

# Up the Pace: FACTS TO SPUR ACTION ON EQUITABLE POLICIES



Visit [thrivemsp.org](http://thrivemsp.org)

1990

2010

2040



**Message from Sue Haigh**  
Chair, Metropolitan Council

*Our metro area is prosperous and a great place to live...but not for everyone.*

*We can point to a long list of markers that confirm our economic strengths. We rank high among the largest regions in the nation for overall income, low unemployment and economic growth.*

*But we also rank high for negative outcomes. Our region has some of the nation's biggest disparities along racial and ethnic lines among our peer metro areas. They include income, poverty, unemployment, homeownership, and education. These disparities are magnified by concentrations of poverty in our region, and they seriously hinder access to opportunities for people of color who are disproportionately represented in these areas.*

*Unchallenged, these disparities jeopardize the future economic vitality of our region.*

*But we have a choice. Improving access to opportunity can make people's lives better. Closing these disparities will make our region stronger and more prosperous. Expanding opportunity in more of our neighborhoods will promote win-win outcomes for individuals, families, our economy, and the region as a whole.*

*This is a major undertaking and needs broad support. The Council will convene partners – including cities, counties, school districts, nonprofit and philanthropic organizations – to develop shared plans for action and investment that help address challenges presented by concentrations of poverty, especially racially concentrated areas of poverty.*

*The Council hopes you will join in this effort.*

## WHAT IS EQUITY?

Equity doesn't mean "the same" for everyone. Equity acknowledges that disparities in educational outcomes, health, income, and employment create additional barriers to success.

Equality is like giving every runner the same-size shoes. Some pairs fit well and others don't. That means some runners will probably do better in the race than others. Equity is like providing shoes that fit each runner equally well.

### Behind the region's economic prosperity are wide disparities between people of color and the rest of the population.

The region ranks #1 nationally for disparities in poverty, employment and homeownership, and near the top (#4) for per capita income.

#### → Poverty

**5.7x higher**

FOR BLACK PEOPLE than for white non-Latino people

#### → Unemployment

**2.9x higher**

FOR BLACK PEOPLE than for white non-Latinos

#### → Homeownership

**49%**

HOUSEHOLDS OF COLOR are half as likely to own their home as white non-Latino households

#### → Per Capita Income

**\$18,078**

PEOPLE OF COLOR

**\$37,493**

WHITE NON-LATINOS

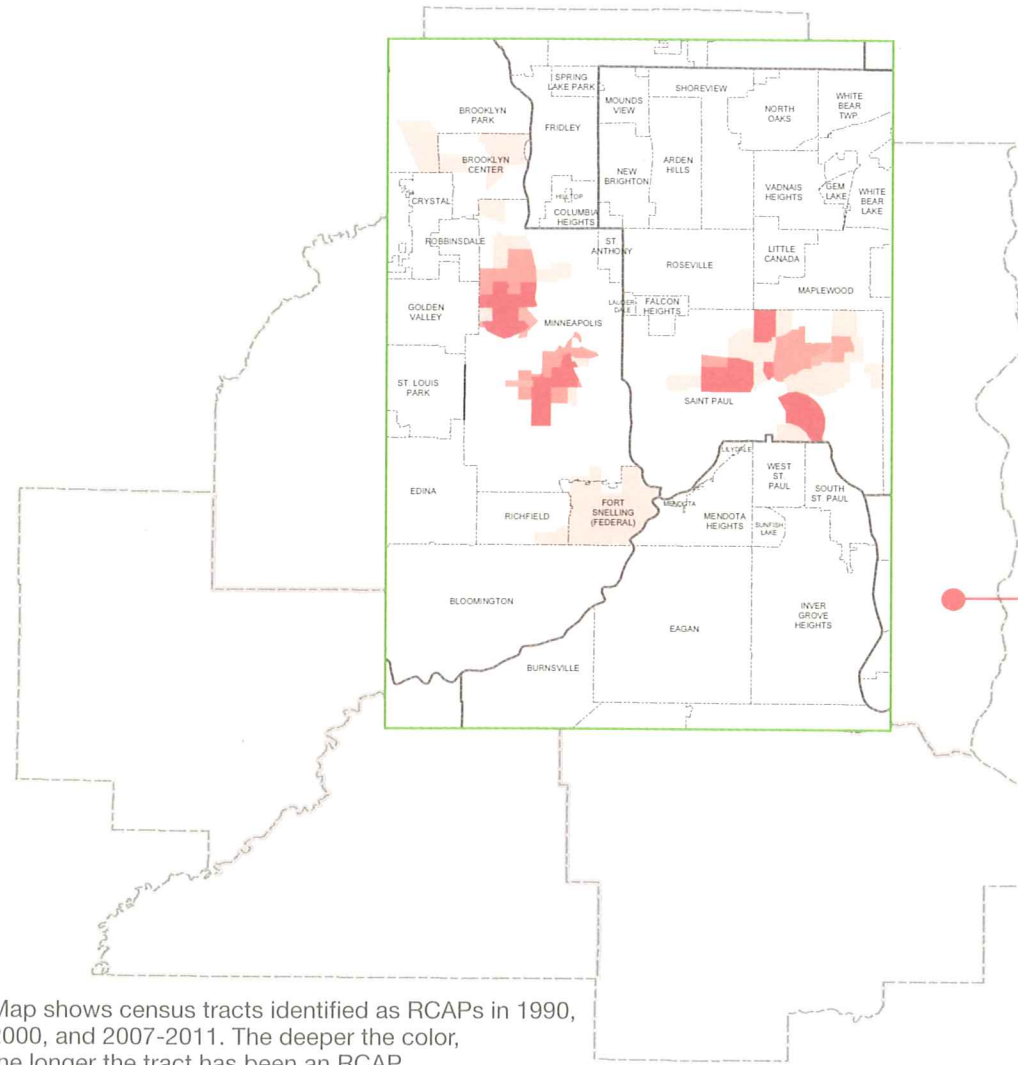
THE RANKINGS ACCOUNT FOR CERTAIN DIFFERENCES FROM REGION TO REGION TO MAKE THEM MORE COMPARABLE.



