

Minutes

Community Development Committee



Meeting date: July 7, 2025

Time: 4:00 PM

Location: 390 Robert Street

Members present:

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chair, Robert Lilligren, D6 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Diego Morales, District 9 | <input type="checkbox"/> Vacant, District 15 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vice Chair, Toni Carter, D14 | <input type="checkbox"/> Peter Lindstrom, District 10 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wendy Wulff, District 16 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reva Chamblis, District 2 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chai Lee, District 13 | <input type="checkbox"/> = present, E = excused |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anjuli Cameron, District 8 | | |

Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgment

The Metropolitan Council acknowledges that the land we currently call Minnesota and specifically the seven-county region is the ancestral homeland of the Dakota Oyate who are present and active contributors to our thriving region. As part of the Metropolitan Council's commitment to address the unresolved legacy of genocide, dispossession, and settler colonialism and the fact that government institutions, including the Metropolitan Council, benefitted economically, politically, and institutionally after the forceable removal of the Dakota Oyate, the Metropolitan Council is dedicated to instilling Land, Water, and People Commitments in regional policy. These commitments support the Dakota Oyate, the eleven federally recognized Tribes in Minnesota, Ho-Chunk Nation, and the American Indian Communities representing over 150 diverse Tribal Nations that call the seven-county region home.

Call to order

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Lilligren called the regular meeting of the Community Development Committee to order at 4:00 p.m.

Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgment

The Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgment was read by Council Member Lilligren.

Approval of minutes

It was moved by Carter, seconded by Morales to approve the minutes of June 16, 2025, regular meeting of the Community Development Committee. **Motion carried.**

Consent business

1. **2025-158** City of Edina Lincoln and Londonderry Small Area Plan Comprehensive Plan Amendment, Review File 22400-3 (Amber Turnquest 651-602-1576)

It was moved by Carter, seconded by Morales, that the Metropolitan: adopt the attached Review Record and take the following actions:

1. Authorize the City of Edina to place its comprehensive plan amendment into effect.
2. Find that the amendment does not change the City of Edina's forecasts.
3. Advise the City of Edina to implement the advisory comments in the Review Record for Water Resources.

2. 2025-159 City of Minneapolis 1501 Johnson Street NE Comprehensive Plan Amendment, Review File 22166-18 (Amber Turnquest 651-602-1576)

It was moved by Carter, seconded by Morales, that the Metropolitan adopt the attached Review Record and take the following actions:

1. Authorize the City of Minneapolis to place its comprehensive plan amendment into effect.
2. Find that the amendment does not change the City of Minneapolis's forecasts.

3. 2025-160 City of Forest Lake Land Use Tables Update Comprehensive Plan Amendment, Review File 222270-7 (Merritt Clapp-Smith 651-602-1567)

It was moved by Carter, seconded by Morales, that the Metropolitan: adopt the attached Review Record and take the following actions:

1. Authorize the City of Forest Lake to place its comprehensive plan amendment into effect.
2. Find that the amendment does not change the City's forecasts.

4. 2025-162 Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve, Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Award (Riesgraf), Scott County (Jessica Lee 651-602-1621)

It was moved by Carter, seconded by Morales, that the Metropolitan:

1. Approve a grant of up to \$1,462,502 from the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund to Scott County to acquire approximately 123 acres located at 17525 263rd St. W. in Belle Plain, MN, for the Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve.
2. Authorize the Executive Director of Community Development to execute the grant agreement and restrictive covenant on behalf of the Council.

5. 2025-163 Lake Rebecca Park Reserve, Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Award (Van Horn), Three Rivers Park District (Kevin Phan 651-602-1333)

It was moved by Carter, seconded by Morales, that the Metropolitan:

1. Approve a grant of up to \$350,636 from the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund to Three Rivers Park District to acquire approximately 5 acres located at 9045 Rebecca Park Trail in Greenfield, MN, for the Lake Rebecca Park Reserve.

2. Authorize the Executive Director of Community Development to execute the grant agreement and restrictive covenant on behalf of the Council.

Motion carried.

The Community Development Committee recommended approval of the proposed action without questions or discussion as part of its consent agenda.

Non-consent business – Reports of standing committees

1. 2025-161 SW: Annual Metropolitan Regional Parks Operation & Maintenance Allocation (Nicole Clapp 651-602-1723)

It was moved by Wulff, seconded by Morales, that the Metropolitan accept the Regional Parks and Trails System state fiscal year 2026 Operations and Maintenance Report, as shown in table 1.

