

Thrive MSP 2040 Outreach and Engagement Plan

Overview

The *Thrive MSP 2040* plan (the Council’s next metropolitan development guide) is a long-range vision for how the Metropolitan Council – in partnership with local governments, residents, interested stakeholders, businesses, and others – can guide the region’s growth and shape the region’s future through 2040. The *Thrive MSP 2040* Strategic Vision Guide provides the high-level vision and strategic direction that then cascades into greater detail defined through the Metropolitan Council’s three systems plans – the *Thrive MSP 2040* Transportation Policy Plan (including the Aviation system), the *Thrive MSP 2040* Water Resources Management Plan, and the *Thrive MSP 2040* Parks and Open Space Plan – as well as the two policy plans, the *Thrive MSP 2040* Housing Policy Plan and the *Thrive MSP 2040* Water Supply Master Plan. (The Council will complete these systems and policy plans in 2014 and 2015.) Local governments will receive Systems Statements in 2015 which will translate the regional plan and the systems plans into expectations for local comprehensive plans due in 2018.

This plan addresses the goals for outreach and engagement related to the *Thrive MSP 2040* planning process, including the general outreach for all of the *Thrive MSP 2040* systems and policy plans, and identifies key activities and roles related to the achievement of those goals. The *Thrive MSP 2040* vision is intended to be the region’s vision and, as such, must reflect and incorporate the insight and ideas of the region at-large, not just the Council’s interpretation of those ideas. The Council is committed to reaching out to those in the region who want to be involved in the planning process, including local government officials, stakeholder organizations, and the public (including historically underrepresented populations). This Outreach Plan is a “living document” that will be revised throughout the planning process.

Goals for Thrive MSP 2040:

- *Between now and 2040, the Metropolitan Council’s goal is to improve our region to make us more competitive, strengthen our economy and make this a great home for our diverse and growing population.*
- *We plan to continue building strong local communities that are great places to live and work and to connect these communities through strong regional assets like housing, water resources, a multimodal transportation system and regional parks.*
- *Finally, our goal is to write a plan for the region that attracts and retains talent, jobs and economic prosperity, which strengthen our region’s quality of life.*

Desired Outcomes of Outreach and Engagement:

- The *Thrive MSP 2040* plans reflect the interests and priorities of the diverse stakeholders of the region – including residents, employers, policymakers, local government staff, developers, and other interested stakeholders.
- The Council’s partners, stakeholders, and constituents share and actively support the regional vision as defined in the *Thrive MSP 2040* plan and the systems and policy plans as a result of having played an active role in their development. This broad base of support will help the *Thrive MSP 2040* plan transcend political differences and transitions.
- The *Thrive MSP 2040* planning process engages a cross-section of the region’s residents, including residents from all parts of the region and from a representative range of demographic characteristics (race / ethnicity / nationality, age, and income level).
- The Council’s partners, stakeholders, and constituents have the opportunity to engage with the *Thrive MSP 2040* planning process through a variety of mediums, including both in-person and online engagement.
- Grow awareness of the Metropolitan Council’s convening role in regional planning and development; promote the importance of regional thinking for economic growth and competitiveness.
- The Metropolitan Council grows its capacity to interact with communities, stakeholders and constituencies.

Proposed Measures of Success of the *Thrive MSP 2040* Engagement Process

- Number of outreach and engagement meetings / conversations;
- Number of hours of outreach and engagement meetings / conversations;
- Number of attendees at outreach and engagement meetings / conversations;
- Number of organizations partnering with the Council on *Thrive MSP 2040* outreach and engagement;
- Number of individual users who interact with the Council's online interactivity (CivicIdeas) around the *Thrive MSP 2040* plans;
- Number of individual users who interact with the Council's social media around the *Thrive MSP 2040* plan;
- Percentage of county, city and township governments whose staff and/or policymakers attend a meeting / conversation to discuss the *Thrive MSP 2040* plan and the percent of the region's population that those city and township¹ officials represent; and
- Number of positive earned media references to the *Thrive MSP 2040* planning process.

Qualitative assessment will determine if participants found online content useful, accessible and easy to use and the degree to which all stakeholders found the engagement process transparent and accessible. Not all of the important outcomes are easily measured; for example, a key outcome is that the Outreach and Engagement work hears from a representative cross-section of the region. To obtain this information, staff will map where outreach opportunities occurred across the region and document, to the extent possible, the age and racial / ethnic composition of those attending in-person engagement opportunities. Staff will also map the zip codes reported by individuals registering for CivicIdeas, the online civic engagement platform. Some of the measures proposed above will necessarily be imprecise – e.g., the positive earned media references will inevitably be incomplete. Nonetheless, we believe that these measures are those that are worth measuring in this work.

The ultimate indicator of the success of this Outreach and Engagement Plan will be a qualitative difference in the interactions in the public hearing held for the *Thrive MSP 2040* Strategic Vision Guide in late 2013. This Outreach and Engagement Plan will be successful if either:

- More and different people show up to the public hearing because they are engaged, excited and enthusiastic about the *Thrive MSP 2040* Strategic Vision Guide; or
- Fewer people show up to the public hearing than traditionally because stakeholders have already had the opportunity to have their ideas heard.

