



# Thrive MSP

ONE VISION, ONE METROPOLITAN REGION



# 2040

*Thrive MSP 2040 is the 30-year vision for our region.*





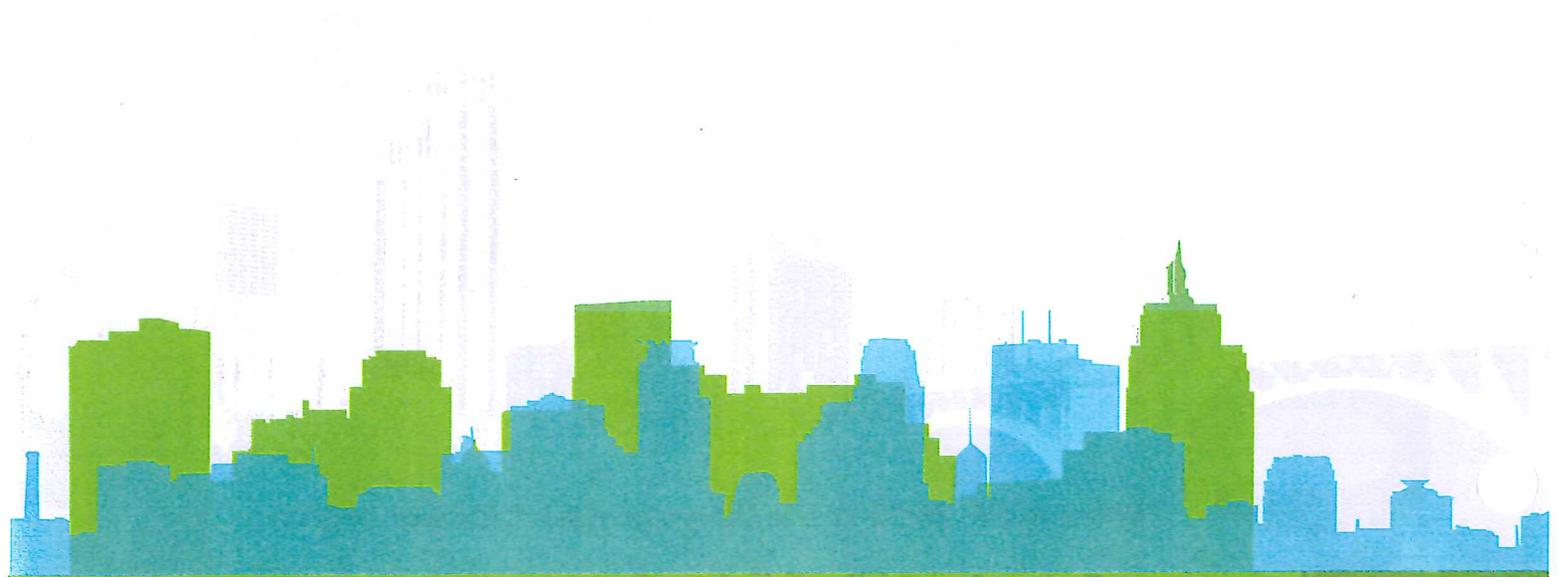
## A Thriving Region



Our region is anchored by three great rivers, dotted by hundreds of lakes, and endowed with wide expanses of green space, giving our residents beautiful landscapes that inspire and renew. Its largest river—the Mississippi—gave birth to two frontier settlements—Minneapolis and Saint Paul. From this base, our region has grown and prospered, and is now well known for its high quality of life, strong economy, and many assets:

- A resilient economy
- Vibrant arts, music and theatre communities, and professional sports teams
- Rich cultural diversity
- Abundant parks, recreational trails, conserved open space, fertile agricultural land, and natural resources
- A civic tradition of shared action

Today, the Twin Cities metropolitan area—the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Council—is a thriving region of nearly three million people living in 186 communities across the seven counties of Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington. The region has emerged as a world-class metropolitan area—a great place to live, work, and do business.



## Resilient economy, diverse communities, civic tradition

Our region's economy nimbly weathers the ups and downs of national trends. A diverse mix of high-tech and high-value-added industries calls the Twin Cities home—including the headquarters of 18 Fortune 500 companies—and benefits from our highly educated workforce and numerous educational institutions. Efficient transportation systems smoothly move people and goods to their destinations, and our residents enjoy a reasonable cost of living, benefitting from lower-priced public services.

