



METROPOLITAN
C O U N C I L

Flexible Development Guidelines

Imagine 2050 Update

May 21, 2026

metro council.org



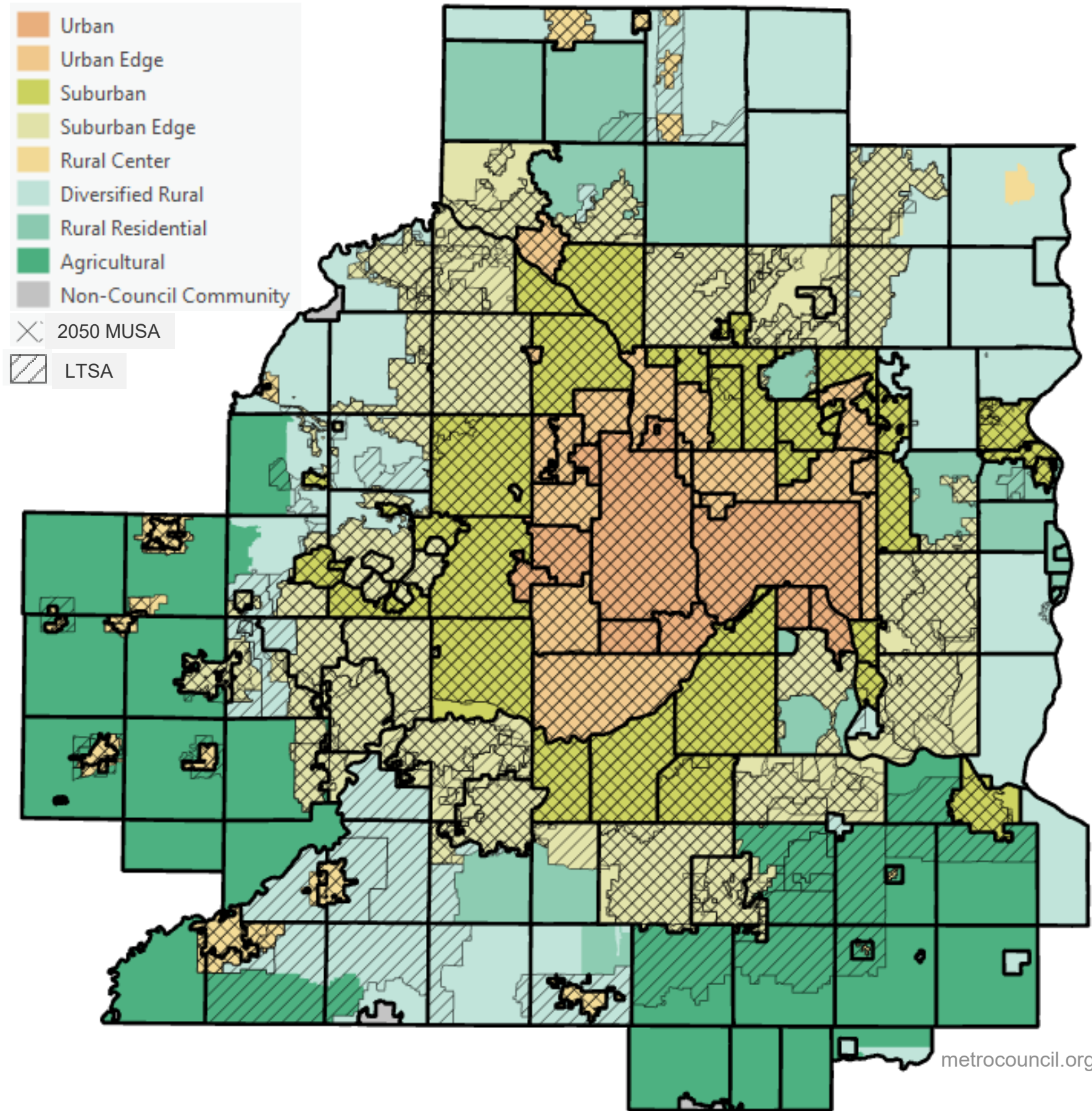
Flexible Development Guidelines

Today's Discussion

- Background
- Current Guidelines
- Potential Areas of Update
- Next Steps



Imagine 2050 Community Designations and Long-Term Service Area



Flexible Development Guidelines

History

- 2006 Rural Issues Working Group
- Concern about rural development patterns
- Need to clarify policy
- 2008 Adopted Flexible Development Guidelines
- 2016 Developed Factsheet
- Imagine 2050: Commitment to update