¹ This measure will not include county officials because a meeting of representatives of each of the region's seven counties would immediately reach 100 percent.

Messaging: What is *Thrive MSP 2040*?

To implement and communicate the outreach effort that will engage the public and stakeholders with a “listen, learn, educate, promote” approach, the following key messages should be used to describe the creation of *Thrive MSP 2040*:

- *Thrive MSP 2040* is the Twin Cities metropolitan area’s regional planning effort. The goal of *Thrive MSP 2040* is to help our region maximize opportunities for growth and prosperity in the coming decades.
- The region’s prosperity is important to everyone – local officials, residents, business owners, community leaders.
- In order to create and implement a vision for our region over the next 30 years, the Council needs residents to tell us what they want and need to thrive here.
- *Thrive MSP 2040* is more than a regional vision – it’s the opportunity to define and achieve goals that are too big for any one community to take on but are possible to accomplish as a region.
- The Council will seek input from a broad range of stakeholders to capture the collective wisdom of the whole community; it is particularly committed to engaging traditionally under-represented groups and encourages practices that address issues of equity and that promote opportunity for all.
- Many different traditional and non-traditional opportunities for public input will be available including community meetings, public meetings, surveys, social media and interactive online discussions.
- As we work to develop policies that support the kind of healthy growth and regional prosperity residents want, we’ll continue to consult the Council’s formal advisory committees, local officials, and key community partners.

Timeline and Messaging Phases

Overall timeline for *Thrive MSP 2040*

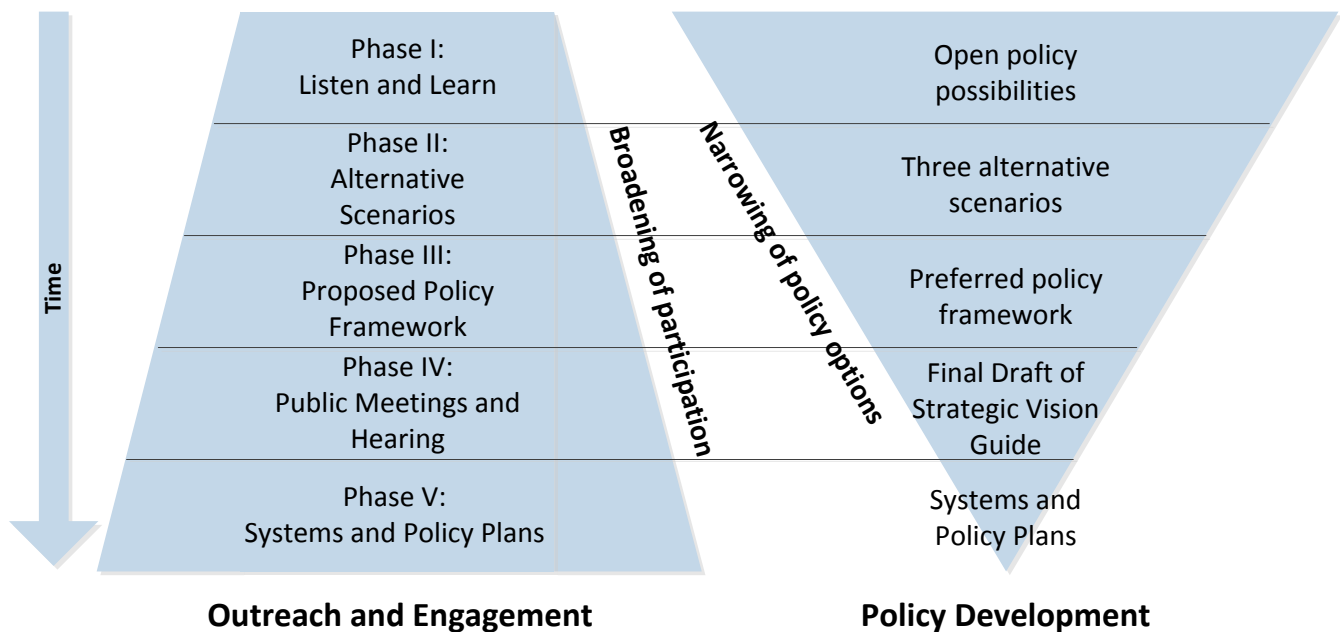
ID	Task Name	Q3 12			Q4 12			Q1 13			Q2 13			Q3 13			Q4 13			Q1 14			Q2 14		
		Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
1	Phase I: Listen and Learn	[Timeline bar from Jun 12 to Sep 12]																							
2	In-person Engagement	[Timeline bar from Jun 12 to Mar 13]																							
3	Presentations and Workshops	[Timeline bar from Jun 12 to Mar 13]																							
4	Councilmember Listening Sessions	[Timeline bar from Aug 12 to Sep 12]																							
5	Policy Development Team: Analyze policy and develop policy scenarios	[Timeline bar from Jun 12 to Dec 12]																							
6	COW: Endorse proposed alternative policy scenarios for public dialogue	[Milestone diamond at Dec 12]																							
7	Release forecasts by planning area to 2040 for baseline / alternative scenarios	[Milestone diamond at Feb 13]																							
8	Phase II: Gather feedback on alternative scenarios	[Timeline bar from Feb 13 to Mar 13]																							
9	Reality Check	[Timeline bar from Feb 13 to Mar 13]																							
10	Reality Check pretest with LUAC	[Milestone diamond at Feb 13]																							
11	Reality Check	[Milestone diamond at Mar 13]																							
12	In-person Engagement	[Timeline bar from Feb 13 to Mar 13]																							
13	Presentations and Workshops	[Timeline bar from Feb 13 to Mar 13]																							
14	Policy Development Team: Propose policy framework	[Timeline bar from Apr 13 to May 13]																							
15	COW: Endorse policy framework for public dialogue	[Milestone diamond at May 13]																							
16	Release preliminary local forecasts to 2040 using proposed policy framework	[Milestone diamond at Jun 13]																							
17	Phase III: Gather feedback on proposed policy framework	[Timeline bar from Jun 13 to Sep 13]																							
18	In-person Engagement	[Timeline bar from Jun 13 to Sep 13]																							
19	Presentations and Workshops	[Timeline bar from Jun 13 to Sep 13]																							
20	Dialogue with local government about local forecasts	[Timeline bar from Jul 13 to Sep 13]																							
21	Policy Development Team: Finalize policy framework	[Timeline bar from Aug 13 to Sep 13]																							
22	Draft the thriveMSP plan	[Timeline bar from Sep 12 to Sep 13]																							
23	Phase IV: Formal public process	[Timeline bar from Sep 13 to Oct 13]																							
24	Public meetings across Council Districts	[Timeline bar from Sep 13 to Oct 13]																							
25	Public hearing	[Milestone diamond at Oct 13]																							
26	Revise thriveMSP Strategic Vision Guide to respond to the public hearing	[Timeline bar from Oct 13 to Nov 13]																							
27	Release updated local forecasts	[Milestone diamond at Nov 13]																							
28	Draft Systems and Policy Plans	[Timeline bar from Oct 13 to Mar 14]																							
29	Submit Regional Plan for Sustainable Development to HUD	[Milestone diamond at Dec 13]																							
30	Council adopts Thrive MSP 2040 Strategic Vision Guide	[Milestone diamond at Feb 14]																							
31	Phase V: Outreach and Engagement on Systems and Policy Plans	[Timeline bar from Oct 13 to Mar 14]																							
32	Council adopts Thrive MSP 2040 Systems and Policy Plans	[Timeline bar from Mar 14 to Jun 14]																							

