Land Use Policy

The land use objectives, policies, and actions in this chapter balance both urban and rural community characteristics of the region to create the most healthy, sustainable, and welcoming environment for the people in this region. The land use objectives in this chapter are intended to support the regional vision and achieve the 2050 goals while addressing key land use and regional growth issues. Each objective should achieve more than one regional goal and the land use direction in this chapter sets the stage for development throughout the region. Crafted with both an equity and environmental justice focus, the land use objectives, policies, and actions center the voices of community members in the same measure as stakeholders like local governments and partners like the American Indian Advisory Council. Outcomes for land use policy will be measured with both quantitative and qualitative efforts.

To achieve the five cross-cutting regional goals established in *Imagine 2050*, the Council identifies eight land use objectives with accompanying land use policies and actions for both local governments and the Council to implement. Each objective has specific policies and actions and while nested under a specific objective, in practice they serve multiple purposes. Land use objectives impact all planning and policy areas and serve to guide how growth and development occur in the region.

The objectives are:

1. Respect the relationship with land and water as a foundation for regional growth.
2. Maximize opportunities for growth in places well-served by transit, bicycle, and pedestrian infrastructure.
3. Establish vibrant, inclusive, connected, and safe communities for people to live, work, and recreate in.
4. Prioritize land use and development activities that protect, restore, and enhance natural systems at all scales.
5. Ensure that people in all types of communities find housing opportunities that align with their needs.
6. Remedy past and present discriminatory land use practices.
7. Implement land use and development practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, embed climate adaptation, and create resilient communities.
8. Support the economic wellbeing of our region and its communities.

As a policy, land use is interrelated with all aspects of the built form and the people that live and move within the region. Alignment of land use with housing, transportation, parks, natural systems, water, climate mitigation and adaptation, and more is critical to achieving regional goals of *Imagine 2050*. One objective or policy alone cannot achieve the outcomes the people of this region need from the regional development guide. Instead, a comprehensive approach to address all the objectives will set the stage for people's individual success. While an objective may appear to directly support some of the regional goals more than others, all of the land use objectives, policies, and actions are interrelated.

Each of the following land use objectives applies to all communities albeit application in urban and rural areas will and must look different in order to be successful. Community Designations will be used to refine requirements for individual communities. The Local Planning Handbook, the PlanIt program,

Sector Representatives, and a full suite of technical assistance tools will provide guidance and resources to help local governments implement specific local planning expectations.

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

Land and water are essential for sustaining all life. We recognize that planning for the region is about more than accommodating a growing human population, but also about respecting the needs of all living things in the region. This approach to growth management emphasizes the importance of stewardship and interconnectedness. By acknowledging and respecting this connection, a broad and shared understanding of the impact humans have on the environment and all living beings within it can change the relationship between development, people, and the environment. Development doesn't have to disturb or disrupt, but instead can care for and protect the region's assets, both natural and human.

To achieve this balance, regional growth requires an orderly and efficient approach to land development to meet evolving and expanding needs. A development pattern that reduces the amount of land used to accommodate growth supports this outcome by leveraging the region's existing resources and limiting impacts to existing habitats. These land use patterns exist throughout the region in communities of all sizes. Directing growth to areas where infrastructure already exists promotes efficient use of available infrastructure capacity in the urban and rural service areas and reduces the need for infrastructure expansion. The concentration of growth in existing service areas also prevents premature development of agricultural areas and destruction of natural systems. Managing growth in this manner allows our region to preserve its agricultural economy and rural lifestyles while accommodating the needs of residents and businesses.

Objective 1: Policies (P) and Actions (A)

P1. Incorporate indigenous approaches, values, and practices in management of land and water sources. Sovereignty of tribal nations necessitates a government-to-government relationship which compels the Council to take a leadership role in elevating the needs and contributions of indigenous community members in the region. Actions that integrate indigenous perspectives are intentional and attempt to alleviate some of the historic harms that American Indians continue to experience. (Council)

  A1. Adopt regional land management guidelines co-created with indigenous community partners to share with local governments as a resource for planning purposes and implementation in areas where there may be local discretion or desire to use such tools. Resources at the regional scale can help provide consistent, clear guidance to a large area of Dakota land and reduce the burden on small American Indian community organizations overtaxed with many individual requests to engage with multiple governments, organizations, or community groups. (Partner) (Council)

  A2. Establish an American Indian Partnership Council with authority and dedicated resources to implement land management guidelines in areas of Council influence or ownership. This Partnership Council would need to be established by the Met Council and participants with a mutually agreed upon purpose and role in the Council's decision-making process. This Partnership Council does not interact with or assume responsibilities of others in established review of cultural or archeological assets. (Partner) (Council)

  A3. Provide educational resources for non-native populations about Indigenous peoples practices as it relates to caring for the land and water to encourage more broad application of land and water management practices at the individual, neighborhood, community, and regional level. (Provide) (Council)

P2. Accommodate regional growth through efficient land use practices to reduce the cost of infrastructure expansion and service improvements through orderly and economical growth.

    A1. Promote more compact development in areas with existing infrastructure. Infrastructure investments at all scales, in all community types, need to be planned for a more compact development pattern. Compact development occurs in all areas with existing infrastructure, from rural downtowns to the growing suburban areas to the most densely developed urban communities. Planning for compact development patterns at all scales maximizes the benefits of investment, mitigates impacts of climate change, and builds localized resilience. (Plan) (Council/Community)

    A2. Using a rolling land supply analysis, the Council will evaluate requests to connect a new municipality or a new area within an already served municipality that is outside of the Council's long-term sewer service area to the regional wastewater system based on the regional need for additional land to accommodate growth and local development trends. Identifying a 20-year rolling land supply ensures that there is sufficient land within the planned Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA) to accommodate the region's forecasted growth without having an oversupply that leads to premature infrastructure investments. This evaluation helps prevent inadvertent restriction of land supply that can drive up land prices, while also carefully evaluating MUSA expansion requests within a community and across the region to protect the region from premature service expansion. (Provide) (Council)

        i. Establish criteria for when MUSA expansions would be authorized. The Council can establish standard criteria for when MUSA expansion meets regional policies and goals to signal a commitment to efficient and cost-effective growth management. (Provide) (Council)

        ii. Local requests for MUSA expansions within communities already receiving regional sewer-services shall be consistent with regional density policy at the development scale and reviewed against the need for additional land to accommodate forecasted growth. Analysis shows that the region has more than adequate land supply within the current MUSA boundary to accommodate the growth forecasted to 2050. (Provide) (Council)

