

Information Item

Community Development Committee



Meeting Date: April 1, 2024

Topic

Draft 2050 Land Use Policies and Actions

Staff Prepared/Presented: Angela R. Torres, Senior Manager, Local Planning Assistance (651-602-1566)
Raya Esmaeili, Planning Analyst (651) 602-1616
Gabriela (Gaby) Olvera, Planner (651) 602-1832

Division/Department: Community Development / Regional Planning

Background

The Community Development Committee (CDC) reviewed and provided feedback on draft land use objectives for *Imagine 2050*, most recently providing feedback on the revised objectives at the February 20, 2024, CDC meeting. At the March 18, 2024, CDC meeting, the Committee reviewed a comparison of *Thrive MSP 2040* land use policies and began review of land use policies and actions drafted for *Imagine 2050* with discussion focused on:

Objective 1: Respect the relationship with land and water as a foundation for regional growth.

Objective 1 reflects key policy areas critical to the comprehensive planning process, reflecting much of the Council's land use regulatory role. The discussion topics, like density requirements and the Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA), have been the subject of recent committee discussions.

At the April 1st CDC meeting, the Committee will continue review of land use policies and actions. The focus will be on two objectives that don't have a direct correlating objective in *Thrive MSP 2040*. The two objectives for discussion are:

Objective 3: Establish vibrant, inclusive, connected, and safe communities for people to live in.

Objective 6: Remedy past and present discriminatory land use practices.

The remaining five objectives (below) will be discussed at upcoming CDC meetings to allow for a more robust conversation of key policies related to each objective. The tentative review schedule is as follows:

At the April 15th CDC meeting, the Committee will review Objectives:

4. Ensure that development activities contribute to the fullest protection and restoration of natural systems on every level.
7. Strengthen the climate resilience of neighborhoods and communities through sustainable land use and development patterns.

At the May 6th CDC meeting, the Committee will review Objectives:

2. Maximize opportunities for growth in places well-served by transit, bicycle, and pedestrian infrastructure.
5. Ensure that in all types of communities, people find housing opportunities that align with their needs.

8. Support the economic wellbeing of our region and its communities.

Discussion Questions

The Committee will be asked to consider these questions:

- Are new approaches to policies going in the right direction?
- Are there concerns about existing approaches or lack of new approaches in any areas?
- Are there current approaches that shouldn't be carried forward?

For discussion: Land Use Objective 3 Policies and Actions

Objective 3: Establish vibrant, inclusive, connected, and safe communities for people to live in.

Peoples' experiences of the places in which they live, work, and recreate reflect the livability of the region. Feelings of safety and connection in one's community promote a sense of belonging and ownership, offering residents access to many of the things they desire close to home. Planning for future growth presents the opportunity to design places where new and existing residents can gather, interact, and connect. Communities can use these spaces to celebrate local culture and history through events that bring together people from different backgrounds. While community connection impacts feelings of safety within a community, land use decisions also create a built environment that supports safety, physical activity, and access to amenities and services, contributing to the notion that residents can conveniently access many of their needs and desires within their own community.

Policies and Actions Draft Language

1. Prioritize planning practices that support mixed-use development, walkable neighborhoods, and easy access to public transportation.
 - a. Develop transportation, land use, and open space plans that prioritize human-scale urban planning.
 - b. Reevaluate parking requirements for new developments to encourage alternative modes of transportation.
 - c. Consider form-based codes to ensure that new developments contribute positively to the overall urban fabric.
 - d. Implement a holistic infrastructure design review process for coherent and connected public spaces.
 - e. Adopt a *Complete Streets* policy in the land use plan and integrate this policy into zoning ordinances, transportation plans, and development regulations to ensure its consistent application in all projects and street redesigns.
 - f. Incorporate *Crime Prevention through Environmental Design* principles into new developments.
2. Plan and maintain public spaces for community gatherings.
 - a. Incorporate placemaking initiatives, such as street vending, pop-up parks, farmers markets, and community art installations, to inject vibrancy and encourage social interaction in public spaces.
 - b. Facilitate creation and maintenance of free and accessible public gathering spaces.
 - c. Facilitate update of zoning ordinances that allow for public spaces, including specific locations with access to water, restrooms, public transit, and parking.
 - d. Support culturally significant design elements that animate the urban landscape.
 - e. Support public art installations that draw residents to public spaces.
3. Prioritize and plan for creation and preservation of green public spaces in urban areas.
 - a. Support neighborhood scale public open space and use of green spaces for community benefit.
 - b. Consider innovative and emerging practices to adapt underutilized land or buildings for development of green infrastructure.
 - c. Incentivize preservation and integration of existing green spaces in new developments or redevelopments for public use.
 - d. Incentivize and support the development of community-based urban agriculture initiatives.



