

# Information Item

Land Use Advisory Committee



Meeting date: May 16, 2024

## Topic

*Imagine 2050* Equity Chapter Update

<b>District(s), member(s):</b>	ALL
<b>Policy/legal reference:</b>	Minn. Stat. § 473.145
<b>Staff prepared/presented:</b>	Angela R. Torres, Senior Manager & RDG Equity Sponsor (651) 602-1566
<b>Division/department:</b>	All

## Background

The Council endorsed a regional Equity Framework at its Committee of the Whole meeting on September 20, 2023, to guide the development of *Imagine 2050* to center equity in both the process of developing the guide and in the policies developed as a part of the guide. These efforts are supported by Minn Stat. § 473.145 which states:

*“The comprehensive development guide must recognize and encompass physical, social, or economic needs of the metropolitan area...”*

The Council’s regional equity goal states:

***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.*

At the April 3, 2024, Committee of the Whole meeting, the Council endorsed additional concepts within the Equity Chapter of *Imagine 2050*. This consists of several Frameworks to guide the Council’s work and include not only the already endorsed regional Equity Framework, but an environmental justice framework, a community-centered engagement framework, an anti-displacement framework as well as the work of the American Indian Advisory Council. At the May 16th, Land Use Advisory Committee meeting, the Committee will review a truncated version of these materials, although [the full content and meeting video](#) is available online for additional background, if interested.

The intention of these frameworks are to set the direction for Council action, show Council commitments, set expectations for how the Council conducts work, and guide decision-making at all levels within the Council. The work embedded in the frameworks include the immense amount of engagement with community and regional stakeholders over the course of the development of *Imagine 2050*, including the direction from the Council to be bold and ambitious with this work.

## Equity Framework

The Council endorsed *Imagine 2050*’s Equity Framework on September 20, 2023. The framework sets the direction of the work of the Council and identifies how the work of the Council will be conducted. It provides a consistent, clear vision of and process toward equity, includes a method of co-creating solutions with communities for long-term, sustainable equity work, and provides guidance on the concept, implementation, and goals of equity for the entire Council, regardless of particular areas’ prior experience with equity work.

The Framework has three main principles:

- Contextualized: This ensures solutions are addressing a systemic inequity by naming institutionalized inequities and centering communities' account of their history.
- Community-Centered: This ensures we are working with the population affected by said inequity to co-create solutions.
- Reparative: Ensures we are creating solutions that are commensurate with what caused the inequity, and institutionalizing equity into all Council processes.

This framework clarifies the existing Council definition of equity. Equity centers Black communities, Indigenous communities, and peoples of color, LGBTQIA people, people of marginalized genders, immigrants, people of low wealth, and people with disabilities. Equity understands inequitable policies, practices, and cultures are integral to the history of our state and country, understands these historic and current inequities lead to unjust patterns of resource distribution, and actively seeks to correct these unjust patterns. Importantly, equity repositions community as experts in their history, needs, solutions, and resources.

### **Environmental Justice (EJ) Framework**

The work on environmental justice builds from the foundation of the Equity Framework and the work conducted during the development of the Climate Action Work Plan adopted by the Council in December of 2022. The definition of EJ for *Imagine 2050* states that:

Environmental Justice is  
the right for all residents to live in a clean, safe environment  
that contributes to a healthy quality of life

Using the Equity Framework as foundation, the EJ Framework centers Black communities, Indigenous communities, communities of color, disabled communities, immigrants and refugees, and low-income communities who have and continue to experience a legacy of racism or other structural or systemic barriers that have resulted in environmental injustices, harms, and risks.

Environmental Justice requires necessary adaptations to Council services, requirements, policies, practices, processes, and decisions, starting with *Imagine 2050*, to support a healthy and safe region.