    A3. Focus growth, both community-wide and in transit station areas, to maximize infrastructure investments, especially in station areas by community designations. (Plan) (Council/Community)

        i. Establish residential density expectations around transit station areas to support higher density of development around substantial investment projects. Communities with transit investments need to meet higher average minimum densities within station areas, depending on the transit type. A detailed assessment is underway to establish minimum density requirements for transit station areas based on recent developments and 2050 community designations and will be included in the public comment draft of this plan. (Council)

    A4. Establish residential density requirements based on adopted Community Designations. Density policies shall improve upon density trends in approved plats and existing development patterns that reflect lower developed densities than required regional minimum density requirements. Minimum density requirements are based on community designations. Additional information on the methodology, analysis, possible approaches, and recommendations can be referenced in the *Density Analysis for Imagine 2050*. These policies and actions represent the **range of potential actions** that the Council continues to actively consider. Additional feedback and conversations are planned prior to release of the public comment draft to further refine this direction. All approaches should be considered

collectively, as they are not mutually exclusive and can potentially complement each other to achieve more consistent and flexible development densities. Specifically, incentives should be integrated with various approaches to enhance their effectiveness and encourage consistency with regional goals. (Council)

i. **Increase minimum density requirements for Community Designations within the Urban Service Area.** Raising the minimum requirements means that communities will have to plan for higher density developments in their comprehensive plans. Increasing the minimum density requirements encourages communities to plan for overall higher-density, more compact development, and better advance regional goals. Additionally, compact development has been shown to lower greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, irrespective of the development trajectory, which is crucial in meeting the State's new GHG reduction targets and regional goals. (Council)

ii. **New connections to the regional system must meet the minimum density requirement for sewer serviced communities** unless the community meets performance-based flexibility criteria. For local governments that meet or exceed the minimum density for their community designation using Plat Monitoring Program data increased flexibility to develop at lower densities may be possible so long as their plat monitoring density remains above the required minimum density for their Community Designation. This approach would require any development with a new connection to the regional sewer system to meet the minimum density requirement based on Community Designation, even if the land use category of the site allows for a lower density development. Implementing this policy would contribute to increasing the overall net density of existing development in communities, addressing situations where density falls below minimum density requirements. It encourages higher-density, more compact development, and promotes efficient platting practices, particularly in single-family attached and detached developments, to meet minimum density requirements. Additionally, it streamlines the review of sewer service extension permits, ensuring the efficiency of the overall wastewater system. (Provide) (Council/Community)

iii. **Evaluate the feasibility of demand and development of land uses based on practicality.** Measuring the feasibility of demand and development of land uses within different communities, ensuring that both the intensity (density range) and location of planned developments are practical differentiates between what is merely allowed and what is plausible, providing a realistic framework for land use planning. Communities would be compelled to plan land uses that are realistically marketable within the planning period, focusing on plausibility and long-term viability. This approach encourages realistic planning and helps prevent the overestimation of development outcomes, thereby reducing the risk of underutilized infrastructure, inefficient land management, and implausible planned densities. (5, Provide) (Council)

iv. **Include all land guided to support growth within the planning period (not just areas of change) in density calculations** to provide a more comprehensive land use analysis for the current planning period. This approach will ensure that every comprehensive plan is reviewed based on all areas that are identified to accommodate future growth and not just those that are changing from the previous 2040 comprehensive plan. This approach can help communities plan more effectively for change in their communities and not focus on previous planning decisions and approaches that may not fit the evolving regional and local needs. This approach also helps to ensure that all new development helps to advance regional goals and meets minimum density requirements. Communities are already expected to plan for the first decade at minimum densities to support development of affordable housing and this

approach carries forward that same method with land use density policy. (Provide) (Council/Community)

v. Plan for forecasted growth and land supply by decade in local comprehensive plans, meeting the minimum density requirements within each planning decade rather than over the planning horizon to achieve a built form that is more reflective of residential density requirements. Identifying growth across the entire planning horizon (2020 – 2050) has led to lower density developments planned for the near term and in some cases, higher density development postponed to a later time in the planning horizon (2050). This cycle delays higher density development with each consecutive decennial plan as comprehensive plan updates occur every 10 years. This approach ensures that communities meet density requirements in each decade, and higher density developments are also planned for the immediate future. Planning for each decade to accommodate growth at required minimum densities ensures that it is possible for the built environment to reflect the expected density of development. This approach could assist some communities in meeting their affordable housing planning requirements for the first decade without postponing higher-density development to later periods to achieve overall density expectations. (Community)

vi. **Use a performance-based approach to explore flexibility in minimum planning requirements while advancing regional goals.** Past plans and actions including regional goal and regional policy consistency, existing development patterns, plat monitoring data, adopted plans and ordinances as well as other relevant data will be used to determine eligibility for MUSA expansion or flexibility for density requirements. A programmatic and performance-based approach to flexible application of density requirements is intended to incentivize local implementation of regional goals. The structure and requirements where flexibility may be acceptable in developing communities must not jeopardize conformance with regional system plans or consistency with Council policies. Criteria will be established as part of the Local Planning Handbook Update. (Partner) (Council)

vii. **Support the allocation of affordable housing need number minimum densities and land guided for affordable housing** established in the Housing Policy chapter through land use and density policies. Local plans will identify land guided at minimum densities high enough to support the opportunity for development of affordable housing in the first planning decade. (Council/Community)

viii. **Evaluate the need for and updates to administrative guidelines** including the MUSA Implementation Guidelines and Flexible Development Guidelines to align with regional goals and to effectively advance the policies in *Imagine 2050*. (Provide) (Council)

A5. Allow for more than one housing type in land use categories with residential uses. To accommodate this, residential densities for land use categories need to provide a wide enough range of densities so that more than one housing type can be developed within individual land use categories. Single use residential districts, particularly on the lower density end, limit the diversity of housing within communities and prevent more efficient use of land. Single family residential districts occupy more land than any other use in the region. Limiting such a large land supply to one housing product impacts land use efficiency, diversity of housing stock within neighborhoods and across the region, and availability of options for residents to stay within the community of their choice as their needs and abilities change.

