

HOUSING POLICY PLAN FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

1. What is the Housing Policy Plan?

The Met Council's Housing Policy Plan will support the Council's [Thrive MSP 2040](#), the Council's regional development guide. Designed to assist local communities and advance regional housing goals, the Plan will establish the Council's broad housing policy direction for the coming decades. Housing investment and disinvestment have a critical impact on the vitality of the region, its cities, its neighborhoods, and its households and families. The Plan will focus on promoting housing options that give people in all life stages and of all economic means viable choices for safe, stable and affordable homes.

2. Why is the Met Council producing a Housing Policy Plan?

Through the development of [Thrive MSP 2040](#), the Council heard a clear need for aligning our regional efforts more effectively around housing. This Housing Policy Plan will be the Council's first housing plan since 1985. Key drivers for a Housing Policy Plan now include:

- Recovering from the Great Recession and reaching a "new normal" in the housing market;
- Planning for significant demographic changes ahead, in particular our aging population and increasing racial and ethnic diversity in the region;
- Increasingly limited public resources for housing investment;
- The strong linkages between housing and land use decision-making, transportation planning, and economic competitiveness

3. What are the Council's goals for the Housing Policy Plan?

- Advance and refine the Council's housing policy direction as defined in [Thrive MSP 2040](#)
- Facilitate a meaningful, inclusive regional conversation on housing;
- Identify local and regional needs and priorities for housing;
- Promote housing options that give people in all life stages and of all economic means viable choices for safe, stable and affordable homes;

- Connect housing to the other Council system plans (e.g. Transportation, Regional Parks, and Water Resources);
- Incorporate recommendations from [Choice, Place and Opportunity: An Equity Assessment of the Twin Cities](#);
- Provide a “toolkit” of best practices, strategies and technical assistance to local communities; and
- Help inform and provide guidance for local housing planning.

4. What is the Housing Policy Plan Work Group (HPPWG)?

In July 2013, the Metropolitan Council formed a [28-member Housing Policy Plan Work Group](#) to advise the Council on key housing issues, policies, and implementation options related to the Housing Policy Plan. This diverse work group brings together people from throughout the region, including Metropolitan Council members, local government officials, housing advocates, developers, communities of color, and other regional stakeholders. A full array of perspectives is represented. The work group is meeting monthly throughout the process. Meeting agendas are available online.

5. When and where does the Housing Policy Plan Work Group meet?

The Housing Policy Plan Working Group meets monthly:

- Third Tuesday of the month
- 10 a.m. to 12 p.m
- Metropolitan Council, 390 Robert Street North, St. Paul MN 55101.

Meetings are open to the public.

6. What is the relationship of the Housing Policy Plan and Thrive MSP 2040?

[Thrive MSP 2040](#) sets the stage for the orderly and economical development of the region by defining five key outcomes—Stewardship, Prosperity, Equity, Livability, and Sustainability—and three core principles—Integration, Collaboration, and Accountability. The Housing Policy Plan will reflect and advance these outcomes and principles.

7. What is the relationship of the Housing Policy Plan to the Council’s other systems plans (Regional Parks, Transportation, and Water Resources)?

Implementing the integration principle defined in [Thrive MSP 2040](#), Council members and staff are looking for opportunities to integrate the work of the Housing Policy Plan into the Regional Parks Policy Plan, the Transportation Policy Plan, and the Water Resources Policy Plan.

8. How many residents does the Housing Policy Plan envision in the region?

The Council's forecasts indicate that the region will add approximately 825,000 people (in about 390,000 households) and need an estimated 400,000 new housing units (plus replacement of approximately 140,000 housing units through development and redevelopment) by 2040.

9. Is the Housing Policy Plan an affordable housing plan?

No, at least not exclusively. The Council's goal is to promote housing options that give people in all life stages and of all economic means viable choices for safe, stable and affordable homes. Affordable housing issues and strategies will comprise a sizable portion of the Housing Policy Plan.

10. What time period does the Housing Policy Plan cover?

Different aspects of the Housing Policy Plan have different time horizons:

- Technical assistance to local governments envisioned in the Housing Policy Plan will begin immediately.
- The update to the Housing Performance Scores will be implemented with the 2015 Livable Communities Fund Distribution Plan.
- Housing policies for local governments will inform local comprehensive plans to 2040, the same regional planning period for [Thrive MSP 2040](#).
- The update to the [Allocation of Affordable Housing Need](#) will focus on affordable housing development for 2021 to 2030.

