



# SCALE

Scott County Association For Leadership And Efficiency

On Friday, February 8, the SCALE meeting was all about nouns: people, places, and things! First, Metropolitan Council Principal Analyst **Todd Graham** walked attendees through an interesting – if rather complicated – presentation about the metropolitan region’s new and emerging trends, particularly driven by a changing demography. “Obviously, local conditions vary across the region,” Graham noted, but added that more Scott County-specific information would be available later in the year. Among the larger trends Graham explained:

- The people moving into the region are more diverse – in both race and national origin – than was previously observed. While the area experienced a net slowdown in in-migration over the last decade, this trend appears to be reversing — due primarily to an improving economy.
- As a whole, the Twin Cities region is expected to add another 890,000 people over the next 30 years; and due to the large Baby Boomer generation as well as increased life expectancy, we will be experiencing the “Silver Tsunami” along with most of the country. (Graham did add, however, that we will have sufficient “Gen Y” members to replace them in the workforce.)
- Household types are also shifting, with the number of childless households expected to outpace those with children. “This has clear implications for the housing market,” he noted, as well as for areas within the larger region that have more nuclear-family-centric communities, such as second – and third-tier suburbs.
- The availability and affordability of housing are the two most significant drivers of population growth and diversity, Graham stated. “And the regional economic models affect these demographic models, which in turn affect both land use patterns and transit demand models.”

Graham concluded his discussion by explaining that the Metropolitan Council is currently undergoing a “renovation” of its forecasting processes, which will focus more heavily on the interactions of employment, housing, socioeconomic factors, demographics, transportation and transit, and other related issues in its longer-term projections. “It’s more of a ‘Sim City’ approach,” he stated. The entire presentation can be viewed at [www.scaleinfo.org](http://www.scaleinfo.org).

Scott County Deputy Administrator **Lezlie Vermillion** then added to the meeting’s complexity by providing an overview of transit facts, current issues, and future concerns in Scott County. “As you just heard from Todd, we’re at a crossroads,” she said. “We’ve had a number of recent accomplishments in the transit area, such as the completion of Southbridge and Eagle Creek transit stations and the soon-to-open Marschall Road one, and we’ve had expansive growth in our ridership numbers on both BlueXpress and SmartLink. But now is the time to start looking at what we want in the future.”

While noting that both the younger (less than 30 years old) and the older (65-plus) segments are more transit dependent, Vermillion also observed that those making more than \$100,000 per year represented the fastest growing transit ridership. “We have four separate providers,” she said. “We also have two major river crossings, a growing population, and a declining revenue stream. So we need to have serious policy discussions about governance, efficiencies of scale, implementation difficulties, stable funding sources, and service expansion.” The entire presentation can be viewed at [www.scaleinfo.org](http://www.scaleinfo.org).

The next SCALE meeting, which will be dedicated almost exclusively to crisis communications/media training, will be held on **March 8, 2013, from 7:30 – 9:30 a.m. at Prior Lake City Hall**. Mark your calendars!

**The mission of SCALE is to forge new and innovative ways in which government entities can collaborate to provide superior services while making the most of limited resources.**