A6. Encourage orderly annexation agreements between growing Rural Centers and adjacent townships to encourage planned and orderly development in rural areas, where applicable. (Council/Community)

    i. Local governments may only plan for areas within their municipal boundaries unless an orderly annexation agreement authorizes another jurisdiction to assume planning authority. Planning to utilize the annexation-by-ordinance process does not convey long term planning authority and will not be considered as part of comprehensive plan review. Local planning that encompasses areas outside of jurisdictional authority will not be considered as part of the Council's review and authorization of local comprehensive plans. (Community)

    ii. Orderly annexation agreements must encompass the planning horizon, identify needed updates that occur within the planning period, and plan authorization may only apply to timelines permitted within the orderly annexation agreement. (Community)

    iii. The Council supports a cooperative, orderly planning approach which protects the long-term viability of growth and development of Rural Center communities. Where appropriate and requested, the Council may act as a convener between jurisdictions to help facilitate discussion and resolution of annexation-related issues. (Council)

    iv. Where the extension of long-term regional service may be under consideration or planning, the Council will evaluate the overall impact of interim uses in rural and agricultural areas to ensure conformance with regional system plans and avoid departures from those plans. (Council)

P3. Protect rural and agricultural areas from premature development and retain the ability to provide urban services based on regional system plans and long-term needs. (Council/Community)

A1. Promote enrollment in the Metropolitan Agricultural Preserves Program including supporting legislative changes to strengthen the Metropolitan Agricultural Preserves Program. Promote enrollment in the Green Acres Program for properties not enrolled in the Metropolitan Agricultural Preserves Program. (Partner) (Council)

A2. Encourage preservation of land identified as Prime Agricultural Soils from uses other than agricultural production and its ancillary uses. (Partner). (Council/Community)

A3. Discourage solar developments on prime farmland or farmland of statewide importance. (Community)

A4. Encourage promulgation of right to farm policies and ordinances at the local level (3, Partner) (Council/Community)

A5. Support the growth of urban agriculture by encouraging the use of vacant and underutilized parcels for this purpose and by providing model ordinances that promote urban agriculture. Evaluate the regional impact of:

    i. supporting changes to the building code to reduce the barriers for constructing hoophouses and similar agricultural structures on non-farm properties.

    ii. encouraging creation of small (sub 40 acre) farms within diversified rural communities.

    iii. supporting changes to definition of farm to expand benefits to smaller (sub 10 acre) farmsteads. (Council)

A6. Evaluate rural development patterns and proposals in the Long-Term Sewer Service Area for future economical expansion of regional service. (Council)

A7. The Rural Residential Community Designation is a development pattern inconsistent with regional goals and expansion of the designation shall be considered a departure from regional system plans. (Provide) (Council)

P4. Encourage redevelopment, infill, and adaptive reuse as part of development priorities. (Council/Community)

A1. Establish a Redevelopment Monitoring program using existing surveys to obtain information through streamlined data collection efforts. (Plan) (Council)

A2. Evaluate building permit survey information that may be necessary to inform frequency and success of adaptive reuse of buildings. (Plan) (Council)

A3. Support funding and incentives for redevelopment projects and adaptive reuse to address the finance gaps that are prevalent in these efforts. (Council)

A4. Encourage mitigation of the impact to natural systems as redevelopment and infill occur.

A5. Provide technical support as part of established grant programs to support redevelopment, infill, and adaptive reuse projects. (Council)

    i. Repurpose existing vacant or underutilized buildings.

    ii. Explore opportunities to incentivize adaptive reuse of existing buildings, such as repurposing vacant schools or commercial properties into affordable or senior housing developments.

A6. Identify opportunities to streamline local development review processes, programs, and incentives that may help realize adaptive reuse for affordable or senior housing developments.

A7. Update land use guidance and regulations to incentivize de-paving in infill and redevelopment opportunities.

P5. Direct growth away from sensitive ecosystems and water sources to prioritize protection of natural systems. Responsible management of growth can include practices which respect and value the region's ecological assets. Considerations as to where and how development occurs can positively impact ecological health and accommodate development. Areas with high biodiversity or ecological significance require sensible land use approaches to development. The Council promotes development and land use stewardship that integrates natural systems in design and implementation. (Council/Community)

A1. Prevent groundwater contamination from development, especially in highly vulnerable Drinking Water Supply Management Areas. (Plan) (Community)

A2. Community-wide growth shall consider water supply constraints in the management of growth and development across the region. (Plan) (Council)

A3. Adopt regional guidelines to protect vulnerable, regional priority waters and aquifers from development and restore water quality as part of development practices. (Plan) (Council)

A4. Local Water Supply Plans, as part of the local comprehensive plan, shall adequately demonstrate availability of clean, safe drinking water in areas where accommodating forecasted growth. Amendments to Local Water Supply Plans are needed when changes exceed the Council-adopted threshold for change which will be established through updated guidelines for comprehensive plan amendments. Consideration of a percentage of change similar to local forecast changes may be used. (Plan)(Council/Community)

A5. Encourage development design using best management practices for stormwater runoff from the site to protect any surface water where sites may drain. (Council /Community)

P6. In staging areas for new development, local governments need to plan for aggregate resource extraction prior to development where viable deposits remain accessible, as mapped in *Minnesota Geological Survey Information Circular No. 46* (Minn. Stat. 473.859). Aggregate resources are needed for not only construction of new roads and buildings but also maintenance and repair. Accessing these resources locally reduces the costs for local construction projects compared to shipping resources in from outside of the region. (Plan) (Community)

A1. Where Regionally Significant Ecological Areas or other locally protected natural areas overlay aggregate deposits, the Council prioritizes preservation of natural systems over aggregate extraction. (Council)

Objective 2: Maximize opportunities for growth in places well-served by transit, bicycle, and pedestrian infrastructure.

Land use and transportation are closely interrelated – changes in land use affect transportation; changes in transportation affect how land can be used. Transportation systems connect people to housing, work, services, and recreation opportunities. The region is well-served by an existing system of extensive roadways which provide connections for people choosing or able to use a personal vehicle. A car-centric transportation system which is well connected with uses and services in proximity to an individual's daily needs provides opportunities for choices in travel options which can help to decrease driving. Both planning and investment need to be coordinated to ensure thoughtful growth and development while continuing to serve people's mobility needs throughout the region.

The region also has a robust network of existing and planned regional transit, bicycle, and walking/rolling infrastructure responding to increasingly diverse travel preferences and needs. Many residents use these options for some or all their daily travel needs due to cost, ability, health goals or simple preference. Additional housing, jobs, and services in places that support these travel modes can have many benefits, including:

- Increased accessibility of the region for those without access to a personal vehicle.
- Reduced need for vehicle trips and/or their cost and duration.
- Reduced GHG emissions related to transportation and land use.
- Efficacy of regional investment in regional transit/bicycling infrastructure.
- Increased positive health outcomes due to greater physical activity.

Places well-served by transit, bicycle, and pedestrian infrastructure can be identified in several ways. Comprehensive plans and other local plans often call out these places specifically. Transit Market Areas, an analysis maintained at the Council, identify areas with density, walkability, and levels of car ownership that favor various levels of transit service. Population analysis such as age (youth/seniors), ability, income, and personal preferences can also identify areas with likely non-automobile using residents.

