



**CITY OF  
GEM LAKE**

# **2025 SYSTEM STATEMENT**



**IMAGINE<sup>50</sup>**



# 2025 SYSTEMS STATEMENT CITY OF GEM LAKE

## Regional Development Plan Adoption

On February 12, 2025, the Met Council adopted Imagine 2050 as a comprehensive development guide for the Twin Cities metro region. Imagine 2050 includes regional systems plans, including the 2050 Transportation Policy Plan, the 2050 Water Policy Plan, the 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan, and the 2050 Housing Policy Plan. The development guide also outlines land use policies and community designations important for local comprehensive planning updates.

The Metropolitan Council is now issuing systems statements pursuant to [State statute](#).

## Systems Statements

Metropolitan systems plans are long-range comprehensive plans for the regional systems – transit, highways, and airports; wastewater services; and parks and open space – along with the capital budgets for those systems. Systems statements explain the implications of metropolitan system plans for each community in the region. They are intended to help communities prepare or update their comprehensive plan, as required by the Metropolitan Land Planning Act:

*Within nine months after receiving a system statement for an amendment to a metropolitan system plan, and within three years after receiving a system statement issued in conjunction with the decennial review required under [section 473.864, subdivision 2](#), each affected local governmental unit shall review its comprehensive plan to determine if an amendment is necessary to ensure continued conformity with metropolitan system plans. If an amendment is necessary, the governmental unit shall prepare the amendment and submit it to the council for review.*

The system statement includes information specific to a community, including:

- community designation or designation(s)
- forecasted population, households, and employment through the year 2050
- guidance on appropriate densities to ensure that regional services and costly regional infrastructure can be provided as efficiently as possible
- affordable housing need allocation.

In the following sections, this systems statement contains an overview of key changes and updates to the policies and plans from the previous 2040 regional development guide and specific system changes that affect your community:

- Transportation, including metropolitan highways, aviation, and transit
- Water Resources, including wastewater, surface water, and water supply planning

- Regional parks and trails

## Regional Development Guide

The development guide adopted in February 2025 reflects the vision and plans adopted by communities for a prosperous, equitable, and resilient region with abundant opportunities for all to live, work, play, and thrive.

Regional values are shared core beliefs or principles that guide the work of developing and implementing Imagine 2050. The values build on those identified in Thrive MSP 2040 and incorporate what we've learned over the last ten years as well as the common values expressed by local governments and partners across the region. These values guide the Met Council in building partnerships and developing policies and programs to support Imagine 2050.

The Met Council has endorsed the following goals for our region to achieve through our policies, practices, programs, and partnerships:

- Our region is equitable and inclusive.
- Our communities are healthy and safe.
- Our region is dynamic and resilient.
- We lead on addressing climate change.
- We protect and restore natural systems.

## Dispute Process

If your community disagrees with elements of this systems statement or has any questions about the process, please contact your Sector Representative, Emma Dvorak, at 651-602-1399, to review and discuss potential issues or concerns. The Council and local government units and districts have usually resolved issues relating to the system statement through discussion.

## Request for Hearing

If a local governmental unit and the Met Council are unable to resolve disagreements over the content of a system statement, the unit or district may, by resolution, request that a hearing be conducted by the Met Council's Land Use Advisory Committee or by the State Office of Administrative Hearings to consider amendments to the system statement. According to Minnesota Statutes [section 473.857](#), the request shall be made by the local governmental unit or school district within 60 days after receiving the system statement. If the Met Council does not receive a hearing request within 60 days, the statement becomes final.

## Next Steps in the Regional Planning Cycle

Receipt of this system statement and the metropolitan system plans triggers a community's obligation to review and amend its comprehensive plan by December 2028. Local comprehensive plans and amendments will be reviewed by the Met Council for conformance to

metropolitan system plans, consistency with Met Council policies, and compatibility with adjacent and affected governmental units. Updated local comprehensive plans are due to the Met Council for review by Dec. 31, 2028.

## Forecasts

The Met Council uses the forecasts developed as part of Imagine 2050 to plan for regional systems. Communities should base their planning work on these forecasts. Given the nature of long-range forecasts and the planning timeline undertaken by most communities, the Met Council will maintain on-going dialogue with communities to consider any changes in growth that may have an impact on regional systems.

### *Imagine Forecasts for the City of Gem Lake*

|            | 2020 (actual) | 2030 | 2040 | 2050 |
|------------|---------------|------|------|------|
| Population | 528           | 590  | 660  | 660  |
| Households | 199           | 220  | 250  | 250  |
| Employment | 357           | 470  | 500  | 570  |

## Housing Policy

The purpose of the Housing Policy Plan, adopted by the Metropolitan Council in February 2025, is to provide leadership and guidance on regional housing needs and challenges and to support Imagine 2050. The Housing Policy Plan provides an integrated policy framework that unifies our existing roles in housing and identifies opportunities to expand our role in supporting safe, affordable and dignified housing in the region.

Consistent with state statute (Minn. Stat. 473.859, subd. 2(c) and subd. 4), cities and townships must include a housing element and implementation program in their local comprehensive plans that address existing and projected housing needs.

The Met Council has determined the regional need for low-income housing for the decade of 2031-2040 (see Appendix B in the Housing Policy Plan).

Based on regional forecasts, the regional need for future affordable housing units is 39,700. Gem Lake’s share of the region’s future need for low-income housing is 17 new units of affordable housing. Of these new units, the need is for 8 affordable to households earning at or below 30% of AMI, 9 affordable to households earning 31% to 50% of AMI, and 0 affordable to households earning 51% to 60% of AMI.

### *Affordable Housing Need Allocation for the City of Gem Lake*

|                     | Units |
|---------------------|-------|
| At or below 30% AMI | 8     |
| 31 to 50% AMI       | 9     |
| 51 to 60% AMI       | 0     |
| Total Units         | 17    |

Future Affordable Housing Need allocations may be updated throughout the decade if local projected sewerage growth changes.

Gem Lake should consult the complete Housing Policy Plan when preparing its local comprehensive plan. In addition, Gem Lake should consult Imagine 2050 and the Local Planning Handbook for specific requirements necessary for the housing element and housing implementation programs of local comprehensive plans.

## Climate Policy

In 2023, the State legislature amended the Metropolitan Land Planning Act ([Minn Stat. § 473.859, subd. 2 and 7](#)) to include new requirements that comprehensive plans address climate mitigation and adaptation. In climate policy, mitigation strategies focus on minimizing contributions to climate change through efficiency measures and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Adaptation strategies focus on how to change policies and practices to adjust to ongoing and future impacts of climate change.

The Met Council will assist communities in addressing climate mitigation and adaptation elements by providing communities with greenhouse gas inventories and technical assistance for identifying appropriate strategies.

## Community Designation

Community designations group jurisdictions with similar characteristics for the application of regional policies. The Council uses community designations to guide regional growth and development; establish land use expectations including overall development densities and patterns; and outline the respective roles of the Council and individual communities, along with strategies for planning for forecasted growth. If there are discrepancies between the Imagine 2050 Community Designations Map and the Community Designation map contained within this systems statement, communities should follow the specific guidance contained in this document. Imagine identifies the City of Gem Lake with the community designation of Suburban on the Community Designation map.

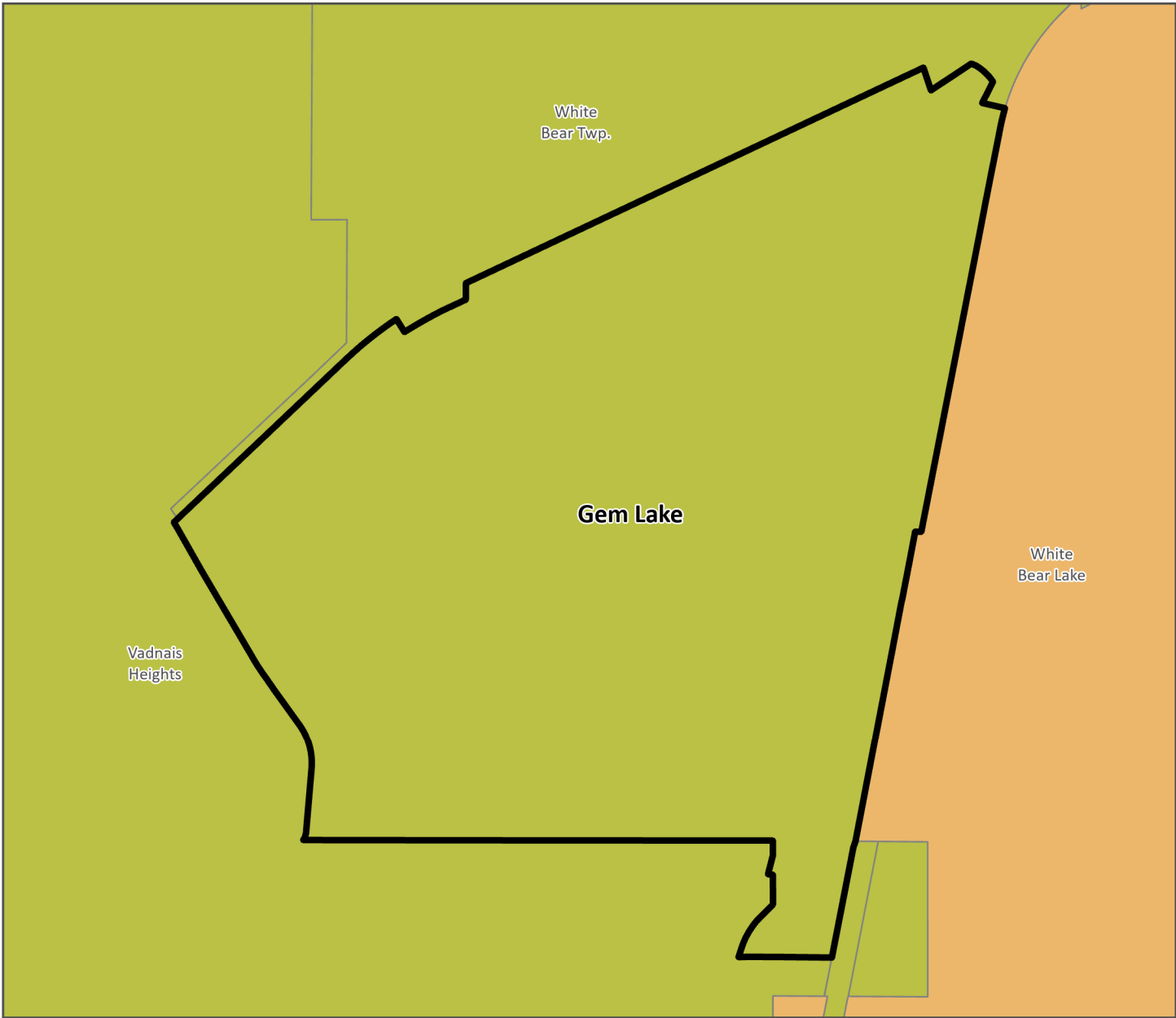
Suburban areas are primarily residential, featuring auto-oriented, medium-density housing developments. Many Suburban jurisdictions have a downtown or core area with a more urban development pattern, reflecting their initial phase of development; however, all of these municipalities experienced most of their growth in the 1980s and early 1990s. This has resulted in an overall development pattern of expansive subdivisions that prioritize vehicle access and exhibit limited intersection density, which affects the efficiency of public transit. Many Suburban areas also feature park-and-ride facilities to enhance connectivity to larger transit networks, supporting commuter needs. Unlike Urban and Urban Edge cities, these jurisdictions often include small amounts of undeveloped land, providing opportunities for future development or green space conservation. Additionally, as the last of their greenfield areas are developed and their earlier developments age, these municipalities are experiencing opportunities for infill and redevelopment, often at higher densities than the prevailing development pattern. As these areas continue to grow, they face challenges such as rising

surface temperatures and strains on local water supplies, emphasizing the importance of integrated resource management strategies.

