

# 2040





## Land Use Policy Setting the Stage

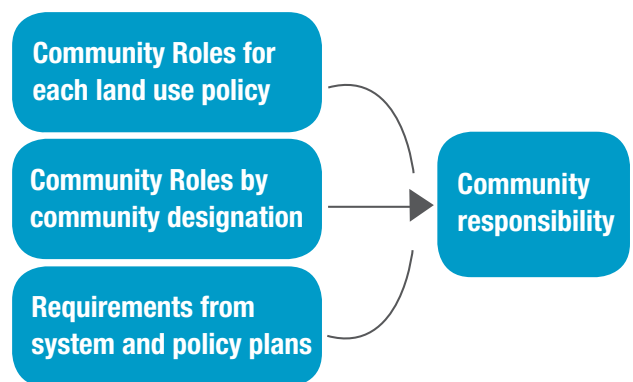
The Twin Cities metropolitan area is a thriving region of interconnected places with a shared future. The Metropolitan Council intends to be a good steward of the region's assets and to capitalize upon them in our efforts toward prosperity, equity, livability, and sustainability. Among those assets are a diversified economy and numerous educational institutions; healthy downtown and suburban business centers; a vibrant arts and cultural community; abundant open space and natural resources; and a diversity of urban, suburban, and rural communities.

Over the last 40 years, the region has made significant investments in the regional systems of parks and trails, transportation, and wastewater collection and treatment that support the built environment we have in place. Today, however, new issues are pressing on our development choices. Because of fiscal, environmental, and political forces at all levels of government, the region is moving from a period of infrastructure expansion to one of maintenance, strategic investments, and getting more out of what we already have.

As a result of demographic and market changes, investment and intensification is occurring in the urbanized area; and though more slowly than in decades past, suburban communities on the edge are continuing to fill in. More communities are taking on the challenges and opportunities related to reuse, infill, and redevelopment; development along mixed-use corridors; and the creation of walkable districts centered on transit.

The 2007 Next Generation Energy Act called for a 15% reduction in Minnesota's greenhouse gas emissions by 2015 and a 30% reduction by 2025. As a part of achieving these goals, the region will need to address our transportation and land use patterns. The Council will contribute toward the reduction of regional greenhouse gas emissions by ensuring the orderly and economic development of the region, making investments in transit, and convening regional discussions on the relationship between land use patterns and energy consumption.

Advancing both the regional vision and local perspective, these land use policies balance both urban and rural qualities in our metropolitan area. By responsibly managing the region's natural and financial resources, these policies support the *Thrive* vision of building a prosperous, equitable, and livable region for today and generations to come.



*Policy language that applies to a community is located in several places. System Statements, which will be issued in late 2015, will provide individualized guidance to help communities update their comprehensive plans.*

## Land Use Policies

To build the foundation for a prosperous, equitable, livable, and sustainable future, the Council has identified seven policies to guide land use and regional development:

**Orderly and Efficient Land Use:** Align land use, development patterns, and infrastructure to make the best use of public and private investment.

**Natural Resources Protection:** Conserve, restore, and protect the region’s natural resources to ensure availability, support public health, and maintain a high quality of life.

**Water Sustainability:** Conserve, restore, and protect the quality and quantity of the region’s water resources to ensure ongoing availability, support public health, and maintain a high quality of life.

**Housing Affordability and Choice:** Promote housing options to give people in all life stages and of all economic means viable choices for safe, stable, and affordable homes.

**Access, Mobility, and Transportation Choice:** Sustain and improve a multi-modal transportation system to support regional growth, maintain regional economic competitiveness, and provide choices and reliability for the system’s users.

**Economic Competitiveness:** Foster connected land use options to provide businesses and industries with access to materials, markets, and talent.

**Building in Resilience:** Promote sensitive land use and development patterns to achieve Minnesota’s adopted greenhouse gas emissions goals at the regional scale, and to develop local resiliency to the impacts of climate change.

To implement these policies, the Council has identified land use strategies for local communities, including counties, and the Council to implement. While each strategy is linked to a specific policy in this document, in practice strategies serve multiple purposes. For example, a strategy of focusing development around centers on transit corridors aligns land uses to make the best use of public and private investments, reduces the development pressures in areas with high quality natural resources, grows transit ridership, and expands options for urban living. We cannot focus on one policy alone to attain the outcomes identified in this plan. Instead, a combination of strategies addressing all of the policies is necessary to set the stage for a successful future. All of the land use policies are interrelated, and implementation must be integrated to achieve the outcomes.

The next section details land use policies for the region, followed by strategies that are common among all communities. In recognition of the opportunities and challenges unique to different communities, additional strategies to implement these policies are tailored to suit the different community types in the region (see “Land Use Policies by Community Designations”).



## Orderly and Efficient Land Use

### Align land use, development patterns, and infrastructure to make the best use of public and private investment.

Orderly and efficient land uses lay the foundation for a prosperous region. The Council sets the framework for land use patterns and guides the overall development of the region, as directed by the Metropolitan Land Planning Act (Minn. Stat. 473.145). To be fiscally responsible, the Council guides land uses and development patterns that leverage the region's infrastructure investments and private development to the benefit of both. Directing growth where infrastructure already exists also reduces the need to add roads and expand the regional wastewater system to support the same growth elsewhere.