Phases of Outreach and Engagement

Phase	Goals	Messages
Phase I: Listen and Learn (June – September 2012)	To listen to and learn from residents, local governments and policy advocates about what the future of the region should look like.	What are your priorities and goals for the future of the region? (ends not means) For audiences interested in policy discussions, what are your priorities? How would you manage challenging trade-offs? What are your reactions to the forecasts and the data that are going into the scenario development?
Phase II: Gather feedback on alternative policy scenarios (January – March 2013) Includes Reality Check	To confirm the feedback heard from Phase I To gather substantive feedback on alternative policy scenarios.	Here’s what we heard in Phase I of our outreach and engagement: Did we hear you accurately? Here are alternative policy scenarios that we are proposing to respond to what we heard in Phase I: What do you think of these policies? Which scenario do you prefer and why? Phase II will include maps and images to help participants visualize the impacts of alternative scenarios.
Phase III: Gather feedback on proposed policy framework (May – August 2013)	To engage with local government about the effect of the proposed policy framework on local forecasts To gather substantive feedback on the proposed policy framework.	These are the policies we are proposing to respond to what we heard in Phase I and Phase II: What do you think of the proposed policy framework? How does the proposed policy framework influence your local forecasts?
Phase IV: Formal public process (September – November 2013)	To hold public meetings across Council Districts and a formal public hearing on the <i>Thrive MSP 2040</i> Strategic Vision Guide	This is your last opportunity to provide input before the <i>Thrive MSP 2040</i> Strategic Vision Guide is adopted!
Phase V: Outreach and engagement, including formal public process, on the <i>Thrive MSP 2040</i> systems and policy plans (November 2013 – spring 2015)	To conduct final public outreach on the <i>Thrive MSP 2040</i> systems and policy plans	Here are the policy refinements that we are proposing to translate the <i>Thrive MSP 2040</i> Strategic Vision Guide into detailed implementation guides through the <i>Thrive MSP 2040</i> systems and policy plans. What do you think of these policy refinements?