11. Does the development of the Housing Policy Plan mean that the Council sees housing as a statutory system?

No. The Housing Policy Plan will work within the Council's statutory authority through the Metropolitan Land Planning Act (see [Minn. Stat. 473.859, subd. 2\(c\) and subd. 4](#)) and the Livable Communities Act (see Minn. Stat. 473.25 – 473.255).

12. What is the overall timeline for the development of the Housing Policy Plan?

The Housing Policy Plan is anticipated to be completed in fall 2014.

- Summer 2013 - Kickoff
- Fall 2013-Winter 2014 - Identify key housing topics and issues

- Spring 2014 - Discuss and evaluate policy ideas and options
- Summer 2014 – Plan drafted and 45-day public comment period begins
- Fall 2014 – Comments incorporated and Housing Policy Plan adoption by the Council

13. Who is the Council engaging in the development of the Housing Policy Plan?

The Met Council is dedicated toward an open, inclusive, and transparent process in all of its planning. Starting in April 2014, the Council will be convening a series of community meetings, visioning sessions, and focus groups to participate in this planning process. These will include discussions with:

- residents of affordable/subsidized housing;
- non-subsidized homeowners and renters;
- youth leadership groups;
- housing finance and development professionals;
- advocacy groups;
- city officials and staff; and
- other interested stakeholders.

Check the [Housing Policy Plan webpage](#) for announcements of specific events.

14. Will there be an opportunity to comment on a draft Housing Policy Plan?

Yes. The Council will conduct a 45-day public comment period, including an official public hearing. Comments are welcomed via writing, phone, and email to thriveMSP@metc.state.mn.us.

15. How does the Housing Policy Plan connect or relate to the Council's *Choice, Place, and Opportunity* assessment?

[Choice, Place and Opportunity: An Equity Assessment of the Twin Cities Region](#) will inform the Housing Policy Plan. Key highlights of the Choice, Place and Opportunity report include:

- the stark difference in place-based opportunities between white households and households of color;
- historical and contemporary patterns of housing investment at the federal and state levels;

- the emergence and expansion of Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty (areas where 50% or more of residents are people of color and 40% or more have family incomes less than 185% of the poverty level); and
- how these patterns define residents’ opportunities in housing, employment and education.

The Housing Policy Plan Work Group is paying special attention to policies and recommendations that narrow equity gaps and lead to a stronger, more economically and socially integrated region.

16. Are there particular areas of focus for the Housing Policy Plan that have already been determined?

Yes. Thrive MSP 2040 has defined the Council’s strategic policy direction for housing; the Housing Policy Plan will refine these priorities. These include:

- Housing strategies in transit station areas;
- Strategies to reduce local impediments to affordable housing development;
- Policies to preserve existing affordable housing and to build new affordable housing where appropriate;
- Approaches to address barriers to housing choice identified in the Choice, Place and Opportunity document;
- Policies to promote housing options that give people in all life stages and of all economic means viable choices for safe, stable and affordable homes; and
- Recommendations for lowering the costs of building affordable housing.

17. Will the “Allocation of Affordable Housing Need” change?

The Housing Policy Plan will update the [Allocation of Affordable Housing Need](#) for the 2021-2030 decade. The Allocation of Affordable Housing Need is the methodology used to determine each jurisdiction’s “fair share” of the region’s need for low- and moderate-income housing. Local jurisdictions are then responsible for guiding adequate land in their local Comprehensive Plan Updates to meet their share of the region’s need to inform local comprehensive plans.

Because local jurisdictions have completed their Comprehensive Plan Updates for the current decade, adjustments to the Allocation for the 2011-2020 decade are unlikely.

A subgroup of Housing Policy Plan Work Group members are currently meeting to develop a proposal for the next Allocation methodology.

18. Will the “Housing Performance Scores” change?

Potentially. The Housing Policy Plan will review and potentially refine the Housing Performance Scores. These Scores are an element of scoring for Livable Communities Act grants. A subgroup of Housing Policy Plan Work Group members are currently meeting to review the Housing Performance Scores.

19. Who can I contact for more information on the Housing Policy Plan?

Visit the [Housing Policy Plan webpage](#).

Contact:

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