

Preserving Agriculture and Planning for Trails

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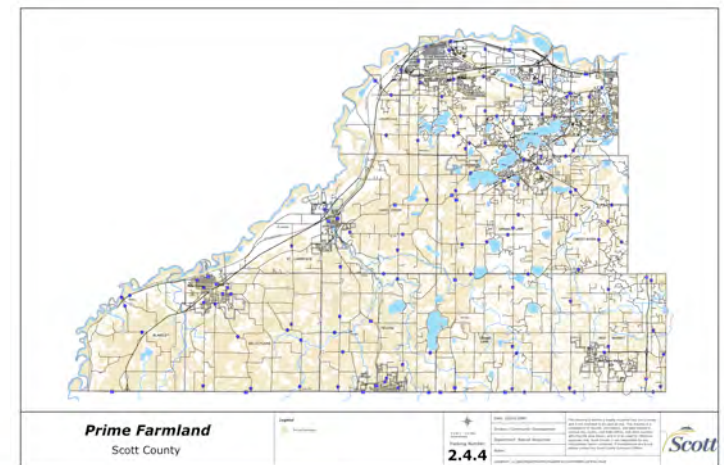


UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



The Future of Agricultural Production in Scott County Project

- Reaction to increasing development pressure
- Four-part project:
 - Inventorying existing agricultural assets
 - Conducting case studies of farmland preservation and local food efforts
 - Mapping prime agricultural land
 - Identifying next steps for a local/regional food system



Scott County Project Findings

Three sets of actors:

1. Non-government actors (farmers, farm co operatives, nonprofit organizations, private investors, etc.)
2. City/township government
3. County government
4. *State and federal government*



Scott County Project Findings

Three key roles:

1. Preserving high-quality farmland [land use]
2. Facilitating a diversity of agricultural uses [zoning]
3. Facilitating markets for agricultural products [economic development]



1. Preserving High-Quality Farmland

- Mapping high quality farmland
- Agricultural zoning
- Conservation development approaches
- Transfer of development rights (TDR)



1. Preserving High-Quality Farmland, *con't*

- Purchase of development rights (PDR) and agricultural conservation easements
- Property tax rebates
- Farmer-to-farmer networks



2. Facilitating a Diversity of Agricultural Uses

- Allow a range of uses by right in agricultural zones (hobby farms, agrotourism, truck farms, speciality and organic, wind farms, biofuel production, B&B, horse stables/trails, etc.)
- Allow on-site processing as a permitted/conditional use
- Establish an agricultural enterprise zone
- Zone for affordable housing for agricultural workers



2. Facilitating a Diversity of Agricultural Uses, *con't*

- Allow working farmland in conservation developments
- Provide publicly owned space for community gardens in residential developments
- Allow low-intensity agricultural uses and practices in residential zones



< Developed Land | Conserved Land >



3. Facilitating Markets for Agricultural Products

- Rebuilding agricultural infrastructure
- Allowing onsite agricultural sales
- Creating farmers' markets
- Facilitating community-supported agriculture (CSA)



3. Facilitating Markets for Agricultural Products, *con't*

- Institutional purchasing programs
- Farm-to-school and farm-to-hospital programs
- Marketing/branding efforts



3. Facilitating Markets for Agricultural Products, *con't*

- Connecting with regional market for local food
- Wholesalers

Local Food Exchange, Bellingham, WA
Photo credit: Growing Washington



Planning for Trails: Best Practices



Building the Case for Trails: Highlighting the Benefits

- Health/recreation
- Transportation
- Economic development
- Habitat/connection with nature
- Building a sense of community



Building the Case for Trails

- Property rights concerns
- Impact on property values
- Privacy issues
- Crime/safety concerns



Identifying Trail Corridors: “The Map” Problem

- Build a strong consensus for trails first
- Foster broad and meaningful public participation
- Identify multiple corridor options
- Capitalize on existing community assets in siting
- Make easements voluntary
- Offer fair market value



