

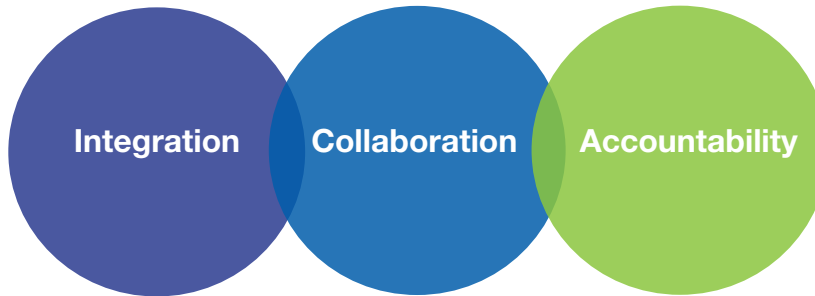
2040





Thrive: Principles

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



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



Integration ● — ● — ● — ● — ●

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

Achieving integration means:

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

Moving beyond organizational silos

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

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

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

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

Coordinating effectively with partners and stakeholders

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

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



Collaboration ● — ● — ●

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

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

For the Council, acting collaboratively means:

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

Being open to shared strategies, supportive partnerships and reciprocal relationships

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

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

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



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



Convening to address complex regional issues

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Providing additional technical assistance and enhanced information to support local planning

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



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

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

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

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





Accountability ● ● ●

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

Acting accountably means:

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

Adopting a data-driven approach to measure progress

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

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

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

— Milton Friedman

Creating and learning from *Thrive* indicators

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

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

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



Providing clear, easily accessible information

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



Deploying the Council's authority

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

