



**Water Resources  
Management**  
Policy Plan

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Adopted May 25, 2005  
Revised January 29, 2007  
Amended September 8, 2010

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**Mission**

The mission of the Metropolitan Council is to develop, in cooperation with local communities, a comprehensive regional planning framework, focusing on wastewater, transportation, parks and aviation systems, that guides the efficient growth of the metropolitan area. The Council operates wastewater and transit services and administers housing and other grant programs.

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**Metropolitan Council Members**

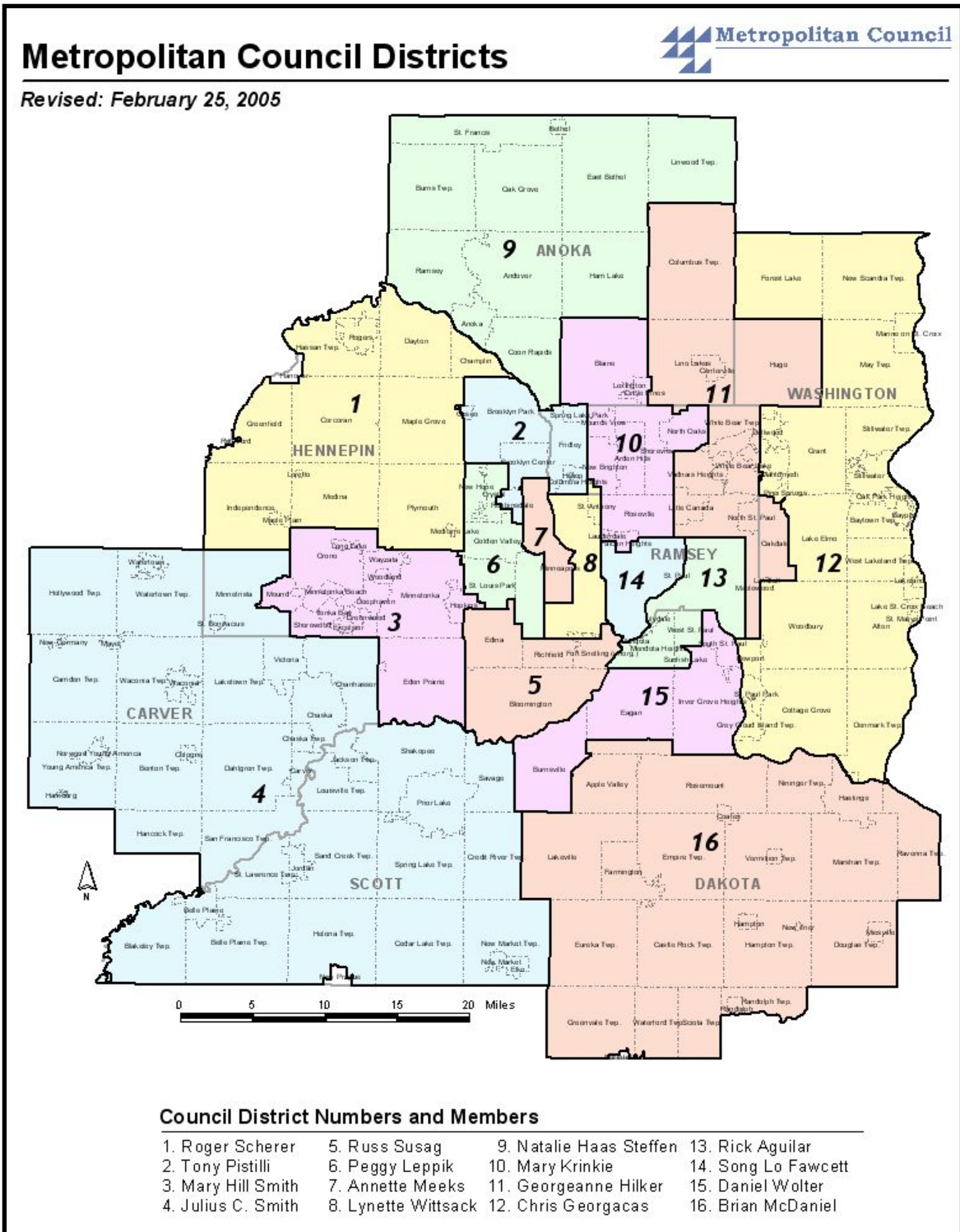
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Figure 1: Metropolitan Council Members and District





