

Regional Framework for Accommodating Growth

During the 1990s, the Twin Cities metropolitan area gained more population (353,000) than any previous decade in our history. Between 2000 and 2030, the region is expected to grow by nearly 1 million people—the equivalent population of two Denvers added to the seven-county metropolitan area.

Such robust growth is a sign of the region’s economic health and vitality. With this growth will come new jobs, greater ethnic diversity, expanded economic opportunities and increased tax revenues. But accommodating growth is not always easy, as the increasing public concern about issues such as water quality and traffic congestion attests. Surveys of metropolitan area residents consistently name the environment as one of the principal reasons for living in a climate that is at times challenging.

The purpose of the Metropolitan Council’s *2030 Regional Development Framework* is to provide a plan for how the Council and its regional partners can address these challenges. The Council’s *Framework* and the accompanying metropolitan system plans – including this *Water Resources Management Policy Plan* – are intended to help ensure the “coordinated, orderly and economical development” of the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area – consisting of Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington Counties (Minn. Stat. Sec. 473.851).

New directions outlined in the *Framework* set out a path for growth that protects water resources and the region's quality of life:

- **Focusing attention on the pattern of land uses.**

The *Framework* pays more attention to *how* development occurs and less attention on how much development occurred in growing communities at the region’s developing edge.

- **Recognizing that transportation and land use influence each other.**

The *Framework* emphasizes the need for intensified development in centers with convenient access to transportation corridors and in rural centers that want to grow and lie along major highways.

- **Offering greater flexibility in the location of new development in growing communities**

The *Framework* provides growing cities the flexibility to decide where development occurs within broader areas than that are planned and staged for development consistent with regional perspectives.

- **Emphasizing reinvestment in older areas throughout the region.**

The *Framework* emphasizes that by investing in underused land and maintaining existing infrastructure, the region can accommodate growth on a smaller urban “footprint,” slow the rate of increase in traffic congestion, ease development pressures on rural land, save billions of dollars in local sewer, water and road construction and

maintenance costs, maintain the housing stock, and strengthen the vitality of older areas.

- **Encouraging increased market-based housing production that reflects shifting demographics, employment locations and a diversity of incomes.**

The *Framework* allows for a mix of housing types and prices to enable people to work, raise a family and retire in the same community, attract jobs and improve local economic competitiveness.

- **Encouraging the use of metropolitan-wide natural resources inventory and assessment to foster development that is more sensitive to the environment.**

The *Framework* identifies the need to use natural resources inventories and assessments to help local governments plan development that respects the integrity of natural areas and incorporates environmental features into development projects.

In support of these new directions, the *Framework's* strategies are organized around four policies:

Policy 1: Work with local communities to accommodate growth in a flexible, connected and efficient manner. Supporting land-use patterns that efficiently connect housing, jobs, retail centers and civic uses. Encouraging growth and reinvestment in centers with convenient access to transportation corridors. Ensuring an adequate supply of developable land for future growth.

Policy 2: Plan and invest in multi-modal transportation choices, based on the full range of costs and benefits, to slow the growth of congestion and serve the region's economic needs. Improving the highway system, removing bottlenecks and adding capacity. Making more efficient use of the highway system by encouraging flexible work hours, telecommuting, ridesharing and other traffic management efforts. Expanding the bus system and developing a network of transitways, based on a thorough cost-benefit analysis.

Policy 3: Encourage expanded choices in housing location and types, and improved access to jobs and opportunities. Allowing market forces to respond to changing market needs, including increased demand for townhomes and condominiums as baby-boomers grow older. Preserving the existing housing stock to help maintain a full range of housing choices. Supporting the production of lifecycle and affordable housing with better links to jobs, services and amenities.

Policy 4: Work with local and regional partners to reclaim, conserve, protect and enhance the region's vital natural resources. Encouraging the integration of natural-resource conservation into all land-planning decisions. Seeking to protect important natural resources and adding areas to the regional park system. Working to protect the region's water resources.

The *Framework* recognizes that “one size does not fit all”—that different communities have different opportunities, needs and aspirations. It includes implementation strategies that are tailored for different types of communities—fully developed communities, communities that are still developing and four different types of rural communities.

Regional Growth Forecasts

During the last three decades, the Twin Cities metropolitan area grew by nearly 800,000 people. Between 2000 and 2030, we forecast that the region will add another 966,000 people and 471,000 households.