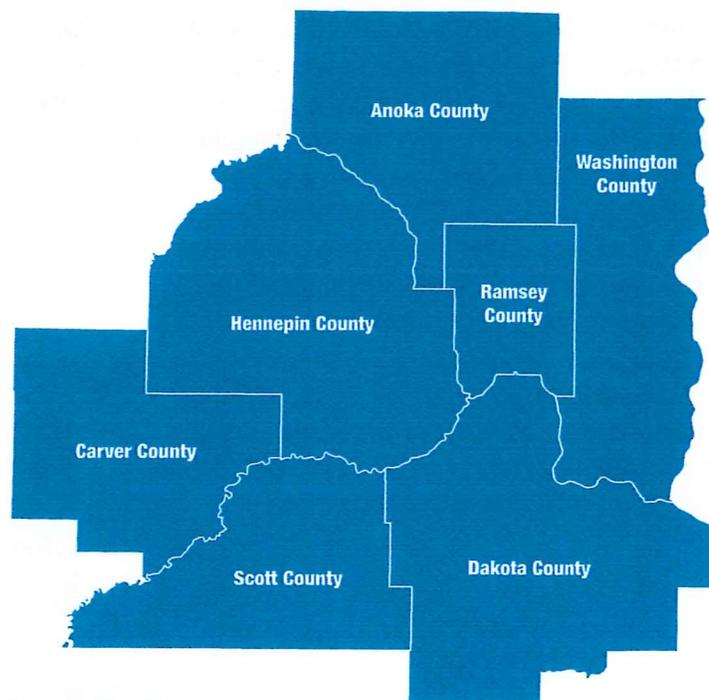
The region offers residents a wide range of communities to call home—active urban districts, city and suburban neighborhoods, small towns, and rural areas. Residents enjoy active living and year-round outdoor activities. *Sperling's BestPlaces* has ranked the Twin Cities as “the most playful metro in America” for the health, happiness, and low stress of its residents. In survey after survey, residents have declared our metropolitan area better or much better than other regions around the country.

Above all, our region has embraced a civic tradition of shared action by government, nonprofit and philanthropic organizations, community groups, and business leaders to enhance our communities and the region as a whole. The strengths that have made our region a success will help us meet the changes and challenges of today and tomorrow.

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*Our strengths  
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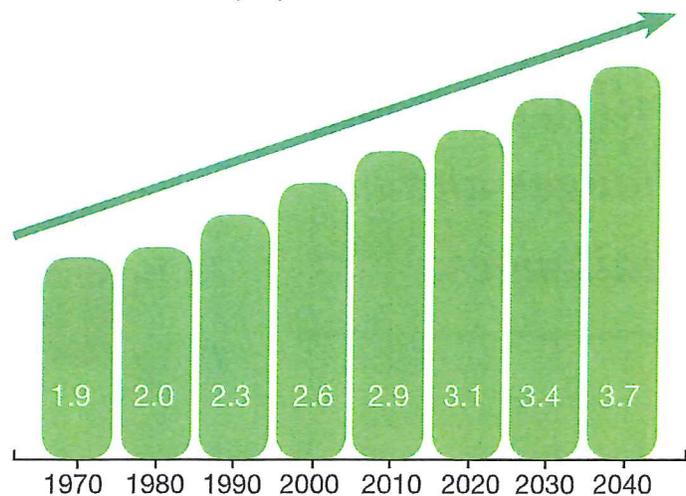
**Our Twin Cities region**

## Continued population and job growth through 2040

**More people.** Over the next thirty years, **our region is projected to grow by 824,000 residents**, a gain of 29% more than in 2010. Two-thirds of this population growth is likely to result from natural growth—more births than deaths and longer life expectancies. The remaining one-third will come from migration as our region’s economic opportunities attract migrants from the rest of the nation and world.

**More jobs and economic growth.** With 1.6 million jobs, the seven-county Minneapolis-Saint Paul region is the predominant economic center for Minnesota, western Wisconsin, the Dakotas, and Montana. Between 2010 and 2040, **our region is projected to add 550,000 new jobs**, an increase of 36%. Having surpassed one million jobs by 1980, our region is projected to surpass two million jobs by 2040. The total value added by all industry sectors in the region—the Gross Metropolitan Product—will rise to \$400 billion in 2040. That \$400 billion represents 1.5% of the U.S. Gross Domestic Product, a major achievement considering that the region has less than 1.0% of the nation’s population. (For more information, see the Metropolitan Council’s [MetroStats: Regional Forecast to 2040](#).)

The seven-county area addressed by *Thrive MSP 2040* is the heart of the larger Minneapolis-Saint Paul-Bloomington metropolitan statistical area. Defined by the federal government, the metropolitan statistical area now adds nine additional counties—Chisago, Isanti, Le Sueur, Mille Lacs, Sherburne, Sibley, and Wright Counties in Minnesota, and Pierce and St. Croix Counties in Wisconsin—to the core seven counties that are the purview of the Metropolitan Council. According to federal estimates, the seven-county Twin Cities region is 85% of the population and 92% of the employment of the greater 16-county metropolitan statistical area. The Office of Management and Budget connects the nine additional counties to the core seven on the basis of interconnected commuting patterns; nearly six in ten workers living in the nine collar counties work in the seven-county area. As the vibrancy of the seven-county core region grows, so will the vitality of the larger metropolitan statistical area.



**Twin Cities Population**  
(in millions)

## Changes and challenges that lie ahead for our region

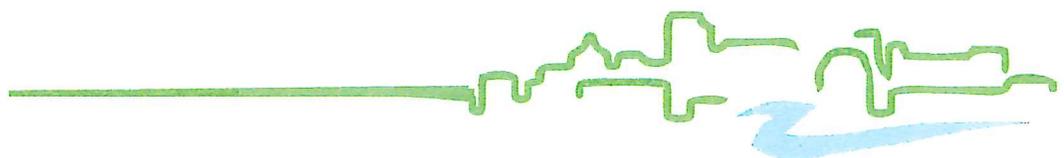
As we plan for our next 30 years, key challenges lie ahead—constrained fiscal resources, new demands stemming from demographic shifts, emerging environmental challenges, new regional planning priorities, and the increasing necessity of regional economic cooperation.