Interaction of Outreach and Engagement with Policy Development

Another way to think about the phases of the outreach and engagement plan is as two “funnels” of activities for policy options and for public participation. During Phase I, the set of policy possibilities is nearly wide open. Phase II will be a discussion on three alternative scenarios. During Phase III, we will ask for feedback on one policy framework, and in Phase IV will conduct the formal public hearing on the final draft document. Phase V, not yet fully defined in this plan, is included to emphasize that Outreach and Engagement for the Systems and Policy Plans will build upon the previous phases of Outreach and Engagement. As the process unfolds, the range of policies being considered becomes more focused, and the funnel narrows. Conversely, the public engagement process will expand, widening the funnel, as more and more people become a part of the process.



Throughout the process, the Council will be asking people – residents and organized stakeholders alike – what kind of region they want for their children and their children’s children. Council staff will be responsible for translation the outcomes heard in the outreach and engagement into implementable policies. In other words, to paraphrase Lewis Carroll, “If you don’t know where you’re going, any road will get you there.” The outreach and engagement will inform the selection of the outcomes and goals for our region; Council staff will propose roads (or transit options!) that will help our region reach that destination.

Methods

Different stakeholders will have a variety of different types of opportunities to engage with *Thrive MSP 2040*:

Audience	In-person Engagement	Presentations, Discussions and Workshops	Reality Check	Formal Listening Sessions, Public Meetings and Public Hearing	Online Engagement
Residents	In-person engagement through community events, etc.	Participation through community-based organizations and policy advocacy organizations	Invited participation by leaders of community-based organizations	General public announcements and invitations to community organizations to attend listening sessions, public meetings, and public hearing	Encouraged to participate in CivicIdeas and social media
Local government (including elected officials, appointed officials, and staff)		Convenings organized through MetroCities Other opportunities for participants in LUAC, TAB, RCM, CoO, and other regional organizations of local government (i.e., North Metro Mayors, SCALE...)	Invited participation by local elected and appointed officials	Explicitly invited to attend listening sessions, public meetings, and public hearing	Encouraged to participate in CivicIdeas and social media
Community-based organizations	Asked to help convene engagement opportunities	Discussions and workshops convened through key organizations	Invited participation by leaders of community-based organizations	Explicitly invited to attend listening sessions, public meetings, and public hearing	Encouraged to participate in CivicIdeas and social media
State government agencies		Discussions and workshops held to address key policy issues		Generally invited to attend listening sessions, public meetings and public hearing	
State legislators		Informed / invited at the discretion of the Council's Government Affairs staff		Explicitly invited to attend listening sessions and public meetings	
Council Advisory Committees		Discussions and workshops held to address key policy issues		Explicitly invited to attend listening sessions, public meetings, and public hearing	Encouraged to participate in CivicIdeas and social media
Policy		Asked to help	Invited	Explicitly invited	Encouraged to

organizations		convene engagement opportunities for members and stakeholders	participation by leaders of policy organizations	to attend listening sessions, public meetings, and public hearing	participate in CivicIdeas and social media
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In-person Engagement (Phases I-III)

In the In-person Engagement component of Outreach and Engagement, Metropolitan Council members, staff or their advocates will engage the public on the public’s terms and in the public’s comfort zones rather than inviting members of the public to come to the Council’s facilities and step outside their comfort zone. The Council’s primary approach will be partnering with community-based organizations to engage their members and constituencies on our behalf. The Council will provide materials and training as background for organizations doing this outreach and ask them to provide us with what they learn. Audiences will include immigrant communities, low-income populations, communities of color, persons with disabilities, and other audiences where the Council would have little credibility and/or a trusting prior relationship is critical. This outreach effort also includes attending meetings to share information and ask questions of the participants.

Phase I: In-person Engagement

In Phase I, the purpose will be to define and refine a broad-based vision of what kind of region and communities the region’s residents want for their children and their children’s children in 2040. Phase I of in-person engagement will focus on vision, outcomes, and goals, not specific policy proposals. Council staff will distill the feedback received into overall summaries and be responsible for translating the outcomes heard in the outreach and engagement into implementable policies. During Phase I, in-person engagement will ask people across the region questions like:

- Where do you live? What do you like about where you live? Why do you choose to live where you do? What would you change about where you live? What would your dream community look like?
- What do you think is the single most attractive feature of the Twin Cities metro area today?
- What do you think is the single most important problem facing the Twin Cities metro area today? In your opinion, what is the best solution to this problem?
- How do we want our region to look in the future? What kind of community do you want today’s children to live in when they are adults?
- How do you feel about your environment and your neighborhood? Tell me about a time when your community felt healthy.
- What aspects of a community enhance the quality of life for its residents? What community amenities are important to you? (i.e. recreational facilities and parks, open space, clean water, transportation and transit, proximity to businesses, ability to walk through neighborhoods.)
- How will we address the big changes we’re expecting (i.e. more seniors, more diversity, smaller households)?
- Do you take transit? If not, what would need to change for you to take transit?
- Is your housing affordable for your family?

Phase II: In-person Engagement

In Phases II and III, the outreach and engagement will focus on the alternative policy scenarios and the proposed policy framework. Council staff will translate the alternative policy scenarios and the proposed policy framework into non-technical language. These stages will also use maps and images to help participants visualize the impacts of alternative policy scenarios.

