

Minutes

Committee of the Whole



Meeting Date: May 18, 2022

Time: 4:00 PM

Location: 390 Robert Street

Members Present:

- Chair, Charlie Zelle
- Judy Johnson, District 1
- Reva Chamblis, District 2
- Deb Barber, District 4
- Molly Cummings, District 5

- John Pacheco, District 6
- Robert Lilligren, District 7
- Abdirahman Muse, District 8
- Raymond Zeran, District 9
- Peter Lindstrom, District 10
- Susan Vento, District 11

- Francisco Gonzalez, District 12
- Chai Lee, District 13
- Kris Fredson, District 14
- Phillip Sterner, District 15
- Wendy Wulff, District 16
- = present

Call to Order

A quorum being present, Council Chair Zelle called the regular meeting of the Metropolitan Council's Committee of the Whole to order at 4:02 p.m.

Agenda Approved

It was moved by Sterner, seconded by Wulff to approve the agenda. Council Members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda. **Motion carried.**

Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Lilligren, seconded by Gonzalez to approve the minutes of the May 4, 2022 regular meeting of the Metropolitan Council's Committee of the Whole. **Motion carried.**

Non-Consent Business – Reports of Standing Committees

Environment

1. **2022-135:** That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute the contract amendment for Master Utility Agreement 221011 with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) for a total contract value of \$906,210.96.

It was moved by Wulff, seconded by Sterner.

Motion carried.

Information

1. 2050 Regional Development Guide: Values, Vision, and Goals
Michael Larson, Planning Analyst, Community Development, led the Council Members in a discussion of "Values, Vision, and Goals" for the 2050 Regional Development Guide. The purpose of this discussion was to begin building the foundational language for Regional Development Guide, which includes discussing shared values, exploring concepts for vision language, and share ideas and feedback that staff can follow up on. Larson shared examples of regional values, as well as defined a "vision" as description of an idealized future. Goals were defined as high-level outcomes or end-states that would represent areas of success

toward achieving our vision. Council Members were split into four small groups to discuss five themes. This small group discussion was followed by large group report outs. Please see attached full reports from each group. Theme 1 was “equitable, affordable, and welcoming”. Group 1 reported that the benefit from valuing others, which ties in with the value of respect. They also discussed the values of focus and equity, and the difference between equity and equality, and measurable and impactful results. Other groups suggested the idea of safe communities and safety, stability and dependability. Theme 2 was “high quality and resilient environment.” Group 2 discussed stewardship, sustainability and equity, and restoring and repairing what is already in place. Also shared was the value of innovation. Theme 3 was “vibrant places and destinations.” Group 3 shared the values of equitability, accountability, and innovation. They also shared that if things are built, they need to be accessible, and the recognition of things that are done well. Other groups discussed spaces that are designed to be unwelcoming. Theme 4 was “accessible and interconnected.” Group 4 shared the values of reliable, safe, equitable, barrier-free, requiring collaboration, and foundational as a major tool for achieving goals. Other groups shared the idea of interconnectedness. Theme 5 was “prosperous and healthy.” Group 1 reported if themes 1-4 are achieved it will lead to themes 3 and 5. Council Members also shared that there should be a broad definition of prosperity so that the community is able to access and achieve their aspirations.

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing narrative and exhibits constitute a true and accurate record of the Metropolitan Council’s Committee of the Whole meeting of May 18, 2022.

Approved this 1st day of June 2022.

Council Contact:

Bridget Toskey, Recording Secretary
Bridget.Toskey@metc.state.mn.us



For each theme in the breakout small groups, Council Members addressed the following questions.

What values are associated with this topic?

What statement or statements would the group make to articulate the vision associated with this topic?

