

CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

From 2000 to 2007, Scott County was Minnesota's fastest-growing county and the 28th fastest-growing county in the nation. In 2007, the County's estimated population was 126,642, representing a 41 percent increase since 2000. According to Metropolitan Council projections, Scott County will continue growing over the next two decades, reaching an anticipated population of 221,770 by 2030. This document is intended to manage the pace, location, and impacts of growth and development and reflects a basic philosophy of Scott County: the cross-jurisdictional nature of population growth issues (e.g., land use, transportation, natural resource preservation, community services) can be guided and shaped to everyone's benefit through cooperative working relationships among the County's stakeholders and decision makers.

Scott County is one of seven counties in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area as defined by the Metropolitan Land Planning Act. This Land Planning Act of 1976 requires all units of government within the seven-county metro area to prepare development plans for review by the Metropolitan Council. This document is an update to the 1981, 1986, and 2001 Scott County Comprehensive Plans prepared in response to the Land Planning Act.

PLAN PURPOSE

The Scott County 2030 Comprehensive Plan Update (the 2030 Plan Update) is a document that serves several purposes. This 2030 Plan Update:

- guides county residents and decision-makers to plan for future growth and development through 2030 and beyond;
- represents the goals and values of Scott County and a vision for maintaining a high quality of life;
- serves as a communication device between decision-makers, units of government, and property owners;
- fulfills a state-mandated requirement to prepare a plan that conforms to the regional growth plan developed by the Metropolitan Council; and
- provides the legal basis of the establishment of ordinances to carry out this 2030 Plan Update.

"The Comprehensive Plan shall contain objectives, policies, standards and programs to guide public and private land use, development, redevelopment and preservation for all lands and waters within the jurisdiction of the local government unit..."

- MN Statute (section 473.859, sub 1)

The 2030 Plan Update guides land use planning in the eleven townships: Belle Plaine, Blakeley, Cedar Lake, Credit River, Helena, Jackson, Louisville, New Market, St. Lawrence, Sand Creek and Spring Lake. Scott County is the planning and zoning authority for these eleven townships consisting of approximately 298 square miles. A partnership decision-making process with township boards has been in place since 1969 when the Scott County Board adopted the first County zoning ordinance. The 2030 Plan Update coordinates regional land use, transportation, natural resource, and community facility planning with the seven cities: Belle Plaine, Elko New Market, Jordan, New Prague, Prior Lake, Savage, and Shakopee – all of which have their own planning and zoning authority. Ensuring a degree of consistency among all of these plans is a major goal for this 2030 Plan Update.

The content of the 2030 Plan Update is somewhat dictated by state statute and the Metropolitan Council. This 2030 Plan Update meets and surpasses these state mandates and reflects the range of issues important to Scott County residents. This 2030 Plan Update focuses on seven main elements:

Land Use & Growth Management – This element guides residential density, commercial and industrial activity, and zoning within the eleven townships. This element also addresses the rapid pace of urbanization occurring in the county. This 2030 Plan Update was developed utilizing a comprehensive methodology to analyze land use from an area-wide perspective, with consideration to both public and private utility systems. This approach considers the cross-jurisdictional needs of transportation, storm water management, and public infrastructure thus transcending both township and municipal boundaries. A high degree of communication and joint/shared decision-making allows this approach to be successful.

Transportation – This element provides the basic framework for development of the Scott County transportation system through the year 2030. It provides an extensive update to the County's *2020 Transportation Plan*, which was adopted in 2001. There is a strong inter-relationship between the transportation element and other plan elements.

Parks & Trails – This element provides a framework for long-range planning efforts in the area of federal, state, local, County, and regional parks and trails. It provides an update to the County's *Interim Parks, Trails and Open Space Policy Plan*, which was adopted in 2004.

Water & Natural Resources – This element provides goals, polices and implementation efforts that are directed at water and natural resources. It provides updates to the County's *Water Resources Plan* and *Groundwater Protection Plan*, which are "stand-alone" policy documents, but are adopted as part of this 2030 Plan Update.

