

HENNEPIN COUNTY 2040

Thought leader engagement highlights

Prosperous, livable and sustainable

Hennepin County has a history as a leader, with residents who are healthy and successful and communities that are safe and vibrant. The story of Hennepin County includes big opportunities, big challenges and a determination to respond. It is the story of energized and engaged residents and employees. It is the story of partners working together toward opportunity and success.

Hennepin County is updating its comprehensive plan — a forward-thinking framework leading to a compelling vision toward 2040. As we plan, we must consider big questions. What are the greatest challenges we face? What does success look like? The county asked regional thought leaders and others for their thoughts on these big questions. **This document summarizes challenges and aspirations stakeholders shared; these are not the county's vision or necessarily issues the county will address**, but they will inform the plan.



Thought leaders told us change is coming

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

Workforce shortages, globalization, automation and communication are altering the work people do and how they do it. The region will need to compete to attract talent.

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.



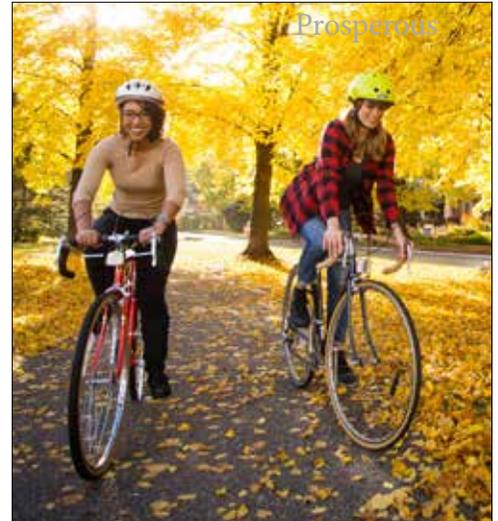
What does success look like?

Thought leaders told us what success in light of our anticipated challenges would look like to them. County staff identified three themes among these outcomes, which can be described as:

Hennepin County should be **prosperous, livable** and **sustainable**, 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 who are looking for 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.



SUSTAINABLE

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 sustainability will mean responsibly managing natural and financial resources, ensuring that people have what they need to succeed, and making strategic investments for the future.



Hennepin County

Mission, vision, goals

Adopted 2004

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

People are **Healthy**

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

People are **Protected and safe**

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

People are **Self-reliant**

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

People are **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.

People are **Mobile**

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

About our process

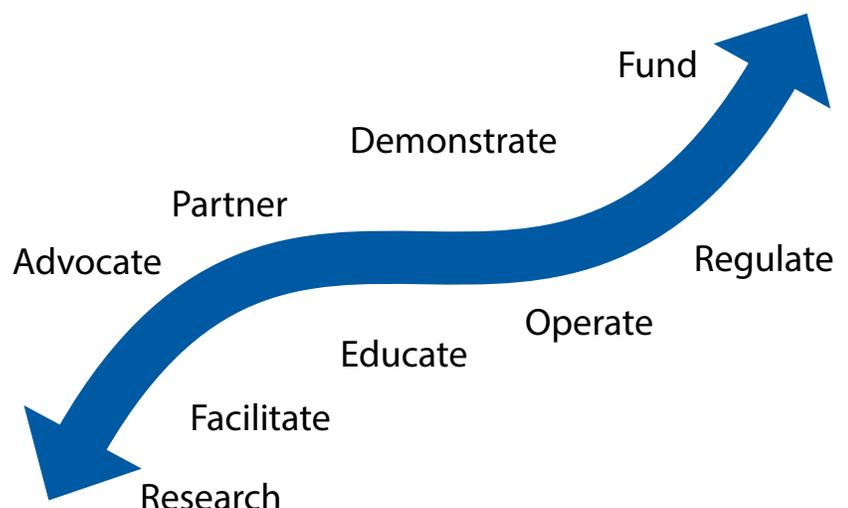
This document summarizes ideas, challenges and opportunities shared in a series of forums, roundtables, interviews and conversations held between early 2016 and early 2017. We asked regional experts, Hennepin County staff and partner agencies to share what they see as the important challenges facing Hennepin County and our region over the next 20 years, and what Hennepin County should become by 2040. A full account of their input is online at hennepin.us/2040plan.

