,425	47,941	53,300	20,996	20,672	23,000	52,991	47,457	59,000
Excelsior	2,393	2,188	2,600	1,199	1,115	1,300	1,823	2,220	2,200
Fort Snelling (unorg.)	442	149	350	-	135	200	35,526	23,215	26,000
Golden Valley	20,281	20,371	24,300	8,449	8,816	10,300	30,142	33,194	41,500
Greenfield	2,544	2,777	4,100	817	936	1,600	337	613	750
Greenwood	729	688	810	285	290	300	161	82	350
Hanover (pt)	332	609	520	113	196	200	86	36	50
Hopkins	17,367	17,591	21,600	8,359	8,366	10,000	11,979	11,009	14,000

	POPULATION			HOUSEHOLDS			EMPLOYMENT		
	2000	2010	2040	2000	2010	2040	2000	2010	2040
Independence	3,236	3,504	5,400	1,088	1,241	2,200	169	587	770
Long Lake	1,842	1,768	2,100	756	732	1,000	2,510	1,093	1,930
Loretto	570	650	670	225	269	300	661	366	370
Maple Grove	50,365	61,567	84,800	17,532	22,867	33,000	18,309	29,877	49,500
Maple Plain	2,088	1,768	2,300	770	723	1,000	1,792	1,579	1,750
Medicine Lake	368	371	400	159	160	170	10	15	100
Medina	4,005	4,892	9,000	1,309	1,702	3,500	3,254	3,351	4,580
Minneapolis	382,747	382,578	464,900	162,352	163,540	202,000	308,127	281,732	356,000
Minnetonka	51,102	49,734	63,000	21,267	21,901	27,500	51,276	44,228	65,200
Minnetonka Beach	614	539	610	215	201	220	201	174	250
Minnetrista	4,358	6,384	13,000	1,505	2,176	5,000	379	665	740
Mound	9,435	9,052	11,000	3,982	3,974	5,000	1,811	1,165	1,900
New Hope	20,873	20,339	22,800	8,665	8,427	9,800	13,565	11,080	15,800
Orono	7,538	7,437	9,200	2,766	2,826	3,800	1,110	1,562	1,780
Osseo	2,434	2,430	3,100	1,035	1,128	1,500	2,312	1,749	2,530
Plymouth	65,894	70,576	87,800	24,820	28,663	35,500	53,491	46,227	68,600
Richfield	34,310	35,228	39,900	15,073	14,818	17,500	11,762	15,604	18,400
Robbinsdale	14,123	13,953	15,300	6,097	6,032	6,800	7,109	6,858	8,000
Rockford (pt)	144	426	800	57	184	400	384	94	550
Rogers ◇	6,051	11,197	21,300	1,973	3,748	8,200	5,414	7,907	12,800
St. Anthony (pt)	5,664	5,156	6,300	2,402	2,210	3,000	1,992	1,626	2,090
St. Bonifacius	1,873	2,283	2,200	681	863	900	436	478	500
St. Louis Park	44,102	45,250	54,500	20,773	21,743	25,500	40,696	40,485	49,100
Shorewood	7,400	7,307	7,400	2,529	2,658	3,000	782	1,113	1,200
Spring Park	1,717	1,669	2,200	930	897	1,100	1,028	583	1,340
Tonka Bay	1,547	1,475	1,500	614	586	680	266	298	570
Wayzata	4,113	3,688	4,900	1,929	1,795	2,300	6,268	4,567	5,900
Woodland	480	437	540	173	169	180	22	8	20
Hennepin County Total	1,116,206	1,152,425	1,427,800	456,131	475,913	602,450	877,346	805,089	1,072,200
RAMSEY COUNTY									
Arden Hills	9,652	9,552	13,500	2,959	2,957	4,600	12,326	12,402	18,400
Blaine (pt)	-	-	-	-	-	-	677	893	1,000
Falcon Heights	5,572	5,321	5,300	2,103	2,131	2,200	4,190	5,298	6,800
Gem Lake	419	393	590	139	155	250	586	526	640
Lauderdale	2,364	2,379	2,600	1,150	1,130	1,300	360	718	1,810
Little Canada	9,771	9,773	14,000	4,375	4,393	6,200	5,960	5,467	8,700
Maplewood	35,258	38,018	47,900	13,758	14,882	19,700	29,259	27,635	36,600
Mounds View	12,738	12,155	13,100	5,018	4,954	5,500	4,170	6,386	8,200
New Brighton	22,206	21,456	26,000	9,013	8,915	11,200	11,007	9,213	13,500
North Oaks	3,883	4,469	4,900	1,300	1,746	2,100	1,091	1,260	1,300
North St. Paul	11,929	11,460	13,100	4,703	4,615	5,700	3,499	2,942	3,610
Roseville	33,690	33,660	38,700	14,598	14,623	17,000	39,211	35,104	44,100
St. Anthony (pt)	2,348	3,070	4,300	1,295	1,638	2,000	1,390	1,357	2,050
St. Paul	286,840	285,068	334,700	112,109	111,001	137,600	188,124	175,933	218,000
Shoreview	25,924	25,043	27,500	10,125	10,402	11,300	9,938	11,665	15,500
Spring Lake Park (pt)	105	178	220	48	75	100	202	66	100
Vadnais Heights	13,069	12,302	14,900	5,064	5,066	6,500	7,164	6,678	13,700
White Bear Township	11,293	10,949	12,000	4,010	4,261	4,900	2,131	2,309	4,780