Safe, Healthy & Livable Communities – This element identifies the county's "human infrastructure" needs and provides workable goals and objectives which reflect those needs. It is based on detailed data analysis regarding demographic, housing and social factors in the county, as documented in the *2005 Community Needs Report*. Due to the integration of both physical and social planning that occurred as part of this 2030 planning process, there is a high-degree of interaction between this and the other plan elements.

Economic Development – This element focuses on goals, policies and strategies to ensure that Scott County develops in an economically sustainable manner and to ensure that growth is matched with the County's ability to provide infrastructure and services.

Utilities – This element focuses on goals, policies and strategies to ensure adequate public and private utilities and supporting infrastructure to serve Scott County's urban and rural land uses. The chapter covers sanitary sewer, drinking water, solid waste, gas, and electric utilities and services that support many of the other plan elements.

PLAN PROCESS

The process to prepare the 2030 Plan Update involved an ongoing exchange of information, analysis, and response between public officials, citizens, County staff, technical work teams, and consultants. Preparation of the 2030 Plan Update, which began in 2004, was organized into seven phases:

Phase 1: Planning Strategy & Tactics – The initial phase involved organizing the overall direction of the 2030 planning process, and informing participants of the purpose, content and scope of the planning effort. To set the overall direction and ensure citizen involvement, Scott County established an eight-member Process Steering Committee responsible for:

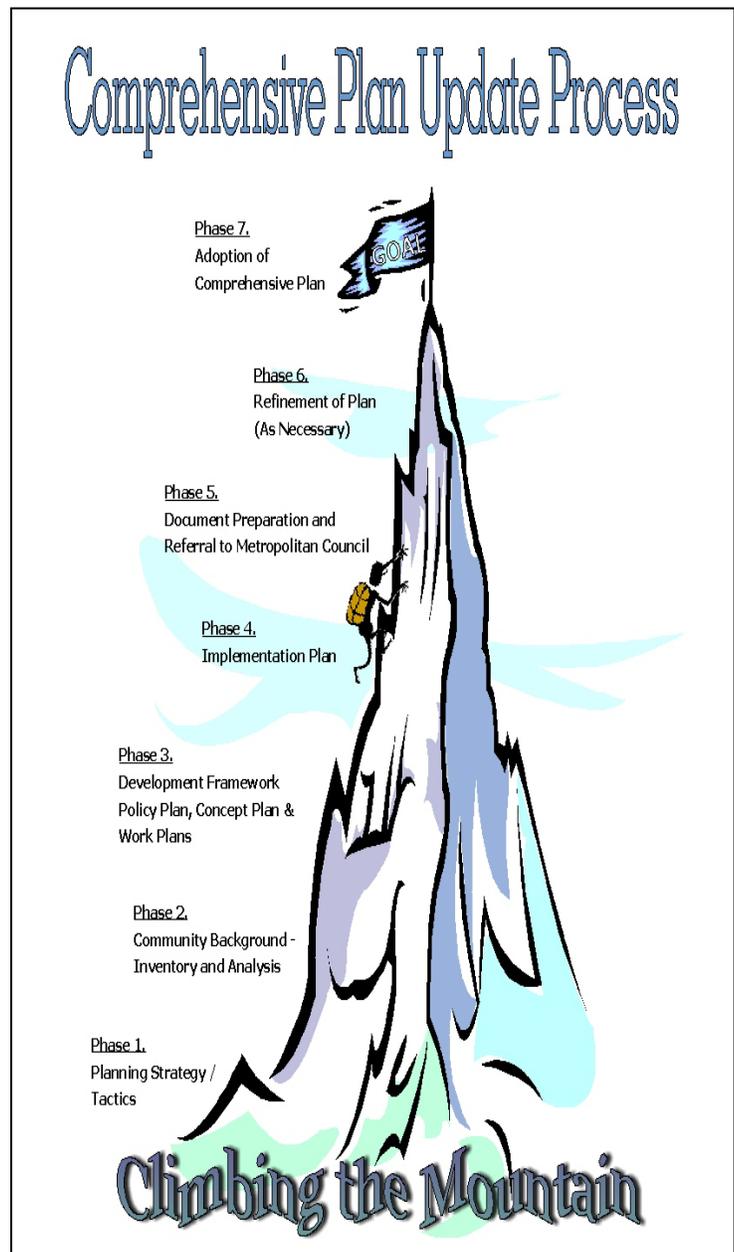
- reviewing the overall planning process and providing recommendations for process improvements;
- outlining roles and responsibilities for education and public involvement functions during the 2030 Plan Update process;
- structuring opportunities for stakeholder and public input through open houses, focus groups, community meetings, and other methods; and
- recommending selection of appropriate facilitators for the 2030 Plan Update process.