Breakout Group #1

Council Members: Reva Chamblis, Deb Barber; Staff recorder: Angela Torres

Theme 1: Equitable, affordable, and welcoming

Council Members in this group made the following comments:

- Pretty much everything on the list.
- Liked the statements on the PowerPoint.
- Equity by definition is not the same as equality; negative impacts will continue if we don't address it; vicious cycle
- Focus is required; people not necessarily done a good job at focus, what will actually affect change.
- Underestimate value of measuring/tracking our work; time is valuable; honor that to show that our time has been worth it
- Starting, measuring, scorecards; are we measuring the right things? Reevaluate measures and impact now, are we gathering meaningful data
- Sometimes we get in a certain train of thought (affordability, housing, etc.) sometimes not thinking about prosperity as a whole (place and space, all socio-economic levels). Need to think more broadly so we aren't missing a lot of things. Access & interconnected is more than transportation. What works in Minneapolis has to work in Belle Plaine.
- Assess unintended consequences, almost more important. Not necessarily at the micro-level; assumption that the lowest aff level are the only ones in need, but it's all levels.
- Respect, time, responsibility, results-oriented, rigor, productivity

Theme 2: High quality and resilient environment

Council Members in this group made the following comments:

- Sustainability
- Environmental justice
- Health and health equity
- Who defines high quality; Collaboration (for defining high quality); different populations have different perception of high quality parks.
- Ethical
- Creating a scenario where the env can still thrive whether its water or community that is the env
- Respect of the environment
- Crosses borders almost more than any other issue
- Status quo is not sustainable
- Hotter, wetter, and more crowded
- Bend not break

Theme 3: Vibrant places and destinations

Council Members in this group made the following comments:

- Connection, communities, accessibility
- Imagination
- Collaboration
- What makes a place feel like a community? People.
- How to do this differently? Connection and accessibility.
- Social infrastructure
- Building places for people: plazas, public spaces
- Food desert – Agriculture – Highway 212



- Look behind the curtain where things are actually happening.
- Safety and security: fear that we will go too far with it
- Concern over empty streets, empty transit vehicles, and impacts of pandemic on behaviors
- How to re-engage
- Places where we can go outside, music, lake, activities, accessible to everyone
- What extends your time in a space? (e.g., portable fire pits, downtown Shakopee parklettes)

Theme 4: Accessible and interconnected

Council Members in this group made the following comments:

- Collaboration/partnership
- Inclusion
- Innovation
- Places and spaces. Not just transportation, it's housing and parks, etc.
- Trails: There are so many it's almost overwhelming to know where to explore. It's a good problem to have.
- Scooters and bikes as transportation mode.
- Mobility hubs, buses, electric vehicles, bikes, peds, options – they become community spaces.
- As communities start to gather, there's enhancement, and amenities, investment in communities, becomes more prosperous.
- Snapshot of a community in a space (baseball games transform the downtown).
- Organization is a value and it takes organizations to facilitate that value.
- Underutilization of spaces/places and the absence of people: barriers prevent use of spaces (e.g., insurance policies, etc.); impact on people experiencing homelessness; codes and regulations (e.g., empty buildings); office buildings repurposed for residential, for events, meetings, etc. Changing/transforming spaces for different uses (e.g., Rhythm on the Rails – Shakopee). Innovation again.

Theme 5: Prosperous and healthy

Council Members in this group made the following comments:

- If you accomplish Themes 1 through 4, it equals Theme 5.
- Common themes with others.
- Different at different levels
- Education, studio to one bedroom, live as a community
- Reassess what prosperity looks like. Limited view impacts our thinking and planning.
- Leads at all levels, cultural, innovation, connected spaces, broad definitions with focused outcomes
- Good food and medical care
- Welcoming
- Safe and stable housing
- Access and opportunity to what they aspire to
- Achieve what I aspire to – as an individual, within a neighborhood, in a community I identify with. Energizing to see people like me, young people that are the future around me. Diversity is energizing.
- Nice cars, nice homes, among community's aspirations, no judgment on an in/out. Be there if you want, leave if you want.
- Both individual and a community-wide value



Breakout Group #2

Council Members: Francisco Gonzalez, Robert Lilligren, Jon Pacheco, Jr.; Staff recorder: Dan Marckel

