

Information Item

Metropolitan Council



Meeting Date: September 4, 2024

Topic

American Indian Advisory Council Recommended Commitments

District(s), Member(s):	ALL
Policy/Legal Reference:	Minn. Stat. § 473.175
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Allison Waukau, Tribal Liaison & Native Relations Coordinator (651) 377-0090 Angela R. Torres, Senior Manager, Local Planning Assistance (651) 602-1566
Division/Department:	Community Development / Regional Planning

Background

To implement a community-centered engagement approach, to initiate co-creation of a regional land acknowledgement with the region's American Indian population, and to acknowledge the historic harm that Indigenous people in this region have survived, the Council established an American Indian Advisory Council as part of development of Imagine 2050. Based on immediate feedback, the land acknowledgement transformed into a land, water, and people commitments of the Met Council.

The Advisory Council includes highly respected leaders of the American Indian community in this region. Members represent Dakota, Ojibwe, Ho-Chunk, and Lakota communities and range from youth advocates to community elders.

The Regional Development Guide (RDG) Council Member Work Group helped to inform and advise on the early stages of this effort at meetings on November 15, and December 6, 2023, and on May 1, 2024. Council staff presented updates on the Advisory Council's work to the Community Development Committee on May 6 and July 1, 2024. On September 4, the Advisory Council will present their recommendations to Committee of the Whole.

Summary

The Advisory Council met ten times between March 2024 to August 2024. The structure of each meeting employed an Inside-Outside Circle format in which the Advisory Council members spoke first and led conversations while Met Council staff listened, took notes, and shared meeting summaries. Early in the process, the Advisory Council recommended that Met Council commitments to action would be more valuable and impactful than a land acknowledgement. The Advisory Council then met with Met Council staff from each policy area to understand Met Council roles and responsibilities and develop effective recommendations for commitments.

Recommended commitments cover a wide range of Met Council work and highlight the opportunities for organizational, operational, and policy change. Recommended commitments were developed for the Met Council overall as well as for each policy area. Recommended commitments from the American Indian Advisory Council emphasize key themes for changes to Met Council work.

- The Met Council has a role in setting the tone for the region when it comes to Tribal and American Indian relations.
- Showing leadership in recognizing harms and consistently implementing a Tribal consultation and engagement policy will help build trust between the Met Council and Tribes and American Indian communities.
- Changes to organizational culture and operations need to be formalized so they do not depend on the support of individual staff or council members.
- Making commitments and transparently reporting on progress will ensure the Met Council remains accountable as it builds and deepens relationships with Tribes and American Indian communities.
- Partnering with American Indian communities and Tribes brings value to all aspects of Met Council work as it works towards a region with abundant opportunities for all.

The Advisory Council submits the attached recommendations as formal public comment on behalf of the Advisory Council.

Next Steps

Council staff will work to transform the vision expressed in the Advisory Council's recommendations into sustainable and lasting change. In the coming months, Council staff will document the work of the Advisory Council and the development of recommended commitments through a report. Council staff will also work through organizational work groups, committees, and Council bodies to identify policy and implementation actions. Council staff will build accountability structures so there are clear mechanisms for reporting on progress and barriers. Finally, Council staff will develop a work plan that guides continued engagement with the American Indian Advisory Council. All these actions will build towards embedding organizational and structural changes at the Council to better serve American Indian communities and all communities in the region.