Specific strategies for Gem Lake can be found on your [Community Page](#) in the [Local Planning Handbook](#).

# City of Gem Lake Community Designations

Suburban



## Urban Service Areas

- Urban
- Urban Edge
- Suburban
- Suburban Edge

## Rural Service Areas

- Rural Center
- Diversified Rural
- Rural Residential
- Agricultural
- Non-Council Community

# 2025 TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM STATEMENT

## CITY OF GEM LAKE

### Transportation Policy Plan Overview

The 2050 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) is the metropolitan system plan for transportation – including highways, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, freight, aviation, and travel demand management – to which local comprehensive plans must conform. It also includes regional transportation objectives, supporting policies and actions, and regional performance measures. The full TPP can be found at the following url:

<https://imagine2050.metrocouncil.org/chapters/transportation>.

This system statement summarizes the regional systems and any significant changes to them, other important regional transportation considerations, and changes made to the 2050 TPP since the 2040 TPP was adopted in 2015. Additionally, this system statement highlights those elements of the system plan that apply to your community. The TPP incorporates the policy direction and the new 2050 socioeconomic forecasts adopted by the Met Council in the regional development guide, Imagine 2050, and extends the planning horizon from 2040 to 2050.

### Federal and State Requirements

The TPP meets both state requirements outlined in statute for a metropolitan system plan, and federal requirements as a fiscally constrained long-range investment plan for surface transportation. As the region has recently received a significant number of new and increased sources of transportation revenue, the 2050 TPP does not include an increased revenue scenario, but it does include additional opportunities for investment. The plan also continues to assume competitive transportation funding (e.g., state and federal discretionary programs like INFRA and Corridors of Commerce) will be sought and amended into the plan as awarded.

Under the Metropolitan Land Planning Act, local comprehensive plans are expected to conform to the projects currently identified as funded in the fiscally constrained plan, which is the official metropolitan system plan. The additional opportunities for investment may be identified separately in local plans as unfunded proposals.

Federal requirements also call for metropolitan transportation plans to be performance based, so the TPP includes objectives, policies, and actions for the regional transportation system. These objectives, policies, and actions guide the Met Council and regional partners in planning and investment in the surface transportation system.

In addition to reviewing this system statement, consult the TPP to ensure that your community's local comprehensive plan and plan amendments conform to the metropolitan transportation system plan. Communities should also review the Imagine 2050 Land Use Policy for land use considerations near certain transportation infrastructure. The format of this plan is different than past TPPs. The plan is no longer separated by chapter, rather each modal plan is distinguished from each other as individual investment or system plans. If the Met Council has a role in the funding of a regional system, the plan is identified as an

investment plan. If not, then it is identified as a system plan. There is no appendix in the 2050 TPP, supporting documentation is combined directly with the specific investment or system plan and identified as support documentation.

## 2050 Transportation Policy Plan Regional Systems

Adopted by the Met Council in February 2025, the TPP identifies the regional transportation systems, regional transportation objectives and policies, and other regional transportation issues communities should consider when producing their own comprehensive plans. This section will cover descriptions of each system and key changes made to these systems.

### Regional Transportation Policies and Actions

In addition to identifying regional systems and investment needs, the TPP includes a set of policies and related actions to guide investments, planning and priorities for the regional transportation system. The policies and actions cover many topics including safety, highway planning priorities, complete streets, non-motorized transportation, equity, climate, and natural systems. Communities are encouraged to incorporate regional policies in their local plans.

### Regional Highway System

The Metropolitan Highway System is made up of principal arterials, shown in Figure 1 of the Highway Investment Plan and included with this system statement. This system is federally known as the National Highway System. The Metropolitan Highway System is a vital element of the regional transportation system; while minor arterials are lower order roadways that provide connectivity and relieve congestion in the principal arterial system. Principal and minor arterials combined represent the Regional Highway System.

### Key Changes from the 2040 TPP

- A major shift from the previous TPP is that potential new revenues are no longer considered a means to resolve unmet needs on the system. The 2050 TPP does not have a current and increased revenue scenario as a result. Instead, it identifies funded projects in the fiscally constrained plan and additional opportunities beyond what is funded. Multiple studies completed since the 2040 TPP identified additional opportunities for investment, shown in figures 8 and 10.
- The 2050 TPP identifies highway investments in five major categories:
  - Safety: Figure 7 in the Highway Investment Plan shows regionally significant safety investments.
  - Spot mobility: Figure 8 in the Highway Investment Plan shows funded regionally significant spot mobility projects alongside identified additional opportunities for investment.
  - Interchanges: Figure 9 in the Highway Investment Plan shows funded and planned regionally significant interchange investments.
  - Managed lanes: Figure 10 in the Highway Investment Plan shows the existing, under construction, and planned E-ZPass system. It also includes managed lane corridors which are identified as additional opportunities for investment.

- Targeted regional capacity: Figure 11 in the Highway Investment Plan shows funded and planned regionally significant highway capacity investments. It also includes potential future capacity enhancements identified in studies.
- Modifications were made to the 2050 TPP that removed appendix naming found in previous plans and reworks previous chapters. Support documents for the Highway Investment Plan include Functional Classification, Preliminary Interchange Approval Process, and Congestion Management Process. The project list appendix item is now a separate section of the TPP, titled Long Range Highway and Transit Capital Project List. This updated list identifies projects from 2025 to 2050.

## Regional Transit System

The regional transit system comprises the region's transitways, regular route bus services, demand response services, transit centers and park and rides, and transit advantages. This system is operated by six different service providers in the region. The COVID-19 pandemic upended transit, and some services vary dramatically from pre-pandemic levels. Many routes were suspended in the region and are still in the process of restructuring.

### Key Changes from the 2040 TPP

- A major shift from the previous TPP is from new revenues raised to fill budget gaps in the system. A new source of revenue for transit was created in 2023 to fund operations and maintenance for the region. Similar to highways, the Transit Investment Plan no longer contains a current and increased revenue scenario. The projects shown in the 2050 TPP are those in the fiscally constrained plan. Additional opportunities for investment are also identified in the plan and these may be incorporated into local comprehensive plans.
- Several transitways have been implemented and opened, and additional transitways have been identified in the region. Multiple arterial bus rapid transit (BRT) routes are completed and operational, while more alignments have been identified in studies for future implementation. The Transit Investment Plan identifies investments planned to be implemented in the 2050 TPP:
  - Two light rail extensions (Green Line Extension, Blue Line Extension)
  - Two dedicated BRT routes (Gold Line, Purple Line)
  - Five arterial BRT routes (B Line, E Line, F Line, G Line, H Line)
- Modifications were made to the 2050 TPP that removed appendix naming found in previous plans and reworks previous chapters. Support documents for the Transit Investment Plan include Transit Design and Performance Guidelines.

## Regional Aviation System

The regional aviation system includes Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport, eight publicly owned regional airports, and two privately owned seaplane bases. These regional airports are owned and operated by the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) and local communities.

## Key Changes from the 2040 TPP

- The MAC completed an update to the Long-Term Comprehensive Plan (LTCP) for the Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport in 2024. This update moves the planning horizon to 2040 with new operation forecasts, anticipated noise impacts, and capital project needs.
- The Aviation System Plan now identifies all facilities beyond regional airports with aviation activity. These facilities may be incorporated into and considered in local planning. Aviation appendix items of the TPP are now included as a single support document titled Aviation Supporting Information.

## Regional Bicycle System

The regional bicycle system is identified through the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN). It is made up of alignments and corridors. Corridors are shown where more specific alignments within those corridors have not yet been designated. The process used to develop the RBTN, the general principles and analysis factors used in its development, and studies done to analyze and update the network can be found in the Bicycle Investment Plan. The RBTN was established in the 2040 TPP to achieve the following goals:

- Establish an integrated and seamless network of on-street bikeways and off-road trails.
- Provide the vision for a “backbone” arterial network to serve daily bicycle trips by connecting regional destinations and local bicycle networks.
- Encourage cities, counties, park agencies, and the state to plan and implement future bikeways in support of the network vision.

The RBTN also incorporates regional bicycle barriers which are established in the TPP as the region’s most significant physical barriers to everyday bicycle travel. These barriers include freeways and expressways, railroad corridors, and secondary rivers and streams. They were developed and analyzed through the [Regional Bicycle Barrier Study](#). The barriers are included on the [Regional Bicycle Barriers Map](#).

## Key Changes from 2040 TPP

- The RBTN has been refined and expanded since it was first implemented in the 2040 TPP. Requests from local governments to add and revise RBTN corridors and alignments prompted the [Regional Bicycle Guidelines and Measures Study](#), which developed specific measures to review updates and requests from local agencies.
- The RBTN undergoes a formal update of alignments and corridors about every two years. The next formal update will take place in 2025 prior to the 2026 Regional Solicitation.

## Regional Freight System

The regional freight system includes interconnecting transportation modes, some of which are unique to freight, and some which overlap with passenger travel modes. There are five distinct modes of freight transportation: highway trucks, railroads, river barges, air freight, and pipelines. Combined with intermodal or warehouse/distribution terminals and supporting

infrastructure, these modes of transportation comprise the regional freight system, known as the Metropolitan Freight System.

### Key Changes from 2040 TPP

- E-commerce has become an increasingly important segment of freight movements and deliveries of goods to homes. The [Urban Freight Distribution Study](#) focused on e-commerce trends and impacts or opportunities of last-mile parcel deliveries in regional communities. The study notes that as urban deliveries become more common, local communities are encouraged to create curb management policies, consider delivery needs in their complete streets planning, and identify microhubs for last-mile parcel distribution.

## Pedestrian System

The Met Council coordinates with local partners on pedestrian issues and trends, and aids in funding for pedestrian needs.

### Key Changes from 2040 TPP

- In the previous TPP pedestrian and bicycle travel were combined into one chapter and discussed together. The pedestrian system is now discussed and considered as an independent investment section.
- To address rising pedestrian danger on our streets, the Met Council developed the [Pedestrian Safety Action Plan](#) in 2022. It includes analysis of crash trends in the region, recommended actions to increase pedestrian safety, and a weighted crash score on every road to aid in future safety planning and project prioritization. Communities are encouraged to incorporate the plan's findings into the pedestrian elements of their comprehensive plans.

## Travel Demand Management

Travel demand management (TDM) is the application of strategies, programs, and policies to increase the efficiency of transportation systems by reducing travel demand, or redistributing this demand in space or in time. These initiatives are intended to inspire new travel habits to support infrastructure investments while reducing the demand for personal vehicle trips.

### Key Changes from 2040 TPP

- TDM has its own dedicated investment plan and discussion in the 2050 TPP. The section identifies key regional partners in TDM as well as their roles and responsibilities. Local communities are being asked to discuss how they include travel demand management strategies in their local plans, since some of them have relationships to land use controls and ordinances.
- The Met Council conducted the Regional Travel Demand Management Study in 2023. It concluded with the [Regional Travel Demand Management Action Plan](#). The action plan outlines structure for a regional TDM program to implement strategies, programs, and incentives to change travel behaviors and reduce single-occupant vehicle trips, vehicle-miles traveled, and greenhouse gas emissions. The action plan is summarized in the 2050 TPP Travel Demand Management Investment Plan.

## System Plan Considerations Affecting Your Community

Your community should consult the complete TPP in preparing your local comprehensive plan. In addition, your community should consult Imagine 2050 and the current version of the Met Council's Local Planning Handbook (LPH) for specific comprehensive plan requirements. Specific system plan considerations affecting your community are detailed below.

### Regional Highway System

There are no principal arterials located within your community.