Theme 1: Equitable, affordable, and welcoming

Council Members in this group made the following comments:

- We can't survive without this.
- Cherish the strength that comes with diverse communities. There are always problems and issues, but we don't look at the flip side: the strength, skills, and perspectives that could help the larger community. There is an opportunity to make positive (contributions) from diversity. For instance, the relationship of labor working in another language with Mexico being the second largest trading partner.
- Equity
- Welcoming
- Is safety the other side of welcoming? See rail, bus surveys on safety: crime plus homeless plus mentally ill behaviors. Safety is not an equality distributed commodity. Offices on Nicollet now must enter via skyway. Downtown is very different right now. Hope we DO get to (a region that is) equitable, affordable, and welcoming.
- It's easy to be welcoming when everyone looks like you. We Our region is diversifying – let's make this welcoming.
- Antiracist. We still are one of most racist regions in country. Conversations are shut down when this is mentioned.
- Learning gap in Minneapolis Public Schools. People of color are not graduating.
- Washington County discussions: unease with light rail transit because of people drinking, etc.
- Bused to meeting today – Express from Minneapolis was fast.
- Route 2: Bus driver reset the machine to make sure Council Member badge was recorded. Great experience.

Theme 2: High quality and resilient environment

Council Members in this group made the following comments:

- Physical? Social? What do we mean by "environment"?
- Invasive species? Global warming?
- Protecting the ecosystems that we have.
- P3: Preserve, Protect, Permanently. Not just prevent worsening conditions but turn the page to recuperating the environment.
- Clean environment for whom (equity plus environment)
- Affordable Housing in brownfields makes no sense.
- Not promoting the environment to diverse communities: e.g., fishing, swimming, and trips up north.
- Resilience and environment together: resiliency planning. Poorest communities are the least resilient as we get hotter, wetter, and more crowded.
- Resilience implies just coping – surviving the apocalypse. Focus rather on restoring the environment and making sure it doesn't happen again.
- Our role is to get electric buses across the system. Is it our job to build resilience into the system? We are Council Members after all. Let's take the opportunity of that, as opposed to private citizens.
- All communities deserve access to clean air and water.
- Stewardship, Sustainable, and Livability are value statements underlying this.
- The status quo is not sustainable.
- Acknowledging the rights of the land and natural systems. In Bolivia, rights granted to the Amazon region. There is a whole system for how to get permission from the Amazon to develop there.

Theme 3: Vibrant places and destinations

Council Members in this group made the following comments:

- Half of my bars are closed right now so it kind of takes the fun out of it.



- If we want our city to attract tourists, we can't be another Peoria.
- As Sports Commission vice chair, I see the real value in teams being here.
- Mall of America a big draw.
- Basketball tournament adds to economy and gets people out and reduces fear of the city.
- Communities self-directing hyperlocal efforts
- Rural communities
- Native community corridors
- George Floyd Square.
- Some feel these are dividers, but they are strengths.
- Eat Street is a great example of local immigrant-owned restaurants.
- Closing Nicollet at Lake first killed rents but caused opportunity for restaurants to grow.
- People don't realize how diverse Minnesota really is. We have the largest population of Hmong and Native Americans in the country. Let's build on that local identity.
- Theaters on Hennepin Avenue.
- Pepitos on Chicago/46
- Surprise when coming to region: a drinking age.
- A good example is Robbinsdale using its local tools to create a hyperlocal sense of place.
- Yesterday's workshop at Latino Chamber of Commerce: buy your own building event. Leading to local identity and character.
- Orchestra

Theme 4: Accessible and interconnected

Council Members in this group made the following comments:

- Justice
- People talk about this using an example of fast Internet (a focus on tools/technology), but connection is about being able to say your piece and have people listen to you.
- Accessibility: physically and socially: places need to be framed as welcoming to be socially accessible.
- We focus on the things of infrastructure, but it is the social relationships that places foster, which are important for anchoring people together. Not just eliminating barriers but making places welcoming.
- We are providing accessibility to our assets, such as parks. What we do and spend on this could be recognized. It is clear who uses regional parks and who doesn't.
- Examples:
 - Native community and regional parks
 - Immigrants playing soccer on baseball fields, which caused conflict.
 - At one time every park building in Minneapolis needed a kiln.
 - Used to have a lot more boxing clubs in the city.
 - Allina example of creating spaces that focused on common area for entry.

