

Introduction

Hennepin County is the largest of Minnesota’s 87 counties in terms of population, budget, and estimated market value.

It encompasses 611 square miles, more than 100 lakes, 45 cities, 22 school districts, and one unorganized territory (Fort Snelling).

The diversity of land and communities in Hennepin County makes us unique, as well as a great place to live and work. We have a high-density downtown, growing suburbs, and rural areas where farms, lakes, and open spaces prevail. Residents have a wide variety of choices in housing, transportation, and lifestyle. Almost a quarter of Minnesota’s residents have chosen Hennepin County as home.

The county has more than 1.2 million residents, including approximately 40 percent of the state’s residents of color. Almost 17 percent of county residents ages five or older speak a language other than English at home, and nearly 13 percent of the county’s population is foreign-born. Along with that diversity comes significant disparities by race and ethnicity — some of the largest in the nation — in employment, educational attainment, health, and socioeconomic status.

The county has one-third of the state’s jobs and approximately 42,000 businesses including some of Minnesota’s largest employers — Allina Health System, Best Buy, Cargill, Carlson Companies, General Mills, Mall of America, Medtronic, Super Valu, United Health Group, University of Minnesota, US Bank, and Target Corporation. In addition, the county is home to the Minneapolis-St. Paul

International Airport, the University of Minnesota, and the Mall of America.

Strategic investments and partnerships that leverage geographic diversity, infrastructure, the strength of the local economy, and increasingly diverse human capital are essential to the continued success and wellbeing of Hennepin County and its residents.

Hennepin County Forecasts 2040

The current forecast is the sum of our 45 cities and the unincorporated area of Fort Snelling. These forecasts may change after the adoption of all local comprehensive plans.



Comprehensive Planning Process

The Metropolitan Council, acting as the designated regional planning agency under the Metropolitan Land Planning Act, every 10 years develops a regional development framework and associated system and policy plans.



Regional development guide

[Thrive MSP 2040](#) was adopted as the regional development guide on May 28, 2014. Thrive identifies five outcomes (stewardship, prosperity, equity, livability, and sustainability) that set the policy direction for the region's system and policy plans.

System and policy plans

The statutory-required system plans for this region include the [2040 Transportation Policy Plan](#), [2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan](#), and [2040 Water Resources Policy Plan](#). The policy plans (the [Housing Policy Plan](#) and [Master Water Supply Plan](#)) establish a shared vision for regionally important issues, but are not considered regional systems.

Local comprehensive plans

Local governmental units in the seven-county region are required to develop a comprehensive plan, fiscal devices, and official controls that conform to Thrive 2040 and the related system plans.

Metropolitan Council review

The Metropolitan Council reviews comprehensive plans of all local governmental units, focusing on three primary areas:

- Conformance with metropolitan system plans
- Consistency with adopted policy plans
- Compatibility with plans of affected and adjacent jurisdictions

Partner agency review

Each city, township, and county reviews the comprehensive plans of government units adjacent to it or within its borders. Hennepin County reviews comprehensive plans for compatibility:

- plans within the county
- plans from adjacent cities and townships
- plans from adjacent counties: Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Ramsey, and Scott

Hennepin County process

As a local unit of government, Hennepin County is required to develop a comprehensive plan that, at a minimum, responds to the system statement provided by the Metropolitan Council. Hennepin County received a system statement from the Metropolitan Council in September of 2015.

Our chapters include:

- Introduction
- Transportation: Mobility 2040 Plan
- Regional Parks and Trails System
- Water Resources
- Mississippi River Critical Corridor Area
- Implementation

Hennepin County does not have land use authority, and as such, is not required to prepare a land use component.

Organizational structure

Development of the comprehensive plan was guided by the [Hennepin County Comprehensive Plan Policy Advisory Committee \(PAC\)](#), an external advisory committee with members appointed by Hennepin County commissioners. The PAC met periodically from mid-2016 through 2018.

Outreach and engagement

Outreach and engagement for the comprehensive plan was conducted in two phases. Phase one focused on receiving input and guidance from internal and external thought leaders — experts in regional and local affairs — through hosting of a series of idea forums, roundtables, and targeted interviews. Participants were asked: 1) What key challenges are we facing today and into the future? 2) What should we do to address those challenges? Phase two focused on sharing the draft document and receiving feedback from internal staff, external partners, and the general public.

What we heard

Thought leaders told us change is coming. They emphasized the following:

We're growing. The county is projected to gain about 152,000 people, 113,000 jobs, and 73,000 households from 2020 to 2040.

We're becoming more diverse. Migration and birth rates continue to move the county toward a less homogeneous people. This will bring different expectations of the county and the region.

We're aging as a population. Meeting the needs of an older population will require adjusting our services and infrastructure. An older population may work less overall but also has more time and expertise to share.

The climate is changing. Different weather regimes will force adaptation in our infrastructure, services, and society. The county will also face pressure to reduce its contribution to climate change.

The economy is shifting. Technology is enabling the rise of a sharing economy and is redefining what work is. No longer will we build one thing for everyone, and many products won't be physical. The workforce is becoming highly connected and mobile.

Mobility is rapidly evolving. Options for how we travel are expanding and our preferences are changing, too. The sharing economy, transit, and autonomous vehicles have the potential to profoundly and rapidly change how people get around. What we do today might not align with future mobility needs.