### Regional Transit System

Your community is located within the following Transit Market Area: TMA 3.

- TMA 3 is mainly lower density Urban Edge and Suburban communities. It is characterized by lower density and less transit-supportive street networks and land use but with some pockets of denser development. Transit service in this market area includes suburban local routes, express and commuter service, and non-regular route transit services, usually dial-a-ride, providing basic transportation access.

Your community is located within the Transit Capital Levy District.

### Regional Aviation System

All communities must include an aviation element in the transportation sections of their comprehensive plans. The degree of aviation planning and development considerations that need to be included in the comprehensive plan varies by community. Even those communities not impacted directly by an airport have a responsibility to include airspace protection in their comprehensive plan. The protection element should include potential hazards to air navigation including electronic interference. Local comprehensive plans can also begin to consider other aviation uses which do not take place at airports, like drones.

Local communities should also consider other facilities which may generate aviation activity, such as heliports or private air facilities. To see all aviation facilities in the region including those that are not defined as a part of the regional aviation system, refer to Figure 6 of the Aviation System Plan.

### Regional Bicycle Planning

The RBTN is depicted on Figure 2 of the Bicycle Investment Plan. The network consists of Tier 1 and Tier 2 corridors and alignments. These are not intended to be the only bicycle facilities in the region. Local units should also include local network plans in their communities.

In your community there are no RBTN corridors and alignments.

In your community there are one or more identified bicycle barrier crossings. Please review the [Regional Bicycle Barriers Online Map](#) to determine which regional bicycle barriers and prioritized barrier crossing improvement locations are in your community. The tiered crossing improvement locations are used as one alternative criterion in the Regional Solicitation to distribute federal transportation funds. Communities are encouraged to analyze and address

the need for new bicycle barrier crossings or improved bicycle facilities at existing barrier crossings.

## **Regional Freight Planning**

The Met Council encourages all local governments to plan for freight movement in their communities. Trucks are the major mode of freight movement in the region and across the nation to distribute consumer goods as well as move manufactured goods and commodities, and they operate in every community.

The Metropolitan Freight System and the National Highway Freight Network are shown in Figures 1 and 5 of the Freight Investment Plan, respectively. There are regional freight facilities located within your community: an active freight railroad. These networks and facilities should be incorporated into your local comprehensive plan. The local plan should also plan for compatible adjacent land uses, consider last-mile freight delivery needs and curb management strategies for local deliveries, if applicable. Refer to the Urban Freight Distribution Study for specific guidance on how to consider e-commerce and local deliveries on the local transportation system.

## **Other Transportation Policy Plan Considerations**

### **Pedestrian Planning**

The Met Council encourages local governments to address pedestrian needs for transportation in their local comprehensive plans. An adopted pedestrian, active transportation, or multimodal plan can be included as an addendum to or in addition to the comprehensive plan. This planning should also include ensuring your local community has a current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) self-evaluation that covers the public rights-of-way for transportation. Agencies with 50 or more employees must also have an adopted ADA transition plan, not just a self-evaluation.

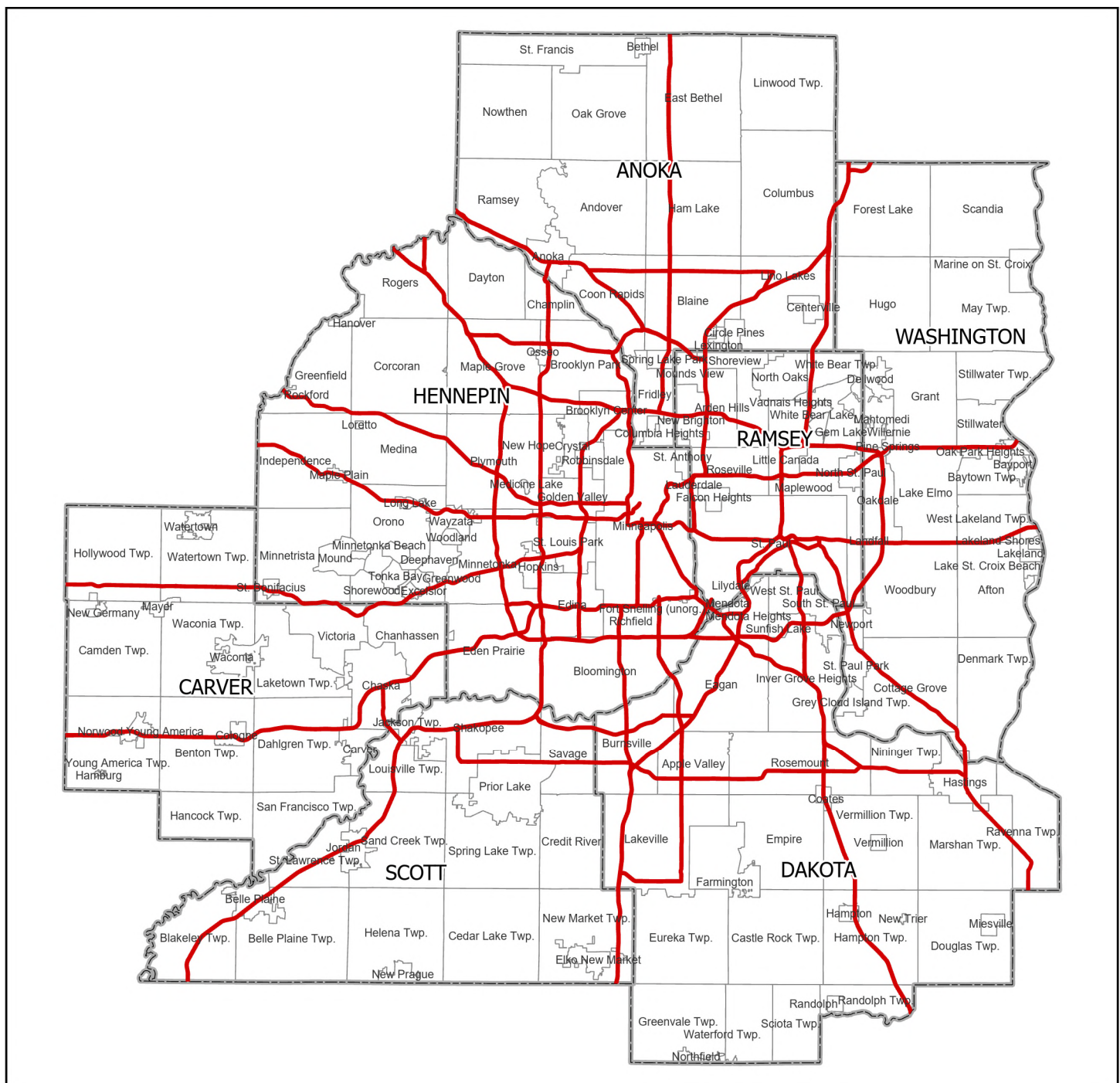
### **Travel Demand Management**

The Met Council encourages local governments to address travel demand management needs for areas which experience traffic congestion. Your community is served by Metro Transit Commuter Services. Local governments should identify the transportation management organization which serves their community and describe any policies, ordinances, practices or programs in place which would aid in regional TDM work in their local comprehensive plans.

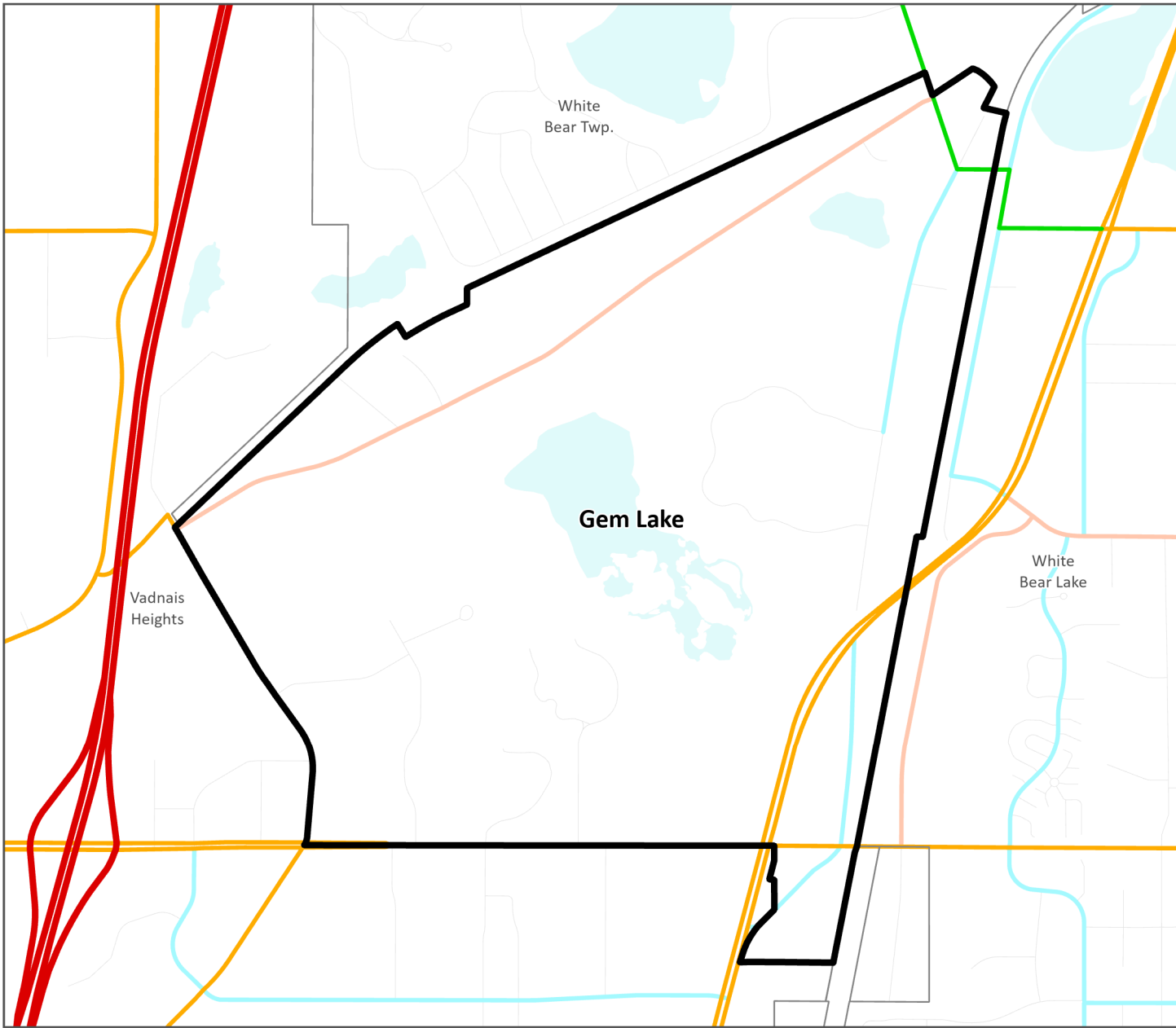
### **Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

State law directs the Minnesota Department of Transportation to establish targets to meet greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction for the seven-county metro region to reach net-zero emissions in the transportation sector by 2050. Your community must include plans or strategies to limit GHG emissions on the surface transportation system in your comprehensive plan to meet the designated regional targets.