Phase 2: Inventory and Analysis –

This phase involved assembling the technical data needed to address the issues identified in Phase 1, and analyzing this data to establish a base from which to generate the Development Framework. The technical data inventory was organized by the following topical areas:

- Land Use, Public Utilities and Urban Expansion;
- Transportation and Trails;
- Water/Natural Resources, Parks and Trails; and
- People and Public Safety.

To assist County staff in the inventory and analysis phase, technical work teams were established for each of the four topical areas. These groups met periodically over the course of the planning process to review and analyze the data necessary to address the priority issues.



Phase 3: Development Framework – The third phase constituted actual plan formulation. The phase included three sub-components: 2030 Vision and Strategic Challenges, Concept Plans, and Draft Plan.

- **2030 Vision and Strategic Challenges:** The 2030 Vision is considered central to the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. Through stated Strategic Challenges, the 2030 Vision guides the development of plan goals, policies, and overall strategies.
- **Concept Plans:** The Concept Plans included a graphic interpretation of the Vision, which set forth in general terms the physical layout and guiding principals for development. To make the Concept Plans more direct and meaningful, the Concept Plans were organized by groups of townships and cities and show conceptual land use, transportation, parks and trails, and natural resource recommendations.
- **Draft Plan:** The Draft Plan was founded on and directed by the Vision and Concept Plans. It organized the policy recommendations into a complete, comprehensive plan document.

Phase 4: Implementation Strategies – The fourth phase of the planning process involved programming implementation efforts. Based upon discussions with county, city and townships officials, projects and actions were prioritized as a means to organize and focus work to make the plan a reality. A detailed list and timeline was generated to identify the major actions Scott County should complete to implement the 2030 Plan Update.

Phase 5: Document Preparation & Referral to Met Council – The process of writing this 2030 Plan Update began in 2006 with members of the four work teams providing technical review assistance on the various chapters. All twelve chapters of this planning document were written by County staff. Consultants were retained only to provide expertise in the visioning and traffic modeling processes.

Phase 6: Refinement of Plan – In April 2008, the draft 2030 Plan Update was distributed to 67 neighboring communities and overlapping jurisdictions for a mandatory six-month review process. A total of 29 jurisdictions responded, with 14 providing written comments on the 2030 Plan Update. County staff incorporated these comments into the draft document before sending the 2030 Plan Update to the County Board for preliminary approval on November 18, 2008.