- The growing need to **preserve and maintain our aging infrastructure** is an increasing burden on limited fiscal resources. For example:
- Seventy-five years after the construction of the Metro Plant on the Mississippi River, our region's aging wastewater infrastructure requires ongoing investments to remain effective.
- Similarly, crumbling roads and bridges demonstrate the necessity for higher levels of investment to maintain our highway system.



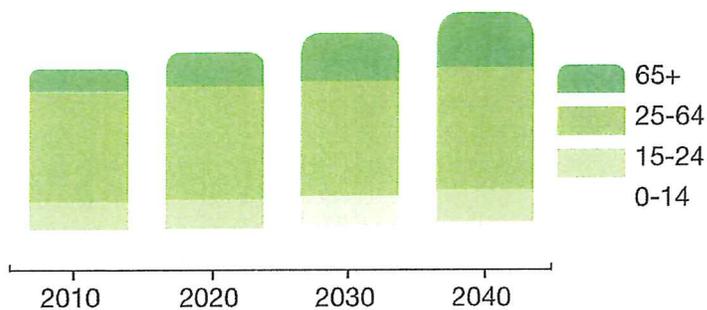
**Financial resources are inadequate** to fully address the region's needs:

- The [2013 Minnesota State Highway Investment Plan](#), prepared by the Minnesota Department of Transportation, shows that, under expected funding streams, the region will have only \$52 million available annually from 2014 to 2022 for highway mobility improvements, meeting only one-quarter of the projected need. No state transportation funding is available for highway mobility improvements after 2023.
- While there is adequate funding to operate the existing bus and transitway system through 2040, there is no funding to expand bus system operations, including both new routes and increased service frequency. Capital investments necessary for bus expansion compete for limited federal resources.
- Transitway funding projections anticipate that no resources will be available to construct new transitways beyond the METRO Orange Line (I-35W South), the METRO Green Line Extension (Southwest), the METRO Blue Line Extension (Bottineau), and four Arterial BRT Projects through 2024 without local financing through the Counties Transit Improvement Board. Under current forecasts, at least 11 potential transitways and 10 Arterial BRT projects will be competing for funding for transitway construction available beyond 2024.
- The Metropolitan Council projected that the region should add 51,000 new units of affordable housing between 2011 and 2020 to meet the growth in low- and moderate-income households. Over the first two years of the decade the region added 2,272 new affordable units, meeting less than 5% of the decade-long need. From 2011 to 2013, Minnesota Housing's "Super RFP"—the state's largest single source for financing housing for low-income households—funded construction of less than 2,000 new affordable units in the metro area, far under the need.
- Financial constraints exist for many of the initiatives described in this plan—particularly for emerging policy issues such as regional bicycle infrastructure and surface water treatment.

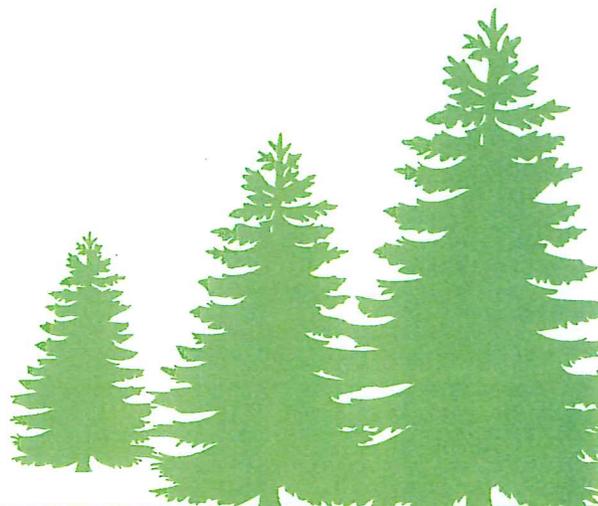


**Our population is changing** in ways that will influence the shape of our future growth and development:

- Our region is aging rapidly. More than one in five residents will be age 65 and older in 2040, compared to one in nine in 2010.
- By 2040, 40% of the population will be people of color, compared to 24% in 2010. This growing racial and ethnic diversity will add to the region's economic vitality.
- The region will gain 391,000 new households by 2040, requiring, on average, over 13,000 new housing units a year. With the changing demographics, these new households are likely to have different housing needs than today's households:
  - Only one in five net new households will be households with children.
  - Seniors will want housing to fit post-retirement lifestyles, with some choosing to age in place and others choosing to move to walkable and transit-served areas accessible to services and amenities.
- Significant racial disparities—in income, employment, poverty, homeownership, education—persist just as our region is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse. If today's disparities by race and ethnicity continue, our region would likely have 124,000 fewer people with jobs, 186,000 fewer homeowners, 274,000 more people in poverty, and \$31.8 billion less income compared to the outcomes if residents of color had the same socioeconomic characteristics as today's white residents. Unchallenged, these disparities jeopardize the future economic vitality of our region.