Making efficient use of land and capitalizing upon existing infrastructure also reduce outward development pressures in rural and natural resource areas. Planning for and supporting growth where infrastructure is already in place allows these rural areas to continue to maintain large tracts of natural resources, agricultural production, and a sparsely developed rural environment.

Aligning land uses, development patterns, and infrastructure is important at the local level, too. Orderly and efficient does not just mean wise use of regional infrastructure; it also means planning livable neighborhoods connected to places of work and play. While planning has traditionally separated residential neighborhoods from commercial and industrial areas, residents still need to access these places to meet their daily needs and get to work. Communities should continue to consider strategic locations for integrating different uses into neighborhoods and make it easier for people to access parks and pick up groceries without a car. Compact development patterns, integrated natural resources, and interconnected local street networks all add to the livability of our communities.

OVERALL DENSITY EXPECTATIONS FOR NEW GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT, AND REDEVELOPMENT	
Metropolitan Urban Service Area: Minimum Average Net Density	
Urban Center	20 units/acre
Urban	10 units/acre
Suburban	5 units/acre
Suburban Edge	3-5 units/acre
Emerging Suburban Edge	3-5 units/acre
Rural Service Area: Maximum Allowed Density, except Rural Centers	
Rural Center	3-5 units/acre minimum
Rural Residential	1-2.5 acre lots existing, 1 unit/10 acres where possible
Diversified Rural	4 units/40 acres
Agricultural	1 unit/40 acres

The region is able to provide cost-effective infrastructure and services when it is able to anticipate where, when, and to what extent growth will occur. The Council establishes overall density expectations for communities based on their community designation with additional expectations near transit stations. Density thresholds are based on an understanding of future regional growth, market demand in different parts of the region, existing development patterns and redevelopment opportunities, existing planned land uses in local comprehensive plans, and regional policies to support the concentration of higher density growth around transit stations.

Because each community and its values are unique, precisely how and where density is guided is determined by each community consistent with regional policies. Communities in the Metropolitan Urban Services Area (MUSA) and Rural Center communities are expected to plan for achieving the overall minimum average density expectations in their community across all areas that a community identifies for new growth, development, and redevelopment. The Council measures minimum net density across all areas identified to support forecasted growth by taking the minimum number of planned housing units and dividing by the net acreage. Net acreage does not include land covered by wetlands, water bodies, public parks and trails, public open space, arterial road rights-of-way, and other undevelopable acres identified in or protected by local ordinances such as steep slopes.

The Council recognizes that not all new development may meet the minimum standards and conversely many other new developments may exceed the minimum standards. Setting minimum average densities for new development provides communities with the flexibility to determine which areas are best suited for higher or lower density development under the framework of meeting that overall minimum on available developable lands. All other communities in the Rural Service Area are expected to set maximum allowable densities. Additional detail regarding density and development patterns is contained in the “Land Use Policy by Community Designation.”

**COUNCIL ROLE**

- Advance the Council mission of ensuring orderly and economical development.
- Develop and update regional plans to manage forecasted growth by using regional systems and land efficiently and effectively.
- Coordinate major regional investment projects with local infrastructure and planning for development and redevelopment.
- Promote development patterns that protect natural resources, the quality and quantity of our water resources, and our water supply.
- Promote land use patterns that differentiate between urban and rural uses.
- Promote interconnected, compact development patterns.
- Coordinate wastewater conveyance projects with Regional Parks System improvements where appropriate.

**COMMUNITY ROLE**

- Plan for development to support forecasted growth at appropriate densities as articulated in the following land use policies by community designation.
- Plan and develop interconnected and well-connected local streets, adequate stormwater infrastructure, adequate water supply, and properly managed subsurface sewage treatment systems to support local growth forecasts.
- Develop plans to improve conditions for and encourage walking and bicycling where appropriate.
- Maintain, replace, or expand local facilities and infrastructure to meet growth and development needs.
- Adopt and implement the local comprehensive plan following Council review.

Land use policies balance both urban and rural qualities in our metropolitan area.



## Natural Resources Protection

**Conserve, restore, and protect the region’s natural resources to ensure their ongoing availability, to support public health, and to maintain a high quality of life.**

An abundance of natural resources has long contributed to the vibrancy of our region. The region is home to a variety of natural habitats, ranging from wooded riverine habitats along the Minnesota and St. Croix Rivers to trout streams like Valley Creek in Washington County. As discussed earlier in *Thrive*, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has identified Regionally Significant Ecological Areas, which designate the high quality natural habitats around the region. This identification is a useful tool to guide agencies and local governments in coordinating their conservation and protection efforts.



Integrating natural resources into our development patterns helps create livable neighborhoods and desirable places to visit. Incorporating natural areas and trees into neighborhoods adds to a community’s sense of place and provides opportunities to interact with the natural environment on a daily basis. Some of the natural areas can also increase opportunities for outdoor recreation and exercise, especially when planned as part of the neighborhood fabric.

This integrated method of development and redevelopment, or incorporating green infrastructure, can provide other benefits, such as assisting in the management of stormwater and reducing flood damage. Trees in the urban area not only provide shade for neighborhoods and pedestrians, but also help to ameliorate the effects of the urban heat island, slow stormwater runoff, and filter the air we breathe.

