

# A Sample of my Technical Writing

*The following was written during an internship with the city of Farmington, Minnesota's Planning Department and was included in the executive summary of their 2020 Comprehensive Plan, formally submitted in the spring of 2008.*

## A "Snapshot" of Farmington's Rapid Growth 2000-2005

Since 1990 the City of Farmington has been growing at an incredibly rapid rate. The city's population, the number of households, and residential densities has all risen a great deal in the last 18 years. The number of housing units added between 1990 and mid-2007 was 4,959, 60.8% of those being built after 1998. The Dakota County Department of GIS reports that the City of Farmington has seen an increase in its number of households by more than 50% between the years of 2000 and 2007. Farmington was one of only two of the thirty-four Dakota County municipalities or townships to achieve that level of growth (the other being Hampton). The Metropolitan Council reported that in 2006, Farmington was among the top 10 municipalities in the seven-county metropolitan area in population growth between 2000 and 2005.

The ranking of 7th on that population growth list, however, is a bit misleading. When reading the list of cities and growth numbers, one must take into account the geographical size and the amount of land available for development within the borders of each of those cities. For example, Minneapolis is defined by Metropolitan Council as a "Developed Community" which means that more than 85% of the land within its borders identified in 2000 had been developed. Though, somehow, Minneapolis was still able to add nearly 5,000 residents between 2000 and 2005, 8th most in the seven county metropolitan area during that time period. However, when one realizes that Minneapolis is far and away the largest city in that same area (not to mention the entire state) at 58.4 square miles it tends not to bear much weight.

Conversely, when Farmington's growth numbers are viewed from that time period it may appear at first to be unimpressive that Farmington only added 5,658 residents during those five years and was ranked 7th overall. However, when Farmington's size is taken into account, the explosive rate of growth becomes obvious. Farmington is geographically the smallest city on the list; outside of Prior Lake and Chaska, it's not even *close* to the geographic size of the other communities. The average square mileage of the top 6 cities on the 2005 list is 34.3. At 12.5 square miles, Farmington is a little more than one- third the size of those cities ahead of it.

<b>CITY</b>	<b>Sq. Mi.</b>
Blaine	34
Shakopee	28.5
Lakeville	37.5
Maple Grove	35
Woodbury	35.6
Eden Prairie	35.2
<b>Farmington</b>	<b>12.5</b>
Prior Lake	16
Minneapolis	58.4
Chaska	14.3

Using a simple mathematical formula one can approximate the relative rate at which the other cities would need to grow to match Farmington's rate of growth. The numbers are astonishing. For example, Farmington added 5,658 residents in that five-year span and was 12.5 square miles in size. That averages an addition of 453 residents per square mile during those five years. Eden Prairie is also considered a "Developing Community" by the Metropolitan Council. As shown in Table 1.1, Eden Prairie has 35.2 square miles of land and added only 6,054 residents between 2000 and 2005. If they had added population at the same rate that Farmington had during that same period (453 residents per square mile over the five year span) they would have grown by 15,933 residents.

## **METROPOLITAN GROWTH COMPARISON**

*Table 1.1*

<u>City</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>2000 Population</u>	<u>Pop. Added 00-05</u>	<u>Density Added 00-05*</u>
Blaine	34.0	45,014	9,006 (20%)	265
Shakopee	28.5	20,568	8,767 (30%)	307
Lakeville	37.5	43,128	8,594 (17%)	229
Maple Grove	35.0	50,365	8,055 (16%)	230
Woodbury	35.6	46,463	7,628 (16%)	214
Eden Prairie	35.2	54,901	6,054 (11%)	171
<b>Farmington</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>12,365</b>	<b>5,658 (46%)</b>	<b>453</b>
Prior Lake	16.0	15,917	5,478 (34%)	342

Minneapolis	58.4	382,747	4,964 (1%)	85
Chaska	14.3	17,603	4,864 (22%)	340

\*Density Added was calculated by dividing the number of residents added from 2000 to 2005 by the area of each respective city, and can be read as 'residents added per square mile from 2000 to 2005'.

\*\*All cities on this table have been labeled as "Developing Communities" by the Metropolitan Council except Minneapolis.

Another way to view these numbers is by percentage of population added during the same five years. In 2000, Eden Prairie was reported to have a population of 54,901. That means that the 6,054 residents added in the five years following that census added up to be a healthy 11% growth in population. In 2000, Farmington was reported to have 12,365 residents and added 5,658 residents, resulting in a staggering 46% growth to 2005.

This phenomenon does not only apply to Farmington versus Eden Prairie. To be completely fair, Eden Prairie has grown considerably in recent years, but up and down the line Farmington's numbers look similar when compared to other cities on the list. Crude though it may be, Table 1.1 above displays the intensity of residential development Farmington experienced between 2000 and 2005. While the same numbers have declined and tapered off in Farmington since 2005 due to an uncertain economy, sluggish real estate, development, and housing markets, the same is true across the board in the seven county metropolitan area. After all, mortgage interest rates are up over 6% and unemployment in the seven county metro is up to over 4.5% (Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development).

## **MUSA**

Due to Farmington's extensive growth through development and annexation, the City has nearly surpassed its allotted 2020 MUSA acres of 1,620. During 2000-2006, Farmington was allotted 1,308.34 acres of MUSA after a number of comprehensive plan amendments were reviewed and agreed to by adjacent jurisdictions and approved by the Metropolitan Council. Farmington will be requesting an additional 1,476.63 MUSA acres by 2030.