Communities in the region can support, reinforce and create these areas through planning and implementation that encourages additional density around activity centers and along corridors, a greater mix of uses, and improvement to the walkability and livability of the area. A critical piece of local planning is the development of interconnected local streets networks that provide more opportunities to support travel by modes other than a car. The design of the networks, the street layout, the relationship with the surrounding land uses, and the space for people to travel without a car is important in creating effective and safe places for people.

Objective 2: Policies (P) and Actions (A)

P1. Maximize opportunities for residential growth and supportive commercial growth in areas with mixed land uses that offer multiple travel choices.

   A1. Focus planned residential and commercial development near available and planned transportation and transit infrastructure. (Community)

   A2. Develop and implement transit-oriented development (TOD) policies and design at all stages of development (site plan, subdivision, long-range plan). (Community)

   A3. Plan higher density residential developments around public transportation hubs and corridors. (Community)

   A4. Provide technical assistance for retrofitting/transitioning from one transit market area to another. (Council)

   A5. Provide technical resources related to accommodating additional density, reducing parking and parking impacts, travel demand management (TDM), placemaking/placekeeping, pedestrian networks, and related considerations. (Council)

P2. Plan auto- or truck-oriented growth such as industrial, shipping, or warehousing development, around existing infrastructure availability, such as highways, rail, waterways, airports, water supply, and wastewater services to minimize impacts on pedestrian/bike/transit areas. (Plan, Community)

   A1. Analyze and coordinate the effects of land uses and transportation infrastructure on each other during local comprehensive plan development. (Community)

P3. Support community-led planning and anti-displacement efforts to ensure community cohesion during change resulting from public investments and market demand, at all scales of development.

   A1. Consider mitigation measures for displacement due to changes in the built environment including relocation assistance programs, land disposition practices, anti-displacement funding programs, support of commercial and residential land trusts, and others. (Community)

   A2. Identify appropriate mitigation measures for different scales of development to provide a consistent and transparent level of planning and engagement. (Community)

   A3. Consider implementation of new policies or retrofitting existing ones to better meet the needs of communities vulnerable to displacement resulting from public investments. (Council/Community)

   A4. Support community-centered engagement practices and community-led decision-making as part of development and public investment. (Council/Community)

P4. Plan for and build an interconnected system of local streets, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities that prioritize the individual experience in planning for transit, bicycling, walking, and rolling.

   A1. Invest in local efforts to encourage growth in locations that support improved access, such as strategic land acquisitions, infrastructure investments, and community/developer engagement. (Council/Community)

   A2. Identify regional, state, and federal funding sources to pair with local efforts to access funding through programs like Regional Solicitation for transportation funding, regional trail acquisition and development funding, federal programs, and new opportunities as they become available. (Council)

   A3. Include market studies in local implementation strategies and priorities. (Community)

A4. Support a comprehensive pedestrian network assessment for integration into land use planning and development projects. (Council/Community)

A5. Address network connectivity gaps to improve accessibility and personal safety. (Council/Community)

A6. Pursue partnerships to collaborate on funding programs that enhance biking, walking, and rolling access to centers of economic activity. (Council/Community)

A7. Identify opportunities to adjust parking requirements to encourage alternative modes of transportation and to achieve additional benefits such as improved water quality, more efficient use of rights-of-way, increased greenspace. (Community)

P5. Support regional centers of economic activity through pollution clean-up, preservation, accessibility improvements, land acquisition for public investment and other planning support.

A1. Coordinate with Council programs including Livable Communities programs, water quality grant programs, transportation funding, and housing investments. (Council/Community)

P6. Prioritize the preservation, restoration, and enhancement of environmental and natural systems near transportation features and areas where transit is available.

A1. Integrate environmental and natural features in road rights-of-way, along highways and corridors, and other public transportation features, including near transit where available. (Council/Community)

A2. Integrate planning for non-motorized access to transit locations, neighborhoods, employment centers, and parks through various regional, state, and federal funding sources. (Council/Community)

A3. Leverage the development process to integrate natural features that can provide bicycle and pedestrian protections as part of planning for local roads, intersections, connections, trails, sidewalks, and bikeways. (Community)

A4. Coordinate infrastructure planning efforts to minimize disruptions to habitat connectivity, integrating wildlife crossings into transportation and utility projects.

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

Objective 3: Policies (P) and Actions (A)

P1. Prioritize planning policies and practices that support mixed-use development, walkable neighborhoods, and easy access to public transportation and enhance connectivity through biking and other sustainable options.

A1. Develop transportation, land use, and open space plans that prioritize human-scale planning in both urban and rural environments. (Community)

A2. Integrate creative street design within roads' right-of-way in collaboration with other transportation partners. (Community)

A3. Consider form-based codes to ensure that new developments enhance community aesthetics, increase walkability, and strengthen neighborhood cohesion. (Community)

A4. Implement a holistic infrastructure design review process that assesses transportation, utilities, and other public amenities together for coherent and connected public spaces. (Community)

A5. Adopt a *Living 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. (Community)

A6. Consider incorporating *Crime Prevention through Environmental Design* principles, or similar, in local controls and encourage integration of these principles into new developments. (Community)

A7. Track and monitor both residential and commercial components in mixed use districts and develop guidelines to assess the extent of residential diversity included in these districts. If local governments use mixed-use districts at scales beyond individual developments, they must establish a precise methodology for tracking and monitoring uses for effective evaluation of system impacts and regional trends. (Community)

A8. Support a comprehensive pedestrian network assessment, coordinated with transportation planning, and incorporate it into development projects to address network connectivity gaps.

P2. Revitalize and strengthen communities at the neighborhood level by planning and maintaining public spaces for community gatherings in order to foster a sense of belonging and ownership.

A1. 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. (Community)

A2. Encourage creative and purposeful placemaking that celebrates diversity and enhances community spirit for all residents, incorporating universal design to exceed standard accessibility where practical. Universal design is a concept in which products and environments are designed to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. It aims to make the built environment inclusive, accommodating diverse needs and preferences, including those of individuals with disabilities, older adults, children, and people with temporary or situational impairments. (Community)

A3. Facilitate creation and maintenance of free and accessible public gathering spaces and community gardens. (Community)

A4. Facilitate update of zoning ordinances that allow for public spaces, including specific locations with access to water, restrooms, public transit, and parking. (Community)

A5. Support culturally-significant design elements that animate the urban landscape. (Community)

A6. Support public art installations that draw residents to public spaces. (Community)

A7. Develop partnerships with local organizations to facilitate cultural programs and initiatives within public spaces, enhancing community identity and inclusivity. (Community)

P3. Prioritize and plan for creation and preservation of green public spaces in developed areas.