Our infrastructure is aging. Many of our systems were built in the second half of the 20th century. That infrastructure needs maintenance, but society has not budgeted for it. There are opportunities to rethink these systems as we rebuild, incorporating new goals and technologies.

What success looks like

Thought leaders also told us what success in light of our anticipated challenges would look like to them. County staff identified themes among these outcomes, which can be summarized as: Hennepin County should be prosperous, livable, and resilient, and it should be so for all.

Prosperous: Thought leaders told us Hennepin County should be a vibrant place where people and business come from around the world to get ahead and make life better for themselves, their families, and their community; and those already here stay here and enjoy the same successes. It should be home to people who have what they need to contribute to society and have the highest quality of life in the nation; a place where employers have the talented and motivated workers they need and workers have stimulating jobs with excellent pay and benefits; a place where location and skills align for workers and job vacancies. Advancing prosperity will mean investing in the services, infrastructure, amenities, and natural resources that lead to vibrant, healthy people and communities.

Livable: Thought leaders told us Hennepin County should be a welcoming place that attracts people from outside the region with a high quality of life. It should be a place with healthful, affordable housing options for all, where there is clean air and clean water. It should be a place that embraces diversity; a place where all people have the opportunity to be healthy and to create a happy, successful life; a place where people are mobile and connected with the things they want, how they want; a place that enjoys high-quality art, recreation, entertainment, and cultural connections; a place where age, race, gender, income, and neighborhood do not determine your health, safety, opportunity, mobility, and education. Creating livable places will mean creating conditions for vibrant, healthy people, communities, and natural resources.

Resilient: Thought leaders told us Hennepin County should be a resilient place where resources are used wisely, and prosperity and livability are shared fairly. It should be a place where natural systems are in balance with the systems people need to live well; a place where people and communities are resilient and adaptable to changes, shocks, and stresses, both short-term and long-term; a place financially able to serve residents well into the future. Advancing resiliency will mean responsibly managing natural and financial resources, ensuring that people have what they need to succeed, and making strategic investments for the future.

For a full account of their input, read the [Thought Leader Report](#) and [Report Summary](#).

Feedback alignment

What we heard through comprehensive plan outreach and engagement supports and strengthens the county's existing mission, vision and overarching goals.

Mission

The mission of Hennepin County is to enhance the health, safety, and quality of life of our residents and communities in a respectful, efficient, and fiscally responsible way.

Vision

We envision a future where residents are healthy and successful and where our communities are safe and vibrant. We will strive to meet and exceed expectations by engaging people and communities in developing innovative solutions to challenges. We will be a diverse, learning organization. We will partner with others to enhance the quality of life in Hennepin County and the region.

Overarching goals

Healthy: People are healthy, have access to quality health care and live in a clean environment.

Protected and safe: People are safe from harm through prevention, early intervention and treatment services, and through enhanced public safety.

Self-reliant: People achieve success with the support of essential services, have access to affordable housing, and opportunities for life-long learning.

Assured due process: People are assured equal protection of the laws through an adversarial and respectful system designed to assure fairness and reliability in the ascertainment of liability, guilt, and innocence.

Mobile: People and goods move easily and safely throughout the county and the region, via an integrated system of transportation.

Timeline

- 2014 Thrive MSP 2040 comprehensive plan adopted by the Metropolitan Council
- 2015 Metropolitan Council develops regional system plans — transportation, water resources, and regional parks
- Metropolitan Council distributes system statements to counties, cities, and townships
- 2016 Hennepin County updates our comprehensive plan
- 2018 Hennepin County releases our plan for jurisdictional review (six months)
- 2018 Hennepin County submits plan to Metropolitan Council by 12/31/2018
- 2019 Metropolitan Council reviews plan and authorizes adoption
- 2019 Hennepin County Board adopts plan

What changed since the 2030 Comprehensive Plan?

As we plan for the future, it is wise to reflect on what we've learned from the past.

In 2008, the key challenges facing Hennepin County, the region, and the nation included fallout from the economic recession and the housing crisis. We questioned sustainability of the American dream of homeownership, meeting growing community needs with declining resources, the impact of technology on the built and natural environments, and adapting for success in an increasingly global economy.

The 2030 Hennepin County Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners on June 28, 2011 (Resolution No. 11-0274) fulfilling our statutory requirement under MN Stat 473.

In addition to adoption of the 2030 Hennepin County Comprehensive Plan, we responded proactively to the key challenges of 2008 through a number of new initiatives and innovative partnerships, including:

- Southwest LRT Community Works (2010)
- Bottineau Community Works
- Penn Avenue Community Works
- Hennepin County Complete Streets Policy (2009)
- Hennepin County Bike Plan
- Asset Management Plan
- Pedestrian Plan
- Freight Study (2016)
- Sales and Use Transportation Tax Implementation Plan (2017)
- Counties Transit Improvement Board (2008-2017)
- Hennepin – University Partnership (HUP)
- Transitways Impact Research Program (TIRP)
- Natural Resources Strategic Plan
- Solid Waste Master Plan
- Cool Counties
- Youth Sports Program
- Heading Home Hennepin
- Education
- Reducing Disparities