## GROWTH OF RACIALLY CONCENTRATED AREAS OF POVERTY (RCAPs)

RCAPs have grown in size and make up a bigger share of the region's population since 1990. As long as they grow, racial and ethnic disparities will grow.

- 1990: 31 census tracts were RCAPs, where 3% of region's residents lived.
- 2000: 53 census tracts, with 6% of region's residents.
- 2007-2011: 80 census tracts, with 9% of region's residents.



Map shows census tracts identified as RCAPs in 1990, 2000, and 2007-2011. The deeper the color, the longer the tract has been an RCAP.

Even as the disparities widen, the region's population is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse.

All of the net increase in the region's workforce over the next three decades will come from the growth in the population of people of color.

**Racial concentrations of poverty perpetuate racial and ethnic disparities.**

RCAPs ARE CENSUS TRACTS, USUALLY CLUSTERS OF THEM, WHERE

**50%** or more of the residents are people of color

AND

**40%** or more of the residents have incomes less than 185% of the federal poverty level.



THERE IS AN ECONOMIC COST TO NOT REDUCING DISPARITIES.

1990 Population

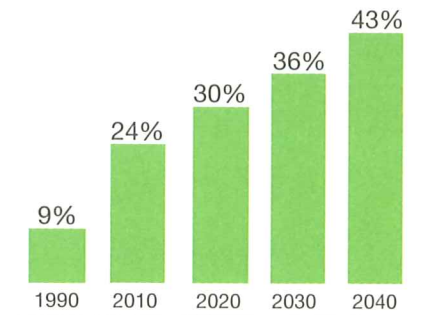
**9%**

people of color

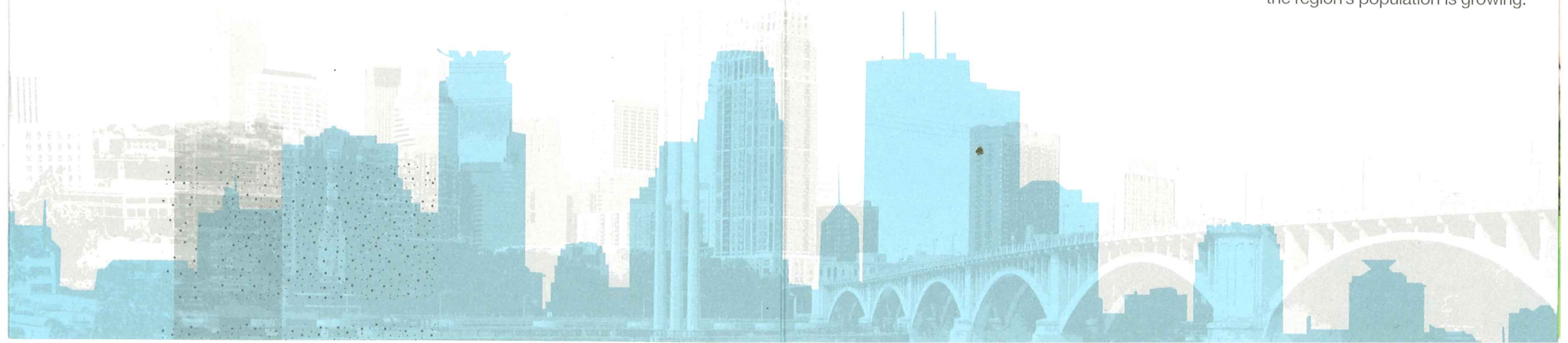
2040 Population

**43%**

people of color



The share of people of color in the region's population is growing.