## Principal Arterial Highways

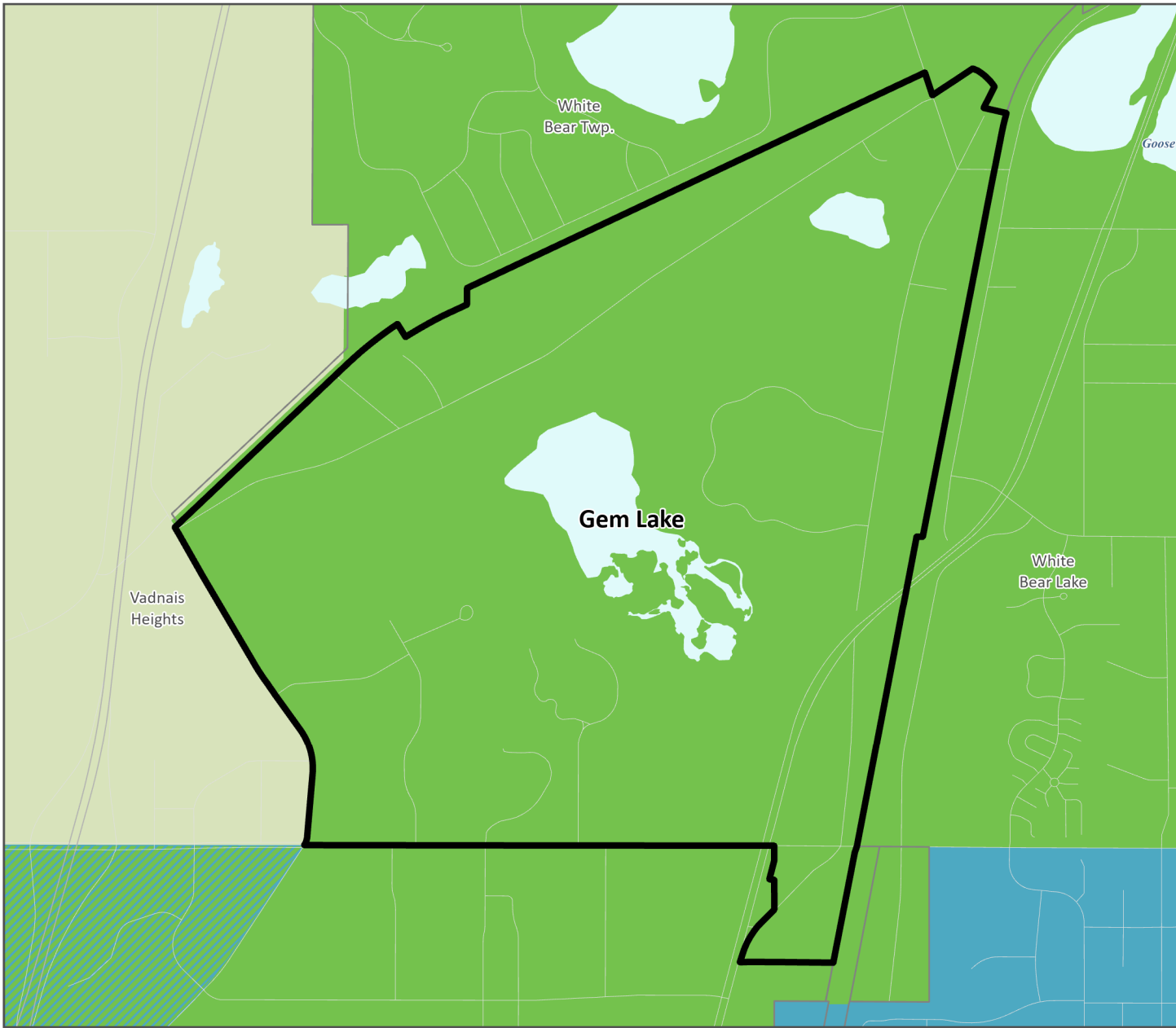


# City of Gem Lake Functional Class - All Roads



- Functional Class**
- Principal Arterial
  - Minor Arterial Augmentor
  - Minor Arterial Reliever
  - Minor Arterial Expander
  - Minor Arterial Connector
  - Major Collector
  - Minor Collector
  - Local Roads

# City of Gem Lake Transit Market Areas



- Transit Market Areas

TMA 1

TMA 2

Emerging TMA 2

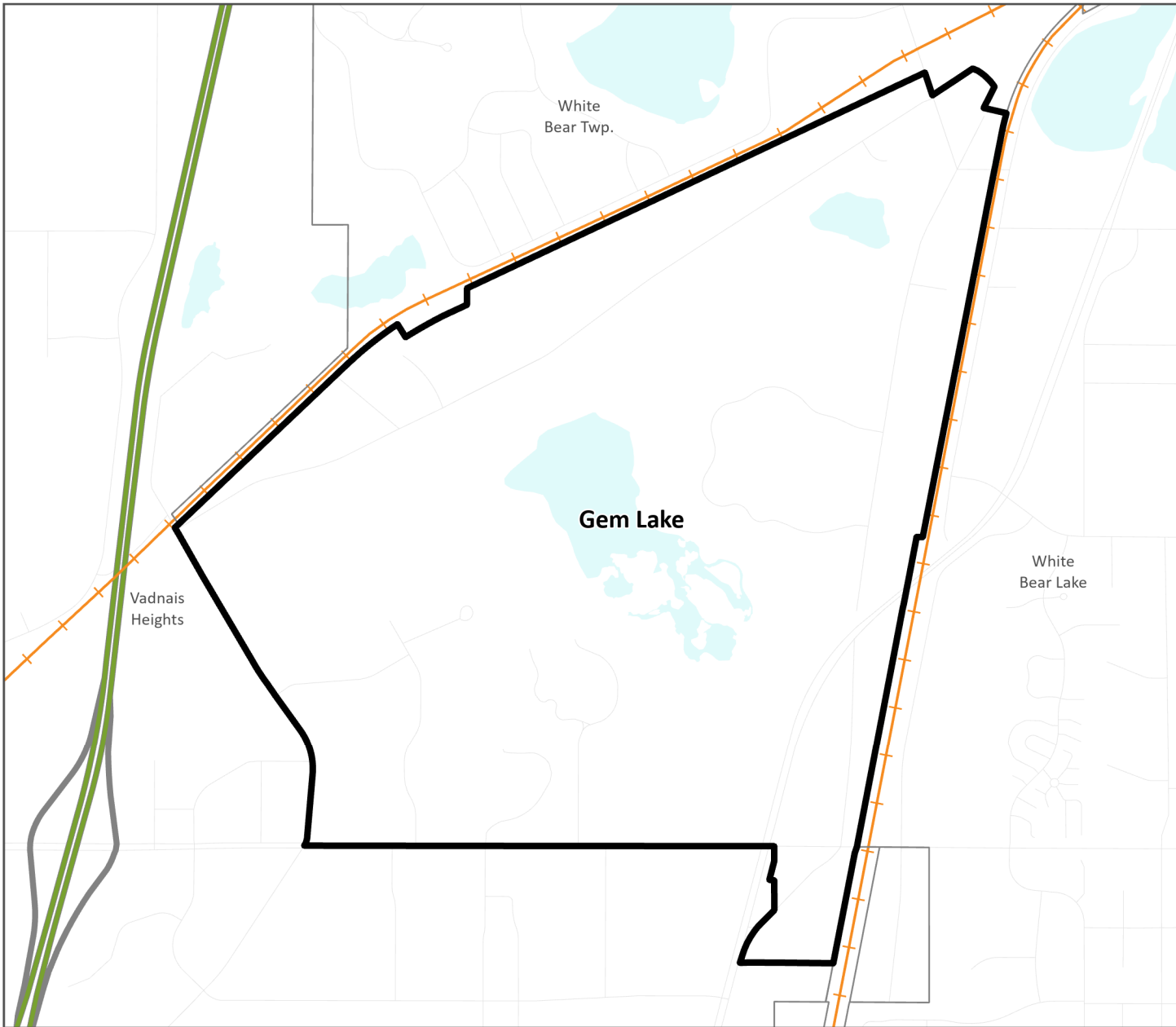
TMA 3

Emerging TMA 3

TMA 4

TMA 5
- Freestanding Town Center

# City of Gem Lake Metropolitan Freight System



**Terminal Type**

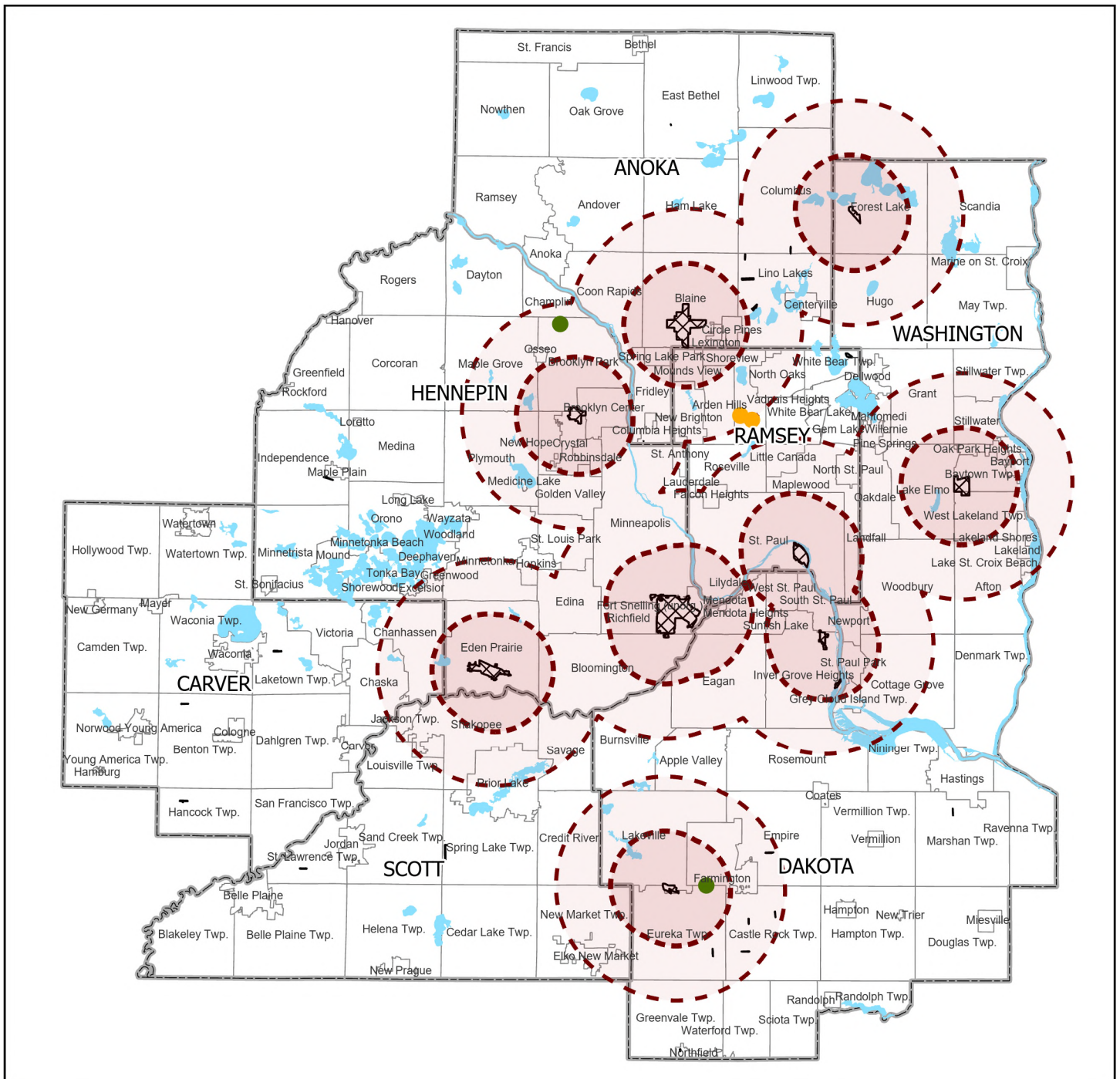
- Airport Terminal
- Pipeline
- Rail Terminal - Container
- Rail Terminal - Non Container
- River Terminal
- Trucking Terminal / Warehouse

**Railroad Class**

- Class I Railroads
- Class III Railroads

- Primary Highway Freight System
- Non-Primary Highway Freight System Interstates
- Critical Urban and Rural Freight Corridors

## Regional Aviation System and Airport Influence Areas



- Tall Tower
- VOR
- 3 Mile Airport Influence Area - Noise, Zoning, Infrastructure
- 6 Mile Airport Influence Area - Landfills, Wind Towers
- ▣ Airport Land Area
- Aircraft Permitted Water

# 2025 WATER RESOURCES SYSTEM STATEMENT

## CITY OF GEM LAKE

### Water Policy Plan Overview

The 2050 Water Policy Plan includes policies and strategies to achieve four objectives that support our regional goals:

- **CLIMATE:** The region's waters and water services are protected from and made resilient to the ongoing and future effects of climate change.
- **INVESTMENTS:** Water protection, planning, management, and infrastructure investments are optimized to ensure public and ecosystem health are fully protected now and for future generations.
- **HEALTH:** Natural waters, source waters, water services, and infrastructure are managed, restored, and enhanced to protect public and ecosystem health that ensures a high quality of life in the region.
- **EQUITY:** The benefits of clean and abundant water and water services are defined by local needs and environmental context, accessible, and justly shared by all residents and communities.