What we heard in these conversations supports and strengthens the County's existing mission, vision and goals (at left), and generally is consistent with data and staff analysis conducted in preparation for the comprehensive plan. The conversations will inform our comprehensive plan, focusing our attention on prosperity, livability and sustainability.

The county's role will vary

No single leader, group or agency can address all our big issues alone. Hennepin County does and will continue to work with many others to address the complex issues noted in this summary. The degree to which the county engages in a particular topic or issue will vary for many reasons. On some issues the County will play a supporting or contributing role, such as providing information and conducting research. In other areas we will play a more direct role, such as operating facilities and programs. In still others, we will have a strong leadership or regulatory role, such as funding initiatives, collecting taxes or enforcing laws.

The figure below illustrates a range for efforts the county might pursue, from less involved on the left to more involved on the right.



Prosperous Hennepin County

Where are we today?

Hennepin County is home to vibrant cultures and an economy that competes on a global stage. The economy is diversified and resilient, generally able to weather economic downturns better than other regions, while remaining affordable for many people.

The region has enjoyed prominence in many ways over the past century, but the Twin Cities faces increasing competition from around the U.S. and the world. The institutions and economic engines that powered growth in the past century are less dominant today, and the research economy has changed.

Hennepin County government remains a nationally known leader in human services, transportation and innovative programs. These have created a foundation for prosperity, but thought leaders said the county can do much more.

Current indicators

- Most populous county in Minnesota, with 1.2 million people — 35th most populous county in the United States.
- The county is gaining more people than any other Minnesota county each year — 9,334 in 2016.
- 11 Fortune 500 companies.
- 2nd highest per capita income in Minnesota — \$35,902.

What should we become?

Thought leaders shared aspirations of what we should be by 2040. They told us that with Hennepin County out front:

The county will be the economic engine of the region and state with a strong, diverse and healthy economy. All its residents will share in prosperity, no matter how it is analyzed — by income, race, cultural background, neighborhood, gender or age.

The county will be an economic leader in the region and the nation, bringing income and jobs to the county.

Everyone will have fulfilling roles in the economy at all experience levels and those roles will meet people's needs fairly.

The county will lead the nation in strengthening residents' health, communities and natural environment to support prosperity.

People will have multiple avenues to training and education throughout their careers.

The county will lead the nation in preparing high school and post-secondary students for success, with equal outcomes for all groups of students.

All people will have equal pay for equal work and employment rates among those who want to work will be consistently high.

All residents will enjoy the region's prosperity and disparities will be reduced.

The county will welcome people from around the country and the world to power the region's growing economy.

The county will retain and attract seniors with its high quality of life, keeping valuable knowledge, skills and people in the region.

People and businesses will have access to safe, reliable and efficient transportation that supports the regional economy.

Challenges

- The region is projected to lose workers, mostly as a result of an aging population, creating a workforce shortage.
- Our population is aging; this trend is permanent and will have long lasting implications for government services, budgets and households.
- People around the country and the world have vague knowledge of the Twin Cities, but it usually centers around stereotypes. When people do get here — especially people of color — they don't find it welcoming, which hurts our ability to add people to fill jobs.
- Not everyone has participated in the region's prosperity. The Twin Cities and Minnesota are among the worst in the nation for disparities between whites and people of color.
- Maintenance obligations for our aging infrastructure already burden our economy; as we build and repair, we must manage future maintenance obligations.
- Our higher education institutions might not be as prominent over the next generation due to more competition. Human Services and Public Health currently serves about 350,000 clients a month; that number is expected to increase in part due to an aging population.
- The mismatch between where people live and where job vacancies are, combined with mismatches in skills for those jobs, results in transportation and economic challenges.

Opportunities

- We need to train the people who already are here and connect them to jobs.
- We can expand workforce pathways for people who are disadvantaged.
- Workforce assistance is needed, especially in North Minneapolis, to connect to jobs in the community and beyond.
- Land use: change land use patterns to have less segregation of uses, more connections.
- Make connections to jobs with the transportation system; plan for a changing workforce.
- Changing technologies, economy and preferences will change how we travel, work and use space.
- We have a thriving arts community that brings creativity and income while attracting and retaining those who enjoy the art.
- Jobs and services can and should be located near where people already live.