4. Center community engagement in the planning process to build community trust and ownership.
 - a. Utilize public and private partnerships to implement projects, including community groups, neighborhood organizations, and schools, to enhance context sensitive design and foster community identity.
 - b. Invest in community-led development initiatives that support the long-term affordability and stability of gentrifying neighborhoods.
5. Protect historic and cultural assets.
 - a. Local governments must identify historic and cultural assets within their community.
 - b. Local governments must develop policies to protect and preserve historic and cultural assets within their community.
 - c. Local governments should adopt culturally expansive ordinances for the preservation, protection, and restoration of historic and cultural assets.
 - d. Provide technical assistance to local governments on culturally expansive historic preservation practices.
6. Incorporate inclusive design principles that consider the needs of all community members including various cultural backgrounds, age groups, languages, and gender identities.
 - a. Plan for developments that meet or exceed the minimum ADA standards to fully meet the needs of people with disabilities.
 - b. Collaborate with educational institutions to implement safety measures around schools.
 - c. Incorporate designated Safe Routes to Schools into urban planning strategies to enhance infrastructure and safety measures, as well as optimize land use around educational institutions.
7. Integrate sustainable water management strategies into the design of vibrant public spaces.
 - a. Incorporate water conservation practices such as wastewater and stormwater reuse, and low-impact development practices when designing public spaces.

For discussion: Land Use Objective 6 Policies and Actions

Objective 6: Remedy past and present discriminatory land use practices.

Our region has a history of discriminatory planning and policy decisions that contributed to persisting inequities and disparities. Discriminatory practices such as redlining, racially restrictive covenants, and disproportionate investment have left lasting impacts on Black, Indigenous, and people of color across the entire region. Such practices have resulted in:

- Disparities in income and homeownership rates,
- Hindrance to generational wealth building opportunities
- Disparities in generational wealth between white and Black, Indigenous, and people of color
- Disproportionate exposure to environmental injustices that contribute to health disparities,
- Inadequate provisions and access to green spaces,
- Stifled community connection and cultural connection
- Adverse impacts on job access and educational opportunities, and
- Constrained transportation options across the region

Although the government has prohibited overly discriminatory planning and policy decisions, gaps between white people and Black, Indigenous, and people of color continue to widen. These policies have been replaced by seemingly neutral policies that reinforce barriers to more equitable outcomes. As we move forward, it is imperative to not only acknowledge the historical faults embedded in our land use policies but also actively engage in collaboration with communities that have borne the brunt of discriminatory decisions to work towards a more equitable region.

Policies and Actions Draft Language

1. Take ownership of past harms, provide transparent communication, and hold governments accountable to plans and actions.
 - a. Provide technical assistance for equitable land use planning and development practices.
 - b. Develop a public dashboard to share progress toward equity goals.



- c. Provide technical assistance for developing and implementing decision-making tools to prioritize equitable outcomes across capital projects.
 - d. Acknowledge inequities and disparities that exist within local jurisdictions and across the region and identify strategies to address them.
 - e. Partner with Just Deeds to discharge racially restrictive covenants from housing deeds.
 - f. Evaluate existing and proposed programs, policies, and procedures for disproportionate impacts on marginalized and underrepresented communities.
2. Prioritize engagement and collaborate with underrepresented populations to develop plans, policies, and programs responsive to and reflective of community needs.
 - a. Expand representation of marginalized and underrepresented populations on boards, commissions, and committees.
 - b. Partner with organizations that represent marginalized and underrepresented populations to inform program and policy development with a focus on cultivating trust and forming long-standing relationships.
 - c. Partner with community organizations to support building community capacity to understand and engage successfully with local and regional government processes.
 - d. Identify and eliminate barriers to engagement participation including location, timing, and access to childcare.
 - e. Build capacity to conduct culturally responsive and inclusive engagement, including language services, ADA services, community assessments, and best practices.
 - f. Reimburse community members participating in engagement for their time and expertise.
 3. Promote equitable distribution of public investments to benefit communities disproportionately harmed by past and present planning practices and to eliminate racial disparities and discrimination.
 - a. Develop strategies to restore community connections in areas negatively impacted by planning and investment decisions.
 - b. Explore the opportunity to establish a reparative actions fund to finance mitigation measures for known and acknowledged past harms to the environment, to native communities, to black communities, and communities of color unjustly harmed by past local or Council actions.
 - c. Apply the Anti-Displacement Framework to ensure Metropolitan Council investments and policies center and empower communities and reduce harm.
 - d. Provide technical assistance to create an analysis methodology and equity/environmental justice framework to evaluate how projects benefit or harm different communities and demographics.
 4. Center the native experience in decision-making and implement the actions included the Council's acknowledgment statement that all land in this region is Dakota land.
 - a. Engage in Tribal consultation with adjacent and affected Tribal governments throughout the planning process.
 - b. Create a power sharing structure to partner with urban Indian organizations and community members in planning processes identified in the land acknowledgment actions.
 - c. Update the Council's processes for tribal consultation and native community engagement.