These objectives help to protect our region's groundwater and surface water, ensure the sustainability of water sources and utility service providers, support public and ecosystem health, and promote a thriving economy, sound development decisions, and a high quality of life for all who call this region home.

The Water Policy Plan strives to generate innovative actions, including water reuse, resource recovery, and nature-based approaches, that have multiple benefits at both the local and regional scales. Additionally, the plan includes policies and strategies to address the impacts of climate change, equitable access to water benefits, and water sector workforce concerns. The region has a strong history of water planning and management, and the 2050 Water Policy Plan continues this tradition. It progresses our organization and the region to ensure clean and abundant water for current and future generations.

### Key Concepts

Adopted by the Metropolitan Council in February 2025, the 2050 Water Policy Plan - including the regional water policies, Wastewater System Plan, and the Metro Area Water Supply Plan - outline the conditions for regional wastewater service, surface water management, and water supply planning. Local comprehensive plans shall conform to these conditions. The Policy Plan incorporates the following changes:

## **Integrated Planning (next steps)**

The Water Policy Plan is a guide for managing wastewater, water supply, surface waters, and groundwater. It takes an integrated approach to water planning and management from local to federal and Tribal levels, which helps to ensure a clean and plentiful water future. Water planning organizations need to work together to address issues that transcend political boundaries to achieve holistic water management.

## **Subregional Approach to Planning**

The Met Council is committed to continuing and broadening the subregional approach to integrated water planning. Subregional groups will be expanded to include stakeholders from Tribal Nations, state agencies, county planning staff, municipal public works and planning staff, watershed organizations, non-governmental organizations, and others who want to participate in discussions about localized, integrated water concerns.

## **Water Equity**

The Water Policy Plan prioritizes equitable access to clean water and water services, especially for historically marginalized communities. Reaching these outcomes requires initiatives such as prioritizing investments in overburdened communities, addressing historical harms, creating accessible information and communications, and including diverse perspectives of community members in water planning and management decisions.

## **Climate and Natural Systems**

The Water Policy Plan includes climate and natural systems objectives, policies, and actions, which guide the Met Council and communities to employ approaches that lead to sustainable water and water services. This includes building water resiliency, limiting risks, and benefiting a growing and a thriving economy through convening partners, new tools and technologies, water conservation and protection efforts, and water planning and technical assistance.

## **Considerations Affecting Your Community**

### **Regional Sewer Service**

The treatment of wastewater is foundational to ensure public health and protect the region's natural environments. Reclamation of water and byproducts from the wastewater treatment process can help our region meet sustainability and climate goals. To operate and steward the regional wastewater system, it is essential for the Met Council to understand local conditions, identify current and future needs, and take innovative approaches to address the region's water sustainability challenges.

Local governments are required to submit both a wastewater plan element to their comprehensive plan and a comprehensive sewer plan describing service needs from the Met Council (Minnesota Statutes 473.513). A complete list of requirements for the comprehensive sewer plan, depending on wastewater service methods in your community, can be found in the Water Resources section of the [Local Planning Handbook](#).

## Forecasts

The forecasts of population, households, employment, and wastewater flows for Gem Lake can be found on your Community Page in the Local Planning Handbook. These forecasts are for sewer development. The sewer forecasts were estimated using Met Council's census block forecast data, individual and communal sewage treatment system data, Sewer Availability Charge (SAC) data, annual city reports, current trends, existing and future local wastewater service areas and other municipal information. The wastewater flows are based on historical wastewater flow data, future wastewater generation rates, and the sewer population and employment forecast data.

The Met Council will use these growth and wastewater flow forecasts to plan future regional wastewater conveyance and treatment system improvements needed to serve your community.

Gem Lake, through its comprehensive planning process, must decide the location and staging of development, and then plan and design its local wastewater collection system to serve this development.

## Wastewater Service

Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (Environmental Services) designs, constructs, and operates the regional wastewater system (Metropolitan Disposal System): a publicly owned system of regional sanitary sewers and water resource recovery facilities (wastewater treatment plants), for the conveyance, treatment and disposal of domestic waste, industrial waste and other waste from residential, commercial, institutional, and industrial users in the metropolitan area. The regional wastewater system currently serves 111 communities and through its work it protects public health, protects the environment, and fosters the economic growth of the seven-county Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.

A Regional Sanitary Sewer System map is provided to assist in the completion of your community's comprehensive sewer plan. The map shows Environmental Services' wastewater infrastructure located within your community's boundaries, if your community is provided regional wastewater service.

A complete list of items required for inclusion in your community's comprehensive sewer plan, depending on wastewater service methods in your community, can be found in the Local Planning Handbook. A comprehensive plan will be found incomplete for review if all submittal requirements are not met.

If your community has multiple methods of wastewater service (including regional service, local (municipal) wastewater treatment system, private communal systems, and/or subsurface sewage treatment systems), review the information in each corresponding section and refer to the Local Planning Handbook for a complete list of requirements that must be included in the comprehensive sewer plan for these systems. We strongly encourage you to include this information in a water chapter of your comprehensive plan.

## **Areas Served by the Regional System**

Current wastewater treatment services are provided to the City by Environmental Services. Wastewater generated within the City is conveyed by Met Council Interceptors 7122, 1-VH-423, and 1-VH-423A and treated at the Metropolitan Water Resource Recovery Facility in St. Paul.

### **Regional Inflow and Infiltration Program**

The Met Council is continuing implementation of its inflow and infiltration (I/I) reduction program and will continue to establish I/I goals for all communities discharging wastewater to the regional wastewater system. Communities that have excessive I/I in their sanitary sewer systems will be required to eliminate the excessive I/I. Those communities will be required to submit a work plan that details work activities to identify and eliminate I/I sources from both municipal and private sources. The Met Council will not design future regional sanitary sewer improvements or water resource recovery facilities to handle peak hourly flows in excess of the allowable rate for your community. Increases in service may be limited in communities that do not demonstrate progress in reducing excess I/I.

Two grant programs are currently available for communities with excessive I/I in their sanitary sewer systems: The Municipal Inflow and Infiltration Grant Program and the Private Property Inflow and Infiltration Grant Program. It is recommended that communities review these programs and determine if participation fits into their I/I work plan. The Municipal Inflow and Infiltration Grant Program is based on annual legislative action and funding amount and availability may vary year to year.

## **Areas Served by Local Wastewater Treatment System**

The requirements of this element do not apply because Gem Lake does not have a local wastewater treatment system.

## **Areas Served by Private Communal Treatment Systems and/or Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems**

The Met Council's position is that private communal wastewater treatment systems should only be permitted in areas not programmed for regional sewer service in the foreseeable future and they are provided for in a community's comprehensive plan. The community is responsible for permitting all private communal or cluster wastewater treatment systems consistent with current Minnesota Pollution Control Agency standards (Minnesota Rules Chapter 7080-7083). The Met Council will not provide financial support to assist communities if these systems fail.

Communities with individual subsurface sewage treatment systems (SSTS), commonly known as septic systems, must adopt a management program consistent with current Minnesota Pollution Control Agency regulations (Minnesota Rules Chapter 7080-7083). A description of the management plan and current SSTS ordinance must be included in the community's comprehensive sewer plan.

## Surface Water Management

The metro region consists of hundreds of miles of rivers, streams, thousands of acres of wetlands, and nearly a thousand lakes. These surface waters define our region. They are where we play, exercise, find peace, and celebrate with friends and family. They support the region's ecosystems and biodiversity. They provide drinking water for the region's residents and energy for industry. They are critical transportation corridors and places to recreate, fueling local economies. Yet these waters are threatened by complex issues like ongoing pollution stress, climate change, and unsustainable development pressures. Comprehensive community planning includes surface water planning to ensure the region's residents, businesses, and ecosystems can benefit from clean and abundant water.

In 1995, Minnesota Statutes Section 473.859, subd. 2 was amended to make the local water plan (often referred to as local surface water management plans) required by Section 103B.235 a part of the land use plan of the local comprehensive plan. Minnesota Rules Chapter 8410, updated in July of 2015, includes the requirements for local water management plans. All communities in the metro region must update their local water plan between Jan. 1, 2027 and Dec. 31, 2028. This means that Gem Lake must update its local water plan as part of the comprehensive plan update. The community's updated local water plan should be submitted to the Met Council for its review concurrent with the review by the local watershed management organizations.

The Surface Water Features map shows the watershed management organizations, Ramsey-Washington Metro WD and Vadnais Lake Area WMO, that have jurisdiction in Gem Lake.

Failure to have an updated local water plan approved by your watershed management organizations will result in the comprehensive plan being incomplete for review. Local water plans shall be submitted to the Met Council for review in the timeframe described above, comments are sent from the Met Council to the appropriate watersheds for inclusion in their review and approval of the plan, and finally the plan is approved by the appropriate watersheds.

Local water plans must meet the requirements for local water plans in Minnesota Statutes, section 103B.235 and Minnesota Rules Chapter 8410. In general, local water plans need to include a summary of the priorities and problems in the community; structural, nonstructural and programmatic actions to take to address the priorities and problems; and clearly identified funding mechanisms to fix the problems.

More detailed guidance for the local water plans can be found in Appendix A of the [2050 Water Policy Plan](#) and in the Met Council's current Local Planning Handbook.

## Priority Waters List

The Met Council updated its Priority Waters List (formerly Priority Lakes List) in July 2022. This new version includes rivers, lakes, and streams. With more than 950 lakes and hundreds of miles of rivers and streams in the region, waterbodies needed to be prioritized to adequately dedicate staff and financial resources. The Met Council uses the Priority Waters List to focus

its limited resources. The list is also used in the environmental review process. Gem Lake does not have any waterbodies on the Priority Waters List.

## **Water Supply**

Water supply is not a regional system. However, water supply information is required for local comprehensive plan updates to meet statutory requirements and for consistency with regional policy.

To ensure that there is a safe and plentiful supply of water—for a wide range of residential, commercial, institutional, industrial, recreational, and other purposes—it is important to make sure local water supply sources, infrastructure, and planned investments are aligned with planned land use changes.

The Met Council recognizes the local responsibility and authority for water supply planning. However, a regional perspective is also valuable, because the effects of local water supply decisions do not stop at community boundaries. The Met Council provides regional planning, guidance, and resources to support communities and help safeguard our shared water resources.

Water supply plan-related requirements generally include:

- Clearly identifying the locations of water sources and amount of water that is currently used and is planned to be used for things like agriculture, homes, businesses, industries, and other public and private purposes. This includes areas that affect those water sources, such as source water protection areas.
- Creating a program for how to implement local rules and regulations about water supply, including when and how these rules will be developed, adopted, and administered.