A1. Support neighborhood-scale public open space and use of green spaces for community benefit. Create safe and inclusive green spaces for all by enhancing and adding parks, community gardens, and recreational amenities, especially in underserved areas. (Community)

A2. Consider innovative and emerging practices to adapt underutilized land or buildings for development of green infrastructure. (Community)

A3. Explore incentivizing preservation and integration of existing green spaces in new developments or redevelopments for public use. (Community)

A4. Support the development of community-based urban agriculture initiatives and community gardens. (Community)

A5. Adopt preservation ordinances to protect and maintain private green spaces, such as tree preservation or wetland buffer ordinances. (Community)

A6. Integrate green infrastructure, food growing spaces, and nature-based solutions, like *Living Streets*, into local planning processes and development implementation.

P4. Protect and preserve historic and cultural assets to enhance community heritage and identity to align with the unique needs of each community.

A1. Develop and implement criteria for the designation of historic and cultural assets, considering factors such as architectural significance, historical importance, and cultural relevance, ensuring alignment with evolving community standards and development goals. (Community)

A2. Local governments must identify historic and cultural assets within their community, incorporating measures to respect and protect the confidentiality and cultural significance of sensitive sites, such as Indian burial mounds. (Community)

A3. Local governments must develop policies to protect and preserve historic and cultural assets, and should additionally adopt culturally expansive ordinances to further enhance restoration and preservation efforts. Culturally expansive ordinances may include provisions related to language access, cultural celebrations, religious practices, heritage preservation, and other aspects of cultural expression and identity. The goal is to ensure that public policies and regulations are sensitive to the diverse backgrounds and experiences of all community members. (Community)

A4. Provide technical assistance to local governments on culturally expansive historic preservation practices. (Council)

P5. Incorporate universal design principles that consider the needs of all community members including various cultural backgrounds, age groups, languages, abilities, and gender identities.

A1. Plan for developments that comprehensively address the needs of people with disabilities beyond minimum ADA requirements. (Community)

A2. Collaborate with educational institutions to enhance safety measures around schools. (Community)

A3. Integrate *Safe Routes to Schools* into planning strategies to improve infrastructure safety and land use efficiency around educational institutions. (Community)

A4. Promote universal design for all residential use types to provide more housing opportunities for residents of all abilities. (Community)

A5. Support small-scale, community-driven development projects that reflect and serve the diverse needs of residents, particularly in underserved areas. (Community)

Objective 4: Prioritize land use and development activities that protect, restore, and enhance natural systems at all scales.

Abundant natural systems contribute to the vibrancy of our region, but stewardship of these regional assets has historically conflicted with growth and development. The Council promotes development and land use stewardship that integrates natural systems in design and implementation. This requires a balancing of natural systems protection, restoration, and integration with development practices for mutual benefit. Although regional parks, conservation areas, and lakes and rivers stand out as obvious focus areas, preservation and restoration of natural systems must also take place at a more local and site-specific scale. Smaller scale efforts may include implementing environmentally sensitive design practices, integrating green infrastructure, remeandering streams, restoring wetlands, and reducing impervious surfaces. Integrating aspects of the natural environment into urbanized areas helps create livable areas and desirable places to visit, while making sure that biodiversity is enhanced through establishment of wildlife corridors. On a larger scale, protecting contiguous areas of high-quality natural systems from development helps preserve habitat corridors across the region and maintain regional biodiversity.

Objective 4: Policies (P) and Actions (A)

P1. Identify natural systems within and between local governments to assess areas for protection, restoration, and enhancement. (Plan; Provide) (Council)

   A1. Measure the value of natural systems to assist local governments in protection, restoration, and enhancement efforts.

   A2. Inventory natural systems within and between local jurisdictions, using mapping and data collection methods to inform conservation and land use planning decisions.

   A3. Prioritize areas for protection, restoration, and enhancement based on ecological significance, potential ecosystem improvement, and equity considerations.

   A4. Utilize the natural systems inventory to develop action plans to implement preservation, restoration, and enhancement, while leveraging resources and monitoring progress.

P2. Establish and connect natural systems corridors through land use, water resources, and conservation planning. (Partner) (Council/Community)

   A1. Identify and prioritize key habitat corridors, including land and water connectivity, through mapping and analysis, considering ecological data and stakeholder input.

   A2. Update land use planning regulations to incorporate measures for protecting, restoring, and enhancing natural systems corridors, such as conservation easements and wildlife-friendly development standards.

P3. Prioritize the protection, restoration, and enhancement of natural systems in overburdened communities to build community resilience. (Partner) (Council/Community)

   A1. Engage communities in restoration projects tailored to their needs, such as native plantings, food growing opportunities, impaired soil mitigation, and stormwater management improvements.

   A2. Provide environmental education and capacity-building opportunities for residents to advocate for and participate in protecting, restoring, and enhancing natural systems.

P4. Working with partners, build a shared regional understanding and identify strategies that address risks to public and ecosystem health. (Partner) (Council/Community)

   A1. Establish an interagency task force to coordinate efforts and develop integrated strategies for addressing environmental risks. (Council)

A2. Support joint research and monitoring programs to collect data and assess ecosystem and community health to inform evidence-based decision-making. (Council)

P5. Utilize planning and development processes to enhance wildlife habitat and pollinator plantings, including native and climate adaptive species, across land and water. (Partner) (Community)

A1. Develop guidelines for integration of pollinator habitat and native plantings across various land uses, including aquatic habitat and climate adaptive species. (Council)

A2. Encourage land use and ordinance updates to establish, enhance, and maintain pollinator and native plant habitat on public and private land through incentives and technical assistance. (Council)

A3. Create interconnected networks of habitat across land and water using pollinator corridor initiatives. (Partner) (Council/Community)

Objective 5: Ensure that people in all types of communities find housing opportunities that align with their needs.

Historically inequitable land use planning has had a disparate impact on our region. Discriminatory land use planning practices have perpetuated systemic, racial inequalities, resulting in limited access to resources, opportunities, and fair housing options for Indigenous people, Black communities, and communities of color. Inflexible low-density residential land use categories often mandate large lot sizes and prohibit even low-density multi-family housing, making it unaffordable to many. Discriminatory lending practices, such as redlining, systematically denied mortgages to people of color, particularly those living in predominantly non-white neighborhoods. Single-family land use planning played a role in this process by restricting the types of housing available in these areas, further entrenching racial segregation. By concentrating affluent residents in predominantly single-family neighborhoods, while restricting affordable housing options elsewhere, land use planning contributed to racial segregation.

