



# *E*xecutive Summary

## **Purpose & Role of the Metropolitan Council: *Focused for the Future***



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## Introduction

The Metropolitan Council is focused for the future. Recently, the Council completed a review of its mission and operation to determine how to best meet the needs of our changing region. The review included an independent and internal analysis of management, organizational strengths and weaknesses; and a performance audit of accomplishments, needs and expectations by external focus groups.

The result is a new Council strategic plan that meets a regional need for problem-solving leadership. There is a clear definition of core areas of focus, priority issues, a redefined role and emphasis on collaborating with other public and private sector organizations to resolve regional concerns.

## Our Focus

Over the years, the Council has been successful in bringing about direct improvements to the metropolitan area. By establishing and overseeing regional systems for sewers, transportation, parks and water quality the Council helped build an urban quality of life that is the envy of metropolitan areas throughout the country. But as the region changed, reflecting the changing environment of the world, the Council found a different type of regional leadership was needed.

The Council must be a change-agent for the region. More staff resources will be devoted to advocating and acting on critical issues facing the region. The Council has narrowed its focus to five core areas, through which the Council will be able to influence our region's critical issues.

The Council is actively collaborating with public and private sectors in resolving issues and shaping solutions, with better accountability overall. Redefining the Council's role as a higher profile leader in regional affairs is a shift from the Council's previous exclusive role as a long-range planning and coordinating agency.

## Our Purpose

To improve the region by strengthening the economic, societal and environmental health and vitality of the metropolitan area.

## Our Role

To provide leadership on critical, current and emerging regional issues leading to action and accountability.

Core areas of focus include:

- 1) land use
- 2) regional investments
- 3) transportation
- 4) housing
- 5) water supply and quality

Issues within each core area of focus will be addressed in a proactive, interdisciplinary manner. The Council is incorporating a societal, environmental and economic regional perspective. The Council is examining symptoms and causes in order to deal with root problems, such as poverty in the center cities.

## How It Will Work

A streamlined staff will provide a comprehensive, cross-disciplinary approach. The Council's core focus has narrowed to five key areas, assuring better integration of policy decisions. While the Council will retain its expertise in urban research and long-range planning, a greater share of staff resources is dedicated to advocating regional issues for collaborative resolution and action among the public and private sectors. Woven into the Council's decision-making are the principles of prudent use of resources for more cost-effective government services, and infrastructure support of regional economic development.

## Getting the Job Done: the Regional Blueprint

Our region faces serious challenges to its future growth and vitality. The Council is responding by developing a *Regional Blueprint*, a physical land-use and fiscal action plan for the development of the region. The Blueprint targets four areas:

- Developing and reinvesting in older parts of the region. The Council will work to remove barriers and develop incentives that will attract private investment.
- Strengthening job creation and economic growth. The Council will facilitate a strong economy as the central emphasis to long-term strategies for jobs, housing and educational opportunity.

- Planning our growth to ensure cost-effective public services and vital central cities. The Council must consider any expansion of urban service area boundaries with managing urban sprawl.
- Managing the financing of regional investments, such as infrastructure. Paying for public facilities that support development, like highways and sewers, must be balanced to maintain our Triple-A bond rating.

New areas of involvement in the *Regional Blueprint* are economic development, job creation and work readiness. The Council is actively building partnerships and cooperative networks with the public and private sectors in addressing these areas of regional concern. The Council will rely less on enforcement over metro systems and more on convening organizations to pursue a course of action, facilitating solutions by others, and partnerships with business, local government, civic and community groups, etc. to produce results.

The Regional Blueprint is leadership in action, and maps out short-term and long-term strategies for the region in the next decade. The *Regional Blueprint* is what the newly focused Metropolitan Council is all about.

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