Theme 5: Prosperous and healthy

Council Members in this group made the following comments:

- This is where equity and opportunity come in.
- Communities define prosperity for themselves.
 - In native communities, you are judged not on how much you have, but how much you give away.
 - Tribes in old northwest – the potlatch ceremony – distribute your property and receive social status. By making yourself poor you make yourself rich. Funneling people into western economic system is a form of colonization.
- Healthy – access to health care
- Right to non-polluted environment.
- Prosperity – equitable access to the opportunity to their own definition of prosperity.
- Maybe we can move to the Vulcan Model: Live Long and Prosper. The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few.
- You need a solid launch pad: a base of economic and health services that cannot be taken away. Then you are free to reach for the stars.



Breakout Group #3

Council Members: Chai Lee, Phillip Stener, Raymond Zeran; Staff recorder: Raya Esmaili

Theme 1: Equitable, affordable, and welcoming

Council Members in this group made the following comments:

- It's broad.
- When people feel welcome, they should feel connected.
- Security and safety are important because it impacts your choice of where you would want to live.
- Equity: People should be able to live anywhere, and that's where affordability will come in.
- Welcoming: parks folks are trying to get people use the parks and track who comes to them. But how can we make Council facilities (like buses and trains) more welcoming? It connects to equity too, for example, for canoe/kayak rental not everyone can afford it and existing programs will help with that.
- Fairness / being kind to other people / being generous in your interaction with other people / simple respect.
- A place/mode of transportation being welcoming and safe motivates people to use facilities and get to different destinations. So not only would the destination be safe, welcoming, affordable and equitable, but also how you get there.
- The work with City of Edina with the Local Housing Incentives Account (LHIA) Pilot touches on this in terms of being innovative and policies that impact housing affordability in the region.
- Welcoming: if we want to be welcoming, we should be communicating with different folks. Start with those who are economically at the bottom: what different options and programs are available and figure out how we can assist them with what their needs are.

Theme 2: High quality and resilient environment

Council Members in this group made the following comments:

- Health
- Clean environment, including addressing contaminants that are not visible.
- Cooperation: Minneapolis launched the electric vehicle (EV) program and we collaborated on that, which is meaningful in combating climate change.
- Carbon neutral footprint of EV charging versus bus stops.
- Need to bring back local food growing and urban gardening, as more agricultural areas are being developed.
- Tree canopy work shows how important tree planting is for climate, but it also has mental health effects, improves walkability, and also creates a welcoming environment of communities.
- Garbage, recycling, and composting needs to be connected from beginning to end. We should reflect that in our own operations/facilities. Need to be more proactive with what we are using.
- Stewardship and leadership: Council should take a leadership role to provide examples for other organizations.
- Sustainability
- Use local products to reduce carbon emissions.

Theme 3: Vibrant places and destinations

Council Members in this group made the following comments:

- Immediately think of parks
- Places need to be welcoming and be safe and secure.
- Maybe have "vibrant places" designation.
- Improve on existing infrastructure. Make sure that within five years you can, for example, bike/walk in a whole loop everywhere.
- Complete streets.
- Passion and originality. Happiness.
- Spirituality. Where people gather.
- Equity and accountability. We are currently doing review of our facilities to make sure they are



accessible. Equity grants have been able to help with building, for example accessible ramps to water.

- Integrity of places.
- Places need to be inviting and accessible to people.
- Invite more tourism and create more welcoming destinations
- Add more activities to regional parks.
- Boldness and innovation: The fact that there is a parks equity grant speaks to that.
- Imagination.
- We should tell our stories better and more when many of our operations are nationally recognized.