Communities served by a municipal community public water supply system must fulfill part of these requirements by attaching a local water supply plan approved by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources as an appendix to the comprehensive plan.

The Water Supply Considerations map illustrates some key content for your community, including Drinking Water Supply Management Areas, Special Well and Boring Construction Areas, and Priority Waters qualifying as drinking water sources.

We strongly encourage you to include any required information that isn't in the local water supply plan—such as source water protection and privately-owned wells—in a water chapter of your comprehensive plan.

A customized checklist of minimum requirements for your community is included in the Local Planning Handbook, along with resources to help you meet and go beyond minimum requirements.

## **Source Water Protection**

Your comprehensive plan should consider water use (including water supply sources) as part of land use planning, to promote land use practices and development decisions that protect public health for your community and the region. Include information about the location of both groundwater and surface water source water protection areas and their vulnerability for all

community public drinking water source(s) within your community's borders and associated contaminant threats. Also include a commitment to collaborate with neighbors on source water protection, when applicable.

### **Privately-Owned Wells and Nonmunicipal Public Water Supply Systems**

Your comprehensive plan should include information about the current and planned use and management strategies for privately-owned wells and nonmunicipal public water supply systems, because people, institutions, and businesses in your community use those sources for a wide range of agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial and/or other nonmunicipal purposes.

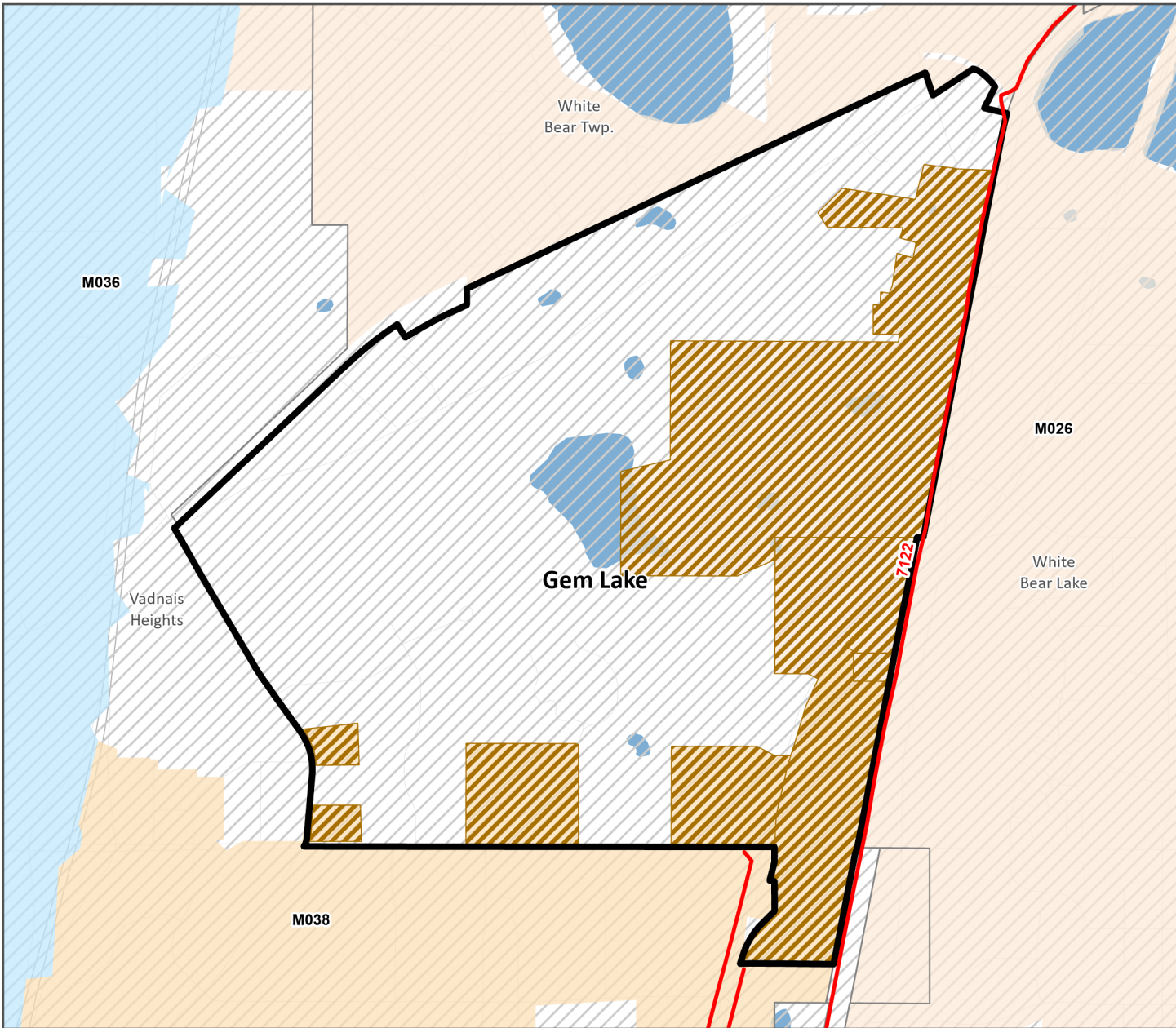
If a new municipal community public water supply system is planned by 2050, a water chapter of the updated comprehensive plan should include details about the planned system.

### **Municipal Community Public Water Supply Systems**

#### **Water Supply System Information**

This element does not apply to Gem Lake, because your community does not own a municipal public water supply system.

# City of Gem Lake Regional Sanitary Sewer System



**Regional Sewer**  
 Gravity

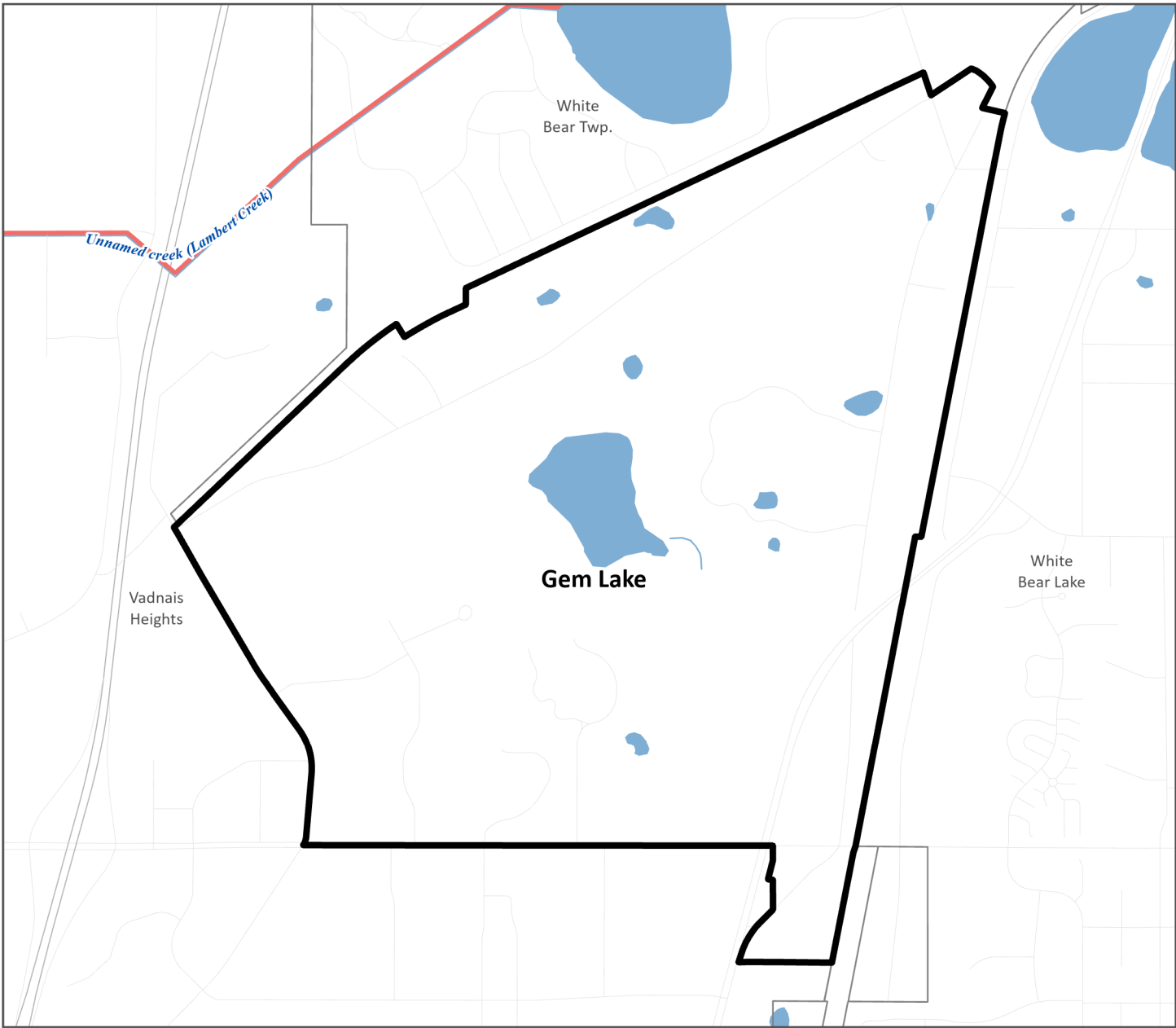
**Areas of Unmetered Flow from the Community**

**2050 MUSA**

**Sewer Service Areas**  
 To Meter M### Not Served

# City of Gem Lake

## Water Contamination and Impaired Waters



### Minnesota Groundwater Contamination Atlas

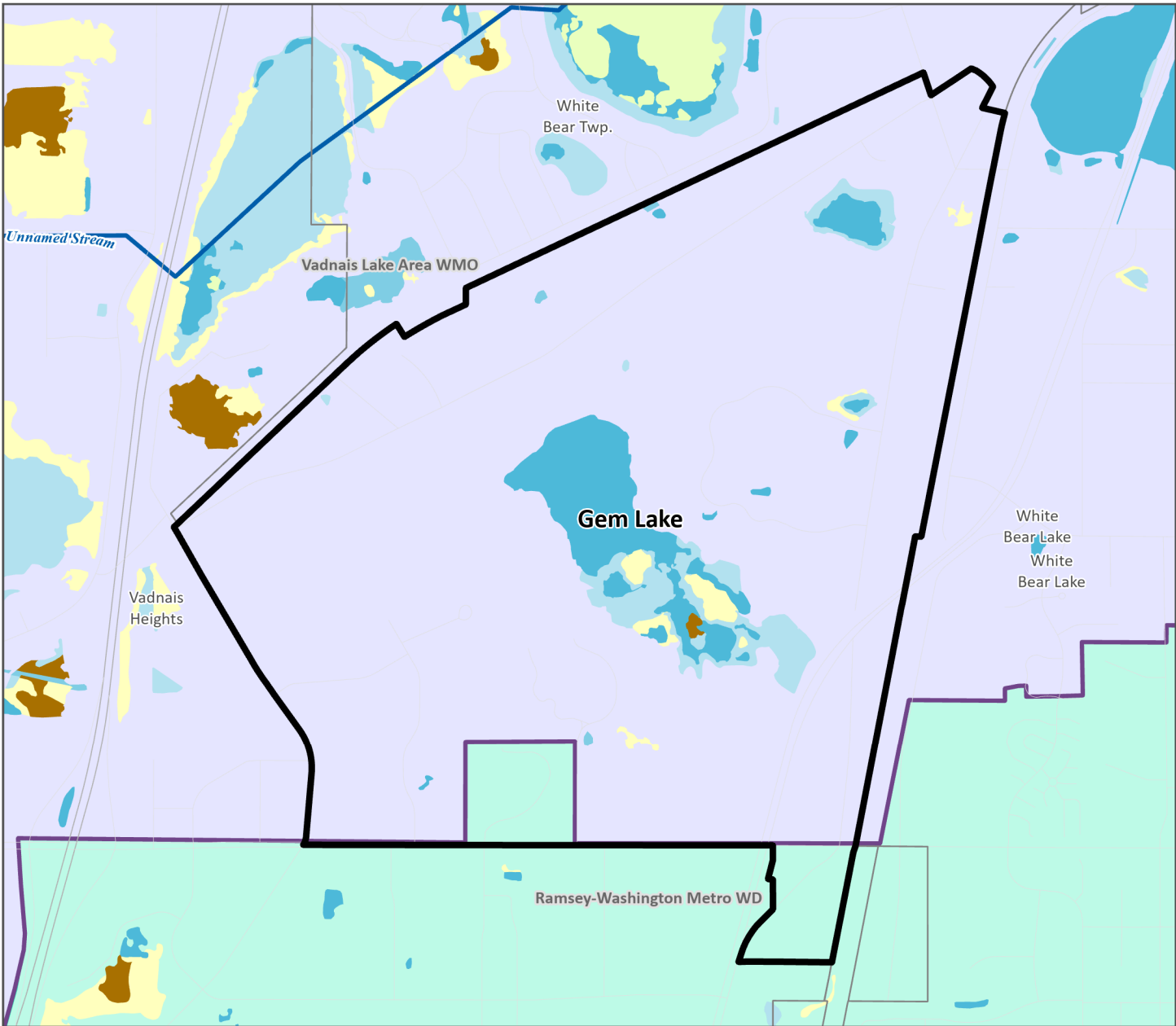
- High Confidence Boundary
- Low Confidence Boundary
- Groundwater area of concern \*

