# NET RESIDENTIAL DENSITY REQUIREMENTS

Net density supports orderly, efficient growth by ensuring regional services—such as wastewater, highways, transit, parks, and redevelopment programs—are cost-effective and sustainable. Communities in the Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA) receive these higher-level services and are expected to plan for development at densities that economically support them. The Metropolitan Council sets density expectations by Community Designation, with higher targets near transit, based on anticipated growth, market demand, existing patterns, redevelopment opportunities, and local comprehensive plans. Minimum average densities give communities flexibility in locating higher or lower density development while meeting overall regional goals

## NET DENSITY REQUIREMENTS BY COMMUNITY DESIGNATION

### Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA)

The area planned to receive urban-level services, such as regional wastewater, transit, and major infrastructure, to support higher-density, compact development. Communities in the MUSA are expected to meet minimum density requirements based on their Community Designation and to focus growth where infrastructure can efficiently serve it.

| Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA) Minimum Net Density Requirements | |
|---|---|
| Urban | 25 units per acre |
| Urban Edge | 14 units per acre |
| Suburban | 7 units per acre |
| Suburban Edge | 3.5 units per acre |

### Rural Service Area

The portion of the region planned for long-term rural or agricultural uses, generally without regional urban services. Rural areas have maximum density limits to preserve farmland, protect natural resources, maintain rural character, and avoid premature infrastructure expansion.

| Rural Service Area Net Density Requirements | |
|---|---|
| Rural Center | 3 units per acre *minimum* |
| Rural Residential | 2.5 acre lots existing, 1 units per 10 acres where possible *maxiumum* |
| Diversified Rural | 4 units per 40 acres *maxiumum* |
| Agricultural | 1 unit per 40 acres *maximum* |

## NET DENSITY REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL COMMUNITIES

Identify when residential development or redevelopment is anticipated to happen, plan for forecasted growth and land supply by decade in local comprehensive plans, meeting the community designation minimum density requirements within each planning decade.

Plan for the overall minimum or maximum average net residential density expectations for your community designation(s) across all land within your jurisdiction guided to support forecasted growth within the planning period.

## How to Calculate Net Density

The Council measures minimum net density to support forecasted growth by taking the minimum number of planned housing units and dividing by the net acreage. Net acreage does not include land covered by wetlands, water bodies, public parks and trails, public open space, arterial road rights-of-way, and other undevelopable acres identified in or protected by local ordinances such as steep slopes.

| What CAN be netted out? | Notes | What CANNOT be netted out? |
|---|---|---|
| **Wetland and Water Bodies** | Areas protected from development by local ordinances | Setbacks from water bodies, storm ponds, NURP ponds. |
| **Principal and Minor Arterials** | Arterial roads are part of the metropolitan highway system Arterial Road Right-of-Way . Principal arterials consist primarily of interstate freeways, other freeways, and highways. The minor arterial system supplements the principal arterial system and provides connections to the principal arterial system. Minor arterials support access to major traffic generators, including regional job concentrations and freight terminals, and between rural centers within and just outside the region. | Local road rights-of-way that are not part of the metropolitan highway system. |
| **Public Parks and Open Space** | Must be public or in permanent open space (federal, state, regional, local) or land held in perpetual open space in an open space easement. | Privately held conservation easements, private parks, private trails. |
| **Areas Protected from Development by Local Ordinances** | Floodplains, steep slopes, bluffs | |

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit the Local Planning Handbook for more information.