## Soil Resources

Agriculture has been an important shaper and supporter of the development of the region. The abundance of rich soils close to the Mississippi River led to the development of early food milling companies like Pillsbury. Many of these early companies have grown to include some of the largest food and agricultural businesses in the world, including Cargill and General Mills. The Twin Cities region is a soil-rich environment, with prime agricultural soils dominating the rural landscape, particularly in Carver, Dakota, and Scott Counties. (For more information on prime agricultural soils, see the Land Capability Classification from the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Classes I, II, and III of this eight-class system are considered prime for cultivation.)

As in other metropolitan regions, farmland in the Twin Cities has experienced development pressures as the region has grown. Both the total number of farms and the total acreage in farms in the seven counties has declined over the last 30 years though there has been some leveling in both the acreage and number of farms since the late 1990s. This may be the result of reduced outward pressures for development, enrollment in programs like the Agricultural Preserves Program and the Green Acres Program, and/or increased profitability from farming.

The Legislature created the Agricultural Preserves Program in 1980 to maintain “viable productive farm operations in the metropolitan area” (Minn. Stat. 473H). This program provides tax benefits for landowners with properties of at least 40 acres along with long-range planning protections in local comprehensive plans and ordinances to protect farming. The Green Acres Program, established in the late 1960s, provides similar landowner tax benefits, particularly to those with small parcels (at least 10 acres), but does not include the restrictions in local land use plans and ordinances for properties to be eligible. Enrollment in these programs varies by county but largely mirrors the locations of prime agricultural lands.

### Aggregate Resources

As development expanded, the region found that a key ingredient for development was under threat. Access to deposits of aggregate resources—crushed rock, gravel, and sand—was being lost due to new development on or near the deposits. Aggregate resources are needed for not only construction of new roads and buildings but also maintenance and repair. Accessing these resources locally reduces the costs for local construction projects compared to shipping resources in from outside of the region. In staging areas for new development, local communities should plan for aggregate resource extraction prior to development where viable deposits remain accessible, as mapped in Minnesota Geological Survey Information Circular No. 46 (Minn. Stat. 473.859). Where Regionally Significant Ecological Areas or other locally protected natural resource areas overlay aggregate deposits, the Council prioritizes habitat preservation over aggregate extraction.





## Role of Regional Parks

It is difficult to overstate how much the Regional Parks System supports the region’s quality of life and protects high-quality natural resources. In the 2012 Metropolitan Residents Survey, nearly half of respondents identified parks, trails, or the natural environment as the most attractive feature of the region. The Regional Parks System provides recreational opportunities, and resources such as the Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Regional Park in Lino Lakes or Lebanon Hills Regional Park in Dakota County contribute to the preservation of important ecological and natural features. Increasingly, the Regional Parks System is an amenity to retain and attract new businesses and residents, and many people use regional trails for commuting.

The *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* sets the direction for protection and growth of the Regional Parks System. The Council does not own or operate parks and trails but supports 10 regional park implementing agencies through a variety of funds. This collaborative partnership has created a system of regional recreational open space that has been, and will continue to be, an important tool for the region in protecting high quality natural areas.

### COUNCIL ROLE

- Integrate natural resource protection strategies into metropolitan system plans for infrastructure investments.
- Collaborate with local, regional, and state partners to expand the Regional Parks System, as appropriate, to conserve, maintain, and connect natural resources identified as of high quality or of regional importance, consistent with the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*.
- Collaborate and convene with state, regional, and local partners to protect, maintain, and enhance natural resources protection.
- Maintain an up-to-date regional Natural Resources Inventory and Assessment in partnership with the Department of Natural Resources.
- Provide technical assistance and tools for natural resources protection, conservation, and restoration.
- Promote the implementation of best management practices for habitat restoration and natural resource conservation.

### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Include goals, priorities, and natural resource conservation strategies in the local comprehensive plan to protect and enhance natural resources identified in regional and local natural resource inventories.
- Conserve, protect, and interconnect open space to enhance livability, recreational opportunities and habitats.
- Adopt and implement ordinances for the conservation and restoration of natural resources within the community.
- Work with regional partners and regional park implementing agencies to identify, plan for, and acquire natural areas and resources prime for preservation and protection.
- Plan for aggregate resource extraction where viable deposits remain accessible, as required by the *Metropolitan Land Planning Act*.

## Water Sustainability

**Conserve, restore, and protect the quality and quantity of the region's water resources to ensure ongoing availability, support public health, and maintain a high quality of life.**

The prosperity, quality of life, and continued development of our region all depend on the sustainability of the quality and quantity of our region's water resources. As discussed earlier, an abundance of natural resources, particularly water, has long contributed to the vibrancy of our region. Early in the region's history, the Mississippi River provided an important source of energy and transportation for the milling industries, shaping the region's development. The region is also home to two other major rivers, the Minnesota and the St. Croix, an expansive network of streams, including high-quality trout streams, and over 900 lakes and numerous wetlands. In addition to the surface waters, the region also boasts access to a multi-layered aquifer system capable of yielding a large supply of good-quality water. These water resources are the foundation for growth and vitality in the region, and we must care for these resources wisely and sustainably in order to prosper.



Sustaining the quality of our region's water bodies is necessary to support the livability of the region and continued natural habitat function. Effective stewardship of our water resources cannot be accomplished through parkland protection alone. As a region, we also need to manage our use of our aquifers for water supply and our region's land use patterns. Land use patterns can impact the quality of both our surface water and groundwater, both through the quantity of stormwater generated from development entering those water bodies and pollutants contained in that stormwater (non-point source pollution). Land use patterns that integrate natural areas into development at the site level add to livability and help avoid costly projects needed to alleviate environmental impacts of development, such as infrastructure to assist in the management of stormwater. Protecting natural areas can help recharge the region's aquifers for water supply, filter and slow stormwater runoff, and reduce flood damage.