Theme 4: Accessible and interconnected

Council Members in this group made the following comments:

- There is a disconnect as it relates to transportation/transit. There are not good transit connections without going into downtown. Everything currently connects to central locations only. We also need to work better in collaboration with the suburban transit providers. The system is not as accessible as it should be.
 - Transportation should be accessible and connected for everyone no matter where you live in the metro area.
- People need to feel safe and secure on trains/buses.
- Access to transit services is disconnected and inequitable (e.g., in Minneapolis you can get service at 9 pm but not in suburban areas like Burnsville).
- Accountability / equity
- Safety of bike riders on all roads not just trails. There is no biking culture in many areas of the region.

Theme 5: Prosperous and healthy

Council Members in this group made the following comments:

- Being prosperous and healthy is relative to the place. What does it mean to have “enough” to be “healthy?”
- Being prosperous on all levels is having some sense of your own destiny and do what you want to do that makes you happy.
- Being a part of the community and feel the vibrancy.
- Both mental health and physical health. As well as social health.
- Transit is a social service that helps a person to be whole, by allowing them to live their life as they need to. It is a social service both individually and community-wide.
- Healthy and locally grown food.
 - Use UMN’s innovative approaches to food/farming



Breakout Group #4

Council Members: Chair Zelle, Molly Cummings, Wendy Wulff; Staff recorder: Katelyn Champoux

Theme 1: Equitable, affordable, and welcoming

Council Members in this group made the following comments:

- Affordable and equitable are values themselves
- Fair, equitable
- Respectful seems to apply to every theme in the survey
- Compassion. Empathy.
- Sense of community
- Good communication so that people don't make assumptions. Open communication.
- All seem to imply safety and security to happen. You cannot welcome someone or feel welcome if you are afraid.
- We find this with transit and housing. Safe and secure.
- Accessible. Even though this is represented in theme four, it feels like a value here.
- Fairness
- Secure. Stable.
- Stable: Economic Stability, Mental Health
 - Setting the stage to make an investment (e.g., time, money) knowing the investment will bear fruit and be successful in the long term.
 - Sustainability. Long-term sustainability.
 - Think about people who put their life savings into Lake Street and lost everything.
 - Families/groups of people are able to put down roots. Stability for children in school. Stability in jobs.
- Resilience
- Dependability. The fact you can depend on your future and thrive in your current situation.
- Diversity. To be welcoming you have to be welcoming to everyone, not just to some.
- Stability and Security
 - We aspire to long-term stability and security for everyone which allows individuals or families to flourish.”
 - “People they know they will be in a place tomorrow, next month. They aren't constantly looking over their shoulder.

Theme 2: High quality and resilient environment

Council Members in this group made the following comments:

- Sustainability: this could fit into the title because it is different from high quality and resilient.
- Resilient isn't necessarily the same as stable, but it bends and doesn't break. It is flexible. Example of our water bodies and surrounding areas being resilient to large rain events until it drains.
- Built to last
- Vitality: thinking of placemaking, community strength
- Team building/teamwork/collaboration: we need to work together to make sure these apply to all of us
- Equitable: everyone is treated equitably as we plan for this resilient environment, realizing not everyone/not every neighborhood has the same quality of environment
- Learn as we go. We've made mistakes in the past that we are now implementing in new developments. The challenge is going back and making up for our past mistakes in the communities that were harmed by them. Change as we move forward. (e.g., Bassett Creek example; Lake Nokomis swamp example)
- Long term thinking. Building for a generation, not just next year. Building for the future.
- Innovation: We need to think creatively because tomorrow's world is different from today's world. We need to imagine what we will face and innovate solutions.
- Comprehensive: broad, interconnected systems; not just one thing; resilience isn't just parks, it is our entire built environment, our water.
- Forward-thinking. We need to be able to look at a long-term vision and all the possible changes that could occur (e.g., separation of stormwater and wastewater?) It saves our region a lot of money.

