



Metropolitan Council Strategic Plan

2020 – 2022

Introduction

Everything we do at the Metropolitan Council has one common, long-term goal: Creating a great quality of life for the people in our region. We're passionate about serving people and building strong communities. We're all working together for something bigger than ourselves. This intersection of systems and planning supports priorities identified by Gov. Tim Walz and Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan in the One Minnesota plan.

- We support families by providing and advocating for stable housing.
- We strive to create equitable outcomes for the people of the region and an inclusive workplace for the 4,500 people who work for the Metropolitan Council.
- We support thriving communities by connecting people to jobs, stable housing, and sustainable development.
- We are stewards of public resources by implementing fiscally accountable budgets and investments and measuring results of our key priorities.
- We support a more sustainable future by assuring that we consume less energy, understanding our impact on the state's environment, and providing resources to our partners in local government to do the same.

Our core responsibility is to create the region's long-term development guide, *Thrive MSP 2040*, which identifies five outcomes for the Twin Cities region that align with the One Minnesota plan: stewardship, prosperity, equity, livability, and sustainability. In addition, *Thrive MSP 2040* identifies the role of the Met Council as a convener around significant, complicated regional issues. The Council partners with leaders from local government, business, community organizations, state government, and the federal government to address critical needs in the metropolitan area. The power of those partnerships helps the region work together to address issues too big for any one city or county to address alone. We also know they are problems too complex to handle without local input – the support of the people on the ground.

In the years since the Council passed *Thrive MSP 2040*, we've made significant progress toward the outcomes. In the strategic plan that follows, we identify some more specific ways the Council can address regional issues as we begin the process of revising the regional plan. Whether it's a multi-modal, integrated transportation and transit system, greenhouse gas assessment, housing initiatives for stable families, or ways the Council can both act directly and influence other decisions to reduce regional disparities, we're committed to responding in ways that support the goals identified in the One Minnesota plan.

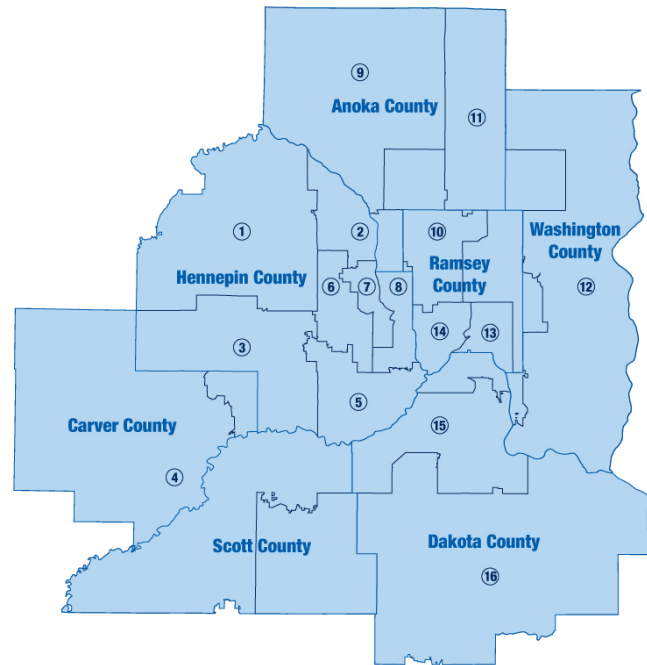
Our Authority and Composition

The Metropolitan Council was created by the Minnesota Legislature in 1967. Ever since, the Metropolitan Council has played a key role in coordinating regional growth and planning for the Twin Cities Metropolitan area.

Our governing body – the 17-member Metropolitan Council – brings together communities to develop policies and a shared vision and direction for the region. The Council’s members are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the governor, currently Gov. Tim Walz. Sixteen members represent geographic districts of roughly equal population across the region. The Council chair, Charlie Zelle, serves as the at-large 17th member.