Ideas to explore

- Preferences for how people work, live and use space is changing. There is less need for segregation of land uses, and people are mixing work with play.
- Technological advances are accelerating. The economic consequences that used to come once in a generation are coming every few years. Regions that are hubs for new economies will have much to gain.
- Our population is becoming more racially diverse. We need to be welcoming and inclusive to compete.
- Government needs to at least keep up with accelerating innovation.
- Regional players need to collaborate to compete globally as one.
- Place-based strategies are important; place largely defines outcomes.



All photos for placement only; will be replaced.

Livable Hennepin County

Where are we today?

Hennepin County residents as a whole have a high quality of life and high standard of living. They enjoy good health care, safe communities, good schools, excellent recreation opportunities and a robust transportation system.

But not every resident shares the benefits of living in Hennepin County. There are stark differences in income, wealth, health, education and access to public facilities such as parks and transportation.

Thought leaders emphasized we must ensure everyone can enjoy the qualities that make Hennepin County and our cities great.

What should we become?

Thought leaders shared aspirations of what we should be by 2040. They told us that with Hennepin County out front:

The county will be the cultural hub of the region and state. Its residents will enjoy excellent health, education, affordability and quality of life, regardless of their income, race, cultural background, neighborhood, gender or age.

The county will lead the nation in well-being measures, meaning its residents are physically, mentally and socially healthy, safe, happy and fulfilled.

Residents will have access to what they need to contribute to society.

Residents will be healthy and have a high quality of life, supported by county systems and services that are flexible and people-centered.

Residents will have safe, affordable, stable and healthful housing and access to healthful food.

Hennepin County will cultivate ongoing relationships with residents that lead to more effective and inclusive ways to provide services and infrastructure that match residents' needs.

Current indicators

- 38th healthiest county in Minnesota, 6th out of 7 metro counties, as found by Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.
- The DNR added 13 Hennepin County water bodies to the proposed 2016 impaired waters list, bringing the total to 80.

Residents will be connected to the places and information they want through networks that are efficient, environmentally sound, financially sustainable and socially equitable.

The county will lead the nation in active transportation use and options; its residents will have safe, accessible and connected systems for walking, biking and taking transit.

As our population ages, seniors will be valued, remain socially connected and have what they need to be healthy and thrive.

Young people will have what they need to enter adulthood, including access to housing, social connections, and to the education, training and jobs that will lead to fulfilling lives.

Air and water in the county will be clean; natural resources will be protected; and green space will be readily available to residents.

Residents will have a variety of housing types and community characteristics from which to choose.

Challenges

- The aging of our population will have profound and lasting impacts that pose challenges for systems, individuals and families.
- Affordability of long-term care and life expenses will be a concern for aging households; funding and providing services and maintaining and replacing infrastructure is a challenge for governments.
- There is an important connection between health and housing. Having stable healthy housing is foundational to success in addressing many other needs and issues; think of housing as critical infrastructure.
- The Twin Cities has among the worst racial disparities in the nation.
- Generational and cultural differences in housing preferences are not adequately accommodated.
- Residents have difficulty finding affordable housing that also has affordable transportation option.
- Digital disparities in access to high-speed internet are contributing to other disparities.
- People value place differently than they used to. They are more mobile and communities are formed online.



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Opportunities

- The changing nature of work has potential to reduce trips, especially at peak hours.
- Autonomous vehicles present great opportunities for how we travel, work and use space; we can reduce the footprint of road infrastructure — reducing costs while improving safety, the environment and personal freedom.
- When it's time to renew and rebuild our infrastructure, make it better and think differently. Roads are our public spaces. We can use them to address multiple goals; use green infrastructure and district systems to reduce costs. We can create great destinations that also safely and efficiently move people.
- The Twin Cities is a center of culture and the arts in the Upper Midwest and the nation. The county can benefit from this status and support its continued growth.
- We need walkable, connected neighborhoods that keep people — including seniors — connected to their communities.