# Foreword

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Three majestic rivers. Nine-hundred and fifty lakes. Extensive wetlands. A 1,000-foot-deep aquifer system. The Twin Cities metropolitan area was settled in the 1800s in large part because abundant water resources were available to support a new and growing population.



Although the resources remain abundant today, the region must carefully protect both the supply and quality of water so that adequate reserves remain to meet the needs of a growing population.

Water is fundamental to the region's global economic competitiveness. The region's abundant water supply supports commercial and agricultural enterprises

in need of reliable, good quality water. The resource also contributes to a quality of life that attracts highly skilled workers and supports a thriving tourism industry. When many places around the U.S. and the world are suffering actual and potential water shortages, the Twin Cities region offers its residents a reliable supply of high quality water from within its seven-county border. Nonetheless, the region cannot afford to be complacent or careless about its water resources. Wise stewardship of the resource is required.

Protecting this resource and passing it on to the generations that follow in as good or better shape than we received it is one of the foremost goals of this Metropolitan Council. A commitment to environmental stewardship is translated into the policies and implementation strategies contained in this *Water Resources Management Policy Plan (Policy Plan)*.

The Council will continue to provide high quality, affordable wastewater collection and treatment services while guiding growth in a manner that protects our valued water resources. The Council will also identify water supply and water quality challenges, and address them by working with all interested partners. One of the Council's primary strengths is its regional perspective, which takes into account the interrelationships of land use, growth patterns, transportation and other regional services, and water resources use and protection. This integrated perspective is the foundation of the Council's *2030 Regional Development Framework*, from which this *Policy Plan* has evolved.

## **Authority to Prepare the *Policy Plan***

State law (Minnesota Statutes, Section 473.145) directs the Metropolitan Council to prepare a comprehensive development guide for the metropolitan area. The development guide consists of the *2030 Regional Development Framework (Framework)* and four "system plans" for transportation, aviation, wastewater and regional recreation open space, and related policy statements, goals, standards, programs and maps describing how it will achieve its charge. This updated *Policy Plan* replaces the current plan, adopted in December 1996.

The *Policy Plan* is also prepared in response to Minnesota Statute 473.157, which states:

*“To help achieve federal and state water quality standards, to provide effective water pollution control, and help reduce unnecessary investments in advanced wastewater treatment, the council shall adopt a water resources plan...”*

The plan includes policies and strategies for water supply, surface water management (nonpoint source issues) and wastewater treatment and collection (point source issues).

Metropolitan land-use planning law (Minn. Stat. Sec. 473.858) states that comprehensive plans of local governments cannot be in conflict with the metropolitan systems plans for airports, transportation, wastewater, and regional recreation open space. The revised *Policy Plan* contains the required system elements (wastewater and water quality).

In addition to the required system elements, the *Policy Plan* includes policies and implementation strategies for water supply and watershed-based target pollution loads. Specific legislative mandates exist for plan development in water supply and for target pollution loads.

The Metropolitan Council’s *Framework* establishes a growth management strategy that incorporates system plans into overall regional development. Both the *Water Resources Management Policy Plan* and the *Framework* will be used to determine consistency of local government plans with those of the Council. Material contained in the plans can be used to determine whether there is a substantial impact on, or a substantial departure from, the metropolitan systems plans. The system plan chapter contains information on what constitutes a substantial impact or departure. The Council will also use this *Policy Plan* in its review of the water-related components of local comprehensive plans, including surface water management, water supply and wastewater.

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