

POLICY

Government-to-Government Tribal Relationship Policy

RF 4-2

Category: Regional and Foundational Policies

Business Unit Responsible: RA: Government Affairs

Policy Owner: Director of Government Affairs

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Synopsis: Establishing the Metropolitan Council's policy and process for formal consultation with Minnesota's Tribal Nations and cooperation with tribal communities on Metropolitan Council decisions.

POLICY

The Metropolitan Council as a public corporation and political subdivision of the state will engage in consultation, collaboration and cooperation with the 11 federally recognized Tribal Nations in Minnesota.

The Council recognizes that meaningful and timely government-to-government consultation between the Council and the Tribal Nations facilitates better understanding and informed decision making on matters of mutual interest.

The Council expects that council members, committee members and staff respect the following principles at all phases of studying, planning and developing regional projects, as well as providing essential services across the metro area.

- We will identify priority issues and intersections with the Council's work through at least yearly consultation with each Tribal Nation.
- We acknowledge the Tribal Nation as the appropriate party to consult for policy decisions related to their people, land or other places of cultural significance.
- We honor tribal officials requests for consultation, and consider the nature of the activity, past consultation, available resources, timing and all other relevant factors.
- We consult in face-to-face meetings between the appropriate level staff and at a location and time determined by the Tribal Nation.
- We will consult with honesty, integrity and transparency, sharing information that will benefit and support shared decisions or positions

PURPOSE OF POLICY

To recognize that the United States and the State of Minnesota have a unique legal relationship with federally recognized Tribal Nations, as affirmed by the Constitution of the United States, treaties, statutes, and case law.

To recognize and support the unique status of the Tribal Nations and their right to existence, self-governance and self-determination, and to demonstrate a clear commitment to that sovereignty.

To create intentional, lasting, working relationships with Tribal Nations that build off a sound, actionable tribal policy.

To embody the Council's commitment to the Thrive MSP 2040 outcomes of equity, stewardship, prosperity, livability and sustainability. Specifically, where equity connects all residents to opportunity and creates viable housing, transportation, and recreation options for people of all races, ethnicities, incomes, and abilities. Our region is stronger when all people live in communities that provide them access to opportunities for success, prosperity, and quality of life.

To acknowledge that the Twin Cities metropolitan area was first inhabited by the Ojibwe, the Dakota, and other tribes.

BACKGROUND AND REASONS FOR POLICY

On April 4, 2019, Governor Tim Walz issued Executive Order 19-24 affirming the government-to-government relationship between the State of Minnesota and the 11 federally recognized Minnesota Tribal Nations. This revision to a 2013 Executive Order (13-10) issued by the previous administration recognized the Council's role in government-to-government relationship with Tribal Nations.

The seven-county metropolitan area geographically includes property owned by two of the 11 federally recognized Tribal Nations in Minnesota – the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community and the Prairie Island Indian Community. While the executive order directly addresses the federally recognized tribes, the Council values the unique relationship with all tribal communities living in the Twin Cities metropolitan region, as well as those living outside the region who have a relationship with tribal land, and sacred or cultural sites. The work of the Council might also involve sacred lands and waters that are culturally and historically significant to Tribal Nations that extend beyond the geographic boundaries of tribal-owned land.

For example, the Dakota people hold deep historic and spiritual meaning in the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers (the Bdote Minnesota). There are also ceremonial sites, ancestral burial grounds, and village sites throughout the region that are still used and revered by tribal people, such as St. Anthony Falls, Minnehaha Falls and Coldwater Spring. Tribally significant lands like these are within the regional parks system, or are important to transportation or wastewater services.

IMPLEMENTATION & ACCOUNTABILITY

Council leadership and staff will consult directly with the appropriate level representatives to ensure appropriate communication and coordination between the Council and tribal officials prior to taking actions that may affect tribes or tribal interests.

Accountability:

1. The Regional Administrator or designee is responsible for administering this policy.
2. The Regional Administrator or designee will collaborate with the Director of Communications and the appropriate outreach and engagement staff to establish procedures to implement the policy and ensure that the procedures are necessary and consistent with this policy.
3. The Metropolitan Council chair is responsible for any direct consultation or communication with a Tribal Council chair or president. Accordingly, Metropolitan Council members are responsible for direct consultation or communications with Tribal Council members.
4. Division leadership and management staff are responsible for being aware of this policy and advising their staff accordingly.

RESOURCES

Other Resources

- [Thrive MSP 2040](#)
- [Public Engagement Plan](#)
- [Guide to Respectful, Inclusive Language](#)
- [Executive Order 19-24](#)

HISTORY

Version 2 – Template Update

10/12/2020 - Updated content into new template.

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07/24/2019

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Former Reference

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Version

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