The housing affordability crisis that persists in our region limits people from choosing the location and type of housing in which they want to live. The issue is harder felt for people with disabilities or those who use housing vouchers, because they are already severely limited in their housing options. Council research has shown that single family neighborhoods, which are limited to a single type of housing product, dominate the residential landscape. The lack of residential diversity within neighborhoods limits the ability of residents to stay in their chosen neighborhoods as their lifestyle and needs change.

Residential land use categories that support more than one type of housing product offers a variety of housing types and accommodates the needs of a diverse populations, including large families, immigrants, and seniors, all within one neighborhood. By providing a mix of housing options, including single-family homes, townhouses, duplexes, or apartments, communities can offer affordable housing choices to a broader range of residents and help prevent socio-economic segregation to ensure that individuals of all income levels can access housing within the community.

By embracing equitable development practices in land use planning and policymaking, the needs and preferences of all residents are integrated into the built form. Planning for a diverse housing stock supports housing choice by providing options for all ages, incomes, and abilities. Lower cost units help meet affordable housing needs, while housing variety allows people to transition to housing that better suit lifestyle changes over time. Inclusive housing options for diverse populations, including seniors, people with disabilities, and multigenerational households, involves creating housing that accommodates different family structures and individual needs. By offering diverse housing options, including affordable and senior housing, near essential services, transportation nodes, employment centers, and recreational amenities, communities foster accessibility and convenience for all residents, regardless of ability, age, financial status, race, tribal affiliation, or family size.

The region must plan to support housing options and services for those who are most vulnerable to housing insecurity. As the population ages, there is a growing need for housing that is accessible, affordable, and designed to meet the unique needs of older adults. For people with disabilities, accessible housing options are essential for individuals to live independently. These housing options must be integrated within communities, close to supportive services, healthcare facilities, culturally responsive social services, and recreational programs, to ensure that residents are protected from isolation in their communities and have access to essential services.

Revitalizing and strengthening communities at the neighborhood level, along with repurposing existing vacant or underutilized buildings, fosters a sense of community pride and belonging by improving the functionality of and cultural connection to one's neighborhoods.

Objective 5: Policies (P) and Actions (A)

P1. Allow for more than one housing type within residential land use categories to encourage mixed income developments, diversity of housing types within neighborhoods, and broader access to housing for more people. (Communities)

A1. Support local controls and fiscal devices which allow mixed use developments and diverse housing types by right, and incentivize the creation of affordable housing opportunities, including modular homes in single-family districts, cooperative housing, and multi-generational housing options.

A2. Accommodate and preserve manufactured and modular home communities and educate residents about manufactured and modular housing benefits.

A3. Support revision of local regulations and fiscal controls as well as local policies, procedures, and practices to remedy historic land use and housing discriminatory practices.

A4. Provide guidance and technical assistance to support housing and land use policy implementation in local comprehensive planning.

A5. Invest in community-led development initiatives that actively counteract the adverse effects of gentrification, ensuring long-term affordability, cultural vibrancy, and stability of gentrifying neighborhoods.

P2. Support the specific housing needs of the region's aging population, people living with disabilities, and individuals experiencing housing insecurity.

A1. Support the local integration of supportive services, healthcare facilities, culturally responsive social services, and recreational programs.

A2. Support the creation of local controls and fiscal devices that address the needs of individuals experiencing housing insecurity that connect them with emergency housing services during a public health or climate crisis.

A3. Support the creation and enforcement of local controls which ensure the maintenance of healthy and safe properties for tenants.

A4. Support the creation and enforcement of local controls which permit the construction of accessory dwelling units in areas within the MUSA.

P3. Prioritize a variety of housing types across all income levels close to local destinations including neighborhood centers, public parks, transit nodes where applicable, and community gathering spaces.

A1. Improve transportation choices to connect senior housing and affordable housing to essential services, healthcare facilities, and recreational amenities.

A2. Support fair housing initiatives and housing programs that remediate historic inequities in land use policy implementation and development practices.

A3. Explore opportunities to design and retrofit neighborhoods to reduce auto-dependency.

A4. Incentivize public transportation hubs and multimodal connections within and adjacent to housing developments, where transit services are available.

A5. Ensure equitable access to safe and healthy housing planning for residential uses away from manufactured or environmental harms.

Objective 6: Remedy past and present discriminatory land use practices.
Our region has a history of discriminatory planning and policy decisions that have contributed to persistent racial 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
- 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 race-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 to actively engage in collaboration with communities that have borne the brunt of discriminatory decisions to work towards a more equitable region.

Objective 6: Policies (P) and Actions (A)
P1. Take ownership of past harms, provide transparent communication, and hold all government partners accountable to plans and actions. The community should hold the Council accountable to action on these issues. (Council)

A1. Provide technical assistance, tools, and resources for equitable land use planning and development practices, including exploration of potential funding sources to encourage more intentional planning for equity issues in local comprehensive plans beyond necessary improvements to community engagement practices at the local level. (Provide) (Council)

A2. Develop a public dashboard to share progress toward equity goals and ensure that the data is regularly updated. Regular public reporting would ensure visibility of regional progress and identify any needed re-evaluation of actions where progress is lacking. (Provide) (Council)

A3. Provide technical assistance for developing and implementing decision-making tools to prioritize equitable outcomes across capital projects. (Provide) (Council)

A4. Acknowledge inequities and disparities that exist within local jurisdictions and across the region and identify strategies to address them. (Plan) (Council/Community)

A5. Support and partner with Just Deeds (Just Deeds Project) to discharge racially restrictive covenants from housing deeds. (Partner) (Council/Community)

A6. Evaluate existing and proposed programs, policies, and procedures for disproportionate impacts on marginalized and underrepresented communities. (Plan) (Council)

P2. Prioritize engagement with underrepresented populations to collaboratively develop equitable and inclusive land use planning policies and programs that reflect diverse perspectives and lifestyles, steering away from imposing norms derived solely from dominant culture and class values. (Council/Community)

A1. Expand representation of marginalized and underrepresented populations on boards, commissions, and committees. (Plan) (Council)

A2. Partner with organizations that represent marginalized and underrepresented populations to inform program and policy development with a focus on cultivating trust, forming long-standing relationships, and valuing lived experiences consistent with the Community-Centered Engagement Framework in the Equity Chapter). (Partner) (Council)

A3. Partner with community organizations to support building community capacity to understand and engage successfully with local and regional government processes.

i.   Work to eliminate barriers to individual and community-based organization participation in planning processes, including developing a streamlined and accessible procurement process created in partnership with community. (Council)

ii.   Provide an example of how the procurement process can be accomplished as a technical resource to others. (Council)