### Minnesota's 2024 Impaired Waters List

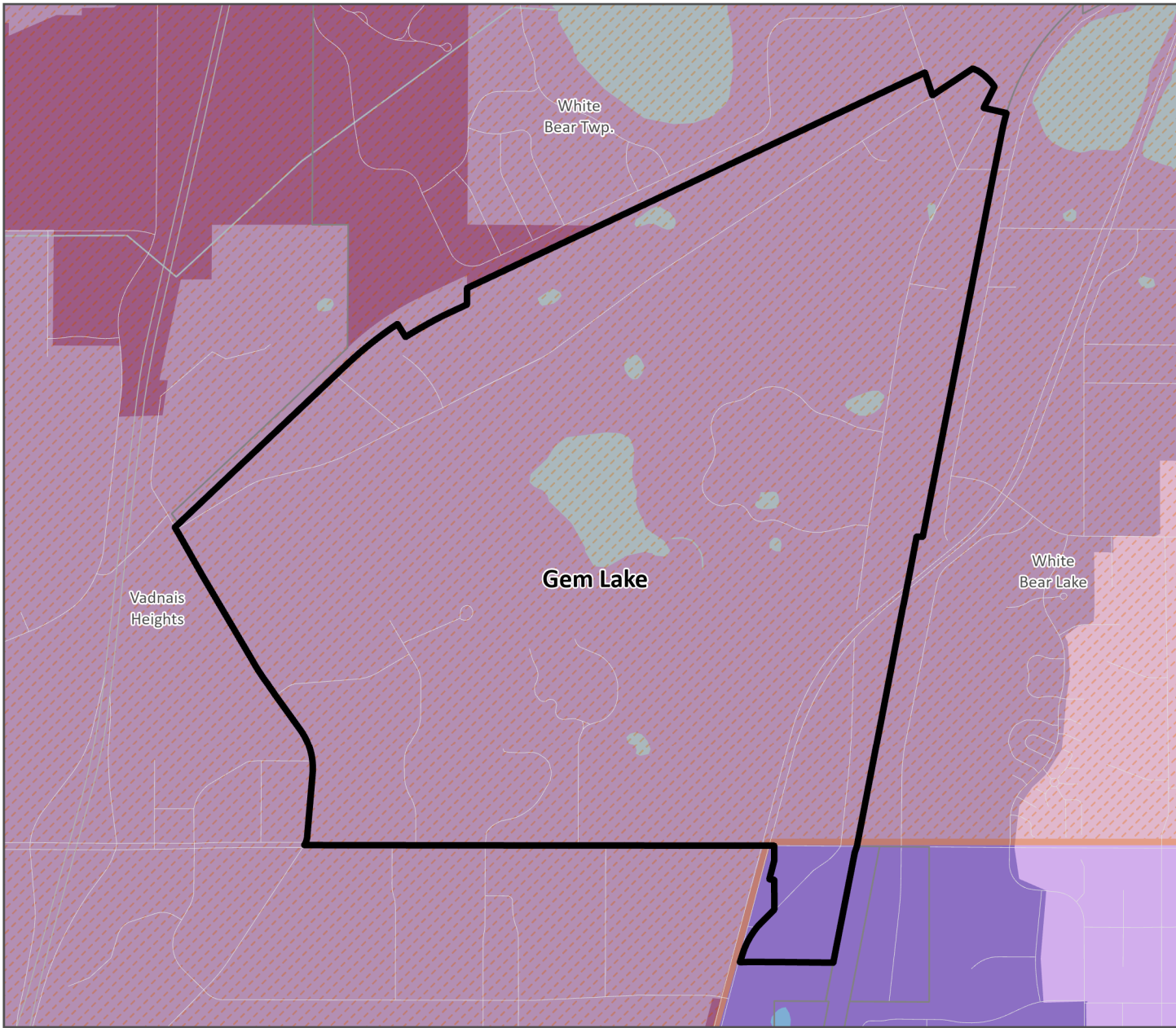
- Impaired Rivers or Streams
- Impaired Lake

\* darker shades of purple represent multiple overlapping areas of concern

# City of Gem Lake Surface Water Features



# City of Gem Lake Water Supply Considerations



**Drinking Water Supply Management Areas for Groundwater (DWSMA)**

- High Vulnerability
- Moderate Vulnerability
- Low Vulnerability

**Drinking Water Supply Management Areas for Surface Water (DWSMA)**

- Surface Water DWSMA Priority Area A
- Special Well and Boring Construction Area
- Priority river or stream qualifying as a drinking water source
- Priority lake qualifying as a drinking water source

# REGIONAL PARKS AND TRAILS SYSTEM STATEMENT CITY OF GEM LAKE

## Overview of the Regional Parks and Trails System

The Regional Parks and Trails System includes 66 regional parks, park reserves, and special features, plus more than 487 miles of regional trails that showcase the unique landscapes of the region and provide year-round recreation. The Regional Parks and Trails System is well-loved by our region's residents and attracted over 69 million visits in 2023.

The organizational structure of the Regional Parks and Trails System is unique, built upon a strong partnership between the Met Council and the ten regional park implementing agencies that own and operate Regional Parks and Trails System units. The regional park implementing agencies are:

|                                       |                            |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Anoka County                          | Ramsey County              |
| City of Bloomington                   | City of Saint Paul         |
| Carver County                         | Scott County               |
| Dakota County                         | Three Rivers Park District |
| Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board | Washington County          |

The 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan advances the Imagine 2050 regional goals and core values including Equity, Leadership, Accountability, and Stewardship by striving to:

- **Foster equity and belonging:** Connect people with nature, community, and cultural landscapes to better support their physical, mental, and emotional well-being
- **Take care of what we have:** Reinvest in existing regional parks and trails to maintain and enhance visitor experiences
- **Protect and restore:** Protect and restore natural systems to safeguard the well-being of all living things
- **Adapt and mitigate:** Increase the region's resilience to climate change through land stewardship practices that mitigate greenhouse gases and adapt to future climates
- **Meet future needs:** Meet the growing demand for regional parks and trails through strategic and timely land acquisition and development.

## Key Concepts in the 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan

The 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan includes the following policies, each with specific associated strategies:

- **System Plan policy:** Maintain a robust and current set of data, maps, plans, processes, and applications to support regional parks and trails planning.
- **Natural Systems policy:** Identify lands with high-quality natural features and/or with high restoration potential that are desirable for Regional Parks and Trails System activities and put these lands in a protected status so they will be available for recreational uses and preservation purposes in perpetuity.
- **Climate Resilience policy:** Adapt and enhance the Regional Parks and Trails System to promote resilience to climate change, including the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions.

- **Planning policy:** Promote long-range planning and help provide integrated resource planning across jurisdictions in order to create a seamless system that connects everyone to the outdoors.
- **System Protection policy:** Protect public investments in acquisition and development by assuring that every component in the system is able to fully carry out its designated role.
- **Recreation, Facilities, and Programming policy:** Foster a sense of belonging by providing a wide spectrum of leisure and play opportunities while connecting people, places, and the natural world.
- **Finance policy:** The Met Council administers, provides financial oversight, and collaborates with a range of partners to fund the ten regional park implementing agencies in support of the Regional Parks and Trails System.

The 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan is the metropolitan system plan for regional recreation open space with which local comprehensive plans must conform. This system statement highlights the elements of the system plan which apply specifically to your community. Find the complete text of the 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan at the following url:

<https://imagine2050.metrocouncil.org/chapters/regional-parks-and-trails>.

## Key Changes in the 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan

Adopted by the Met Council in February 2025, the 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan incorporates the following changes:

- Unit name changes
  - Anoka County
    - “Northwest Search Area” changed to “Sugar Hills Search Area”
  - Dakota County
    - “Lebanon Hills-Big Rivers Greenway Trail Search Corridor” changed to “Lebanon Hills-Minnesota River Greenway Trail Search Corridor”
    - “Lebanon Hills-Mendota Greenway Regional Trail, Highway 62 segment” changed to “Lebanon Hills Greenway Regional Trail”
  - Scott County
    - “Scott West Regional Trail” changed to “Big Woods Regional Trail”
    - “Minnesota River Bluffs Extension and Scott County Connection Regional Trail” changed to “Merriam Junction Regional Trail”
    - “Louisville Trail Search Corridor” changed to “Merriam Junction Regional Trail”
    - Portion of “Southern Scott Trail Search Corridor” changed to “Shallow Waters Regional Trail”
- Trail refinements
  - Three Rivers Park District’s Dakota Rail Regional Trail Search Corridor Extension moving the trail terminus from Highway 494 to Minnetonka City Hall
  - Three Rivers Park District is transferring a portion of the Lake Minnetonka Regional Trail to Carver County
- Future 2028/2029 system additions process candidates
  - Ramsey County’s Rice Creek North Regional Trail Boundary Adjustment adding 2,407 acres to the current 792 acres at the former Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant
  - Three Rivers Park District’s 5.5-mile West Minnehaha Creek Trail Corridor Study Area
  - Dakota County’s 58-acre Thompson County Park Study Area in West St. Paul serving the outdoor recreational needs of the more than 50,000 residents who live in the northern portion of Dakota County

The 2050 Regional Parks and Trails System Plan Map is depicted in Figure 1. Gem Lake should consult the complete 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan in preparing its local comprehensive plan. In addition, your community should consult Imagine 2050 and the current version of the Met Council's Local Planning Handbook for specific comprehensive plan requirements.

## 2050 Regional Parks and Trails System Units

The Regional Parks and Trails System comprises four main types of units: regional parks, park reserves, special features and regional trails.