**Twin Cities Population By Age**



**Emerging environmental challenges** threaten the continued livability of our region:

- We have long assumed that our region has plenty of water, but we now recognize that our reliance on groundwater is unsustainable. Increased pumping of groundwater to support development is depleting aquifers, affecting lakes, streams, and wetlands. In some areas, groundwater levels have been dropping a foot per year since the 1970s.
- Our region is already feeling the effects of climate change as we experience more severe weather events and temperature extremes. Severe heat waves have stressed people, agriculture, and energy supplies. Increased frequency of severe weather is already increasing homeowner insurance premiums and repair costs of public facilities.



As we approach a half-century of coordinated planning across the region, new planning challenges and opportunities are emerging:

- Growth is occurring in not only new suburban subdivisions connected to the regional wastewater treatment system, but also redeveloping parts of the region. Driving this change are our aging population, new residential preferences among younger households, and increasing interest in sustainable lifestyles. This redevelopment, infill development, and intensification in the older, urbanized, and most accessible parts of the region more efficiently uses existing regional infrastructure, but can be complex and costly for developers and local units of government.
- An aging multifamily housing stock, including the large number of rental apartments built in the 1960s and 1970s, is ready for reinvestment to both retain structural integrity and meet the housing preferences of today's households. Many of these units have aged into affordability but are at risk of functional obsolescence.
- Light rail, commuter rail, and bus rapid transit lines are changing the landscape by attracting new real estate development in station areas and, along with new bicycle facilities, are creating more choices for how people move about the region.



In today's economy, regions are the primary drivers of **economic growth**. Our region competes economically with other regions across the nation and the globe. To thrive in this competitive environment, our region's public jurisdictions and private interests must work together:

- From 2000 to 2010, the region saw its first decade with net job loss since the Great Depression, losing 63,000 jobs. While our region was not alone losing jobs, regional leaders responded by strengthening our focus on a shared economic competitiveness strategy and creating **[GREATER MSP](#)**, a public-private economic development partnership focused on growing the regional economy.
- In the next 20 years, employers will face a retirement boom. Workforce turnover, skilled workforce preparedness, and succession planning will be major challenges for employers —not just for the Twin Cities, but for the nation as a whole. While the Council does not play a direct role in education, it recognizes that a skilled, educated workforce is a key factor in maintaining a competitive region.



## The opportunity of a regional approach

As a region, we can react to these challenges, or we can **plan for these challenges**. The coordinated regional planning approach underlying the Metropolitan Council and institutionalized in the Metropolitan Land Planning Act uniquely equips our region to transform challenges into opportunities to thrive.

In the late 1960s when the Metropolitan Council was created, **community leaders saw value in collaborating to solve regional issues**. At that time, the Minneapolis-Saint Paul region was facing tough challenges resulting from rapid population growth and unimpeded urban sprawl:

- Rapid growth was threatening ecosystems and natural areas better suited for preservation as parks and open space.
- Inadequately treated wastewater was emptying into lakes, rivers, and waterways.
- The Twin Cities' privately owned bus company was rapidly deteriorating, a victim of rising fares, declining ridership, and an aging bus fleet.
- Growing fiscal disparities were making it difficult for communities with inadequate tax capacity to fund essential services.

The Minnesota Legislature took unprecedented action to address these challenges. In 1967, the Legislature created the Metropolitan Council and gave it responsibilities for planning and coordinating the region's growth and setting policies to deal with regional issues. On signing the bill, then Governor Harold LeVander observed that the Council "was conceived with the idea that we will be faced with more and more problems that will pay no heed to the boundary lines which mark the end of one community and the beginning of another."



A region-wide perspective provides the opportunity to address issues that:

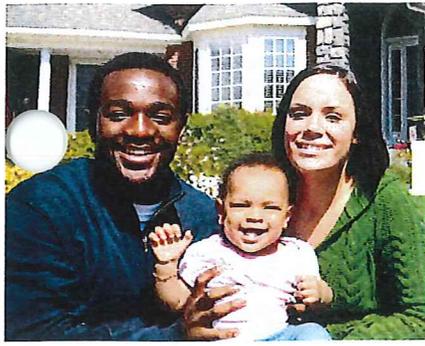
- Are bigger than any one community can address alone.
- Cross community boundaries to affect multiple communities.
- Could benefit from an opportunity to share best practices.
- Require resources that are most effectively used at a regional scale.

Four additional actions created today's regional organizational structure:

- 1969: The Legislature created the Metropolitan Sewer Board to consolidate sewer systems, reduce costs, and modernize the system.
- 1969: The Legislature created the Metropolitan Transit Commission to acquire the privately held transit system with the charge to overhaul the system, buy new buses, and improve signage, shelters, and bus stops.
- 1974: The Legislature designated more than 31,000 acres of existing city and county parks to be a new regional parks and open space system.
- 1994: The Legislature gave the Council operational control over transit and regional wastewater systems—consolidating planning, services, and operations into a single agency.

For nearly 50 years the Metropolitan Council has played a key role in coordinating regional growth and planning—providing essential services such as transportation and wastewater treatment, and convening partners to accomplish ambitious goals unrealistic for a single community but possible as a region. Thinking ahead—and working together—helps the region achieve a high quality of life, economies of scale, high-quality regional services, and a competitive edge envied by other metropolitan areas.