Presentations, Discussions and Workshops (Phases I-III)

A major component of the Outreach and Engagement will be presentations, discussions and workshops held with stakeholder organizations. In many cases, Council staff will request the opportunity to be included on an organization's agenda or might request that an organization host a special event targeted at providing feedback for the *Thrive MSP 2040* plan. In general, Council staff will seek to work through umbrella policy organizations that can invite and convene a broader set of stakeholders. The Council will solicit opportunities to participate in meetings with a variety of organizations, including, but not limited to:

- the Council's formal advisory committees (the Land Use Advisory Committee, the Transportation Advisory Board, the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee, the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission and the Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee)
- Local government, including local elected officials, local appointed officials, and local government staff, and convened through MetroCities, the Regional Council of Mayors and county leaders
- Chicano Latino Affairs Council, Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans, Council on Black Minnesotans, Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, and Minnesota State Council on Disability
- Corridors of Opportunity Consortium Policy Board and Senior Staff
- Policy advocacy organizations (e.g., Alliance for Sustainability, Builders Association of the Twin Cities, Chambers of Commerce, MetroCities, Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy, etc.)
- Community-based organizations (e.g., Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, Community Engagement Steering Committee, ISIAH, etc.)
- Culturally-based non-profit organizations that provide services to targeted populations (e.g., CLUES, Hmong American Partnership, Minneapolis Urban League, etc.)
- State agency partners

In order to manage scarce staff resources, the Council will focus its time on events that reach new audiences and meet the Council's goals for a diversity of participants, including geographic diversity.

Presentations, discussions and workshops will occur throughout the first three phases of Outreach and Engagement. Council members are encouraged to attend and participate in these events.

For each phase of presentations, discussions and workshops, the Outreach and Engagement Team will work with Communications staff to put together a short standard presentation that describes the *Thrive MSP 2040* planning process, including the Council's regional forecasts to 2040, and then queues up a range of questions for substantive policy discussion. For Phase I, the presentation will use the Council's forecasts to 2040 to ground the conversation and then the questions for policy-informed organizations would be drawn, depending on the emphasis of the host organization, from questions along the lines of the following:

- What are the elements of a **strong quality of life** for all of our residents? What makes a neighborhood that works? What makes a healthy region? If we achieve our vision, how will the region be different?
- What contributes to a vibrant regional economy?
- Our strong regional economy attracts international migrants, but net domestic migration has been and is forecast to remain negative – more people leave the region each year for elsewhere in the nation than

move into the region. How could the region more effectively **attract and retain talent, jobs and economic prosperity**?

- What is **essential infrastructure** and what are essential regional services? How do we move toward fair access to these resources?
- More than two-thirds of the net new households forecast will have no children; more than half of those households (nearly 40 percent of the net new households) will be individuals living alone. Over half of the new households will have only one income to support housing costs. 463,000 people will migrate to the Twin Cities from outside the United States. What regional and local policies would ensure that our housing stock will provide **viable housing options to accommodate our changing population**?
- In an environment of limited housing resources, how should the region determine the appropriate mix of expanding the availability of affordable housing and investing in the preservation of existing affordable housing? What is the **appropriate allocation of affordable housing** between high-opportunity suburban locations and urban locations characterized by greater concentration of poverty and yet lower transportation costs?
- Despite a legacy of strong economic performance, the Twin Cities region suffers from some of the most severe disparities between the social outcomes of white residents and residents of color of any metropolitan area in the U.S. How might **regional investments in infrastructure** and development **mitigate these disparities**?
- The region's **multimodal transportation network** connects people to jobs, school and services and offers opportunities for long-term economic development. How should the region balance competing priorities for **accessibility, mobility and development** in making transportation investments?
- Over the last decades, the majority of new development has occurred in greenfield development as the region has converted undeveloped and agricultural land into urbanized uses. What policies, funding, tools and incentives need to be in place to **attract and promote infill development and redevelopment** in the developed core of the region?
- What are the opportunities to **ameliorate the possible impacts of climate change** on our regional vitality?
- The Pittsburgh region has 83 separate wastewater treatment systems while the centralized wastewater treatment provided by the Metropolitan Council has reduced cost and complexity for the region's sewer users. Private and civic leaders identified a need for improved coordination in business recruitment across the region and created Greater MSP. Are there other opportunities to **reduce costs by regionalizing services or information**?
- An ethos of sustainability suggests that we use resources in a way that meets the needs of the present without jeopardizing the region's future needs. Where are the greatest **pressures on our region's natural resources**?

For Phases II and III, the focus of the presentation and discussion would be on the alternative policy scenarios and the proposed policy framework respectively.

For general organizations, including local government groups, the presentation and discussion will be led by either Council Members, members of the Outreach and Engagement Team or the Council's Sector Representatives. For organizations that have a strong interest in a particular policy dimension of the *Thrive MSP 2040* plans, the presentation and discussion will likely be led by a subject matter expert, likely also to be a member of the Policy Development Team. In all cases, a member of the Thrive MSP Outreach and Engagement Team will attend the event to ensure a coordinated message and adequate documentation.

