

Information Item

Community Development Committee



Meeting Date: February 3, 2025

Topic

2040 Comprehensive Plan Amendment Annual Report

District(s), Member(s):	All
Policy/Legal Reference:	Minn. Stat. § 473.864, subd. 2
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Gabriela Olvera, Planner (651-602-1832) MacKenzie Young-Walters, Senior Planner (651-602-1373)
Division/Department:	Community Development / Regional Planning

Proposed Action

No action necessary. This is an information item.

Background

Local governments amend their comprehensive plans as the need arises. Most amendments are related to development proposals that are supported by the City but are not consistent with the current guiding land use or other policies in their adopted Plan. Other reasons for amending plans include the incorporation of more detailed planning (e.g., neighborhood or station area plans); refinement of policy; or changes in the timing, location, or staging of development.

Council staff review amendments for conformance with regional system plans, consistency with regional policy, and compatibility with affected jurisdictions. Many of these are reviewed administratively by staff, but amendments with larger impacts require consideration by the Community Development Committee and full Council, consistent with the Council's adopted Administrative Review Guidelines.

Council staff compile information related to comprehensive plan amendments to better understand and report on themes related to amendments. This ongoing inventory and analysis of amendments helps staff provide assistance to local governments as well as helps craft future regional policies and practices. This report covers authorized amendments to 2040 comprehensive plans. Amendments that were found to be incomplete or ultimately withdrawn are not included.

Types of Amendments

The amendments submitted by communities often have multiple components. An amendment may include one or more of the following:

- Changes in guiding land uses:
 - Parcel-specific changes to accommodate development proposals (most common amendment).
 - Modifying many parcels as a result of a small area planning exercise.
 - Assigning a guiding land use as a result of annexation (infrequent).
 - "Correcting" a guiding land use to better match the existing use (uncommon).
- Adjustments to the Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA) or staging areas of the Plan based

- on development interest or lack thereof.
- Text amendments adjusting the density range of an existing guiding land use to accommodate market conditions or changing local policy for these locations.
- Increases to the community's forecasts related to a development proposal and/or policy changes that create more favorable conditions for development given market demand.

Less common amendments also occur, such as:

- Text amendments creating a new guiding land use category.
- Infrastructure-related amendments, like the incorporation of a new bicycle plan.
- Change in Community Designation for a parcel(s).

Findings

When communities submit amendments for Council review, they might include multiple policy changes or actions. For example, a City might submit a proposed amendment for the reguiding of properties for two unrelated developments. Council staff have disaggregated this information for reporting and analysis.

The Big Picture for 2040 Plans

- The Council has authorized 409 amendments¹, consisting of 447 actions. Of the 409 amendments, 103 required Council action and 306 were reviewed administratively by Council staff.
 - Communities within the MUSA account for approximately 89% of amendments.
 - The Council authorized the highest number of amendments in Emerging Suburban Edge (114) communities, followed by Suburban Edge (90), and Suburban (88).
- The number of amendments has declined since its peak in 2021 (Figure 2).
 - Only three amendments were submitted in 2019, which is not surprising as many plans were still under review for the 2040 decennial update.
 - Amendments grew to 47 in 2020 and peaked in 2021 with 115 amendments.
 - Amendments declined in 2022 and 2023 with 81 and 76 amendments, respectively, but increased to 87 in 2024.
- The most frequently submitted amendments included changes in guiding land use (335), including those associated with a development (215) and those without a specific development proposal (120). There were 99 amendments related to changes in the text, such as the creation of a new guiding land use or revisions to density ranges.
- Amendments associated with development were linked to the creation of over 20,000 dwelling units, nearly 1,900 affordable dwelling units, and over 3,000,000 square feet of commercial and industrial uses.
- Of the 409 total amendments to 2040 Plans, the Council found 16 amendments to be inconsistent with regional policy.
 - Ten amendments created inconsistencies with housing policy.
 - Two amendments created inconsistencies with natural resources policy.
 - Two amendments created inconsistencies with land use policy.
 - One amendment created an inconsistency with both land use and natural resources policies.
 - One amendment created an inconsistency with agricultural preserves policy.

¹ The Council authorized the first 2040 Comprehensive Plan on February 14, 2018.

A Closer Look at 2024

In 2024, the Council authorized 87 amendments through November 30, 2024. Of these amendments, 20 required Council action and 67 were reviewed administratively by staff. The general trends in 2024 align with those seen across all amendments authorized by the Council. The following are some key findings of the amendments authorized in 2024:

- Frequency of amendments:
 - Among the 181 communities and 7 counties in the region that require comprehensive plans, 49 amended their plans in 2024.
 - Communities within the MUSA account for 81% of amendments.
 - The Council authorized the highest number of amendments in Emerging Suburban Edge (22) and Suburban Edge (21) communities, followed by Suburban (17) and Urban Core (12).
 - The most frequently submitted amendments included changes in guiding land use (75), including those associated with a development (45) and those without a specific development proposal (30).
 - There were 17 amendments related to changes in the text, such as the creation of a new guiding land use or revisions to density ranges.
- Land use impacts:
 - Development-driven amendments authorized in 2024 accounted for 3,660 housing units, including 591 affordable housing units. These amendments also facilitated the creation of 140 memory care/assisted living units.
 - Approximately 73% development-driven changes in guiding land use in 2024 were either a change from one residential land use to another residential land use (43%), or a change from a non-residential land use to a residential land use (30%).
 - Of the 49 amendments involving residential land uses, 20 resulted in increased development capacity and 17 resulted in decreased development capacity. Two of the amendments did not lead to a change in development capacity.
 - The net impact of all amendments was an increased development capacity of over 7,000 units (inclusive of units associated with developments and additional units that could be constructed due to amendments that are not associated with a known development).
- Regional policy impacts:
 - One amendment created an inconsistency with regional housing policy.
 - One amendment created an inconsistency with regional land use policy.

Discussion

At the February 3, 2025, Community Development Committee meeting, staff will present an overview of this information with additional data, graphs, and examples of amendments authorized during 2024.

We are interested in your thoughts and questions about this data, and what you think would warrant further investigation and reporting. We will continue to build upon this effort so that we have an ongoing means to track and report on trends in amendments.

Figure 1. Comprehensive Plan Amendments by Community Designation

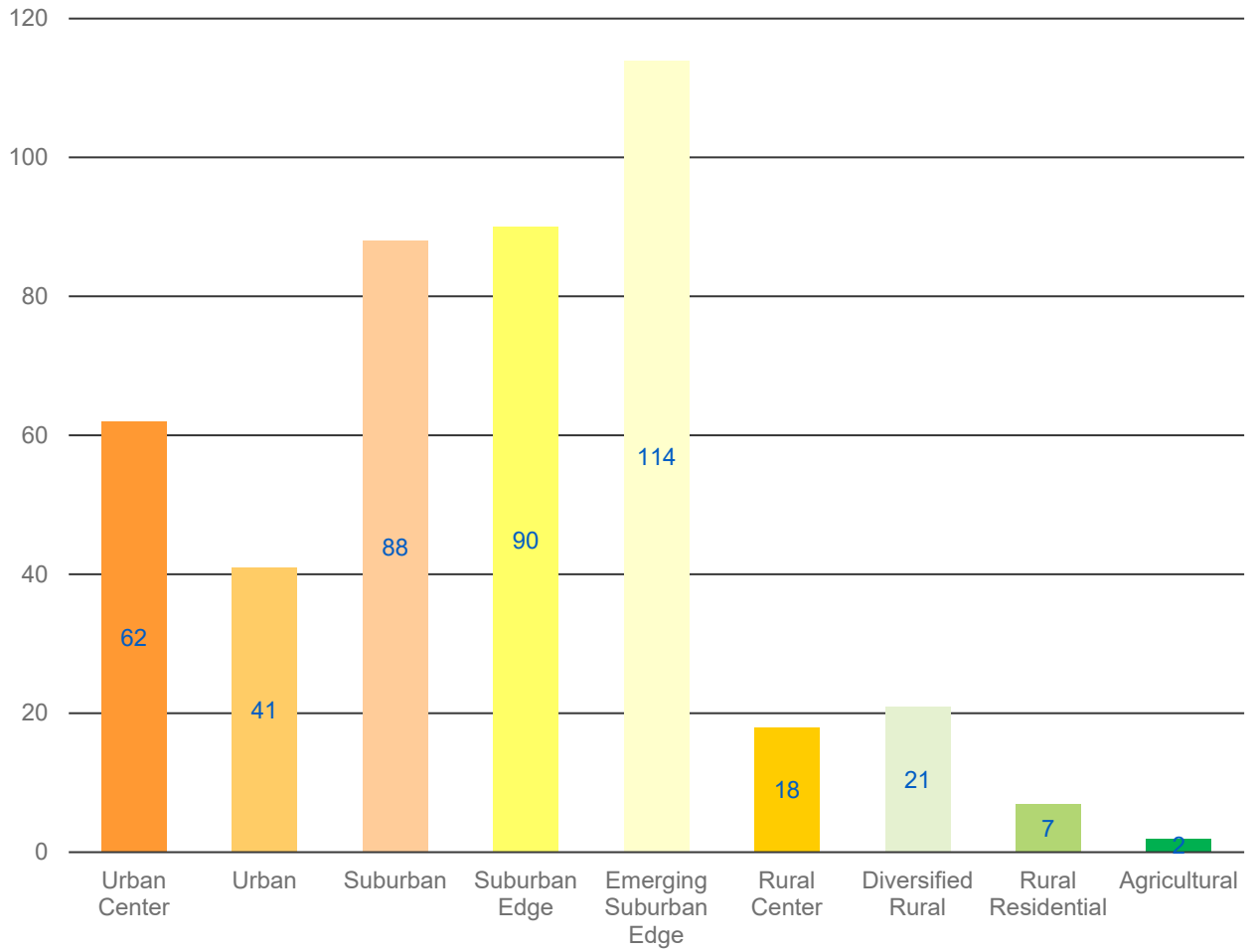


Figure 2. Comprehensive Plan Amendments by Year