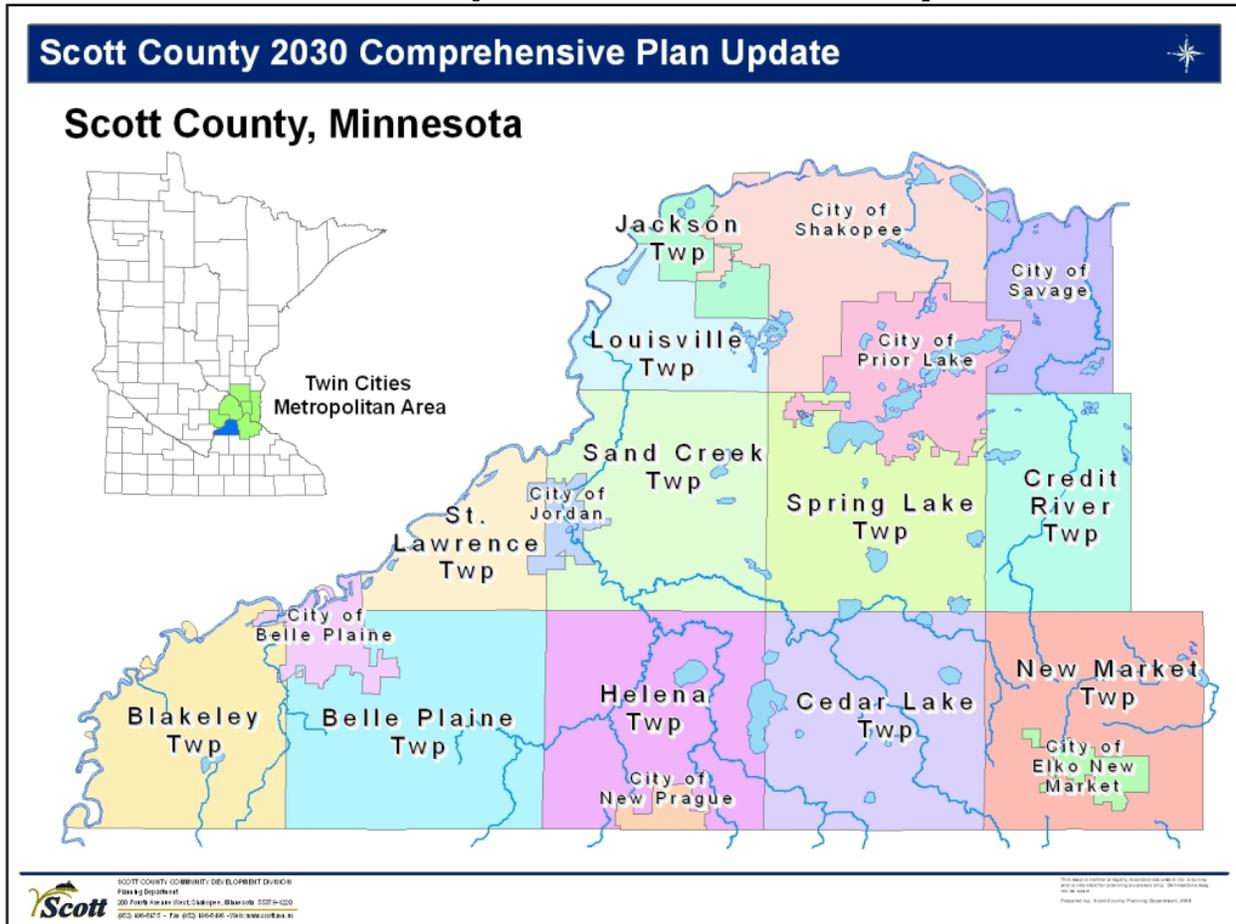
Phase 7: Adoption of Comprehensive Plan – The Scott County Planning Advisory Commission held a public hearing on the draft 2030 Plan Update on March 27, 2008. Approximately 100 people attended the hearing, with twenty residents providing oral comments. Most of the comments focused on two issues: 1) the draft 2030 Plan's position on long-term farmland preservation and the promotion of locally-grown food production; and 2) the draft 2030 Plan's position on the TH 41 Minnesota River Crossing study and potential impact the County's preferred eastern alignments will have on manufactured home parks. After closing the public hearing, staff addressed the aforementioned issues and the Planning Advisory Commission unanimously recommended to the County Board to approve the draft 2030 Plan Update with a condition that comments related to the long-term farmland preservation be addressed in the near future. On April 8th, 2008, the County Board gave preliminary approval of the draft 2030 Plan Update and authorized staff to send the plan out for the mandatory six-month review period.

The 2030 Plan Update was approved by the Metropolitan Council on February 25, 2009. On March 24, 2009, the County Board adopted the final draft of the 2030 Plan Update.

PLAN FRAMEWORK

This 2030 Plan Update was not prepared in a vacuum; rather, the Plan Update takes into account the overall framework for planning at the state, regional, and local levels. Below are the key jurisdictions that influence long-range planning in Scott County:

Figure I-1
Scott County Location and Jurisdictional Map



A. State of Minnesota

Minnesota's estimated 2007 population of 5.2 million is projected to grow to 6.2 million by 2030. This growth will be fueled by natural increase (more births than deaths) and by immigration from other states and foreign countries. Population growth is expected to be greatest in the Twin Cities' suburban counties. Statewide, the aging baby boomer generation will produce an explosion in the senior population.