Phase III will also include focused conversations with local government, both policymakers and staff regarding the allocation of the Council's forecasts to local jurisdictions. Council forecasters will play a significant role in these conversations, working closely with the Thrive MSP Policy Development Team and the Thrive MSP Outreach and Engagement Team. This component of Phase III is likely to include regional workshops that address both the forecasting methodology and the impact of the proposed policy framework on those forecasts. Council forecasting staff will be having one-on-one conversations with local government staff regarding these forecasts to follow-up on the regional workshops.

Reality Check (part of Phase II)

Another key opportunity to engage with stakeholders will occur through Reality Check, an event co-sponsored by the Urban Land Institute, Greater MSP, and the Metropolitan Council (and others yet to be confirmed). The region's Reality Check will be built on similar Reality Check events held by the Urban Land Institute elsewhere in the country but will take advantage of the unique statutory roles and responsibilities of the Metropolitan Council around regional planning.

The fundamental structure of a Reality Check is a one-day event that convenes three-hundred people – one-hundred representatives of the business community, one-hundred local officials (including both elected and appointed), and one-hundred representatives of community-based organizations and policy advocates – to discuss how to implement a regional vision. For the purposes of the *Thrive MSP 2040* process, Reality Check will provide several functions:

- Provide a single event that allows a broad and diverse range of stakeholders to provide feedback on the alternative policy scenarios, including the opportunities and challenges associated with implementing each of the three scenarios;
- Expand the base of support for regional solutions and an integrated regional vision;
- Engage with stakeholders beyond the Council's seven-county area to open up the dialogue about how the Council's role in the seven-county area connects to the collar counties; and
- Encourage a discussion about what economic development needs from the Council's role in providing regional infrastructure.

The details of the Reality Check event will be developed over the next six months by a team convened by the Urban Land Institute, including representatives from the Metropolitan Council (both staff and Council). Council staff has proposed to conduct a pilot test of Reality Check – either the full event or key components – with the Council's Land Use Advisory Committee prior to the full Reality Check event. This pilot test will offer the members of the Land Use Advisory Committee a high-quality opportunity to engage with the *Thrive MSP 2040* plan while also testing the approach envisioned for the Reality Check.

Formal Listening Sessions, Public Meetings and Hearings (Phase I, IV)

During Phase I, Council members will host listening sessions across the region – at least one in each county – in August and September 2012. At these listening sessions, Council members will provide a brief overview of the *Thrive MSP 2040* planning process and then receive comments and input without response. Council staff will distribute invitations to the events to core Council constituencies, including local government officials, state legislators, policy advocates, community-based organizations and members of the public. Council members are expected to attend public meetings held in or in proximity to their Districts, and scheduling will honor their time constraints. A member of the Thrive MSP Outreach and Engagement Team will attend events to ensure a coordinated message and adequate documentation.

During Phase IV in late 2013, Council staff will conduct public meetings across Council districts to engage in more formal listening sessions and collect response to the final draft of the plan. Council staff will schedule these events in a mix of locations that will attract diverse attendance. Council staff will distribute invitations to the events to core Council constituencies, including local government officials, state legislators, policy advocates, community-based organizations and members of the public – including all who have engaged in previous phases of the *Thrive MSP 2040* planning process. Council members are expected to attend public meetings held in or in proximity to their Districts, and scheduling will honor their time constraints. A member of the Thrive MSP Outreach and Engagement Team will attend events to ensure a coordinated message and adequate documentation.

As a public document, the *Thrive MSP 2040* plan must go through a public hearing process. The Council will hold a formal public hearing in the Metropolitan Council Chambers on the *Thrive MSP 2040* plan, and staff will formally document the comments received at this stage. All members of the Council are expected to attend the public hearing.

Online engagement will leverage and supplement the in-person opportunities.

Online Interactivity and Social Media

The Metropolitan Council will use web-based and social media strategies to engage the public throughout the Thrive MSP 2040 planning process. Online engagement will work well for some stakeholder groups (i.e., younger and well-educated audiences) and less well for others, so this is but one channel in the overall engagement strategy.

Civic Ideas platform

CivicIdeas is an online crowdsourcing platform that invites the public, Council members, stakeholders and others to participate in a set of online discussions organized by topic. The Council has a goal of 1,000 participants enrolled and actively participating in the CivicIdeas platform. Council staff will:

- Monitor participation daily – answer questions as necessary.
- Plan and post bi-weekly discussion topics to augment discussions created organically by participants.
- Periodically collect results.
- Summarize as necessary.

Social media events

The Council intends to conduct at least six social media events to support Thrive MSP 2040. Social media events could include including: live tweet discussions, Facebook surveys/questions, interactive features (as available). These social media events will coincide with in-person and online events as well as integrate with the use of CivicIdeas and GovDelivery.

Informal surveys

Council staff will use Facebook, Twitter, and GovDelivery platforms to ask questions and promote discussion spaces (Civic Ideas, in-person meetings).