Consider Design Issues Carefully

- Destination vs. recreation
- Multiuse vs. single use
- Signage and wayfinding
- Surfaces and amenities
- Safety/privacy
- Access and ease of use



Implementation: Getting Trails Built

- Begin with high-visibility, high-payoff segments
- Take the long view
- Include in comprehensive plan/official mapping
- Include in capital improvement plan
- Involve multiple stakeholders
- Identify multiple funding sources
- Have a maintenance plan



Resources

Agriculture

- Scott County Project Reports, www.cura.umn.edu/Programs/CGO/Projects.php#Local
- American Farmland Trust, www.farmland.org
- Land Stewardship Project, www.landstewardshipproject.org
- Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, www.michaelfieldsagainst.org
- *Growing Opportunity: The Outlook for Local Food Systems*, Farm Credit Council study (2006)
- Arendt, *Rural by Design* (Ch. 18—"Retaining Farmland and Farmers")

Trails & Parks

- American Trails, www.americantrails.org
- Trust for Public Land, www.tpl.org
- Embrace Open Space, www.embraceopenspace.org







Questions?



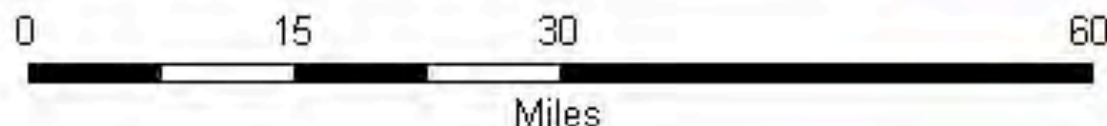
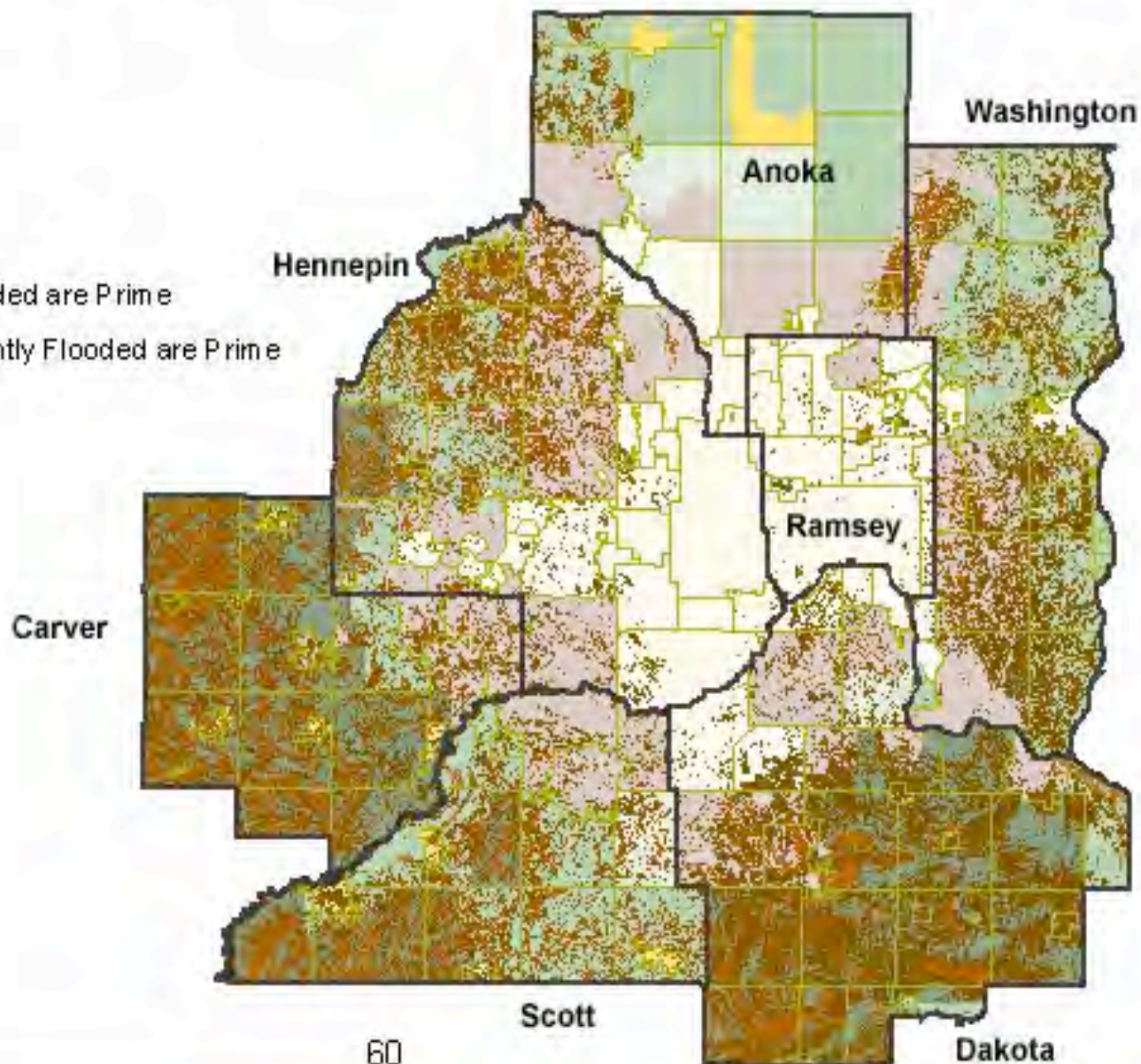
Prime Farmland in Twin Cities Metropolitan Area