Minnesota has 87 counties and 853 cities. In Minnesota, counties perform state-mandated duties such as property assessment, recordkeeping, road maintenance, administration of election and judicial functions, and police protection. In addition to these administrative duties, many counties provide other support duties like social services, corrections, child protection, library services, public health services, planning and zoning, economic development, parks and recreation, water quality, and solid waste management.

Several key state agencies participated in the preparation of this document by allowing staff attendance at work team meetings, and providing and reviewing planning documents. These agencies included the Department of Transportation (Metro District), Department of Natural Resources (Central Region), Department of Health and Human Services, and Department of Agriculture.

B. Metropolitan Council

The Metropolitan Council is the regional planning agency serving the Twin Cities seven-county metropolitan area (Hennepin, Ramsey, Dakota, Anoka, Carter, Washington, and Scott). The Metropolitan Council works with 272 separate units of government—counties, cities, and townships—to provide: the region’s largest bus system and only light-rail transit system; wastewater collection and treatment; population and household forecasts; affordable housing opportunities; and planning, acquisitions, and funding for regional parks and trails.

In 2001, the Metropolitan Council found Scott County’s 2020 Comprehensive Plan Update consistent with regional goals and policies. In their review of the County’s 2020 Plan Update, they identified the need for additional study of growth occurring along the Interstate 35 corridor within the county and recommended that the County work with the Council on this effort. The result of this collaborative effort was the preparation and adoption of the Southeast Scott County Comprehensive Plan Update.

In 2004, the Metropolitan Council adopted a *2030 Regional Development Framework* under the authority of state statutes. The *Development Framework* is the umbrella statement of regional policies, goals, and strategies that will inform the Council’s metropolitan system plans for airports, transportation, regional parks, and wastewater service. The *Framework* created geographic planning designations (see Figure I-2) across the metropolitan area to classify strategies for communities based on the different types of growth expected to occur. In Scott County, the *Framework* identified the following designations:

Developing (Urban) Areas – Cities of Shakopee, Prior Lake, and Savage. These communities are where most of population growth in Scott County is expected to occur.