Table 1: Metropolitan Area Growth, 1970-2030

	1970	2000	2030	1970–2000 Increase	2000–2030 Projected Increase
Households	573,634	1,021,454	1,492,000	448,000	471,000
Population	1,874,612	2,642,056	3,608,000	767,000	966,000
Jobs	779,000	1,563,245	2,126,000	784,000	563,000

The metropolitan system plans seek to carefully integrate regional land-use, transportation, housing and natural resource policies to achieve regional goals in each area and avoid working at cross-purposes. The forecasts are used in the planning and capital-improvement-program processes to assess regional needs, land-use patterns and infrastructure investments that will be needed to serve growth in a timely, efficient and cost-effective manner.

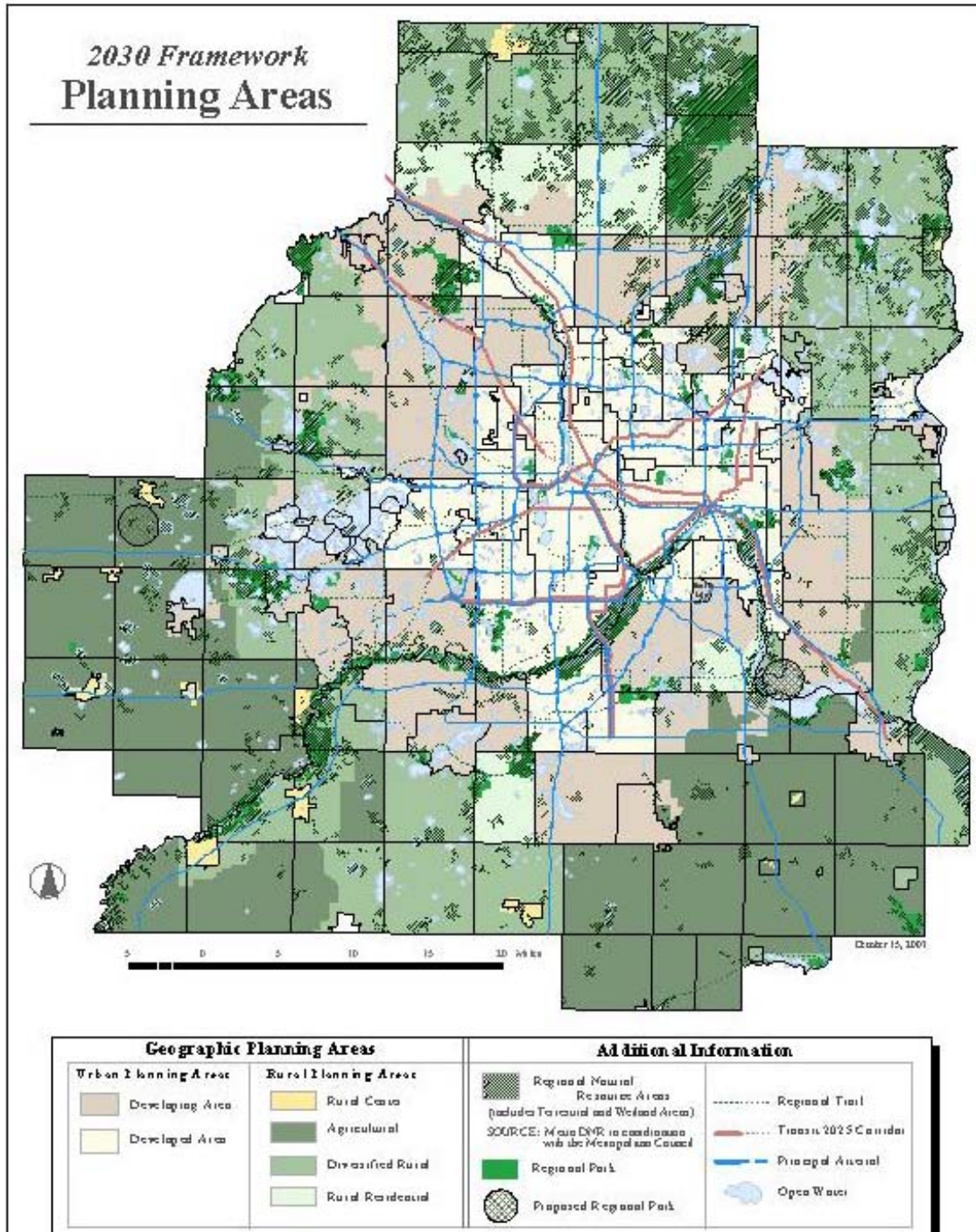
Water Resources Management and Framework Planning Areas

The *Framework* sets out different strategies for communities based on the types of growth that are expected (see “Geographic Planning Areas” map). The *Framework* identifies an urban area and a rural area, each of which occupies approximately half of the region.