## Surface Waters

Water resources have shaped the region’s growth and development, as evidenced by the locations of the region’s two major downtowns in Minneapolis and Saint Paul to the cities that developed around Lake Minnetonka and White Bear Lake. Our region’s waters have also been recognized for not only their beauty and recreational value but also their roles sustaining life and economic activities.



Some of our resources are protected as parks and public lands by levels of government from federal to local. Vadnais-Snail Lakes Regional Park in Ramsey County, Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area in Anoka County, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Louisville Swamp in Scott County are just a few examples of how various public entities have protected some of our surface waters. The St. Croix River, considered one of the most pristine riverways in the nation, is a federally designated National Scenic Riverway with management coordinated among local governments, the National Park Service, and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. The Mississippi River is a state-designated Critical Area<sup>7</sup> and federally designated National River and Recreation Area, with its protection and preservation coordinated among local governments, the Department of Natural Resources, the National Park Service, and the Council. State shoreland rules (Minn. Rules 6120.2500-3900) provide statewide standards that local governments must adopt to manage development along lakeshores to protect lake quality. The Wetland Conservation Act is implemented through local land use controls with oversight from the Board of Water and Soil Resources.

<sup>7</sup> Executive Order No. 79-19 designated the Mississippi River Corridor as a Critical Area in 1979. The Mississippi National River and Recreational Area (MNRRA) was established by Congress as a unit of the National Park Service in 1988. In 1991, Minn. Stat. 116G.15 designated the MNRRA corridor as a state critical area in the *Critical Areas Act*.



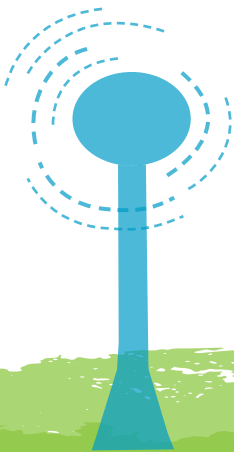
## Groundwater Resources

While the Mississippi River supported the initial development of the region, plentiful groundwater accommodated the region's outward growth. Increasing reliance on groundwater over time, however, has become a significant issue. In parts of the region, groundwater levels are declining as described in the "Special Features" section of this document. In some cases, it is affecting, or has the potential to affect, lake levels. A pressing concern is the possible impact of future development on the reliability of groundwater as a water source. Consideration of impacts to our groundwater resources is important during the planning and development processes to ensure that we are not negatively affecting those resources and that we are taking advantage of any opportunities to recharge our groundwater.

## Managing Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems

There are approximately 75,000 individual subsurface sewage treatment systems (SSTS) as well as several more private community systems serving clustered developments in use within the region. Both individual and community systems largely serve portions of the region where wastewater collection and treatment is not available. The Council will work with local governments—including counties, cities, and townships—to ensure that SSTS do not cause surface or groundwater quality problems in areas where collective sanitary sewer service is not available.

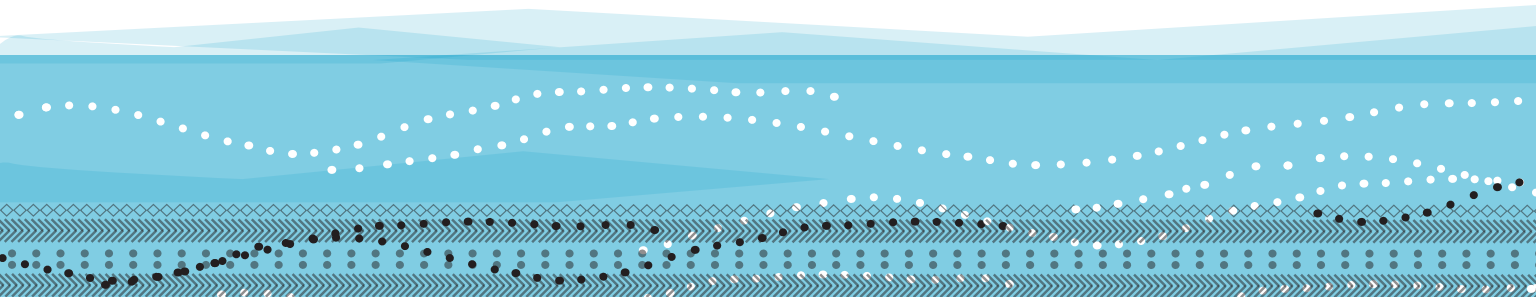
As directed under the Metropolitan Land Planning Act, the Council will continue to work with local governments that permit the construction of individual and private wastewater treatment systems to demonstrate through the comprehensive planning process that they have the capability to ensure that these systems are operated effectively consistent with the standards required by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). Local communities and counties must incorporate current MPCA regulations (Minn. Rules Chapters 7080-7083) into their local ordinances and programs for managing subsurface sewage treatment systems.