Prime Farmland

-  All Areas are Prime
-  Only Drained Areas are Prime
-  Only Areas Not Frequently Flooded are Prime
-  Only Drained Areas Not Frequently Flooded are Prime

2030 Planning Areas

-  Developed Area
-  Developing Area
-  Rural Center
-  Rural Residential
-  Diversified Rural
-  Agricultural Area



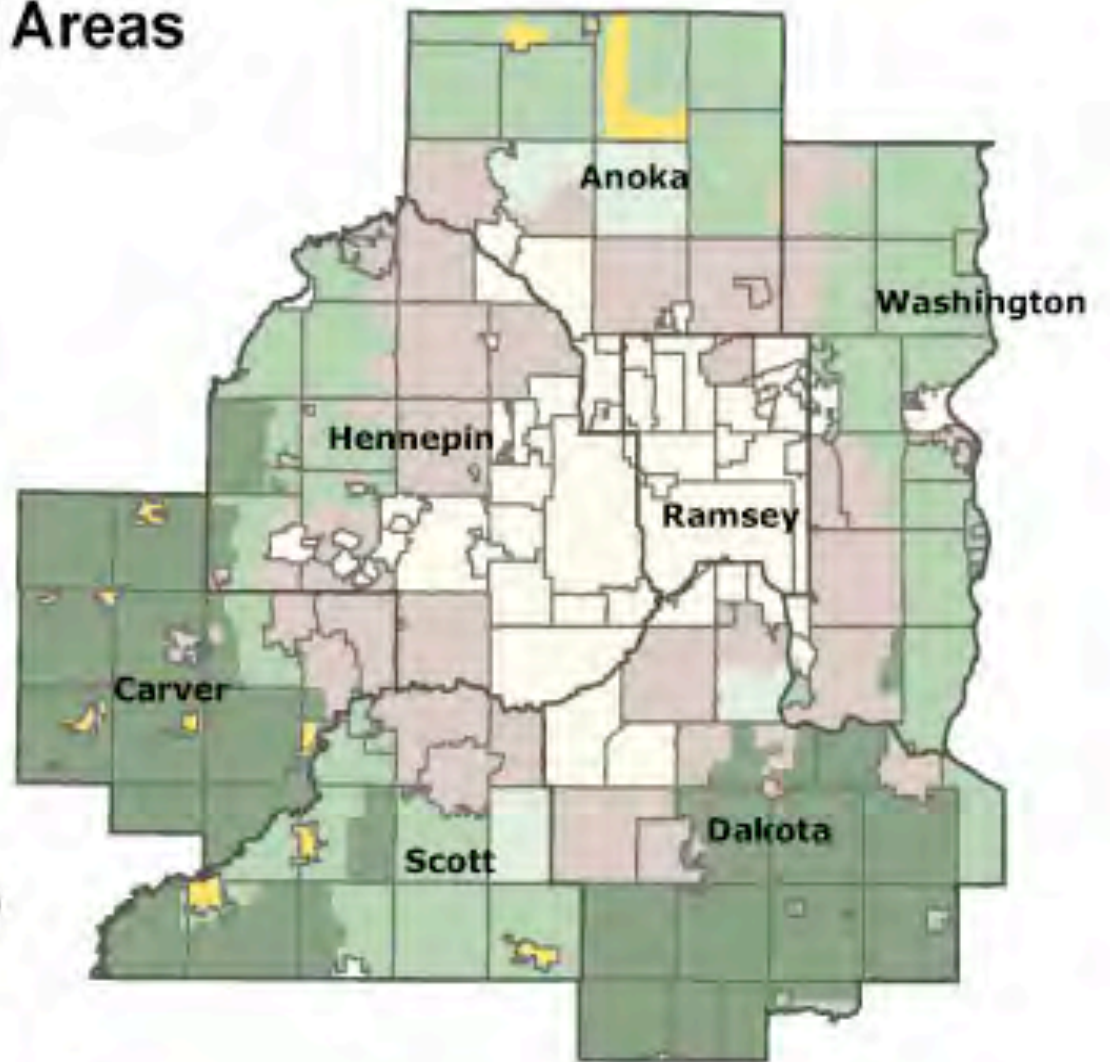
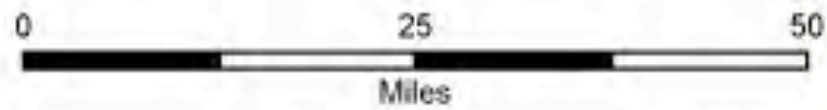
2030 Regional Development Framework Planning Areas

- **Diversified Rural Communities**—areas sparsely developed at one unit per 10 acres or less that host a wide variety of farm and non-farm land uses, including large-lot residential, agriculture, and facilities requiring a rural location.
- **Agricultural Areas**—large contiguous land areas planned and zoned to maintain agriculture as the primary land use, one unit per 40 acres.



2030 Framework Planning Areas

- City & Township Boundaries
- Developed Area
- Developing Area
- Rural Center
- Rural Residential
- Diversified Rural
- Agricultural Area