The urban area is divided into two specific geographic planning areas: the Developing Communities and the Developed Communities. The rural area is divided into four specific geographic planning areas: Rural Centers/Rural Growth Centers, the Diversified Rural Communities, the Rural Residential Areas and the Agricultural Areas.

Approximately 91 percent to 95 percent of new growth is forecast to be located in the urban area—in land-use patterns that make efficient use of regional infrastructure—with the rest, five percent to nine percent, in the rural area, particularly in small towns to be designated as Rural Growth Centers.

Figure 2: Framework Geographic Planning Areas



One of the primary differences among these planning areas is the density at which they develop. The Council has established benchmarks indicating the overall densities that planned development patterns in each of the geographic planning areas can be expected to achieve. The Council negotiates a share of the regional forecasts with each community based on its geographic planning area designation(s), development trends, expected densities, available land, local interests and Council policies. The cumulative results of the community-accepted distribution of the forecasts among planning areas becomes the

basis for determining the required land supply, and for the Council's plans for and investments in regional systems such as wastewater service and highways.

The Developed Communities are the cities where more than 85 percent of the land is developed, infrastructure is well established and efforts must go toward keeping it in good repair. These communities have the greatest opportunities to adapt or replace obsolete buildings, improve community amenities, and remodel or replace infrastructure to increase their economic competitiveness and enhance their quality of life. The *Water Resources Management Policy Plan (Policy Plan)* and infrastructure investments will support the maintenance and enhancement of wastewater collection and treatment facilities to accommodate growth and reinvestment in the developed communities.

Developing Communities are the cities where the most substantial amount of new growth—about 60 percent of new households and 40 percent of new jobs—will occur. The amount of infill and redevelopment, and the way in which new areas are developed, directly influence when and how much additional land in Developing Communities will need urban services—services that will call for substantial new regional and local investments. The *Policy Plan* and infrastructure investments will support the staged, coordinated expansion of regional systems (wastewater treatment, transportation, parks and open space, and airports) to help ensure adequate services to communities as they grow and stage their development within an area needed to accommodate 20 years of forecasted growth.

Roughly half of the 3,000 square miles in the seven-county Twin Cities area are rural or agricultural. That includes cultivated farmland, nurseries, tree farms, orchards and vineyards, scattered individual home sites or clusters of houses, hobby farms, rural centers, gravel mines, woodlands, and many of the region's remaining important natural resources. About five percent to eight percent of new growth is forecast for the rural and agricultural area—most of it in Rural Growth Centers. The *Policy Plan* and infrastructure investments will support Rural Growth Centers and adjacent townships in their efforts to concentrate growth as a way to relieve development pressure in the rural planning area.

Water Resources Management and Land Use

Water resources management is a vital tool for preserving and enhancing the region's economic competitiveness and quality of life. Decisions about water supply, surface water management, wastewater collection and treatment, transportation, housing, natural resources and other land uses cannot be made in isolation from one another. Regional transportation and wastewater system investments and services help shape growth patterns; housing location and types affect mobility options and travel patterns; unplanned growth can put a strain on natural areas, groundwater quality and other resources.

The significant costs associated with building new wastewater facilities mean that the region will have to make targeted investments, recognizing that “one size does not fit all,” and carefully weighing the options in all of the geographic planning areas of the region. The first priority for the wastewater system is to maintain the current infrastructure while reducing the excessive amount of inflow and infiltration into the system and providing additional capacity where needed. But the region must also look at ways to support growth, especially in the developing areas and the Rural Growth Centers.

The Council can support growth in developing areas by adding interceptor capacity, expanding existing treatment plants or building new treatment plants at the edge of the region. In order to support the concentration of growth in the Rural Growth Centers, the Council may need to assist the Rural Growth Center communities by agreeing to either acquire and operate the Rural Growth Center treatment plants or connect them to the Metropolitan Disposal System at their request.