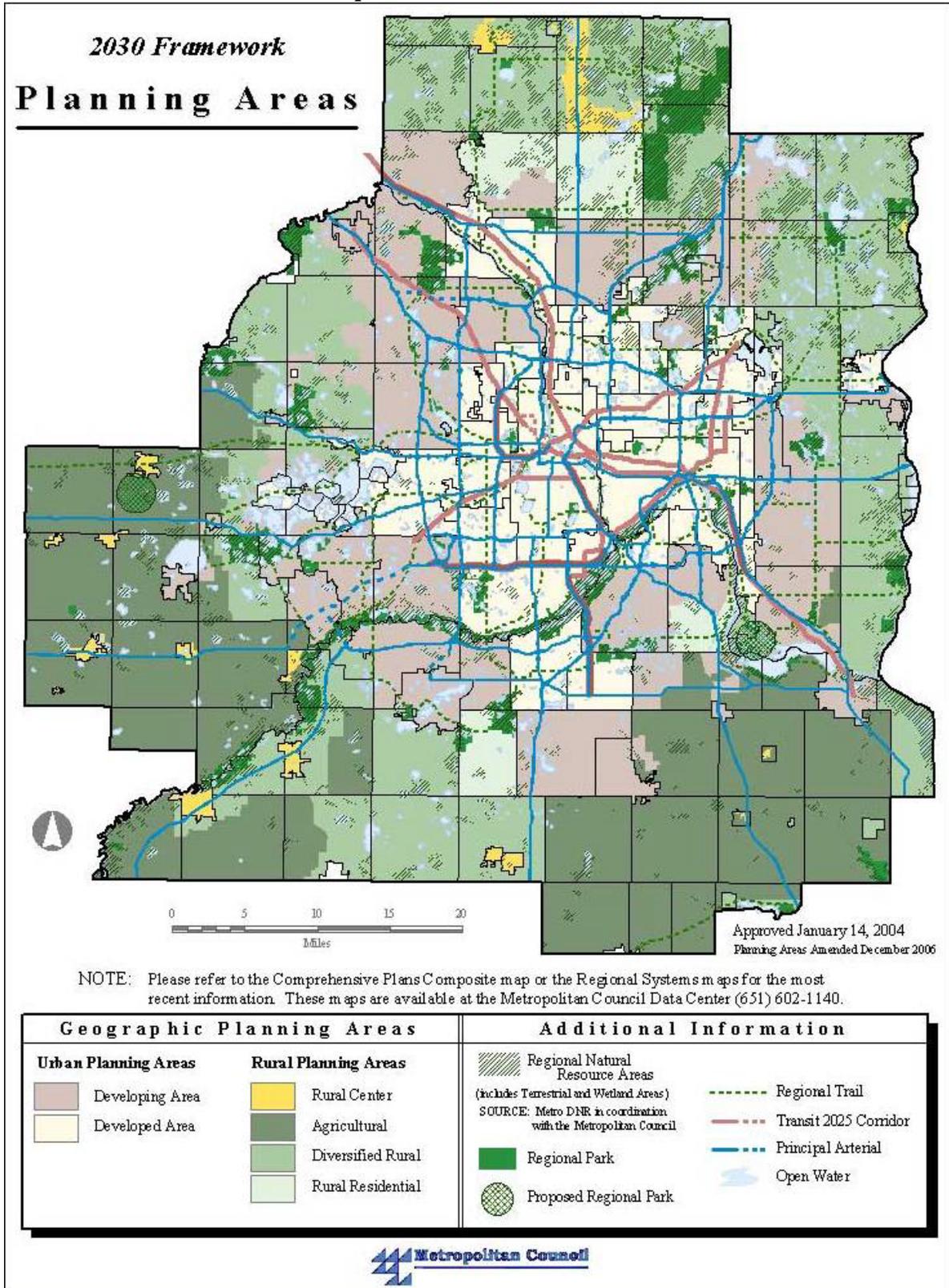
Rural Centers – Cities of Jordan, Belle Plaine, and Elko New Market. These smaller communities have potential for growth over the planning period. Belle Plaine is considered a Rural Growth Center given its potential for strong growth over the planning period.

Rural Residential – Credit River Township. The southern half of Credit River Township is currently developed at and planned for a residential density of one unit per 2½ acres, with no plans to provide urban sewer and water infrastructure.

Diversified Rural – Cedar Lake, Helena (portion), Jackson, Louisville, New Market, St. Lawrence, Sand Creek (portion), and Spring Lake Townships. These communities contain and are planned for a mix of farm and non-farm land uses, including a limited amount of large lot residential and clustered housing with agricultural land and other uses. The intent of this planning designation is to limit development in a manner that allows clustering not to exceed a density of one dwelling unit per 10 acres of land, and to preserve areas for post-2030 urban development.

Agricultural – Blakeley, Belle Plaine, Sand Creek (portion), and Helena (portion) Townships. The communities contain and are planned for large contiguous farm land. The intent of this planning designation is to limit residential development to a density of one dwelling unit per 40 acres of land.

**Figure I-2
Metropolitan Council 2030 Framework**



Source: Metropolitan Council, 2006

Under state law, each city, township and county in the region is required at least every 10 years to prepare and submit a local comprehensive plan that is consistent with the Council's system plans. All updated plans are due in 2008. Scott County's relationship to the Council's policies, goals, strategies and investments are provided in the different elements of this 2030 Plan Update.