White Bear Lake (pt)	23,974	23,394	27,500	9,469	9,747	12,000	12,020	11,085	12,700
Ramsey County Total	511,035	508,640	600,810	201,236	202,691	250,150	333,305	316,937	411,490

	POPULATION			HOUSEHOLDS			EMPLOYMENT		
	2000	2010	2040	2000	2010	2040	2000	2010	2040
SCOTT COUNTY									
Belle Plaine	3,789	6,661	13,300	1,396	2,362	5,300	1,428	1,847	3,300
Belle Plaine Township	806	878	820	266	310	320	77	69	70
Blakeley Township	496	418	370	166	165	170	70	69	100
Cedar Lake Township	2,197	2,779	3,600	719	939	1,400	91	82	340
Credit River Township	3,895	5,096	5,000	1,242	1,662	1,900	265	397	420
Elko New Market	804	4,110	12,200	286	1,259	4,500	248	317	640
Helena Township	1,440	1,648	1,700	450	548	700	473	147	150
Jackson Township	1,361	1,464	1,300	461	486	500	92	168	530
Jordan	3,833	5,470	10,700	1,349	1,871	4,300	1,321	1,587	2,900
Louisville Township	1,359	1,266	1,200	410	425	430	476	298	300
New Market Township	3,057	3,440	3,300	956	1,146	1,200	262	325	350
New Prague (pt)	3,157	4,280	7,200	1,160	1,618	3,100	2,282	2,142	3,270
Prior Lake	15,917	22,796	39,300	5,645	8,447	15,700	7,972	7,766	12,500
St. Lawrence Township	472	483	810	144	161	320	145	48	50
Sand Creek Township	1,551	1,521	1,400	478	554	560	249	298	460
Savage	21,115	26,911	38,200	6,807	9,116	14,300	5,366	6,753	9,500
Shakopee	20,568	37,076	57,400	7,540	12,772	21,500	13,938	18,831	27,400
Spring Lake Township	3,681	3,631	4,100	1,217	1,267	1,600	176	390	400
Scott County Total	89,498	129,928	201,900	30,692	45,108	77,800	34,931	41,534	62,680
WASHINGTON COUNTY									
Afton	2,839	2,886	3,100	996	1,081	1,300	351	411	490
Bayport	3,162	3,471	4,400	763	855	1,300	4,900	3,790	5,100
Baytown Township	1,533	1,617	2,000	492	573	760	154	69	260
Birchwood Village	968	870	840	357	351	360	20	25	30
Cottage Grove	30,582	34,589	49,300	9,932	11,719	18,600	6,263	6,484	8,100
Dellwood	1,033	1,065	1,100	353	373	450	282	277	300
Denmark Township	1,348	1,737	2,500	481	615	1,000	386	629	650
Forest Lake	14,440	18,377	28,300	5,433	7,015	12,000	6,636	6,449	9,700
Grant	4,026	4,094	4,300	1,374	1,463	1,700	750	449	840
Grey Cloud Island Township	307	295	280	117	117	120	50	10	40
Hastings (pt)	3	-	-	2	-	-	224	64	100
Hugo	6,363	13,332	31,300	2,125	4,990	13,100	1,917	1,973	2,780
Lake Elmo	6,863	8,061	21,200	2,347	2,776	8,300	1,682	1,941	3,160
Lakeland	1,917	1,796	1,500	691	681	710	374	302	470
Lakeland Shores	355	311	360	116	117	160	20	26	40
Lake St. Croix Beach	1,140	1,053	1,000	462	460	500	50	129	130
Landfall	700	663	770	292	257	300	50	25	30
Mahtomedi	7,563	7,676	7,700	2,503	2,827	3,100	1,252	2,090	2,660
Marine on St. Croix	602	689	1,200	254	302	530	235	124	160
May Township	2,928	2,776	3,800	1,007	1,083	1,600	40	66	180
Newport	3,715	3,435	4,600	1,418	1,354	2,100	2,480	1,605	2,000
Oakdale	26,653	27,401	31,000	10,243	10,956	13,000	7,812	8,651	15,000
Oak Park Heights	3,777	4,445	5,800	1,528	1,911	2,600	2,713	4,358	7,500
Pine Springs	421	408	370	140	144	150	10	72	80
St. Marys Point	344	366	330	132	147	150	10	15	20
St. Paul Park	5,070	5,273	7,900	1,829	1,967	3,300	1,399	1,515	2,520
Scandia	3,692	3,934	5,000	1,294	1,498	2,100	272	519	730
Stillwater	15,323	18,227	22,500	5,797	7,076	9,500	10,719	9,628	11,700
Stillwater Township	2,553	2,364	2,700	833	855	1,100	120	165	250
West Lakeland Township	3,547	4,054	4,000	1,101	1,286	1,500	313	232	370
White Bear Lake (pt)	351	403	680	149	198	300	131	184	200
Willernie	549	507	480	225	218	230	135	182	200
Woodbury	46,463	61,961	87,200	16,676	22,594	33,100	15,899	19,438	28,700
Washington County Total	201,130	238,136	337,510	71,462	87,859	135,020	67,649	71,897	104,490
METRO AREA	2,642,062	2,849,567	3,673,660	1,021,456	1,117,749	1,509,170	1,606,263	1,543,872	2,094,380