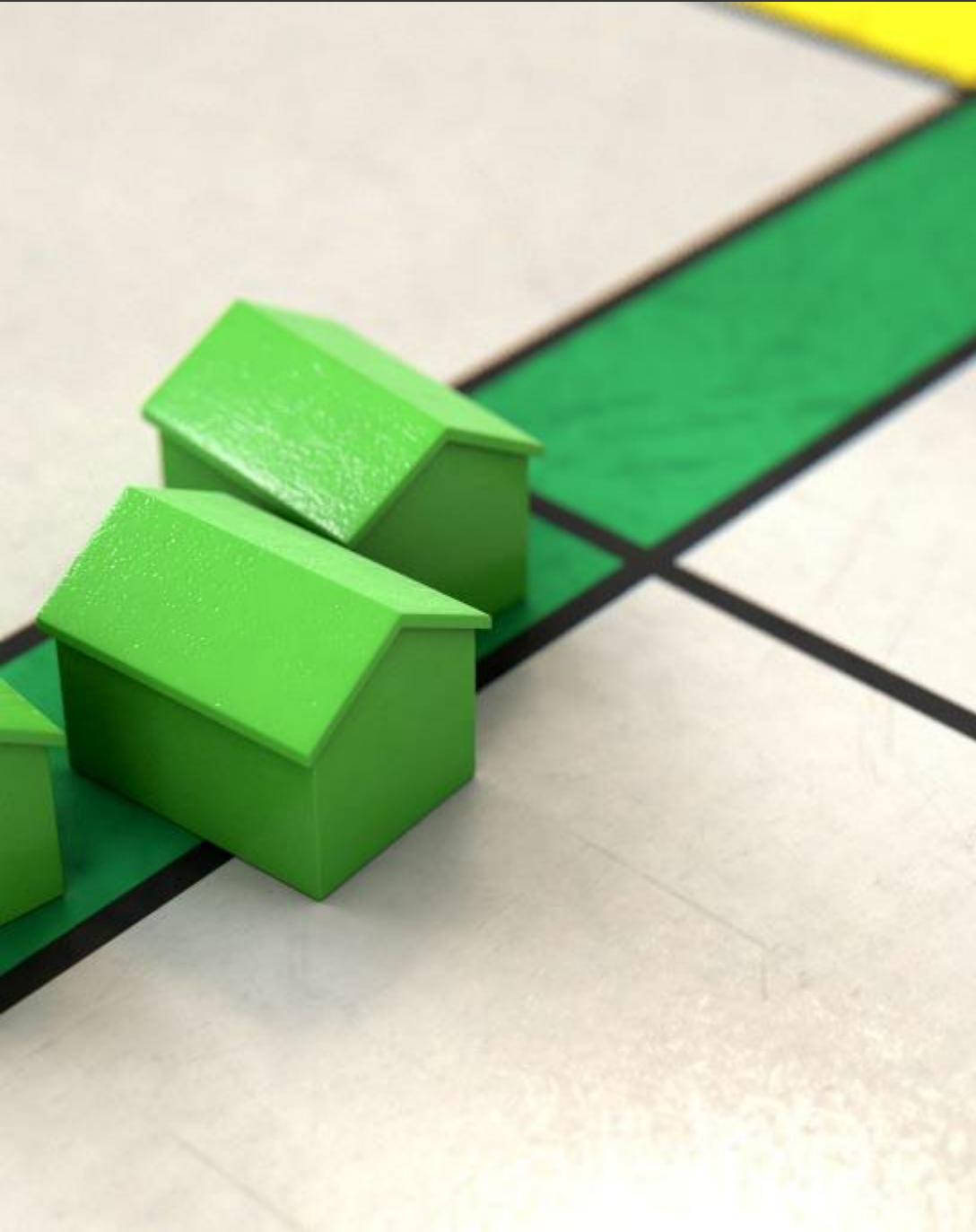
Purpose

- Allow for development within Diversified Rural's Long-Term Service area
- Ensure that development facilitates orderly and economical expansion of regional system

Current Guidelines

- City must state purpose is facilitating future urbanization
- City must describe characteristics of land required for future urbanization
- 25% can develop; 75% reserved for future
- City must require reserved land to be protected by development agreement or deed restriction
- City must provide for rezoning of parcel when urban services are available
- Encourages the use of community wastewater systems to serve clusters

Potential Updates



Accommodate Development in LTSA

- Allow for development while ensuring that future development can be efficiently served
- Requirements associated with above goal (% preserved, type of systems, density, etc.)

Managing Rural Growth

- Rural areas have forecasted growth
- Permit clustering to direct growth into more desirable areas
- Guardrails to prevent policy inconsistency and future need to provide urban services

Potential Updates



Preserving Environmental Systems

- Investigate possibility of using Flexible Development Guidelines to protect natural areas
- Within and outside of LTSA
- Guardrails to prevent policy inconsistency

Preserving Agricultural Areas

- Investigate possibility of using Flexible Development Guidelines to protect agricultural lands
- Outside of LTSA
- Guardrails to prevent policy inconsistency

Support for Communities



Technical Assistance

- Determine what needs to be included in Comprehensive Plans for communities using Flexible Development Guidelines
- Resources explaining Guidelines
- Best practices in rural cluster developments

Next Steps



- Analysis of rural development trends
- Analysis of 2040 Comprehensive Plans that reference Flexible Development Guidelines, as well as a more general review of rural development ordinances.
- Interviews with cities/counties in Rural Service Area who have used Flexible Development Guidelines
- Focus group of affected rural communities to solicit input
- Return to LUAC with proposed update to Flexible Development Guidelines
- Develop guidance on meeting 2050 Comprehensive Plan Update requirements



Freya Thamman

Planning Analyst, Local Planning Assistance
Community Development

Freya.Thamman@metc.state.mn.us

(651) 602-1750

MacKenzie Young-Walters

Senior Planner, Local Planning Assistance
Community Development

Mackenzie.Young-Walters@metc.state.mn.us

(651) 602-1373