Theme 3: Vibrant places and destinations

Council Members in this group made the following comments:

- Diversity: not only in terms of racial diversity, but in age, cultures, etc.
- Safe: non-vibrant places do not feel safe. Vibrant places help make people feel welcome
- Openness
- Accessible: vibrant places you can get to; you still need a bus or a parking space
- Interesting, inviting
- Fair
- Respectful
- Vibrant places have more than just housing, industrial, and commercial. There are a mix of uses. Live, work, play. Office buildings become sterile if they are just office buildings with nothing on the street. Mixed use areas. Not siloed.
- Redesign of the office atmosphere to make them vibrant cities where people want to be as they return to the office after teleworking during the pandemic. This is not just in the central cities.
- Vibrant places are places people care about. If they care about it, they want to keep it nice, they want to invest in it. They want to be there. They have a sense of ownership.
- Not defined by big open spaces. Sometimes people like the safety of a pocket park. It creates a vital space in a small area. Madison Avenue is the greatest retail street in New York City because it is the narrowest. It has an energy. Vibrant places have an energy. They are people oriented.
- Energy and color. Thinking about the areas near the river. They feel energizing because of the moving water.
- Economically successful. An empty skyway without retail is not thriving.
- Optimism. Positivity.
- Aesthetic. Beautiful.
- Healing. Places that make people feel healthy, get healthy, be happy. Uplifting.

Theme 4: Accessible and interconnected

Council Members in this group made the following comments:

- Reliable
- Safe
- Equitable for all
- Fairness: accessible to all. Marginalized communities not connected.
- Interconnected isn't just transit. Systems without barriers. No physical barriers. Open. Thinking about the bike line that is great but suddenly stops. Your bus connection gets cancelled.
- Stopping the trains at 11:20 hurt existing workforce challenges (e.g., Twins games end and staff clean up the stadium but there is no way to get home)
- Affordable
- Forward-thinking. Building for the next generation.
- Respectful.
- Productivity: Allow people to be productive.
- Foundational. This ties to our higher aspirations for equity, climate change, prosperity, etc.
- Expensive: this doesn't happen by itself; you need to invest but the return is high
- Commitment: financial commitment
- Collaboration, working together
- Statements:
 - We want an open, affordable, interconnected, and accessible system.
 - Not just transit, but housing. Being able to live where you want to live. There are choices.
 - People have choices on where to live, work, and recreate, and choices in how to get to these places.
 - Mentioned U of M's research on accessibility looking not only at how long it takes to get somewhere but what that overall experience looks like. Evaluating accessibility in this way.



Theme 5: Prosperous and healthy

Council Members in this group made the following comments:

- More than economic prosperity. It applies to health. Abundance as opposed to scarcity. Life is rewarding. Spiritually prosperous. Fulfilling life.
- Shared prosperity: thinking about the commons, public spaces like parks, places that generate community value and places that people care about; North Commons parks will create a sense of wellbeing that measures beyond any economic factor.
- Prosperous and healthy communities lead to prosperous and healthy individuals. Allow people to thrive.
- Anti-racism theory teaches kids that the system is stacked against them, and they don't have a chance. It sets people up for failure. They cannot be prosperous.
- Prosperity does not come at the expense of others. It should not.
- Give everyone opportunities, mentoring, and support so they can do their best. Opportunities without barriers.
- People need hope. They need to believe in themselves and their future prosperity/success. They need a vision for their future. This is lacking in our schools right now. People need to understand what opportunities are out there.
- Inspiring
- Proactive
- Possible for all
- Prosperous doesn't mean rich. It means satisfied. Having a balanced life. Ability to achieve personal goals.
- Green space is a determiner of community health.
 - Smart Cities – Columbus, OH: smart transportation that tied transportation to measurable outcomes; one was to reduce infant mortality rates, found they could do this by connecting expecting mothers to rides to clinics
 - Connectivity – this is important for achieving health outcomes

