Land, Water, and People Commitments and the American Indian Advisory Council

Meeting Summaries and Engagement Update
Allison Waukau and Angela R. Torres

May 2024
Council value and Regional goal

Our region is equitable and inclusive.

Racial inequities and injustices experienced by historically marginalized communities have been eliminated; and every person feels welcome, included, and empowered.

~ Final language endorsed
January 2024
Imagine 2050 Direction

Council member feedback throughout RDG development

- Equity at the center of policy and process
- Center community voices
- Be bold
- Be ambitious
- Councilmembers support positive change
- Met Council serves all people of this region
Co-creation process and building trust

**Inside – Outside Circle**

- Community speaks first (inside)
  - Talk amongst themselves
  - Speak to broad question prompts

- Council staff listen (outside)
  - Listen and take notes
  - Provide transcribed notes for Advisory Council participants
  - Provide summaries of discussion to others
Reflections from Meeting 1 (March 25)

Land Acknowledgements

• Recognize indigenous people survived a genocide and there has been no accountability.
• Land acknowledgements need to result in action.
• Value of land acknowledgments are for non-native people.
• It can be the start of impactful work for future generations.
• Commitments are more impactful as they focus on change and accountability.

Recommended Actions

• Recognize genocide and past harm
• Change from Acknowledgement to Commitments
• Actions need to recognize more than 11 federally recognized tribes in MN
• Take corrective action on Council responsibility for health of and access to sacred sites
• Waive fees and transit costs
• Institutional change can’t be dependent on specific people and their relationships
• Educate both the public and Council staff about Dakota land
Met Council Roles

• Policy, Operations, Institutional Change
  • Tribal consultation policy needs to be proactive and robust.
  • Govt-to-govt relationship as well as urban Indian organizations partners
  • Incorporate tribal nations & indigenous communities into Council plans
  • Relationships must go beyond individuals
  • Make changes that aren’t temporary or advisory and support leaders
  • Native representation in policy makers

Recommended Actions

• Revise tribal consultation policy and procedures. Follow policy.
• Visibly integrate indigenous perspectives into regional plans
• Fund the work of Dakota & native orgs
• Employ native people across all areas of the Council; train staff to be leaders
• Require TSRT training; support program expansion and act
• Recommend minimum policymaker appointments; set expectations for Council Boards and Committees
• Apply International Indigenous Human Rights standards
Reflections from Meeting 3 (April 22)

Regional Parks and Trails

- Recognize lands with significant cultural value to Dakota people
  - Support native management of land resources, medicine, and foraging
  - Appropriate place naming
- Educate non-native people; appropriately interact with sacred sites
- Lead on reframing the regional parks system.
- Staff implementing changes need to be aware of changes.
- Native people care for the land, water, air as relatives.
- Council guidelines have a broad reach and consistent info sharing helps.

Recommended Actions

- Create a cultural landscape designation in regional parks policy
- Incorporate training on native communities and tribal sovereignty into required onboarding
- Develop regional land management guides with partners to mitigate volume of individual requests
- Use funding mechanisms to influence functional policy changes on foraging and fees for native people.
- Remove barriers for access to sacred sites and ceremony.
- Support regional historical and cultural inventories.
Outline of upcoming meetings and agendas

- **13 May**: Water policy
- **28 May**: Environmental Justice
- **10 June**: Transportation policy
- **24 June**: Housing policy
- **8 July**: Review of commitments and recommendations
- **22 July**: Organizational change and review recommendations
- **1 August (tentatively)**: Committee of the Whole presentation of Advisory Council recommendations
Allison Waukau
Tribal Liaison and Native Relations Coordinator
Allison.Waukau@metc.state.mn.us
(651) 602-1590

Angela R. Torres, AICP
Imagine 2050 Equity Sponsor and
Senior Manager, Local Planning Assistance
Angela.Torres@metc.state.mn.us
(651) 602-1566