## **Thrive MSP 2040: Planning a prosperous, equitable, and livable region for today and generations to come**

Under state law, the Council is responsible for preparing a comprehensive development guide for the seven-county metropolitan area. Thrive MSP 2040 provides a framework for a shared vision for the future of our region over the next 30 years. While the Council is responsible for developing Thrive and the plans for the three statutory regional systems—wastewater, transportation, and regional parks—the vision within Thrive can only succeed through partnerships with local governments, residents, businesses, philanthropy, and the nonprofit sector.

As a regional plan, Thrive addresses issues greater than any one neighborhood, city, or single county can tackle alone to build and maintain a thriving metropolitan region. At the same time, the future's increasingly complex challenges demand innovative strategies and greater collaboration. Building on our region's past planning successes, the Council will adopt more collaborative and integrative approaches to allocating limited funds and addressing the demanding challenges that lie ahead. **Protecting our resources and investments**, Thrive provides the foundation for a prosperous, equitable, and livable region for today and generations to come.

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## Thrive MSP 2040 and the role of the Metropolitan Council

Under state statute, the Metropolitan Council is responsible for developing the comprehensive development guide:

The Metropolitan Council shall prepare and adopt, after appropriate study and such public hearings as may be necessary, 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 the orderly and economical development, public and private, of the metropolitan area. (Minn. Stat. 473.145)

The Council develops a comprehensive development guide at least once a decade following the updates to the long-term forecasts that follow the Decennial Census.

This document, Thrive MSP 2040, establishes the policy foundation used to complete regional systems and policy plans, development policies, and implementation strategies that together form the comprehensive development guide. State statute defines three metropolitan systems plans:

- Transportation Policy Plan (Minn. Stat. 473.146);
- Water Resources Policy Plan (Minn. Stat. 473.146 and 473.157);
- Regional Parks Policy Plan (Minn. Stat. 473.147).

In addition to the three statutory metropolitan systems plans, the Council is also producing a Housing Policy Plan. The Housing Policy Plan will provide an expanded policy framework to inform the Council's review of the housing elements and housing implementation programs of local comprehensive plans required in statute (Minn. Stat. 473.859, subd. 2 and subd. 4).

In 2005, the Minnesota State Legislature authorized the Metropolitan Council to take on planning activities to address regional water supply issues (Minn. Stat. 473.1565). As part of its overall planning efforts, the Council is currently updating the Master Water Supply Plan.

The policy direction in Thrive—and the systems and policy plans that follow—assist local governments to create consistent, compatible, and coordinated local comprehensive plans that together strive to achieve local visions within the regional policy framework, and help ensure efficient and cost-effective regional infrastructure.

The Council reviews local comprehensive plans based on the requirements of the Metropolitan Land Planning Act, state and federal guidelines referenced in this document, and the comprehensive development guide (Thrive MSP 2040 and the metropolitan systems plans). The Council considers each local comprehensive plan's compatibility with the plans of neighboring municipalities, consistency with adopted Council policies, and conformance with metropolitan system plans. If the Council finds that a community's local comprehensive plan is more likely than not to have a substantial impact on or contain a substantial departure from metropolitan system plans, the Council can require the community to modify its local plan to assure conformance with the metropolitan system plans (Minn. Stat. 473.175).

## Thrive: Outcomes



The Metropolitan Council has listened to the aspirations voiced by the region’s residents, civic, nonprofit and business leaders, and government officials and woven their thoughts and hopes into five desired outcomes that define our shared regional vision:

Stewardship Prosperity Equity Livability Sustainability



These five outcomes reinforce and support one another to produce greater benefits than any single outcome alone. Stewardship leads to decisions that advance prosperity, equity, livability, and sustainability. Prosperity provides more resources to support stewardship, equity, livability, and sustainability. Equity is crucial to creating greater prosperity and livability in the region. And so on.

Plans, policies, and projects that balance all five of these outcomes will create positive change, while efforts that advance only one or two at the expense of the others may fall short over the long term. Policymakers make tough decisions at the intersections of these five outcomes, weighing the benefits and costs of their options against these five outcomes. Focusing on outcomes allows for flexibility in implementation—for both the Council’s systems and policy plans and local comprehensive plans—while prioritizing a shared strategic vision.

With *Thrive MSP 2040*, the Metropolitan Council is adopting an outcomes-orientation to its regional policy, focusing on policies that demonstrably improve our region. The Council 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 enriching our region for our residents and businesses, not how much money we are investing or how many miles of highway, interceptor pipe, or rail we ...are building.

Living out the Council’s first principle of integration, the following narrative weaves together all of the Council’s core policy authorities—from affordable housing and aviation to wastewater treatment and water supply—in the framework of the five outcomes. The *Thrive* outcomes—stewardship, prosperity, equity, livability, and sustainability—are lofty ideals that defy simple categorization into the Council’s authorities. Instead, progress toward these outcomes demands that the Council use its full range of authorities and activities in a new, coordinated way. Integrated approaches will advance the *Thrive* vision of a prosperous, equitable, and livable region for today and generations to come.