The *Water Resources Management Policy Plan* seeks to integrate growth, housing, transportation, and natural resource policies with water resource management plans and investments to achieve regional goals contained in the *Framework* along with the strategies for each of the planning areas. The full potential of investments in wastewater infrastructure, transportation, housing, natural resource preservation and other factors is best realized when they are considered together in well-conceived land-use patterns. Maximizing the benefits of wastewater infrastructure plays a key role in supporting the competitive position of the region. The Council will coordinate wastewater infrastructure investments with land-use decisions to support and encourage redevelopment concentrations along transportation corridors.

Comprehensive Planning Process

The purpose of the Metropolitan Council's *2030 Regional Development Framework* is to provide a plan for how the Council and its regional partners can address these challenges. The *Framework* is prepared under the authority of state statutes, which direct the Council to:

...prepare and adopt...a comprehensive development guide for the metropolitan area. It shall consist of a compilation of policy statements, goals, standards, programs, and maps prescribing guides for orderly and economical development, public and private, of the metropolitan area. The comprehensive development guide shall recognize and encompass physical, social, or economic needs of the metropolitan area including but not limited to such matters as land use, parks and open space needs, the necessity for and location of airports, highways, transit facilities, public hospitals, libraries, schools, and other public buildings...
(Minnesota Statutes, section 473.145)

The *Framework* is the initial “chapter” and the unifying theme of the Council’s Metropolitan Development Guide. The *Framework* is the umbrella statement of regional policies, goals and strategies that will inform the Council’s metropolitan system plans for wastewater services, transportation, airports, and regional parks as well as other comprehensive development guide chapters and policies adopted by the Council.

Under state law, each city and township in the seven-county metropolitan area is required at least every 10 years to review and, if necessary, amend its local comprehensive plan to ensure that the local plan – and local fiscal devices and official controls – are consistent with the Council’s metropolitan system plans (Minn. Stat. Sec. 473.864). The next round of updated local plans will be due in 2008.

Following the adoption of this *Water Resources Management Policy Plan* as required under the Metropolitan Land Planning Act, local communities then have three years to update their local comprehensive plans. These plans are reviewed by the Council for conformance with system plans, consistency with Council policies, and compatibility with adjacent and affected governmental units.

Conformance: A local comprehensive plan is in conformance with the regional system plans, planned and existing, if the plan:

1. Accurately incorporates and integrates the components of the regional system plans:
 - Wastewater system components that are properly maintained to eliminate excessive I/I provide for planned growth consistent with the Council’s 2030 growth projections, and are staged consistent with the MCES development program. (Minn. Stat. 473.513).
 - Local surface water management plans consistent with requirements in the statute and Minnesota Rules Chapter 8410. (Minn Stat. 473.859, subd. 2 and Minn. Stat. 103B.235).
2. Integrates public facilities plan components (Minn. Stat. 473.859).
 - Integrates development policies and compatible land uses to accommodate forecast growth at appropriate densities and to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the regional system.
3. Adopts the standards and conditions under which the installation of private sewer systems will be permitted, and the areas not suitable for public or private systems because of public health, safety and welfare considerations. (Minn. Stat. 473.859, subd. 3.)

Consistency: A local comprehensive plan is consistent with Council policies and statutory requirements if the plan:

1. Addresses community role strategies contained in the *Framework*, including the planning and development of an interconnected local trunk line and lateral interceptor system that is integrated with the regional system.
2. Addresses the linkage of local land uses to local and regional wastewater systems. Meets other statutory requirements relating to:
 - Water supply plans, which must be consistent with statutes and DNR guidelines for water supply plans (Minn. Stat. 473.859, subd. 3).
 - Local surface water management (Minn. Stat. 473.859 and Minn. Stat. 103B.235).
3. Includes an implementation plan that describes public programs, fiscal devices, and other specific actions for sequencing and staging to implement the comprehensive plan and ensure conformance with regional system plans (Minn. Stat. 473.859 subd. 4).
4. Official controls
 - Capital Improvement Program (wastewater facilities, parks, transportation, water supply, and open space).

Compatibility: A local comprehensive plan is compatible with adjacent and affected governmental units, based on comments or concerns, or lack thereof from these entities. In order to be determined compatible, a community must adequately document that it has addressed the concern(s) of all adjacent and affected governmental units.