External Communications

Metropolitan Council Communications will develop and implement a full promotional campaign for the Thrive MSP 2040 effort, including the web, the interactive spaces, and the social media events. This promotional campaign will include:

- News releases;
- Newsletter articles that describe the status of the planning effort (including, at Phases II and III, illustrations of emerging policy concepts) and identify opportunities for engagement (including online engagement as well as in-person opportunities);
- Talking points for Council Members and staff;
- Social media content; and
- Web content.

Formal promotions will commence in June 2012.

Website

The Council will create a Thrive MSP webpage on metrocouncil.org that describes the status of the planning effort (including, at Phases II and III, illustrations of emerging policy concepts) and announces opportunities for engagement (including online engagement as well as in-person opportunities). Council staff will update the website content regularly, highlighting timely aspects of the planning process.

Thrive Allies

The Council will develop and maintain **Thrive Allies**, a mailing list of interested parties, in the GovDelivery mailing system. Individuals attending an outreach and engagement event or generally interested in the Thrive MSP 2040 planning process will be invited to subscribe to **Thrive Allies**. Council staff will send out regular updates to the **Thrive Allies** to describe the status of the planning effort (including, at Phases II and III, illustrations of emerging policy concepts) and identify opportunities for engagement (including online engagement as well as in-person opportunities). (Note that language used for newsletter articles can often be leveraged to be communications with the **Thrive Allies**. Council staff will send out mailing to the **Thrive Allies** at least once per month.

Print Material

The Council will develop a print takeaway that describes Thrive MSP 2040 – both what Thrive MSP 2040 is and the opportunities for engagement. A standard document, translated into multiple languages, will be available throughout Phase I of Outreach and Engagement for Council members and Council staff to distribute at any meeting attended by Thrive MSP 2040 stakeholders. Council staff will develop additional documents for use in subsequent phases of Outreach and Engagement that describe the alternative policy scenarios and the proposed policy framework in non-technical language.

Surveying

The Metropolitan Council will use surveys to supplement In-person Engagement as a means of soliciting ideas and input from the region's residents. In June 2012, the Metropolitan Council is deploying its biennial Metro Residents Survey. Core questions in this year's survey include:

- What do you think is the single most attractive feature of the seven-county Twin Cities region today? What are some additional attractive features of the seven-county Twin Cities region?
- What do you think is the single most important problem facing the seven-county Twin Cities region today? In your opinion, what is the best solution to this problem? What other important problems are facing the seven-county Twin Cities region today?
- What is your impression of the Metropolitan Council's performance addressing regional issues?
 - The Metropolitan Council plans or manages a variety of regional programs. How important is each program to the quality of life in the seven-county Twin Cities region?
- How would you describe the area where you now live? Which best describes your neighborhood or the area around you. (check one)
 - Rural or agricultural
 - Mostly single-family housing and auto-oriented shopping
 - Mostly apartments, condos and townhomes
 - A mix of single-family housing and multifamily housing options (apartments, townhomes or condos)
 - A mix of multifamily housing (apartments, townhomes or condos), commercial and retail, convenient to frequent transit service
- Would you prefer to live in a different kind of area? What type of area would you prefer to live in?
- Have you taken public transit in the seven-county Twin Cities region in the past month? If not, what is the main reason you have not taken public transit in the past month?
- What kind of impact do you expect the planned expansion of the light-rail system to have on the following aspects of life in the seven-county Twin Cities region? (check one box on each line)
 - Reducing congestion
 - Providing a high-quality alternative to auto travel
 - Improving access to jobs
 - Increasing the attractiveness of the seven-county region to businesses

Many of these questions have been asked continuously in prior Metropolitan Residents Survey, providing the Council a long time-series for comparing data.

The survey is a random address-based sample of 1,150 households with an oversample of 600 households in neighborhoods whose residents are members of groups less likely to respond (recent immigrants, younger households, renters, and recent movers). Respondents are asked for information about their age, race / ethnicity, and income, and survey responses will be weighted to ensure that survey responses accurately represent the households of the region. Results will be available in the fall.

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Activities/Approach

Information gathering (Phases I, II, III)

- Provide range of opportunities for input, including small working sessions, other in-person informational meetings, formal surveys, online/interactive feedback opportunities, venues for Council members to interact with the public/constituencies
- Look for public domain sources of ideas to gauge existing sentiments/interests of community at large.
- Organize discussion around issues of interest that relate to key community values, rather than specific system jargon. (Focus is on outcomes, not strategies.)
- Work with local governments to gather any related feedback that may have come from other processes they managed.
- Document and track ideas, with methods for reporting “this is what we’ve heard” and progress, as relevant to enhance transparency.
- Create process for managing input that doesn’t directly relate to Council work, but can be addressed by a partner agency or local government.

Partnership management (All phases)

- Reach out to traditional partners (local governments, advocacy organizations, etc.).
- Leverage partner relationships during the information gathering/confirmation stages to facilitate large discussions with identified audiences (i.e. Reality Check, etc.).
- Build relationships with community organizations that are not traditionally involved in Council activities, but help meet the identified goals/desired outcomes.
- Employ a trusted advocate-style model for working with different constituencies where existing relationships may not exist or may be difficult to forge in the timeframe identified.
- Work with partners and constituencies to build the Council’s capacity and trust with traditionally underrepresented community members and identify individuals for more active participation in Council planning activities (including the *Thrive MSP 2040* plans).
- Leverage partner relationships for communications and promotional activities related to the framework process.