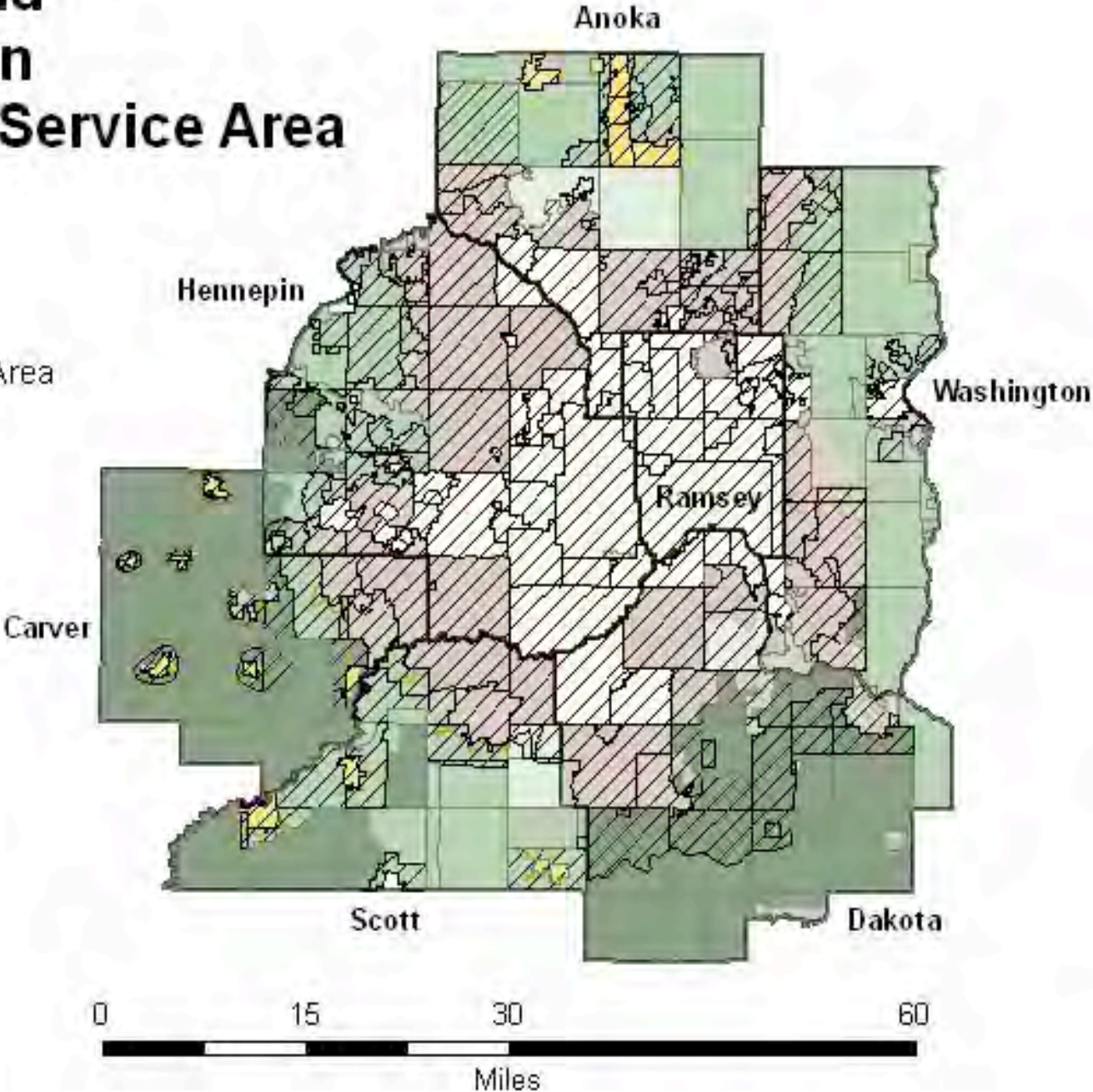
Changes in Met Council Policies for Diversified Rural and Agricultural Areas

- Limitations on conservation design approaches in areas located within Future Wastewater Service Areas:
 - Cannot exceed gross density of 1 unit per 10 acres (limits use of density bonuses)
 - Discourages permanent easements for natural area or open space protection
- Future wastewater service area includes Agricultural Areas.



Diversified Rural and Agricultural Areas in Future Wastewater Service Area

-  Future Wastewater Service Area
-  Developed Area
-  Developing Area
-  Rural Center
-  Rural Residential
-  Diversified Rural
-  Agricultural Area



Policy recommendation: Acknowledge prime farmland as a valuable regional natural resource, and agricultural production as a legitimate long-term land use

- Existing Agricultural Areas should remain agricultural, with no extension of urban services
- Permanent easements to protect prime farmland with long-term production potential should be permitted within Diversified Rural areas