A4. Identify and eliminate barriers to engagement participation including location, timing, transportation, and access to childcare. (Provide)

A5. Build staff and partner capacity to conduct culturally responsive and inclusive engagement, including language services, ADA services, community assessments, and best practices. (Plan and Provide)

A6. Reimburse community members participating in engagement for their time and expertise. (Provide)

P3. Promote equitable development and distribution of public investments to benefit communities disproportionately harmed by past and present policies and land use planning practices to eliminate racial disparities and discrimination. (Council/Community)

A1. Develop strategies to restore community connections in areas negatively impacted by planning and investment decisions. (Plan) (Council/Community)

A2. Explore the opportunity to establish a reparative action fund to finance mitigation measures for known and acknowledged past harms to the environment, to Indigenous communities, to Black communities, and communities of color unjustly harmed by past local or Council actions. (Provide) (Council)

A3. Apply the Anti-Displacement Framework identified in the Equity Chapter to ensure Metropolitan Council investments and policies center and empower communities and reduce harm. (Partner) (Council)

A4. Provide technical assistance to create an analysis methodology utilizing the Equity and Environmental Justice Framework outlined in the Equity chapter to evaluate how projects benefit or harm different communities and demographics. (Provide) (Council)

P4. Center the American Indian experience in decision-making and implement the actions included the Council's land, water, and people acknowledgment statement that all land in this region is Dakota land. (Council)

A1. Engage in Tribal consultation and collaborate with adjacent and affected Tribal governments throughout project planning and regional planning process. (Partner)

A2. Create a power sharing structure to partner with Indigenous organizations and community members in planning processes identified in the land, water, and people acknowledgment actions.

A3. Update the Council's processes for tribal consultation and American Indian community engagement.

Objective 7: Implement land use and development practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, embed climate adaptation, and create resilient communities.

The effects of climate change transcend community boundaries and impact the entire region, at all scales. People organize themselves into all sorts of different communities, from cities, to neighborhoods, ethnic and cultural communities, and communities based around interests or a particular geography. All scales and types of community are affected by climate change impacts. We must also recognize that under resourced and historically disinvested communities often suffer the worst impacts of climate change. Climate change and environmental justice (equity considerations) are inextricably linked. Climate action must center environmental justice outcomes to build community and neighborhood scale resilience.

While it is important to implement mitigation measures to stop climate impacts associated with climate change from getting worse, we must also use nature-based and built solutions to adapt to current and future climate impacts and strengthen our resilience in the face of these challenges. The way our region develops impacts our ability to build resilient communities in the face of climate impacts. Development patterns that reduce impervious surface coverage and promote the use of green infrastructure can help reduce flooding during more intense rain events and cool areas impacted by the Urban Heat Island (UHI) effect. Preserving and restoring tree canopies, especially in urban areas, supports cooling efforts while sequestering carbon. Adaptation and mitigation measures work hand in hand to increase climate resilience for communities, which ultimately makes our region more livable, healthy, and economically strong.

Objective 7: Policies (P) and Actions (A)

P1. Establish climate requirements in line with current State statutes. (Council)

A1. Establish regional climate change strategies with state, regional, and local partners including setting goals for the region and actions to accomplish those goals. This will include update and maintenance of the Met Council's Climate Action Work Plan on a regular cycle as well as ongoing dedicated resources to the operational climate action plan implementation. The Council will continue to explore financing for climate initiatives at the state and federal level and as new opportunities emerge. (Partner) (Council)

A2. Identify local climate planning needs and emerging goals with local partners to establish 2050 climate planning requirements. Develop and provide needs-based technical assistance to local governments.

A3. Establish performance metrics and evaluate implementation measures for climate reporting at both the local and regional scales and provide regular public progress reports.

A4. Local governments must include in their local plans a greenhouse gas emissions inventory and projections generated from activity that occurs with the local government's jurisdiction and covers the range of applicable emissions sectors.

A5. Local governments must plan for strategies that reduce or naturally sequester greenhouse gas emissions.

P2. Establish goals to restore, enhance, and maintain urban tree canopy to support local planning decisions. (Partner) (Council)

A1. Conduct urban tree canopy assessments to identify priority areas for preservation, restoration, and maintenance efforts. (Council)

A2. Develop model urban forest management goals and strategies for protecting and enhancing the tree canopy, soil health, water quality, and overall biodiversity. (Council)

A3. Implement tree planting, preservation, and maintenance initiatives at the local level. The Council will provide technical assistance, training, and resources to support local governments and residents. (Council/Community)

A4. Assess the adaptation, mitigation, and public health value of the regional urban tree canopy to support decision-making and policy creation at the local level. (Council)

A5. Support species diversity and climate adaptive planting on public and private land, including support for management of Emerald Ash Borer. (Council/Community)

P3. Incentivize urban design and development that maximizes renewable energy readiness and enhances energy efficiency, especially for energy-burdened households. (Council)

A1. Establish a target percentage of a local government's energy needs to be met by sustainable energy.

A2. Promote green building certification and energy benchmarking to encourage sustainable construction practices.

A3. Pursue funding to establish a local government grant program to accelerate building decarbonization through weatherization and building retrofits.

A4. Provide support for renewable energy and energy efficiency measures in lower-income communities and affordable housing.

A5. Implement renewable energy programs to support renewable energy deployment, especially for energy-burdened households.

P4. Encourage solar panel installations in underutilized land areas, on industrial land, on rooftops, and accessory to complimentary uses. Protect agricultural areas by encouraging co-location and integration of solar within sites. (Community)

A1. Provide technical assistance to local governments on methods and means to maximize solar energy protection and development potential. (Council)

A2. Form public-private partnerships to develop solar energy projects, leveraging resources and expertise. (Community)

A3. Simplify permitting and promote co-location of solar panels with compatible land uses to maximize efficiency, renewable deployment, and minimize land use conflicts. (Community)

A4. Local governments must ensure that local comprehensive plans and ordinances protect and enable the development of solar resources, as required by the Metropolitan Land Planning Act, and consider the use of other alternative energy sources as part of the planning process. Local comprehensive plans must include strategies needed to implement local solar protection policies. (Community)

P5. Support integration of climate adaptation measures into development to prepare for current and projected climate impacts on our region.