C. Cities and Townships

Scott County was established and organized by an Act passed in the legislature on March 5, 1853. Scott County has an area of 375 square miles. The eleven townships are: Belle Plaine, Blakeley, Cedar Lake, Credit River, Helena, Jackson, Louisville, New Market, St. Lawrence, Sand Creek, and Spring Lake. The seven cities are:

- Belle Plaine (founded in 1854, incorporated as a borough in 1873, incorporated as a city in 1974);
- Elko New Market (merged in January 1, 2007. New Market was organized as Jackson Township in May 1858, renamed New Market on October 12, 1858. Elko was platted in 1902, incorporated as a city in 1949);
- Jordan (platted in 1854, incorporated as a village in 1872, and as a city in 1891);
- New Prague (partly in Le Sueur County, founded in 1856, incorporated as a village in 1877, and as a city in 1891);
- Prior Lake (platted in 1875, incorporated as a city in 1891);
- Savage (platted in 1857, incorporated as a City in 1858);
- Shakopee (platted in 1854, incorporated as a city in 1857, reincorporated as a city in 1870);

Over the last twenty-five years Scott County has changed considerably, from a population of 43,784 in 1980 to an estimated 126,642 in 2007. Figure III-2 (found in Chapter III - Community Background) depicts the municipal boundary changes over the past fifty years. This map was helpful throughout the process of preparing this 2030 Plan Update to demonstrate historical growth patterns and trends.

D. Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community

The Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community (SMSC) is a federally recognized Indian Tribe exercising inherent powers of self-governance to protect that health, welfare, and safety of SMSC residents and members. The SMSC has a federally approved Tribal Constitution that establishes the form of government and the rights, powers, and duties of the Tribal Government. All land held by the SMSC (located in north-central Scott County) is held communally by all members. No individual members hold fee title to any land controlled by SMSC. Residential parcels are assigned to individuals and held on a leasehold basis. SMSC owns and operates Mystic Lake Casino, the largest Indian-gaming facility in Minnesota.

SMSC completed its last comprehensive plan in 2000 to establish a basis for development planning, provide data to allow the protection of natural resources, and to set a foundation for zoning ordinance revisions. The SMSC updated its comprehensive plan in 2008.

E. Neighboring Counties and Cities

Scott County shares boundaries with six counties: Hennepin (2007 est. pop. 1.1 million), Dakota (390,478), Rice (61,955), Le Sueur (28,034), Sibley (15,007), and Carver (88,459). The following plans or maps from these six counties were reviewed and consulted during the preparation of this 2030 Plan Update:

- *Dakota County 2020 Comprehensive Plan;*
- *Dakota County 2025 Transportation Policy Plan;*
- *Dakota County 2020 Parks and Open Space Plan;*
- *Rice County Comprehensive Plan (2002);*
- *Carver County 2020 Comprehensive Plan;*
- *Le Sueur County Zoning Map; and*
- *Sibley County Zoning Map.*

During the planning process, County staff had considerable discussions and meetings with staff from neighboring Dakota County, Rice County, and Carver County to discuss issues of mutual interest or concern. Because growth and development in the neighboring cities of Chaska, Burnsville, and Lakeville have certain impacts on the County's land use, transportation, parks and trails systems, these community's plans were also reviewed and consulted during the planning process.

F. Soil and Water Conservation District

The Scott Soil and Water Conservation District is a political subdivision of the state of Minnesota established to carry out a program for the conservation, use, and development of soil, water and related resources. Five locally elected Scott Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisors provide leadership and governance. The role of the Elected District Supervisors is to develop policy, long-range plans, and budgets. It is the objective of the Scott Soil and Water Conservation District to carry out a well-rounded program of conservation. Assistance to land occupiers in applying proper practices to control soil erosion, reduce water pollution and aid in land resource planning will be made available on all lands within the District.

G. School Districts

Nine public school districts have jurisdiction over portions of Scott County. Chapters III and IX of this Plan include a map and more descriptions of these school districts.

H. Watershed Management Organizations / Watershed Districts

There are five watershed jurisdictions in Scott County: Scott WMO, Black Dog WMO, Scott County Vermillion Joint Powers Organization, Lower Minnesota River Watershed District, and Prior Lake–Spring Lake Watershed District. The boundaries of these watershed jurisdictions are shown on Figure I-3. Most of the county is within the Scott WMO. In 2004, Scott WMO prepared and adopted its *Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan* for the purpose of managing surface and groundwater within the boundaries of the Scott WMO. The other watershed jurisdictions in Scott County have adopted similar water resource management plans.

**Figure I-3
Watershed Jurisdictions**