## Stewardship

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Stewardship advances the Metropolitan Council's longstanding mission of orderly and economical development by responsibly managing the region's natural and financial resources, and making strategic investments in our region's future. Several of the major challenges that the Council was established to address—such as an aging bus fleet and inadequately treated wastewater polluting the region's lakes, rivers, and streams—demonstrate the need for effective regional stewardship.

### Stewardship means:

- Responsibly managing our region's finite resources, including natural resources—such as lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, groundwater, high quality natural habitats, and agricultural soils—financial resources, and our existing investments in infrastructure.
- Pivoting from expanding to maintaining our region's wastewater and highway infrastructure.
- Leveraging transit investments with higher expectations of land use.

Stewardship

## Prosperity ●

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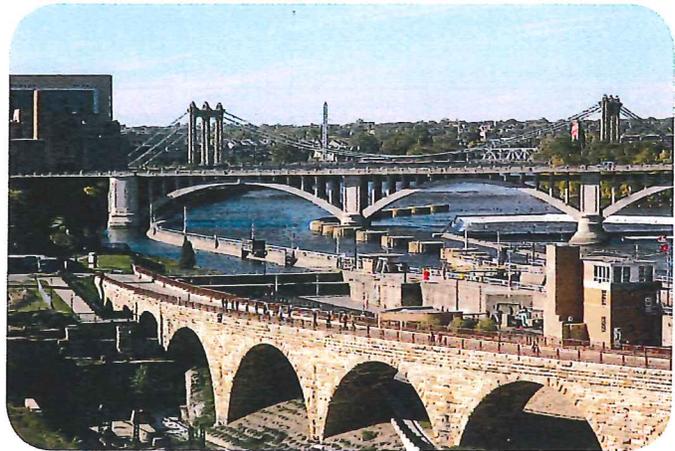
**Prosperity is fostered by investments in infrastructure and amenities that create regional economic competitiveness**, thereby attracting and retaining successful businesses, a talented workforce, and, consequently, wealth. Regional economic competitiveness results from strategic, long-term public and private decisions that build on and grow our region's economic strengths relative to other regions. Collectively, the region must provide great locations for businesses to succeed—particularly the industries that export products or services beyond the metropolitan area and bring revenue into the region.

### **Advancing prosperity involves:**

- Fostering the conditions for shared economic vitality by balancing major investments across the region.
- Protecting natural resources that are the foundation of prosperity.
- Planning for and investing in infrastructure, amenities, and quality of life needed for economic competitiveness.
- Encouraging redevelopment and infill development.

Prosperity

Minneapolis and Saint Paul developed as cities because of their favorable locations. Saint Paul was considered the navigable head of the Mississippi River, while Minneapolis found its origins alongside the hydropower provided by Saint Anthony Falls where milling blossomed. James J. Hill's Great Northern Railway brought the agricultural wealth of the entire northwestern United States through Minneapolis and Saint Paul, creating and reinforcing the region as a financial hub.



Though the economy has evolved over the last 150 years, businesses still seek locational advantages, particularly access to a skilled workforce, access to markets, and an overall environment that allows them to compete in the global market. Some businesses rely more heavily on freight and the movement of goods, while knowledge-intensive services concentrate on moving people to jobs and on the quality of life that attracts and retains a highly-skilled workforce.

The Metropolitan Council's regional planning and infrastructure set the stage for our region's economic competitiveness and prosperity. While local economic development authorities and others work directly with businesses, the work of creating and retaining businesses in the region requires coordinated efforts. The Council's contributions to regional economic competitiveness lie in the arena of community development—that is, supporting the infrastructure, amenities, and quality of life that are essential to attracting and retaining businesses and talent. The Council will use its existing role and capacity to plan and invest in community development and consider prosperity and economic competitiveness as a lens through which to evaluate its planning, operations, and investment decisions.

# Equity ●

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Equity connects all residents to opportunity and creates viable housing, transportation, and recreation options for people of all races, ethnicities, incomes, and abilities so that all communities share the opportunities and challenges of growth and change. For our region to reach its full economic potential, all of our residents must be able to access opportunity. Our region is stronger when all people live in communities that provide them access to opportunities for success, prosperity, and quality of life.

**Promoting equity means:**

- Using our influence and investments to build a more equitable region.
- Creating real choices in where we live, how we travel, and where we recreate for all residents, across race, ethnicity, economic means, and ability.
- Investing in a mix of housing affordability along the region’s transit corridors.
- Engaging a full cross-section of the community in decision-making.

Equity

Over the next three decades, the Twin Cities region will become more racially and ethnically diverse. In 2010, 24% of our region's population was people of color; by 2040, 40% of our region's residents are expected to be people of color. The share of people of color increases among younger age groups; 54% of residents under age 18 will be people of color in 2040. This rich and growing racial and ethnic diversity should be an asset to our continued economic vitality. However, our region has some of the largest disparities by race and ethnicity of any large metropolitan area in the nation, and the region will not be able to realize its full economic potential if these disparities persist:

- In the Minneapolis-Saint Paul-Bloomington metropolitan area, 25.7% of all people of color are poor, compared with 6.4% of white non-Latino people.<sup>3</sup> This is the largest such disparity among the 25 largest metropolitan areas. The poverty rate for African Americans is 5.7 times greater than the poverty rate for white, non-Latino people—by far the largest such disparity among the 25 largest metropolitan areas.
- The per capita personal income for black and African American people (\$15,336) is just 40% of the per capita personal income for white, non-Latino people (\$37,943).
- The percentage of adults of color who lack a high school diploma is nearly six times that of white, non-Latino adults.
- The unemployment rate for people of color is more than twice that of white, non-Latino persons. The unemployment rate for blacks and African Americans is 2.9 times the unemployment rate for white, non-Latino people—the biggest such disparity among the 25 largest metropolitan areas.
- The homeownership rate among households of color is 37%, half of the comparable rate among white, non-Latino households. Just 22% of black or African American households own their homes.