A1. Encourage adaptation measures to reduce the effects of extreme heat, manage stormwater, and lessen human vulnerability through technical assistance to local governments. (Council/Community)

A2. Prioritize water conservation practices such as wastewater and stormwater reuse in development and redevelopment projects. (Council/Community)

A3. Provide incentives for projects integrating climate adaptation solutions, to encourage wider adoption. (Council)

A4. Establish clear performance criteria to measure and evaluate the success of adaptation projects, guiding program improvements and funding priorities. (Council)

A5. Prioritize planning practices that support nature as a climate adaptation solution to build community resilience to potential climate impacts. Nature based solutions are sustainable approaches that utilize natural ecosystems and biodiversity to address various environmental, social, and economic challenges. (Provide; Plan) (Council/Community)

A6. Identify human, built, and natural vulnerabilities to climate change, and prioritize nature-based adaptation solutions to enhance community resilience. (Council)

A7. Ensure that new construction projects and existing infrastructure upgrades prioritize the incorporation of nature-based solutions to reduce the likelihood and intensity of potential climate impacts through collaborative approaches. (Council/Community)

A8. Develop policy incentives and allocate dedicated funding to support the adoption of nature-based climate adaptation solutions at the local government level. (Provide; Plan) (Community)

P6. Partner with Indigenous people and overburdened communities to collaborate on climate solutions. (Council)

A1. Strengthen partnerships with Indigenous and overburdened communities to support collaborative climate and natural systems work, respecting tribal sovereignty, self-determination, and cultural practices.

A2. Facilitate regular forums for knowledge-sharing between Tribal Nations, Indigenous communities, and underrepresented communities to hear their perspectives on climate and natural systems work.

A3. Co-create climate solutions with Tribal Nations, Indigenous communities, and underrepresented communities.

P7. Integrate local food systems and land use planning to build community resilience, access to healthy food, and food security. (Council/Community)

A1. Assess land use and transportation policy implications as they relate to food access, including food deserts.

A2. Support farm-to-table initiatives and local food markets, facilitating direct connections between producers and consumers and promoting regional food systems.

A3. Implement supportive urban agriculture policies to designate areas for community gardens and urban farms, streamlining permitting processes and providing incentives to remove barriers to food growing spaces on public and private land.

A4. Partner with immigrant groups, Tribal Nations, and Indigenous communities to establish, or join, coalitions that address urban agriculture and foraging that respects cultures and spiritual practice.

A5. Assess food insecurity by being in partnership with the food safety net system (SNAP, food shelves, free and reduced lunch percentage) to be responsive to dynamic trends.

Objective 8: Support the economic wellbeing of our region and its communities.
The region historically has had a robust and diverse economy, often leading our peer regions with growing industries that have competitive advantages. However, racial economic disparities and economic injustice are significant and chronic challenges that our region must confront. Disparities in employment, poverty, income, and homeownership by race and ethnicity persist in the Twin Cities and - in some cases - are the largest nationwide. As our region continues to grow in racial diversity, it is imperative to address these disparities in a meaningful way to ensure prosperity for all residents of the region. This dynamic becomes even more important as we recognize that job relocations to the region, as well as international immigration, have been waning. Regional and local economic conditions have significant impacts on the wellbeing of places important to our region and communities. These include our downtowns, other regional job and industrial centers, local main streets, and neighborhoods.

The economic vitality of our region requires active support of the region's economic assets, such as export industries and sectors of strength. We must commit to addressing the place-based and accessibility needs of industries and businesses, recognizing the importance of equitable access to resources and opportunities especially for emerging entrepreneurs and small businesses. The Council promotes reinvestment and innovation in underutilized areas, aiming to revitalize and maximize the potential of these communities. We also strive to enhance the accessibility of jobs for the region's workforce, facilitating greater opportunities for employment and economic participation. With our commitment to inclusive growth, we focus on meeting the needs of industries and enhancing the earning potential of workers through education, training, and mentoring programs which can be accomplished through partnership and collaboration. We seek to eliminate income and wealth disparities by race, advocating for equity and justice in economic opportunities. We are dedicated to creating accessible economic pathways for immigrants, acknowledging their valuable contributions to our region's diversity. Through these multifaceted efforts, we strive to build a resilient, inclusive, and thriving economy that benefits all people.

Objective 8: Policies (P) and Actions (A)
P1. Support efforts to keep the region attractive and affordable for residents, visitors, and businesses. (Council)

A1. Conduct and disseminate ongoing research to understand the dynamics, and place-based needs of the region's existing industries, businesses, and communities.

A2. Develop and support programming that preserves the affordability of housing and commercial space in places experiencing significant investment.

A3. Develop programming that reduces the cost-burden and uncertainties for industries, businesses, and entrepreneurs seeking to locate and/or expand in fully developed areas (i.e., redevelopment / renovation / re-use).

A4. Explore opportunities to bolster global competitiveness in innovative and developing fields.

P2. Support industries that directly contribute to addressing climate change and promoting environmental sustainability. (Council)

A1. Partner and collaborate with other agencies and regional stakeholders to expand workforce development opportunities across climate and environmental sustainability fields.

A2. Explore partnerships that support and provide tools, resources, and technical assistance to businesses and entrepreneurs seeking to develop business models that integrate sustainable and eco-friendly business practices.

P3. Value and promote a just economy through the economic growth and wellbeing of Black communities, Indigenous peoples, people of color, immigrants, and people of all ages and abilities in the region through equitable access to economic resources. (Council)

    A1. Remove barriers and promote equitable access to quality education, skill-building, mentorship programs, and diverse job training programs for all residents regardless of age, race, disability, or immigration status. Where possible, the Council will model skill building, mentorship, and internship programs that support equitable workforce development.

    A2. Encourage businesses and developers to adopt diversity and inclusion initiatives aimed at recruiting, retaining, and promoting employees from diverse racial and immigrant backgrounds.

    A3. Expand culturally responsive access to financial services and resources for underserved communities, including immigrants and people of color (ex. credit building, sharia compliant financing, ITIN acceptance.).

    A4. Collaborate with agencies and other regional stakeholders on planning and programming that promote the economic wellbeing of the region, prioritizing efforts that reduce racial economic disparities.

P4. Advance economic equity and wellbeing in historically underserved communities by fostering growth of small and local businesses, entrepreneurship, and diverse industries in all communities. (Council)

    A1. Integrate arts and cultural considerations into regional planning processes to ensure that cultural assets are recognized, preserved, and integrated into the fabric of the community.

    A2. Collaborate with historically underserved communities to identify community economic development strategies that preserve and enhance their local business districts and resources.

    A3. Establish local controls and fiscal devices to support and preserve business districts that have historically served and been focused on the needs of historically marginalized or vulnerable communities.

    A4. Create opportunities for the Council to support and partner with organizations that support entrepreneurship and small business development among historically marginalized and immigrant communities by providing access to affordable loans, mentorship programs, business incubators, and technical assistance.