Motion carried.

Information

1. Parks Research Update: Regional Parks System 2024 Annual Use Estimate & 2026 Visitor Study update (Ismael Ramirez 651-602-1831)

The Metropolitan Council has prepared annual use estimates for the Regional Park System since 1995 in partnership with the ten regional park implementing agencies.

The Council bases its estimates of parks and trails visits on counts of visitors entering regional parks and trails from Memorial Day to Labor Day. The count is a collaboration between all ten regional parks implementing agencies, whose staff conduct the summer counts, and Council staff who complete the analysis.

An estimated 65.7 million visits were made to the Regional Parks System in 2024, representing a 5.4% decrease from 2023. This is the first decline in the past five years, partly due to typical variations in research methodology and weather patterns, particularly the rainy summer months in 2024, as nearly half of the counts (44%) coincided with rainy days. Sixty-nine percent of the visits were to regional parks, park reserves, and special recreation features, while the rest were to regional trails—a shift from last year's 71%. The most visited regional park was Minneapolis Chain of Lakes, with 6.8 million visits. Other top-visited parks include Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park and Mississippi Gorge Regional Park, both with 3.5 million visits. The most visited trail was the Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail, with about 2.6 million visits, followed by Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail and Cedar Lake Regional Trail, each with 1 million visits.

The Council uses a four-year rolling average of counts to ensure a representative sample of each park and each trail. Off-season visits (winter, spring, and fall) are based on a survey asking visitors how often they visit during off-season months. The most recent survey was completed in 2021.

The next Visitor Study will be completed in 2026. The 2026 Parks and Trails Visitor Study aims to collect data from visitors to all Regional Parks and Trails System units during the summer of 2026, with a final report due by late fall 2026.

At the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission meeting, staff provided a more detailed explanation of the methodology and findings for the 2024 use estimate.

2. **Livable Communities Program Update: Alignment with Imagine 2050** (Hannah Gary 651-602-1633; Emily Seddon 651-602-1023)

The Met Council has been engaged in a multi-year effort to update the Livable Communities Act (LCA) grant program to ensure impact and responsiveness, as well as align with the Imagine 2050 regional development guide. Since the [April 21, 2025](#) update to the Community Development Committee (CDC), staff have continued to engage external stakeholders about an updated program design. Between April 2025 and the present, staff have spoken with more than 45 program partners from cities, counties, and the development sector, representing all 16 Council districts. Staff also presented to the Housing Work Group, the Livable Communities Advisory Committee (LCAC), the Land Use Advisory Committee (LUAC), and the Regional Planning Advisory Group (RPAG).

This information item shared the staff's preliminary recommendation (50% draft) for the LCA application process, scoring criteria, and evaluation plan for Council Member feedback.

- **Alignment with Imagine 2050:** Imagine 2050, the Met Council's current regional plan, builds on the outcomes and directions identified in Thrive MSP 2040. Due to this continuity, there are no significant changes to the LCA program goals. However, Imagine 2050 does provide specific policy guidance for LCA programs and Met Council grants more broadly, which are incorporated into this proposal. Imagine 2050 also has a clearer emphasis on wealth-building and regional prosperity. While jobs and commercial projects have always been eligible for LCA grants, the proposed update aims to clarify where LCA grants can advance these goals.

- **Focus on outcomes, less on acronyms:** Current LCA grant programs are defined by their funding source, with carve-outs for specific activities, resulting in a heavy reliance on acronyms and funding account names that are unclear. Despite staff outreach, this presents a barrier to entry for the LCA programs, as local project teams unfamiliar with the fund structure have had to piece together where their project will fit. The proposed structure



defines the grant programs by the type of project and outcomes they seek to achieve, making it clearer how to apply for funds. Staff will manage the funding sources internally.

- **Every community is part of a livable region:** Currently, development projects are scored on five criteria, and the more a project does, the higher the score. This created an imbalance where small projects and suburban projects with narrower scopes had a harder time competing for funds. The proposed update seeks to correct that by using a new scoring structure in which a project that meets one Met Council goal well is competitive. The proposed scoring structure focuses on enhancing the qualitative elements of a livable community—safety, ability to meet your needs in your community, and choice in housing and transportation—rather than simply the quantity of housing units or projects.

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 5:18 p.m.

Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing narrative and exhibits constitute a true and accurate record of the Community Development Committee meeting of July 7, 2025.

Council contact:

Michele Wenner, Recording Secretary

Michele.Wenner@metc.state.mn.us

651-602-1456