**Residents of racially concentrated areas of poverty (RCAPs) and people of color in the region face obstacles in accessing opportunities.**

Access to opportunities varies for residents of RCAPs and, more generally, people of color, whether quality education, jobs, safe communities, environmentally healthy neighborhoods, social services and facilities, basic necessities, and community amenities.

Looked at by their location, access to opportunities can be viewed as people's physical ability to reach destinations. Other factors – such as educational attainment, job skills, and most important, racial discrimination – can also hinder meaningful access to opportunities.

**EMPLOYMENT.** A job is the single largest factor that opens the door to current and future opportunity. Although proximity to jobs is not a major disadvantage for RCAP residents and people of color on the whole, high unemployment rates stand in the way of a better life and better opportunities.

**EDUCATION.** Higher educational attainment is closely tied to higher incomes. There are substantial racial and ethnic disparities in access to good schools, which are especially pronounced for the school-age residents of RCAPs.

**CRIME.** Persistently high crime rates create an environment of fear, stress, and anxiety about personal safety, and can discourage business development. RCAPs are almost entirely located in areas with high exposure to crime.

**ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS.** Long-term exposure to pollution can cause adverse health effects in vulnerable residents, and exposure to environmental hazards occurs across the region. Nevertheless, Native Americans and black people are the two groups most exposed to polluted environments.



**SOCIAL SERVICES AND BASIC NECESSITIES.** Locations providing these opportunities include grocery stores, health care clinics, pharmacies, churches providing social support, job training centers, social service sites, libraries, and child care centers. Although the region's RCAPs generally have good access to these resources, a high percentage of Asians, Latinos, and Native Americans live in communities with lower access to social services, basic necessities, and amenities.



**Expanding opportunities and closing disparities benefit the region's economy and improve the quality of life for more people.**

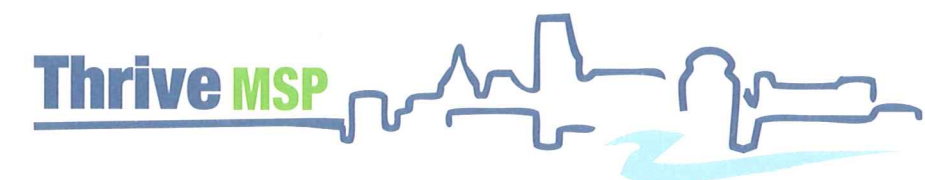
**What may be possible if we eliminate the disparities by 2040:**



THIS BROCHURE INCLUDES INFORMATION FROM A STUDY THAT THE COUNCIL IS COMPLETING CALLED THE FAIR HOUSING AND EQUITY ASSESSMENT. THE STUDY HIGHLIGHTS FACTS AND ISSUES THAT CAN HELP MOVE THE REGION TOWARD GREATER OPPORTUNITY AND EQUITY.

Want to learn more?

Visit [thrivemsp.org](http://thrivemsp.org)





## The Metropolitan Council is committed to strengthening opportunity and equity.

The Council is shaping a new 30-year regional plan called Thrive MSP 2040. Among its key outcomes is to advance equity in the Council's regional policies, operations, and collaborations with other organizations.

To promote greater access to opportunity, the Council makes these commitments:

- To serve as a catalyst and a partner in revitalizing neighborhoods in concentrations of poverty and in racially concentrated areas of poverty.
- To advance more economically and racially balanced neighborhoods.
- To promote expanded housing choices for people of all economic means by:
  - preserving existing affordable housing across the region
  - encouraging new affordable housing, especially in areas well connected to jobs and transit
  - investing in affordable-housing construction and preservation in higher-income areas of the region
  - providing competitive rent limits to expand residential choices for holders of Housing Choice Vouchers
  - supporting research into Fair Housing issues, discriminatory lending practices, and real estate steering to determine how housing practices may be limiting housing choices
- To strengthen transportation connections between lower-income areas and job opportunities in transportation investments – including transitways, strategic highway capacity improvements, and bicycle/pedestrian facilities.

The challenge requires partnerships, collaboration, and cooperative efforts as broad and deep as the problems themselves. The Council looks forward to working with many organizations on many fronts to help secure the future of the metropolitan area.



METROPOLITAN  
C O U N C I L

390 Robert Street North  
Saint Paul, MN 55101-1805  
651.602.1000  
TTY 651.291.0904  
public.info@metc.state.mn.us  
metro council.org

80% post consumer fiber