## Water Sustainability

### COUNCIL ROLE

- Collaborate and convene with state, regional, and local partners to protect, maintain, and enhance natural resources protection and the protection of the quality and quantity of the region’s water resources and water supply.
- Work to maintain and improve the quality and availability of the region’s water resources to support habitat and ecosystem health while providing for recreational opportunities, all of which are critical elements of our region’s quality of life.
- Update regional plans for water supply and pursue environmentally sound and cooperative water reuse practices, conservation initiatives, joint planning, and implementation efforts to maximize surface water infiltration to recharge groundwater supplies.
- Support economic growth and development by promoting the wise use of water through a sustainable balance of surface and groundwater use, conservation, reuse, aquifer recharge and other practices.
- Provide efficient and high-quality regional wastewater infrastructure and services.
- Pursue wastewater reuse where economically feasible as a means to promote sustainable water resources.
- Reduce the excess flow of clear water into the regional wastewater collection system (inflow and infiltration) to protect capacity for future growth.
- Require proper management of subsurface treatment systems, consistent with Minn. Rules Chapters 7080-7083, to minimize impacts on surface water, groundwater, and public health.
- Assure adequate and high quality groundwater and surface water supplies to protect public health and support economic growth and development by promoting the wise use of water through a sustainable balance of surface water and groundwater use, conservation, reuse, aquifer recharge, and other practices.
- Review watershed management plans in coordination with the Board of Water and Soil Resources.
- Review local water plans in partnership with the watershed organizations that approve the local water plans.
- Support implementation of volume reduction techniques such as infiltration or filtration for stormwater management.
- Promote the implementation of best management practices for stormwater management.
- Collaborate with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to provide technical assistance to local governments in implementing the Mississippi River Critical Area Program, and coordinate with the DNR in review of those plans and ordinances.



## Water Sustainability

### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Collaborate and convene with state, regional, and local partners to protect, maintain, and enhance natural resources protection and the protection of the quality and quantity of the region's water resources and water supply.
- Prepare and implement local water supply plans and source water (wellhead) protection ordinances, consistent with Minnesota Rules part 4720, in all communities with municipal water supply.
- Plan land use patterns that facilitate groundwater recharge and reuse, and reduce per capita water use to protect the region's water supply.
- Plan for sustainable water supply options and groundwater recharge areas to promote development in accordance with natural resources protection and efficient use of land.
- Partner with other water supply providers to explore options to reduce dependence on groundwater.
- Prepare and implement local surface water plans as required by Minnesota Rules Chapter 8410, the Metropolitan Land Planning Act, and the *2040 Water Resources Policy Plan*.
- Reduce the excess flow of clear water into the local wastewater collection system (inflow and infiltration). Participate in inflow / infiltration grant programs as available.
- Incorporate current MPCA regulations (Minn. Rules Chapters 7080-7083) as part of a program for managing subsurface sewage treatment systems (SSTS) in the comprehensive plan and local ordinances, and implement the standards in issuing permits. Describe the conditions under which the installation of SSTS will be permitted and the areas not suitable for public or private systems.
- Adopt and enforce ordinances related to stormwater management and erosion control.
- Adopt and implement best management practices for abating, preventing, and reducing point and nonpoint source pollution.
- Develop and adopt critical area plans and ordinances consistent with Executive Order 79-19 and Critical Area Program rules in all communities with affected lands in the Mississippi River Critical Area Corridor.
- Integrate drinking water source protection into local land use decisions, particularly in Drinking Water Supply Management Areas.
- Develop programs that encourage stormwater management, treatment, and infiltration.

## Housing Affordability and Choice

Promote housing options to give people in all life stages and of all economic means viable choices for safe, stable, and affordable homes.



Communities throughout the region recognize the significance of housing quality, choice, and affordability. The region is expecting 391,000 new households by 2040. In addition to population growth, other factors influence housing need such as the changing composition of families, household income, and an aging population. Recent years have seen a surge in the demand for multifamily housing, particularly in the central cities, fueled by demographic changes and market interest in areas well-served by transit and amenities.

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

Opportunities to address housing needs are not limited to new development and redevelopment. Maintenance and preservation of existing housing stock addresses many local housing needs and can offer housing choices closer to many job locations. Selective infill, historic preservation, live/work units, appropriately designed accessory dwellings, and adaptive reuse are also strategies to protect and expand the region’s housing stock. Housing affordability and diversification are strongly connected to higher levels of residential density; as a result, unsewered areas are generally inappropriate for new affordable housing.

Because housing and residential land use patterns are durable, often lasting generations, it is critical that residential development advances the broader policy of orderly and efficient land use, including connectivity to jobs, services, amenities, and transportation networks. As further detailed in the *2040 Housing Policy Plan*, communities should plan for a range of housing types to meet the housing needs of all of the region’s residents.

## Housing Affordability and Choice

### COUNCIL ROLE

- Provide guidance to communities regarding their share of the regional affordable housing need in order to implement the Metropolitan Land Planning Act.
- Provide technical assistance to communities to establish, encourage, expand, and preserve affordable housing options and expand local knowledge of and access to funding assistance for housing, whether public, private, or philanthropic.
- Negotiate lifecycle and affordable housing goals with communities that participate in the Livable Communities Act.
- Strategically invest Council resources to assist community efforts to increase the variety of housing types and costs, attract and retain residents, create and preserve mixed-income neighborhoods, appropriately mix land uses, increase transportation choices, and leverage private investment.
- Encourage the use of sustainable building techniques in housing to promote livability and health, increase energy efficiency, create longer lasting and more durable housing, and benefit the regional environment.
- Promote the preservation of existing housing, especially affordable housing, to maintain the most affordable housing stock.
- Calculate housing performance scores that reflect each community's existing affordable housing stock and new affordable housing opportunities created.
- Collaborate with partners to expand the supply of affordable housing available at all income levels, including extremely low-income households who earn less than 30% of the area median income (that is, \$24,850 for a family of four in 2014).
- Support research and other activities related to fair housing, residential lending, and real estate practices to determine if discriminatory practices are occurring and limiting housing choices.
- Convene regional and local housing stakeholders, including practitioners, funders, and advocates, to refine policies and develop programs to respond to the housing needs of low- and moderate-income households throughout the region.

### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Prepare a local comprehensive plan that addresses the affordable housing planning requirements of the Metropolitan Land Planning Act, including guiding sufficient land to support a community's share of the regional affordable housing need and an implementation section that identifies the programs, fiscal devices, and official controls to be employed to address a community's share of the regional need for affordable housing.
- Review local ordinances, policies, and partnerships to ensure they encourage and facilitate the opportunity for the development or preservation of affordable and lifecycle housing.
- Identify and analyze local markets, location, condition, and availability of affordable units, both publicly subsidized and naturally occurring, to inform the housing element of the local comprehensive plan.
- Participate in Livable Communities Act programs by negotiating affordable and lifecycle housing goals that support regional and local housing needs, and prepare a Housing Action Plan to address those goals and become eligible to access grant funding to address local development and redevelopment objectives.
- Direct new affordable housing development to land with sewer service or adequate community septic systems.
- Collaborate with partners, especially counties, to rehabilitate and preserve existing housing, including in rural areas.



## Access, Mobility, and Transportation Choice

**Sustain and improve a multi modal transportation system to support regional growth, maintain regional economic competitiveness, and provide choices and reliability for the system's users.**

Transportation is pivotal to the region's economy and quality of life. *Thrive MSP 2040* recognizes that a competitive economy, and the economic and social well-being of the region's residents, require a multi-modal transportation system that provides choice and reliability. The Council has a leadership role with regard to investments and services that enhance the mobility of people and freight, improve multi-modal access to regional destinations, and support reuse, infill, and redevelopment efforts. Concern about climate change is also pushing the region to address how we might reduce carbon emissions from transportation.

The community designations described in the previous section reflect the transportation system and the land use patterns that developed alongside it. Most of the region's Job Concentrations as described earlier in *Thrive* are located at the confluence of regional highways, transit, and/or rail service. In the more urbanized communities, transit use and bicycling represent significant shares of travel because destinations are closer and often easier to reach by those modes than by car. In suburban areas, transit use is less common but plays an important role in commuting to the downtowns from park-and-ride facilities.

Geographic patterns of development mean that different areas experience different challenges and opportunities with each transportation mode. The region has a significant investment in the regional highway system. More recently, the region has been developing a system of transitways, including light rail transit (LRT), bus rapid transit (BRT), and arterial bus rapid transit. To ensure that the region prospers and responds to the economic needs of households and businesses, the Council will be a good steward of these regional investments. As described in the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*, this includes detailing land use development expectations to leverage and support transit investments, identifying cost-effective means of improving multi-modal access to regional destinations, and improving mobility and reliability on the regional highway system, especially when it benefits movement and accessibility for freight, transit, carpools, and MnPASS users.



Managing regional growth and travel demand requires a partnership between the region and its communities. Regional highways, including principal and A-minor arterials, and transitways are planned and designed to provide faster travel over longer distances. Local transportation systems, on the other hand, play an important role at the beginning and end of all trips whether for automobiles, freight movement, bicycling, or walking. A critical piece of local transportation planning is the development of interconnected local street networks. In many cases, the regional highway system, including county minor arterial roadways, are serving short trips that should be made on local roadways. Interconnected local streets with more direct routes also lay the foundation for better conditions for walking and bicycling. More direct routes, route alternatives, and a wider distribution of traffic also create opportunities for greater sharing of public right-of-way among different modes.

In particular, the development of the regional transit system is enhanced by the development of local bicycle and pedestrian systems. Transit patrons may not own cars, and transit trips typically end on foot even if they began at a park-and-ride. Local pedestrian and bicycle planning is also critical for the development of local and regional centers, where intensification and diversification of land uses create economies of scale and an opportunity to make shorter local trips on foot or by bike. Local bicycle and pedestrian planning is also critical in more automobile-oriented parts of the region where sidewalk networks are essential for people who are transit-dependent to reach jobs. Regardless of the development pattern, communities can identify cost-effective opportunities to make biking and walking a more attractive alternative over time as redevelopment occurs and as roadways and rights-of-way are planned, improved, or reconstructed.