- **Regional parks** contain a diversity of natural features, either naturally occurring or restored, and are typically 200-500 acres in size. Regional parks accommodate a variety of outdoor recreation activities. In 2024, a total of 46 regional parks are open to the public.
- **Park reserves**, like regional parks, provide for a diversity of outdoor recreation activities. One major distinguishing feature is that the minimum size for a park reserve is 1,000 acres. Additionally, regional park implementing agencies are required to manage at least 80% of the park reserve as natural lands that protect the ecological functions of the native landscape. As of 2024, a total of 12 park reserves were open to the public.
- **Special features** provide opportunities not generally found in the regional parks, park reserves, or trail corridors. Special features often require a unique managing or programming effort. As of 2024, there are eight special features open to the public.
- **Regional trails:** The Met Council has defined two major types of trails to serve the region: destination or greenway trails and linking trails. Destination or greenway trails typically follow along corridors with high-quality natural features that make the trail itself a destination. Linking trails are predominately intended to provide connections between various Regional Parks and Trails System units. As of 2024, 56 regional trails totaling approximately 487 miles were open for public use.

## 2050 Regional Parks and Trails System Components

The 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan identifies five components which together comprise the vision for the Regional Parks and Trails System in 2050, as described below.

- **Existing Regional Parks and Trails System facilities** are open for public use and include land that is owned by regional park implementing agencies. They may include inholding parcels within the boundaries of these parks and trail corridors that have not yet been acquired. Existing regional trails may include planned segments that will be developed in the future.
- **Planned Regional Parks and Trails System facilities (not yet open to the public)** have a Council-approved long-range plan and may be in stages of acquisition and development but are not yet open for public use.
- **Regional Parks and Trails System boundary adjustments** include general areas identified as potential additions to existing Regional Parks and Trails System facilities to add recreational opportunities or protect natural resources. Specific adjustments to park or trail corridor boundaries have not yet been planned.
- **Regional Park and Special Feature search areas** include general areas for future regional parks and special features to meet the recreational needs of the region by 2050 where the regional park boundary has not yet been planned.
- **Regional trail search corridors** include proposed regional trails to provide connections between Regional Parks and Trails System facilities where the trail alignment has not yet been planned.

## System Plan Considerations Affecting Your Community

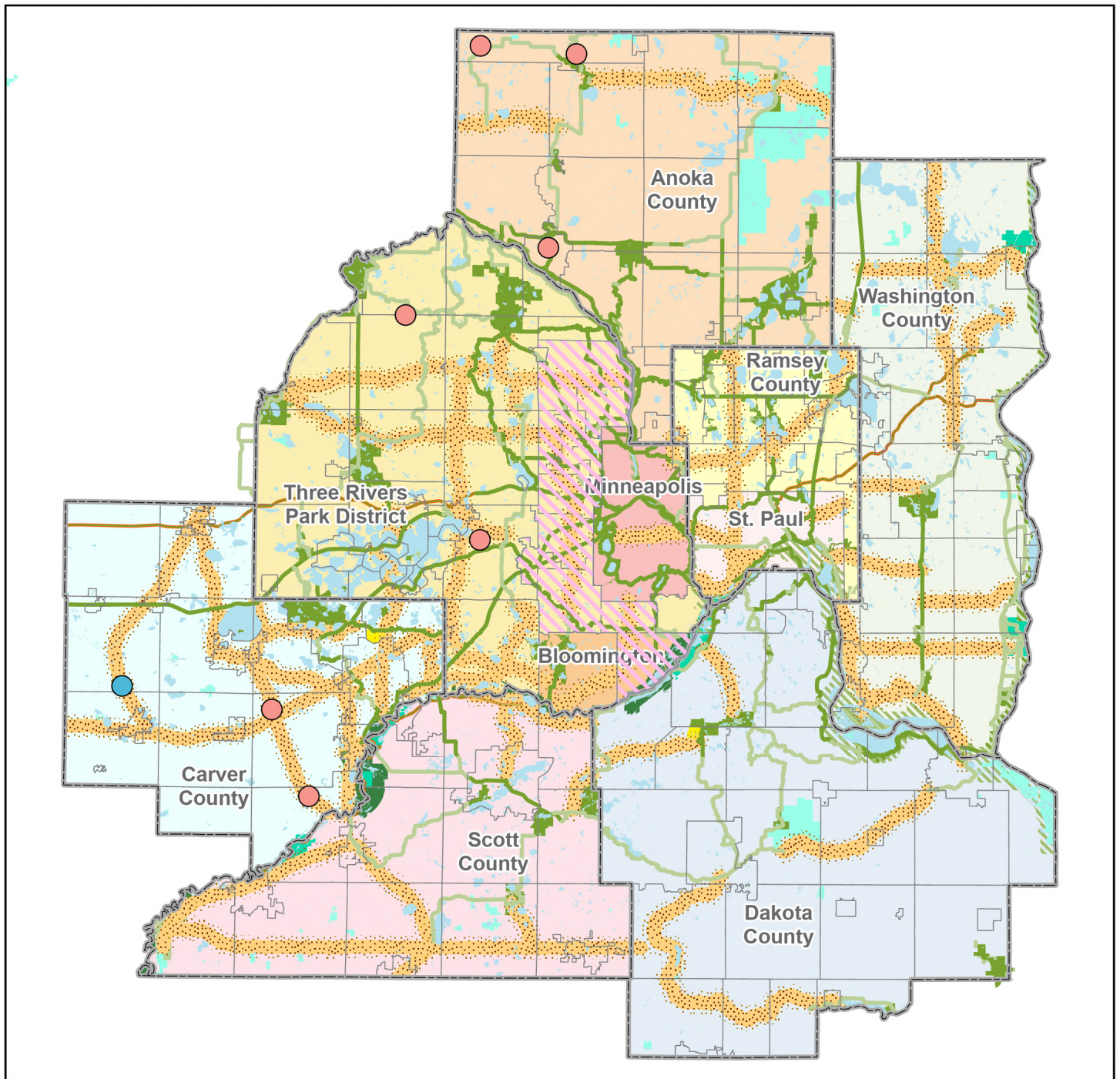
The following Regional Parks and Trails System Components within Gem Lake are identified in the 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan:

### *Regional Trails*

- **St. Anthony Railroad Spur Regional Trail Search Corridor:** The regional trail search corridor travels through Roseville, Little Canada, Vadnais Heights, Gem Lake, and White Bear Lake Township as it connects to the Northeast Diagonal Regional Trail, Lexington Parkway Regional Trail Search Corridor, Trout Brook Regional Trail Search Corridor, the planned portion of Bruce Vento Regional Trail, and the Bruce Vento Regional Trail Search Corridor. Ramsey County will lead a planning process in the future to determine the alignment of the regional trail. When preparing its comprehensive plan, Gem Lake should verify whether a long-range plan has been approved by the Metropolitan Council. If a long-range plan has been approved, the planned regional trail alignment should be acknowledged in the comprehensive plan. Otherwise, the general search corridor as shown in Figure 2 should be acknowledged in the comprehensive plan.

Please contact Ramsey County for more information regarding Regional Parks and Trails System Components in Gem Lake.

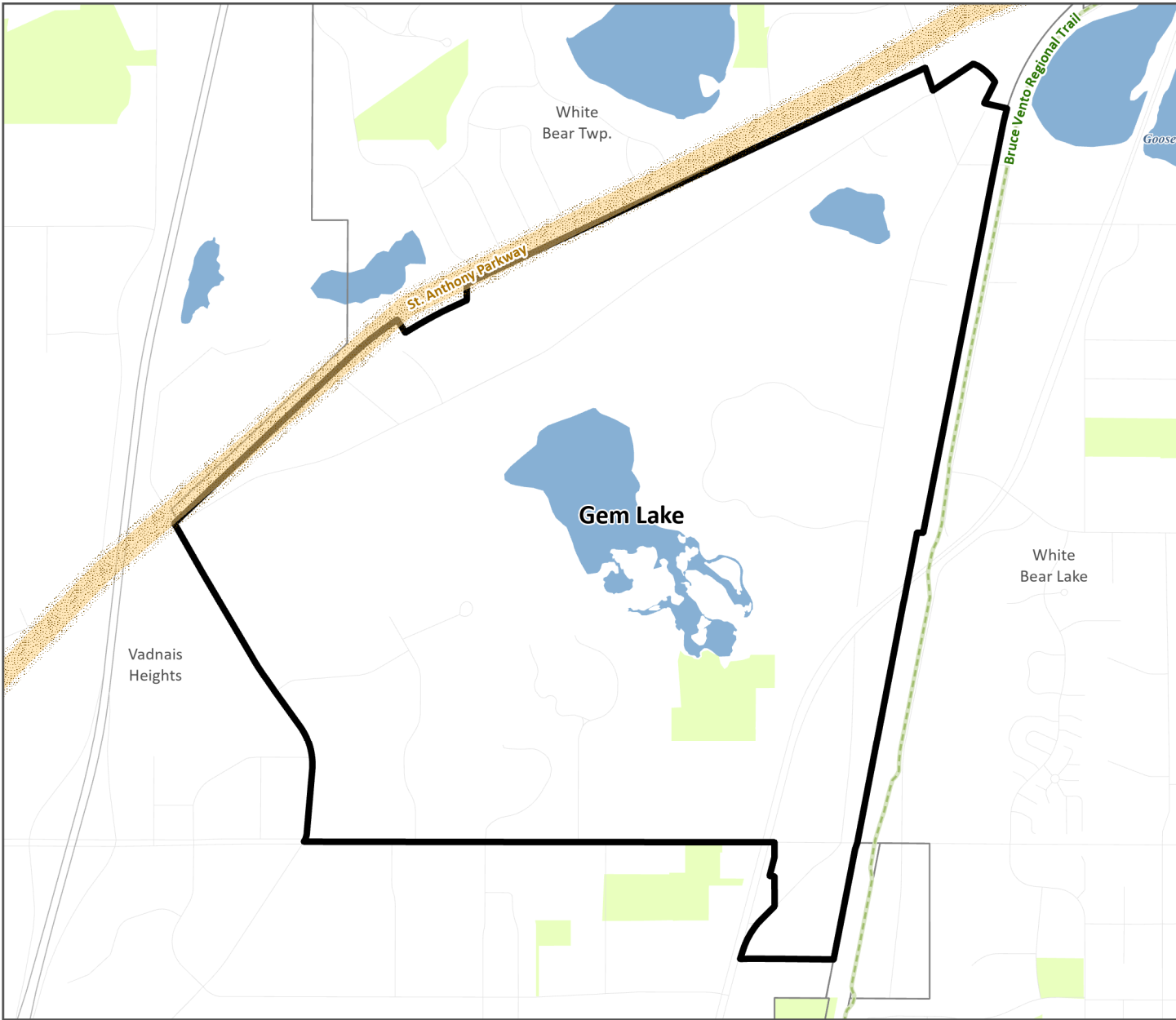
# Regional Parks and Trails System



## Long-Range Plan Boundary Adjustments and Search Areas

- Boundary Adjustment
- Park Search Area
- ▨ Special Feature Search Area
- ▨ Regional Trail Search Corridor
- Regional Trail (Open to the Public)
- Planned Regional Trail (Not Open to the Public)
- State Trails
- Regional Park (Open to the Public)
- Planned Regional Park (Not Open to the Public)
- ▨ Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway
- ▨ Mississippi National River & Recreation Area
- State Wildlife Management Areas
- State Parks and Recreation Areas
- MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge
- Special State Recreation Features

# City of Gem Lake Regional Parks and Trails System



## Regional Parks and Trails Systems

## Other State and National Features

- |                                |                                                 |                                   |                                                   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Boundary Adjustment            | Regional Trail (Open to the Public)             | State Trails                      | Other Parks, Preserves, Refuges and Natural Areas |
| Search Area                    | Planned Regional Trail (Not Open to the Public) | State Parks and Recreation Areas  | Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway          |
| Special Feature Search Area    | Regional Park (Open to the Public)              | State Wildlife Management Areas   | Mississippi National River & Recreation Area      |
| Regional Trail Search Corridor | Planned Regional Park (Not Open to the Public)  | Special State Recreation Features | MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge                |