Ideas to explore

- Create places designed to be enjoyed year-round, not just in the few warm months we have. Embrace our long and cold winters; find ways to help people enjoy them.
- Transportation connects A to B. Often it is more efficient, productive and less destructive to make A and B closer together in an existing system than to create new connections.
- Make our spaces more flexible — buildings and roads don't have to be just commercial or just residential, they will change based on demand and should be designed with that in mind.
- Housing should be thought of as critical infrastructure. The availability of affordable housing is a key ingredient of the economic and social health of our community.

Sustainable Hennepin County

Where are we today?

Sustainability augments and balances prosperity and livability. Evaluating sustainability can lead to doing things differently to achieve long-lasting success.

Climate change brings challenges for the future of our communities and our environment. Resiliency concerns are challenging us to rethink how we provide infrastructure and services — and call for new ways to live, work and renew our communities. The county plays a key role in environmental sustainability and social and economic resilience through its policies and how it invests in its residents, communities and infrastructure.

What should we become?

Thought leaders shared aspirations of what we should be by 2040. They told us that with Hennepin County out front:

The county will lead the nation in sustainability — environmentally, economically, socially and otherwise — with resilient systems that improve the lives of all residents, regardless of their income, race, cultural background, neighborhood, gender or age.

Natural systems will be healthy and in balance with the systems people need to live their lives as they desire.

The County will be financially able to continue systems and practices well into the future; it will be responsible with its resources, using them wisely without placing undue burdens on others.

County systems will protect resources and will be restorative, for example by recharging groundwater rather than depleting it.

When it's time to renew and rebuild our infrastructure, the County will address multiple goals, such as sustainability, system resilience and supporting healthy and livable communities.

Current indicators

- Minnesota's highway funding gap is projected to be \$18 billion over the next 20 years.
- Hennepin County reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by 19 percent from 2007 to 2015, beating its goal of a 15 percent reduction.
- Largest tax base in the state.

Hennepin County and its partners will coordinate transportation, land use and natural resources to complement one another and create sustainable places.

People will connect to jobs, health care, education and more not only with the transportation system, but also with communications and other systems.

The county will right-size infrastructure so it can be affordably maintained over generations and will have resources to meet those maintenance commitments.

Households and businesses will be resilient and prepared for disruptions, disasters and emergencies.

Residents will get good value for their tax money and taxes will be affordable at the individual and societal level.

Residents will be self-reliant, healthy and in supportive communities, reducing the need for County human services.

Residents will be socially connected and engaged in their communities and with the County.

Residents will have a high degree of environmental justice and a lesser overall environmental burden.



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Challenges

- The infrastructure we rely on is aging and needs extensive maintenance.
- Our aging infrastructure needs maintenance; we will have difficult decisions on what should be rebuilt and how. We are faced with limiting the number and size of projects.
- Our region is one of the areas projected to be most affected by climate change, bringing challenges to health, livability and sustainability of our communities and environment.
- The county needs to make significant steps to stay on track toward its 2030 and 2050 greenhouse gas emissions goals.

Opportunities

- Preferences are changing; there is a desire for different living, work and transportation options, which will affect multiple systems and services.
- The county plays a key role in social and economic resilience in how it invests in its residents, communities and infrastructure.
- Retrofitting public buildings and infrastructure can reduce energy use and cost while supporting jobs.
- Changing energy sources can reduce emissions, increase energy reliability and increase local production.
- As our infrastructure ages, the county will have opportunities to rethink how it provides infrastructure and services to increase resiliency, as part of a new economy and to serve residents.
- Preservation of agricultural land and open space can meet multiple public purposes, including producing food, protecting natural resources, connecting people to green space and managing stormwater.

Ideas to explore

- Autonomous vehicles amplify both the good and the bad societal and personal effects of automobiles. Policy at a state and national level will determine how those effects are managed — whether we move to a “featureless plain” model of automotive mobility where motor vehicles dominate or a system that prioritizes people and placemaking.
- Ultimately the economy — regionally and globally — will have to wean itself from oil, whether due to resource exhaustion, environmental impacts, cost or more competitive sources. The most competitive places will make this transition early.

Thought leaders

This is a partial list of the people who contributed leadership and ideas to the process summarized in this document.

In addition to the people here, Hennepin County staff, comprehensive plan technical team members, senior county leadership, external topic area experts and others contributed to the engagement summarized in this document. Additional

A more complete list of participants is in the stakeholder engagement report at hennepin.us/2040plan.

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