## Access, Mobility, and Transportation Choice

### COUNCIL ROLE

- Oversee the planning of a multimodal, interconnected regional transportation system in cooperation with state agencies, counties, local governments, and suburban transit providers.
- Invest in and operate transit services commensurate with efficient and effective standards established by Transit Market Areas defined in the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*. Coordinate other regional transit services to ensure a consistent and convenient user experience.
- Support investments to safely operate, preserve and improve the regional highway system, which includes principal and A-minor arterials, by providing transit advantages, MnPASS lanes, and implementing cost-effective, management, spot mobility, and strategic capacity improvements.
- Support the management of access points to state and county road systems and emphasize construction of an interconnected local public street system.
- Support the development of regional bicycle corridors as defined in the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan* to provide viable transportation options.
- Invest in the development and improvement of regional trails as defined in the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* to better connect communities with regional parks and to provide recreational opportunities. Encourage communities to plan and develop local trail connections to the Regional Parks System where appropriate.
- Work with local, regional, and state partners to coordinate transportation, pedestrian, bicycle, and trail connections across jurisdictional boundaries.
- Use Council investments and policies to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and carbon per unit of fuel, which are key drivers of the region’s generation of greenhouse gas emissions.
- Ensure that transportation elements of local comprehensive plans provide for pedestrian and bicycle access to regional transit services, regional trails, and regional bicycle corridors.
- Invest in transportation improvements that support the export and mobility of freight by truck, rail, air, and barge.
- Coordinate with the Metropolitan Airports Commission, the Federal Aviation Administration, Minnesota Department of Transportation Office of Aeronautics, and local communities to ensure that land uses and air space adjacent to the system of regional airports is protected from incompatible uses.

### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Consider travel modes other than the car at all levels of development (site plan, subdivision, comprehensive planning) to better connect and integrate choices throughout all stages of planning.
- Plan for and construct an interconnected system of local streets, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities that is integrated with the regional system to minimize short trips on the regional highway system.
- Adopt access management standards that support state and county highway access and mobility needs.
- Plan for compatible land uses and air space adjacent to the system of regional airports.
- Participate in regional transportation planning activities to ensure that the metropolitan planning process and regional transportation system reflect local needs.
- Work with partners in communities, counties, and the region at large to coordinate transportation, pedestrian, bicycle, and trail connections within and between jurisdictional boundaries.

## Economic Competitiveness

### Foster connected land use options to provide businesses and industries with access to materials, markets, and talent.

Just as the region's residents need housing, so do the region's businesses and institutions need land to locate their enterprises and jobs. Commercial, industrial and institutional land uses comprise only 6% of the region's land area compared to 22% for housing. More than half of the region's 1.5 million jobs are located in Job Concentrations, which consume less than 2% of the land area of the region. Though a small portion of the region's overall land supply, these land uses provide the locations for the jobs and economic activity that lead to prosperity.

The Twin Cities region is expecting 550,000 new jobs between 2010 and 2040, and businesses want to site those jobs in locations with access to materials, markets, and talent. Freight transportation networks, whether river, rail, air, or road, transport raw materials and finished goods to and from state, national, and international markets. Proximity to workers—particularly via attractive commute modes—increases employers' desirability as places to work and minimizes the negative impact of travel time delays.

Businesses seeking to locate or expand in the region want viable location options—whether defined by accessibility to transportation or talent. To maintain the region's economic competitiveness, communities should ensure that local land use provides location choices that can meet business needs. To achieve this, communities should engage business voices early and often in the local comprehensive planning process.

While housing tends to last for generations, commercial and industrial buildings often have short life spans and turn over quickly to meet new locational needs. As these commercial and industrial uses change and move, cleaning up the contaminated land creates opportunities for new industry in places that have already benefited from prior infrastructure investment. More broadly, cleaning up contaminated land facilitates bringing underutilized and abandoned properties back on the tax rolls for a variety of uses, whether prior uses were industrial, commercial, or residential.



### Economic Competitiveness

#### COUNCIL ROLE

- Prioritize regional investments that improve access to national and international markets by regional and state businesses.
- Ensure that regional growth is managed in efficient ways that allow for a variety of choices in location and transportation for businesses and residents.
- Support a variety of freight transport to better connect the region with state, national, and international markets.
- Support the cleanup of contaminated land for new industry, including manufacturing and other sectors that are export industries for the region.
- Promote the intensification of existing and emerging Job Concentrations.
- Provide technical assistance to help local communities better understand their contributions to the regional economy; provide information, research, and analysis on economic competitiveness.
- Support cost-effective subregional infrastructure investments in efforts to promote sustainable water use and protect the region’s water supplies.
- Support local and regional efforts to develop climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies to remain economically competitive.

#### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Plan for the further development of and intensification of existing and emerging Job Concentrations.
- Consider completing a community-based market analysis to better understand real estate needs for commercial and industrial land.
- Consider addressing economic competitiveness in the local comprehensive plan.
- Preserve sites for highway-, river-, and rail-dependent manufacturing and freight transportation.
- Engage with businesses and other employers to ensure their input is provided to the local comprehensive plan.

## Building in Resilience

### Promote sensitive land use and development patterns to contribute toward achieving Minnesota's adopted greenhouse gas emission goals at the regional scale, and to develop local resiliency to the impacts of climate change.

The effects of climate change transcend community boundaries and are felt throughout our region, whether as flooded farmlands, modified growing seasons, rising energy costs, or storm sewer systems overloaded from large summer storms. The built environment is a primary contributor to climate change, resulting from the energy used in homes and businesses and our travel behaviors that result from our pattern of regional land use development. The Minnesota Climate Change Advisory Group Final Report found that transportation contributed 24% of the state's total greenhouse gas emissions in 2005, with the use of fossil fuels in residential, commercial, and industrial sectors adding another 20%. As such, the region's response to climate change must include measures to reduce both greenhouse gas emissions and the vulnerability of our local systems to climate change impacts.

The Council's land use direction is rooted in our mission to guide the orderly and economical growth of the region, but changes to our region's land use patterns can also help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Compact development and redevelopment near Job Concentrations or transit will result in fewer emissions from transportation. Redevelopment or renovation of existing buildings for new uses is more energy-efficient than new development and takes advantage of existing infrastructure. Growth at the edge of the region that includes interconnected streets and walkable/bikeable destinations nearby will also result in fewer emissions from local trips.