Communications and promotion (All phases)

- Engage internally across Council divisions to assure staff are in the loop and have opportunities to understand the process and promote it externally.
- Facilitate with information gathering/partnership management.
- Identify partnership opportunities and other creative strategies to meet identified goals and outcomes.
- Create related materials to use for education/communication purposes.
- Create key messages and refine as necessary for different audiences throughout the process.
- Provide basic information about the process through official/formal Council communications channels.
- Equip Council members and staff with necessary materials to manage outreach/engagement process.
- Revise plans as necessary and respond to ongoing progress of outreach and engagement activities.

Confirmation and revision (Phases II-III)

- Use information gathering methods/outreach opportunities and partnerships to confirm and refine related policies.
- Communicate what we heard (from a regional perspective, with relevant detail) and how that was included into policies.
- Confirm direction, prior to formal feedback process, for revision.

Roles and Responsibilities

The chart below outlines the different activities and how each area staff will be involved.

	Phases I, II and III	Reality Check	Phase IV	Online interactivity
Council Chair	Promote Outreach and Engagement through speeches, newsletter columns and interactions with stakeholders and refer interested organizations to the OET Use consistent messages about Thrive MSP	Attend	Attend the public hearing	Promote the CivicIdeas site through speeches, newsletter columns and interactions with stakeholders
Council Members	Host and attend District Listening Sessions Attend specific events or engagements Meet with local stakeholders to discuss Thrive MSP Monitor overall findings from engagement as input into policy development Use consistent messages about Thrive MSP	Attend Consider how the results of Reality Check inform policy development	Host and attend District public meetings Attend the public hearing	Promote the CivicIdeas site through speeches and interactions with stakeholders
Regional Admin./ Executives	Promote the process through interactions with stakeholders and refer interested organizations to the OET	Assist as necessary in framing the event and in ensuring that key stakeholders actively participate	Attend the public hearing	Promote the CivicIdeas site through interactions with stakeholders
Communications	Guide message and strategy creation about ThriveMSP and Outreach Inform partners and constituencies about engagement opportunities through: - Web content - Social media channels - Council	Cover the event journalistically, including photos and video	Staff Council members prior to District public meetings Plan and facilitate District listening sessions	Write and post content Manage social media events Assist with CivicIdeas Promote participation

Thrive MSP 2040 Outreach and Engagement

	<p>newsletters, mailing lists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council media relations - Fact sheets/information briefs/handouts - Interactive/visual elements - Other methods, as necessary - Translation services, as necessary <p>Plan and facilitate District listening sessions</p>			
Outreach and Engagement Team	<p>Agree to key messages and language around the Thrive plan</p> <p>Solicit, set up and facilitate opportunities for engagement</p> <p>Conduct presentations, workshops and discussions</p> <p>Provide information to, train and collect feedback from organizations engaging on our behalf .</p> <p>Document learnings and responses and deliver results to the Policy Development Team</p>	<p>Inform Reality Check planning team of opportunities to contribute to overall outreach and engagement</p>	<p>Attend District meetings and capture how public comments support the final draft of the Thrive plan</p>	<p>Promote the CivicIdeas site through other engagement opportunities</p> <p>Manage the daily interactions with stakeholders through the site and delegate inquiries as needed</p> <p>Document learnings and responses and deliver results to the Policy Development Team</p>
Thrive Project Management Team	<p>Guide message and strategy creation</p> <p>Promote the process through interactions with stakeholders and refer interested organizations to the OET</p> <p>Attend occasional engagement opportunities to listen and observe</p>	<p>Assist as necessary in framing the event and in ensuring that key stakeholders actively participate</p>	<p>Attend the public hearing and some District meetings and capture how public comments support the final draft of the Thrive plan</p>	<p>Serve as Subject Matter Experts</p> <p>Promote the CivicIdeas site through interactions with stakeholders</p>

Thrive MSP 2040 Outreach and Engagement

	<p>Provide staff to conduct presentations and workshops</p> <p>Ensure that proposed policies align with the results of Outreach and Engagement</p>			
Thrive Policy Development Team	<p>Promote the process through interactions with stakeholders and refer interested organizations to the OET</p> <p>Attend and lead in key engagement opportunities that tie directly to specific policy areas</p> <p>Ensure that proposed policies align with the results of Outreach and Engagement</p>	<p>Assist as necessary in framing the event and in ensuring that key stakeholders actively participate</p>	<p>Attend the public hearing and some District meetings and capture how public comments support the final draft of the Thrive plan</p>	<p>Serve as Subject Matter Experts and respond to OET-requests for assistance in responding to ideas</p> <p>Promote the CivicIdeas site through interactions with stakeholders</p> <p>Monitor the public feedback and dialogue through the site and adjust policy development to respond to public engagement</p>