

2024 URBAN GROWTH MANAGEMENT:
PRELIMINARY GROWTH CAPACITY ESTIMATES

Date: March 19, 2024
Department: Planning, Development, and
Research
Meeting Date: April 9, 2024

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Length: 45 minutes

ISSUE STATEMENT

The region's urban growth boundary (UGB) delineates urban and rural uses and is a tool for ensuring thoughtful and efficient growth patterns. The Metro Council is required by state law to – at least every six years – determine whether the UGB has adequate land for expected housing and job growth. The Metro Council last made this determination in December 2018 and is scheduled to do so again by the end of 2024. The Metro Council has directed staff to proceed with an approved work program and requested periodic updates.

A central aspect of the work program is estimating how much room the current UGB has for housing and employment growth. To complete this analysis staff must determine the growth capacity of vacant and partially vacant lands as well as lands that may be used for redevelopment and infill.

Because this work involves, not just inventorying land, but also forecasting how lands may get developed in the future, there is a degree of uncertainty. Staff seeks to provide the Metro Council with the best available information through several means:

- Reviewing methodologies and results with local jurisdictions and subject area experts
- Seeking to understand the trends and market factors that may influence future development
- Recognizing sensitivity to assumptions and expressing capacity results as a range

At the April work session, Metro staff will summarize and answer questions regarding:

- How the UGB capacity analysis informs the Metro Council's growth management decision
- Methods for estimating UGB capacity
- Preliminary UGB capacity estimates for housing
- Sources of uncertainty in estimating housing capacity
- Next steps for local review

ACTION REQUESTED

Update the Council on implementation of the work program for the 2024 urban growth management decision, focusing on the preliminary residential capacity analysis.

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

State law and regional policies lay out an intention to make efficient use of land inside the UGB and to only expand the UGB if there is a demonstrable regional need to accommodate expected housing or job growth. The Metro Council makes this growth management decision for the region after significant engagement. To ensure that areas added to the UGB are ready for growth, it is the Metro Council's policy to only expand the UGB in urban reserves that have been concept planned by a city or a county. Metro provides grant funding for local jurisdictions to complete concept planning.

POLICY QUESTION(S)

- Does the Council have any questions for staff about preliminary UGB capacity estimates?

POLICY OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

The Council may provide staff with direction on:

- Advice that would be useful from MPAC or CORE
- Updates that the Council would like to have going forward

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

- Staff recommends proceeding with the work program

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Regional urban growth management decisions have long been one of the Metro Council's core responsibilities. The Metro UGB – first adopted in 1979 – is one of Metro's tools for achieving the 2040 Growth Concept's vision for compact growth, thereby protecting farms and forests outside the UGB and focusing public and private investment in existing communities. These are all key to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and expanding housing options.

The UGB is just one policy tool, however, and must be accompanied by other policies, partnerships, and investments to make good on the 2040 Growth Concept and to address challenges like housing affordability, displacement, homelessness, and economic development. Often, growth management processes provide a venue for identifying the need for new initiatives.

Metro strives for transparency in its growth management work, which can be challenging given its highly technical aspects. The 2024 decision will provide opportunities for interested parties to inform and understand the many technical and policy aspects of this work. Those opportunities include, not only standing advisory committees, but also groups formed for this decision process such as the UGR Roundtable, the Land Use Technical Advisory Group, the regional forecast expert review panel, and the Youth Cohort.

BACKGROUND

At its March 7, 2023 work session, the Council directed staff to begin implementing the work program for the 2024 urban growth management decision. The Council also directed staff to periodically update the Council on work program implementation, particularly related to engagement activities.

ATTACHMENTS

- Is legislation required for Council action? Yes No
- If yes, is draft legislation attached? Yes No
- What other materials are you presenting today?
 - UGM project timeline and tentative committee engagement schedule