

2024 URBAN GROWTH MANAGEMENT DECISION:
WORK PROGRAM STATUS UPDATES

Date: August 30, 2023
Department: Planning, Development, and
Research
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Length: 60 minutes

ISSUE STATEMENT

Under state law, the Metro Council is required to – at least every six years – determine whether the urban growth boundary (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, particularly related to engagement activities.

ACTION REQUESTED

Update the Council on implementation of the work program for the 2024 urban growth management decision, including:

- The proposed engagement plan, including the stakeholder roundtable
- Initial ideas for possible UGB conditions of approval

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.

The Council will make a growth management decision by the end of 2024. As part of that decision, the Council will need to also decide on conditions of approval if it adds any land to the UGB.

POLICY QUESTION(S)

- Does the Council have any feedback on the proposed engagement plan?
- Does the Council have any initial direction on possible conditions of approval for any UGB expansions?

POLICY OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

The Council may provide staff with direction on:

- The proposed engagement approach
- Possible UGB conditions of approval

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

- Staff recommends proceeding with the proposed engagement plan.
- Staff recommends that the Council describe its policy interests regarding any potential UGB expansion areas so that staff can propose some options for UGB conditions of approval.

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, houselessness, and economic development. Often, growth management processes provide a venue for identifying the need for new initiatives.

As the Council is aware, several stakeholder groups follow urban growth management decisions closely and staff expects this decision to be no different. While these stakeholders at times have differing opinions or interpretations, staff has found that a focus on city readiness and concentrating growth management discussions around actual expansion proposals makes practical sense to all. Consequently, that focus on city readiness is a consistent theme in the work program.

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 stakeholders 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 Stakeholder Roundtable, the Land Use Technical Advisory Group, 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?
 - Proposed 2024 Urban Growth Management Decision Engagement Plan
 - Memo providing background on UGB conditions of approval