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MEMORANDUM

TO: Sunfish Lake Mayor and City Council

FROM: Michelle Barness

DATE: April 30, 2014

RE: Sunfish Lake – Summary of Metropolitan Council Thrive 2040

FILE: 211.02 - General

5/6/14 CC Mtg.
**Agenda
Item
6b**

BACKGROUND

The Metropolitan Council has released Thrive MSP 2040 to metro communities for review and comment. This document describes the Metropolitan Council's regional vision, which will inform policy in Sunfish Lake's next Comprehensive Plan update. In the document Sunfish Lake is designated as a "Rural Residential" community. Community designations are used by the Council to establish land use expectations (including densities and overall development patterns), and to outline respective roles for local communities in planning for growth.

ANALYSIS

Rural Service Area. Nearly half of the land in the metro region is in the Rural Service Area. This area includes a range of uses including cultivated farmland, vineyards, hobby farms, gravel mines, woodlands, small towns, scattered and clustered housing, open spaces and significant expanses of the region's natural resources. The rural service area is able to protect significant natural amenities, while accommodating desires for rural and small-town residential choices. Aside from investments in the regional parks system, Metropolitan Council investments in regional services are limited in the Rural Area. The Rural Residential designation is one of several designations provided for communities located within the rural service area.

Rural Residential Community. According to the Metropolitan Council, Rural Residential communities have residential patterns characterized by large lots and do not have plans to provide urban infrastructure, such as centralized wastewater treatment. Many of these communities have topographic development limitations and an historic development pattern

with lot sizes that generally ranged from 1- 2.5 units/acres. Rural Residential development precludes providing urbanized infrastructure in an effective, connected, and efficient manner. These areas need to accommodate minimal growth while protecting natural areas and water quality and quantity, and ensuring sufficient public infrastructure (e.g. public roads and trails).

Based on the Rural Residential designation, Metropolitan Council's 2040 population, household and employment forecasts for Sunfish Lake are as follows:

2040 Population: 520
2040 Households: 210
2040 Employment: 10

The U.S. Census Bureau identifies Sunfish Lake's 2010 population as 521 individuals, which already exceeds the Metropolitan Council's projections for 2040. The 2010 Census identifies 183 households in Sunfish Lake, so that the Metropolitan Council is projecting an increase of 27 units in Sunfish Lake by 2040. Based on a net area analysis of vacant and/or subdividable land (excluding wetlands, drainage ways, floodplains, and steep slopes), the City estimated in its 2008 Comprehensive Plan that it has the capacity for 228 households at full build out. Considering the fact that some property owners may decide against subdivision, the Metropolitan Council's estimate of 210 households by 2040 seems reflective of the City's own assessment of development conditions.

Policy Implications for Rural Residential Communities.

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, to support public health, and to 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, to support public health, and to 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.

Policies related to housing affordability and economic competitiveness are generally not applicable to Sunfish Lake, given current zoning and land use designations which do not provide for multifamily housing, or commercial or industrial development due to a lack of public water and sewer infrastructure.

Other policies, including natural resource protection and water sustainability are particularly relevant to Sunfish Lake, which due to its larger lot sizes and natural surroundings has a significant opportunity to manage development with resource protection in mind. Sunfish Lake will continue to integrate goals, priorities, and strategies for the conservation and protection of land and water resources in its comprehensive plan, water resource management plan, stormwater management plan, and ordinances.

Issues related to access, mobility, and transportation choice are relevant to Sunfish Lake in that the City is responsible for maintaining public roads and for working with other jurisdictions to address the maintenance of shared arterial and collector roads. In addition, the City may wish to address improved pedestrian and bike routes in the future, to provide additional mobility and passive recreation options for residents.

In addition, Thrive 2040 has asked all communities to consider how their land use regulations and development patterns help to build a resilient region. Community policy is required to support the achievement of Minnesota adopted greenhouse gas emission goals, and develop local resilience to the impacts of climate change. This regional policy addresses a new set of issues which have not undergone regular review and consideration by communities in the past.

The Metropolitan Council suggests that the community role in building resilience may include:

- Addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation throughout the local comprehensive plan.
- Identifying measures that would result in reductions in water use, energy consumption, and emission of greenhouse gases.
- Ensuring access to solar energy by addressing it in the comprehensive plan and ordinances, as required by the Metropolitan Land Planning Act, and considering the use of other alternative energy sources as part of the planning process.
- Identifying measures to address impacts to local resources and infrastructure systems as a result of more frequent or severe weather events.
- Identifying initiatives as cost saving measures that may, as a result, lower energy consumption, reduce the generation of greenhouse gas emissions, preserve water supply, reduce waste, or increase participation in recycling programs.
- Participate in programs that evaluate and share city practices and provide technical support, such as GreenSteps program and the Regional Indicators Initiative.

SUMMARY

With regards to projected development patterns in Sunfish Lake, including the degree of population and household growth in the community, the Thrive 2040 document and associated forecasts are supportive of policies provided in the Sunfish Lake 2008 Comprehensive Plan. The Rural Residential land use designation accurately portrays the City's current and future land use goals. Rural Residential communities may continue to develop at one unit per 2 ½ acres, with the provision of water and sewer utilities by individual land owners, as opposed to via community-wide infrastructure improvements. While communities that fall within the Urban Service Area receive a higher level of regional service, the Council expects these jurisdictions to plan for and build the higher levels of development that economically support those regional services. Sunfish Lake is considered to fall within the Rural Service Area, where the Council discourages higher development densities to ensure the orderly development of the region, promote the efficient use of regional investments, and to protect agricultural land, water resources, and the rural landscape.

Thrive 2040 policies pertaining to resource protection, water sustainability, mobility & transportation, and orderly land use are generally reflected in existing goals, policies, and strategies found in the Sunfish Lake comprehensive plan and ordinances. Policies pertaining to community resilience are generally new to Sunfish Lake land use planning and regulation, and will require careful consideration in the course of future plan updates and ordinance amendments.

cc: Catherine Iago, City Clerk
Tim Kuntz, City Attorney
Don Sterna, City Engineer
David Neameyer, Building Official
Jim Naves, City Forester
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