For more information about the historical context of these disparities, see [Choice, Place and Opportunity: An Equity Assessment of the Twin Cities](#).

<sup>3</sup> Data from the 2012 American Community Survey. To enable comparisons with other regions, numbers describe the 13-county Minneapolis-Saint Paul-Bloomington metropolitan statistical area.

Disparities by Race and Ethnicity in the Twin Cities, 2012			
Measure	White, non-Latino	Persons of color	Rank of disparity among 25 largest metro areas
Percentage of population age 25+ with a high school diploma	96.3%	78.3%	3
Percentage of civilian working-age population that is employed	79.4%	64.8%	1
Percentage above poverty threshold	93.6%	74.3%	1
Per capita income	\$37,943	\$18,078	4
Percentage of householders who own their homes	75.8%	37.0%	1

These disparities are growing at the same time the share of our region's population of color is growing. Eliminating these disparities and accessing the full potential of our region's residents of color could have dramatic benefits. If everyone in the Twin Cities in 2040 enjoyed the same socioeconomic profile as white non-Latino people do today, the social and economic impact would be significant. Compared to the disparities continuing unabated, there would be:

- 171,000 more people with a high school diploma
- 124,000 more people with jobs
- 274,000 fewer people in poverty
- \$31.8 billion in additional income
- 186,000 more homeowners<sup>4</sup>

The combined impact of increased employment, income, and homeownership would go far to close today's disparities in wealth by race and ethnicity. Nearly all of our region's net workforce growth over the next three decades will come from residents of color. In short, all residents of the Twin Cities region need access to opportunity if the region is to have a healthy and prosperous future.

<sup>4</sup> These figures are Metropolitan Council staff calculations based on 2007-2011 American Community Survey data for the seven-county Twin Cities region and the Metropolitan Council's Revised Regional Forecast to 2040 (February 2014).

## Livability

**Livability focuses on the quality of our residents' lives and experiences in our region**, and how places and infrastructure create and enhance the quality of life that makes our region a great place to live. With abundant and beautiful open space, an active arts community, a range of housing options, and a reasonable cost of living, the Twin Cities region is widely recognized for its high quality of life.

The Metropolitan Council's focus on livability is on creating and renewing vibrant places and underlying infrastructure, investing in regional parks and affordable housing, and collaborating with partners to achieve the full range of possibilities that help our region thrive. **Livability adds value to our region** by helping to retain and attract a talented workforce, increasing living choices, building community identity, highlighting the unique qualities of local places, and supporting individual decisions that reinforce those qualities. The Council is committed to increasing livability for people of all ages, races, ethnicities, incomes, national origins, and abilities in the region through its authorities, its investments in infrastructure, and its collaboration with others to sustain and increase a high quality of life.

### Enhancing livability means:

- Increasing access to nature and outdoor recreation through regional parks and trails.
- Providing housing and transportation choices for a range of demographic characteristics and economic means.
- Supporting bicycle facilities to promote bicycling for transportation, recreation, and healthy lifestyles.
- Aligning resources to support transit-oriented development and walkable places.
- Promoting healthy communities and active living through land use, planning, and investments.

Livability

Livability helps attract and retain the people and businesses that our region needs to thrive and compete economically. People are increasingly choosing where they want to live—especially in urban areas that offer attractive amenities and lifestyles—and then looking for jobs there. Young, creative professionals today are highly mobile and can live anywhere they want. They are choosing high-amenity places that have a diverse population, a rich arts and entertainment culture, natural beauty, abundant recreation, and sufficient walkability and transit systems that allow them to travel without a car.

Attracting younger talent through high-quality communities is also an investment in the future market for our housing stock. Many young urbanites look for more space as they have children and their lifestyle preferences change. As existing residents age out of their homes, these younger residents will be ready to move in. Businesses also place a high value on livability. Whether a large company seeking a location for an office or a talented entrepreneur looking to grow an innovative business, decision-makers want to know their employees can get to work and are happy living here.

Every community can strive for better livability, but the needs and challenges for infrastructure and place-making vary widely by location. A neighborhood in the urban core may need wider sidewalks, shared open spaces, careful building detailing, and a mix of activities to be livable. A suburban neighborhood may need increased housing options and more bike trails to access parks and transit stops. A rural center may need a traffic-calmed main street that allows pedestrians to cross more safely or renovated downtown buildings to catalyze reinvestment.

Livability for all areas also requires the network of businesses—whether an ethnic restaurant owned by new immigrants or the small-town bar owned by the same family for generations—that makes our communities unique, both supporting local residents and attracting visitors from across the world. Each jurisdiction has a unique combination of natural landscape, built environment, and local culture; communities that recognize and value their particular character, needs, and opportunities can more effectively invest in their future.