The Council is reducing its own energy consumption and emissions through multifaceted initiatives. For example, Metropolitan Council Environmental Services has reduced its energy purchases at its wastewater treatment plants by 21% from 2006 to 2013, an energy equivalent of 2,500 households. By 2020, the Council aims to reduce its energy purchases by 50%. In 2008, Metro Transit worked with Xcel Energy to perform a comprehensive energy audit of bus garages, followed by \$8.8 million in energy-saving improvements, expected to be recouped through utility savings by the end of 2014.

Communities are choosing to reduce their contributions to climate change and attempting to mitigate its impacts through a variety of energy reduction measures, developing in a more compact land use pattern, and reducing automobile dependency, to name a few. Integrating natural resources into our development patterns, or green infrastructure, can also serve to improve the resiliency of the existing built environment, considering that many plant communities can help manage stormwater. Improving urban forestry can mitigate emissions and provide additional benefits, such as an improved pedestrian experience and reduction of urban heat island effects. Taking these measures ensures that communities are better prepared to deal with more frequent extreme weather events and other expected climate impacts that can drain limited local resources and threaten the region's competitiveness and viability.

Because of the related benefits, many communities are responding to climate change by reducing their energy use. Local government budgets are leaner than ever, and addressing climate change can cut energy costs. For example, the City of Falcon Heights began with implementing improvements to its solid waste operations, instituting lighting

retrofits throughout the city, adopting a new recycling program, and exploring solar power, all implemented or to be implemented as cost saving measures. Another resource focusing on the built environment for communities is Minnesota’s B3 Sustainable Building 2030 (SB 2030) Energy Standard, which is a conservation program designed to significantly reduce energy use in commercial, institutional, and industrial buildings.

Effective land use planning provides a community with the tools needed to better address climate change locally. Encouraging land use policies that create a more compact land use pattern can reduce energy consumption, protect public investments in infrastructure, lessen development pressures on habitat and open space, provide benefits to public health, and create more sustainable communities. Innovative land use policies can create a more compact region resulting in more efficient use of our infrastructure investments, cost-effective extension of urban services, and preservation of natural and agricultural areas within the region.

## Building in Resilience

### COUNCIL ROLE

- Substantially reduce energy consumption at Council facilities, improve the efficiency of the Council’s vehicle fleets including Metro Transit buses, and provide information to the public and partners to lead by example.
- With regional infrastructure, planning, and operations, increase efforts to reduce water use and energy consumption.
- Identify and address potential vulnerabilities in regional systems as a result of increased frequency and severity of storms and heat waves. Maintain dikes, emergency generators, and response plans for Council facilities facing extreme weather.
- Use the Council’s investments and planning authorities to contribute toward meeting statutory goals for reductions in the generation of regional greenhouse gas emissions.
- Convene regional discussions about goals for climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Encourage the preparation of adaptation, mitigation, and resiliency responses to climate change as part of the comprehensive plan update.
- Develop, collect, and disseminate information about climate change, including energy and climate data, GreenStep Cities best practices, and the next generation of the Regional Indicators data.
- Work with the State of Minnesota on a greenhouse gas emissions inventory that informs regional discussion on emissions reduction.
- Provide technical assistance and toolkit resources to communities in integrating climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies as part of local comprehensive plans.
- Develop and strengthen partnerships with experts in climate change to better assist and inform local communities on how best to evaluate and develop local climate changes strategies.
- Encourage communities to participate in regional programs which support efforts to inform, plan for, mitigate, adapt, and respond to climate change issues of local significance such as water conservation, stormwater infrastructure adaptation, greenhouse gas reduction, use of alternative energy sources, infrastructure planning, and hazard mitigation planning.
- Provide technical references and resources for communities seeking to mitigate and adapt to climate change in their own facilities and in their communities. Examples of these resources include stormwater, wastewater, and water supply management practices, and transit and land use planning.
- Provide, or collaborate with partners to provide, technical references, and resources for communities seeking to mitigate and adapt to climate change, in their own facilities and in their communities, including, but not limited to, stormwater, wastewater, and water supply management practices, and transit, and land-use planning.



## Building in Resilience

### COMMUNITY ROLE

- Address climate change mitigation and adaptation in locally meaningful ways in the local comprehensive plan.
- Identify local measures that would result in reductions in water use, energy consumption, and emission of greenhouse gases.
- Ensure that local comprehensive plans and ordinances protect and enable the development of solar resources, as required by the Metropolitan Land Planning Act, and consider the use of other alternative energy sources as part of the planning process.
- Consider the development or use of community solar gardens (CSGs) by public and private entities to enable fuller and more economic use of the community's solar resource, including participating as subscribers, assisting in marketing community solar garden opportunities for economic development, and providing sites for gardens to be developed.
- Identify local measures to address impacts to local economies, local resources, and infrastructure systems as a result of more frequent or severe weather events.
- Identify local initiatives as cost-saving measures that may, as a result, lower energy consumption, reduce the generation of greenhouse gas emissions, preserve water supply, reduce municipal waste, or increase participation in recycling programs.
- Participate in programs that evaluate and share city practices and provide technical support, such as the GreenStep Cities program and the Regional Indicators Initiative.