

# Metropolitan Council Facts

## Working for the region

The Metropolitan Council is the regional planning organization for the seven-county Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area. The Council provides cost-effective transit and wastewater services, coordinates orderly and economic development, and assists communities as they plan for anticipated growth. The Council was established by the Minnesota Legislature in 1967. The Council's jurisdiction comprises the counties of Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington. The Council:

- Provides an average of 250,000 bus and rail rides each weekday.
- Collects and treats up to 250 million gallons of wastewater daily, protecting public health and the environment.
- Helps plan and fund a system of regional parks and trails – more than 54,000 acres in all.
- Provides affordable housing opportunities to households with low incomes.

The Council develops, in cooperation with local communities, the *2030 Regional Development Framework*, a set of policies to guide the efficient growth of the region and help maintain the region's economic competitiveness. The Council carries out the *Framework*, in part, through its plans for "regional systems" – transportation, regional parks and water resources.

Council staff is organized in four divisions that focus on transportation planning and transit operations, wastewater treatment and water quality, and community development, supported by administrative and service units.



## How the Council is governed

The Metropolitan Council has 17 members; they are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the governor. Sixteen Council members represent geographic districts of roughly equal population across the region. The Council chair, the 17th member, serves at large. The current Council Chair is Susan Haigh, CEO of Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity and a former Ramsey County Commissioner.

The role of Council members is to provide a regional perspective and work toward a regional consensus on issues facing the metropolitan area. All meetings of the Council and its subcommittees are open to the public.

## Major achievements in 2010

- Awarded five major construction contracts and began construction on the Central Corridor light-rail transit project, linking downtown St. Paul, the State Capitol, the Midway Shopping District, the University of Minnesota and downtown Minneapolis.
- Continued implementation of bus rapid transit in the I-35W and Cedar Avenue corridors, with service start-up scheduled for 2012.
- Implemented region-wide dial-a-ride service, Transit Link, in areas not served by fixed-route transit. The service is equitable and consistent across the seven counties, and coordinated with fixed-route transit.



The Council runs the regional bus and light rail system, collects and treats wastewater, coordinates water resource management and preservation, plans regional parks, and administers funds that provide housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income families and individuals.

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The Council has about 3,760 employees; most of those are transit and wastewater service workers.

About 45% of the Council's revenue is user fees, such as bus fares and wastewater fees. State and federal funding constitute 41% of revenues.

- Endorsed light rail and the locally preferred route for the Southwest Corridor, which runs 15 miles from downtown Minneapolis to Eden Prairie.
- Updated the *2030 Transportation Policy Plan* to include a new highway investment strategy that focuses on system-wide highway management, using strategies like managed lanes and low-cost, high-benefit improvements.
- Achieved major reductions in energy use in the wastewater collection and treatment system.
- Took strategic action to combat a revenue crisis in the wastewater system caused by the downturn in the housing and commercial construction markets.
- Implemented a new groundwater model and regional water supply plan to help communities protect and ensure an adequate supply of drinking water for future generations.
- Updated the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, adding The Landing in Shakopee, a living history museum, as the seventh special recreation feature in the regional parks system.
- Awarded nearly \$9 million in Livable Communities grants to clean up polluted land for redevelopment; demonstrate land uses that connect housing, job, and services; and support affordable housing development.
- Completed review of 91% of the 181 decennial local comprehensive plan updates submitted by metro area communities between late 2008 and 2010.
- Earned a competitive, \$5 million grant award from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to develop plans and strategies along five major transit corridors. Earned a \$16 million Living Cities Initiative grant to develop affordable housing, mainly along the Central Corridor.
- Assisted nearly 7,000 low-income households monthly and made rental assistance payments to more than 2,000 property owners, injecting \$50 million annually of federal and state funds into the regional economy.

## Council revenues and expenditures

The Council relies on several funding sources. In 2010, 45% of the Council's revenue came from user fees for wastewater treatment and transit services, and 41% from state and federal funds. About 10% percent of revenue came from a seven-county property tax, and 4% from other sources.

The Council's 2010 budget expenditures totaled \$738.6 million. The operating budget of \$519.4 million (70.3% of expenditures) covered daily expenses, mostly for regional transit service and wastewater treatment. Debt service (19.1%) covered payments on the Council's long-term capital bonds and loans. Pass-through funds (10.6%) came primarily from federal sources (and some state funds) that the Council received and allocated to local governments, agencies and rental property owners for transportation, housing and other programs.

## For more information

- Learn more about the Council at [www.metrocouncil.org](http://www.metrocouncil.org), or call the Council's Data Center at 651-602-1140 (TTY 651-291-0904.)