- People centered, data-driven decision-making: Data and lived experiences of overburdened communities inform decisions.
- Prioritize engagement with overburdened communities to transform engagement towards reparative, respectful relationships with the most overburdened and vulnerable communities.
- Community benefits beyond harm mitigation: Prioritize maximum environmental benefits to the most overburdened people, especially where legal frameworks insufficiently address concerns.

### **Community-Centered Engagement Framework**

Community-Centered Engagement intentionally puts people first and centers community perspectives in the process of Met Council decision-making. It facilitates the values of partnering with community as co-creators, committing to shared agenda setting, investing in community capacity building, and focusing on assets in community. This Framework builds on the foundation from the Public Engagement Plan as part of *Thrive MSP 2040*, to more explicitly call out the value of centering community voices in Council decision-making. Since the adoption of *Thrive MSP 2040* we have identified specific practices that more intentionally involve community voices, which include:

- Embrace nationally recognized standards of engagement, including the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2), with small modifications.
- Prioritize community partnerships that empower and compensate community leaders and individuals in guiding decision-making.
- Support engagement and research cohorts to both support community voices in planning processes, but also build capacity for leadership in public processes and decision-making.
- Intentionally identify impacted communities, to ensure their involvement in a decision-making



process.

- Dedicate budgets to engagement in a way that supports community voices and builds community capacity for public decision-making.
- Prioritize engagement with overburdened communities and recognize the need for engagement processes to include shared agenda-setting and decision-making.

Since *Thrive*, community voices have identified ways to imbed equity principles into engagement and decision-making processes – namely to recognize historical patterns of injustice and exclusion, and the impact of unilateral decision-making. This Framework honors community expertise, addresses inequity by acknowledging and compensating the value of community expertise, and prioritizes processes that invite community partnership. It ensures all people are represented in decision-making and that the weight of feedback from community is proportional to the impact a decision has on communities.

### **Anti-Displacement Framework**

The Anti-Displacement Framework is an assessment framework that includes strategies and tools to outline the potential effects of displacement from Met Council investments. This Framework works to uncover the potential impacts investments can have on a community and uplift community centered actions and decision making to combat the generational effects of inequitable policies such as redlining and racial covenants.

Anti-Displacement is an active process of centering and empowering communities to protect their home, access to resources, and sense of belonging from loss due to a Council investment or policy. To prioritize those most impacted by displacement and reduce harm, key components of anti-displacement for Met Council policies, processes and systems should include:

- Preservation of existing cultural connection
- Creation and strengthening of community inclusiveness
- Be justice-centered; repair historical injustices by empowering overburdened communities to co-create best practices to remedy historic and ongoing harm
- Prioritize overburdened communities that are most impacted by displacement

The objective of this Framework is to increase the ability for residents to keep their housing, amenities, health and/or sense of belonging in a neighborhood. Implementation strategies include:

- Council investments go through an anti-displacement risk assessment.
- Prioritize projects that support community connection and anti-displacement in Council grant programs.
- Provide best practices and resources through engagement and collaboration with overburdened communities.

### **Land, Water, and People Commitments**

On March 25th, the first American Indian Advisory Council meeting was held with members of the American Indian community representing some of the most respected elders and community leaders in the region. The American Indian Advisory Council, which centers Dakota voices, includes highly respected members of the American Indian community in this region. Members represented Dakota, Ojibwe, Ho-Chunk, Lakota, the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, and the Prairie Island Indian Community as well as a broad spectrum of community elders, artists, advocates, and youth representatives. The Advisory Council is sponsored by Council member Robert Lilligren and led by Allison Waukau, Tribal Liaison & Native Relations Coordinator.

The Advisory Council will meet bi-weekly for four to five months, tasked with developing a Land, Water, and People statement of commitment for the Met Council and *Imagine 2050*. The Advisory Council will identify necessary commitments and actions for the Council as well as review all policies and actions with references to Indigenous peoples in *Imagine 2050*. This work is based on the endorsed Equity Framework (Contextualized, Community-Centered, Reparative). This work is ongoing and will continue to develop over the coming months.