## Sustainability ●

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“Our greatest responsibility is to be good ancestors,” Dr. Jonas Salk once said. And that responsibility calls us to live and act sustainably. Sustainability means protecting our regional vitality for generations to come by preserving our capacity to maintain and support our region’s well-being and productivity over the long term. The region’s investments in prosperity, equity, and livability will fall short over the long term if the region exhausts its resources without investing in the future.

### Planning for sustainability means:

- Promoting the wise use of water through expanding water conservation and reuse, increasing groundwater recharge, and optimizing surface water and groundwater use.
- Providing leadership, information, and technical assistance to support local governments’ consideration of climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience.
- Operating the region’s wastewater treatment and transit systems sustainably.

# Sustainability

## Promoting the wise use of water

The Twin Cities metropolitan area is endowed with a relative abundance of high-quality ground and surface water. Three major rivers, vast underground aquifers, and over 900 lakes make us the envy of urban areas the world over. Aside from the beauty and recreational value of the region's lakes and rivers, water is necessary to sustain our residents and our economic prosperity. The area's plentiful water supplies and the proximity of navigable rivers sustained indigenous communities and supported the development of the region's growing cities. The Mississippi River and the region's prolific aquifers continue to provide residents with a reliable water supply. Our rivers are natural highways that serve commerce. Our region's lakes, rivers, and streams nurture wildlife and offer people a variety of recreational opportunities.

### *In parts of the region, groundwater levels are declining.*

Yet our water supplies are not limitless. Population growth, development, localized water shortages, contamination, drought and the impact of groundwater withdrawal on surface waters, are affecting our future water supply. Increasing reliance on groundwater as our main source of drinking water has become a significant issue. In parts of the region, groundwater levels are declining. In some cases, it is affecting, or has the potential to affect, lake and wetland levels.

A pressing concern is the impact that current groundwater use and future development might have on the reliability of groundwater as a municipal water source.

In 2010, 70% of our region's drinking water came from groundwater, with the remainder coming from surface water sources. Groundwater analysis indicates that our aquifers are showing signs of depletion—water levels in some locations have declined by 40 feet in the last 40 years—which in turn has begun to have impacts on our lakes and wetlands in the region. Forecasts indicate that the region will add over 800,000 residents over the lifetime of this plan. Continuing current practices of using groundwater as a primary drinking water source will lead to continued depletion of groundwater supplies across the region. Conservation measures alone are inadequate to protect the region's water supply. Rather, the region needs to restore balance among water sources, maintain and enhance groundwater recharge, and expand the use of conservation measures. To achieve our long-term vision of the region's prosperity and livability, our region's water resources must be sustainable, supported by a regional strategy that balances growth and protection to improve and maintain the quality and quantity of our water in our lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, and aquifers.

The Minnesota State Legislature uses the following definition of water sustainability:

*“Water is sustainable when the use does not harm ecosystems, degrade water quality or compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”*

The Metropolitan Council is committed to collaborating with its partners to promote the long-term sustainability of the region’s water resources and water supply. This regional strategy will balance growth and protection to improve and maintain the quality and quantity of our lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, and groundwater supplies. The Council will work with state, local, and regional partners to provide for sustainable water resources through effective planning and management of water supply, surface water, and wastewater. To promote adequate and high-quality groundwater and surface water supplies, the Council will:



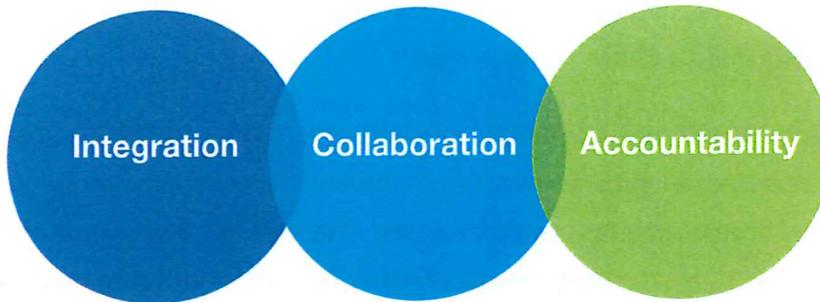
- Promote water sustainability in communities through the *2040 Water Resources Policy Plan* and the *Master Water Supply Plan*, and through the review of local water supply plans, surface water management plans, comprehensive plans, and comprehensive sewer plans.
- Promote the wise use of water through optimizing surface water and groundwater use, conservation, reuse, aquifer recharge, and other practices.
- Collaborate with partners, including providing technical assistance to local governments about wastewater, water supply, and surface water management.
- Address the reliability, resiliency, security, and cost-effectiveness of the region’s water supplies.
- Incorporate water sustainability considerations in all areas of Council policy and actions, including overall development patterns, water management, transportation, housing, and regional parks.
- Identify subregional and local water sustainability solutions that balance regional needs and local objectives.

The Council’s *2040 Water Resources Policy Plan* will advance water sustainability through specific policies for water supply, surface water management, and wastewater.



## 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.



## 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.



## 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.