Metropolitan Council Members

Charlie Zelle	Chair
Judy Johnson	District 1
Reva Chamblis	District 2
Christopher Ferguson	District 3
Deb Barber	District 4
Molly Cummings	District 5
Lynnea Atlas-Ingebretson	District 6
Robert Lilligren	District 7
Abdirahman Muse	District 8
Raymond Zeran	District 9
Peter Lindstrom	District 10
Susan Vento	District 11
Francisco J. Gonzalez	District 12
Chai Lee	District 13
Kris Fredson	District 14
Phillip Sterner	District 15
Wendy Wulff	District 16



What we do

The Council provides the following services for the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan region:

- **Plans for the future growth of the region:** As the Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Council plans for future growth and makes strategic, efficient public investments to support the region’s high quality of life and economic competitiveness.
- **Operates Metro Transit:** Every day, Metro Transit serves bus and rail passengers with award-winning, energy-efficient fleets (nearly 78 million in 2019 or about 85% of all regional transit rides). These strategic investments support a growing network of bus and rail transitways, and transit-oriented development.
- **Collects and treats wastewater:** Thanks to a region-wide system operated by the Council, this region collects and treats wastewater at rates 40% lower than peer regions, while winning national awards for excellence.

- **Protects and monitors for clean water:** The Council works to ensure adequate clean water for the future through water supply planning and lake and river monitoring programs.
- **Develops regional parks and trails:** The Council plans and oversees the development of a world-class regional parks and trails system made up of more than 56 parks and park reserves and more than 400 miles of interconnected trails.
- **Provides affordable housing:** The Council creates and supports affordable housing opportunities throughout the region by providing affordable housing for 7,200 families in 100 communities through the Council’s Metro Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) and establishing regional housing policies and planning.

Thrive MSP 2040, Regional Partnership

Under Minnesota state law, the Council is responsible for preparing a comprehensive metropolitan development guide for the seven-county metropolitan area, branded [Thrive MSP 2040](#), which provides a framework for a shared vision for the future of the region over the next 30 years. The Council is also responsible for developing the plans for the three statutory regional systems – [water resources](#), [transportation](#), and [regional parks](#) – as well as a [housing policy plan](#) and a [master water supply plan](#). These system and policy plans provide specific information to assist local governments in creating consistent, compatible, and coordinated plans that strive to achieve local visions within the region and help ensure an efficient and cost-effective regional infrastructure.

- [2040 Water Resources Policy Plan](#)
- [2040 Transportation Policy Plan](#)
- [2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan](#)
- [2040 Housing Policy Plan](#)
- [2040 Master Water Supply Plan](#)

We create these plans through partnership and engagement with the residents and stakeholders of the metropolitan region. In developing *Thrive MSP 2040*, the region’s long-range plan, the Met Council established the goal to engage a full cross-section of the community in decision-making and [implemented a Public Engagement Plan to further define that commitment](#).

Engagement is an ongoing and relational. It can be general, related to broad regional issues, and specific, to long-range planning efforts (including *Thrive MSP 2040* and the related systems and policy plans) and other planning and development projects.

Sixteen of the Council members, appointed by the governor and representative of each part of the region, connect with leaders and residents in their districts to connect their communities to Council decision-making. These strategic plan goals are informed by those Council members, who helped develop the goals and objectives through feedback from their communities, as well as critical research and analysis from the Council staff.

One Minnesota Plan

Governor Walz, Lt. Governor Flanagan, and leaders of their administration have had the immense privilege of traveling across the state to meet with thousands of Minnesotans in their communities. The following mission, vision, guiding principles, and priorities reflect common themes from these conversations. These core components of the One Minnesota Plan, combined with ongoing input from Minnesotans, guide the efforts outlined in our agency's strategic plan.

This section of the plan states explicitly how our agency's plan aligns with the One Minnesota Plan's priority areas and, where applicable, quantifiable goals. This integration is critical, as one of the strategies embedded in the One Minnesota Plan is that each agency will develop and execute its own strategic plan that aligns with the administration's priorities and guides the work of the agency.

Each agency is working to realize the One Minnesota plan's vision: to make Minnesota the best state in the country for our kids to grow up in, and to do so in a collaborative way that brings people together and builds One Minnesota. And each agency is supporting work in the priority areas and working to embed the guiding principles of the Walz Administration into their organizational culture.

Mission

Improve the lives of all Minnesotans by working collaboratively to implement policies that achieve results.

Vision

Minnesota is the best state in the country for children to grow up in – those of all races, ethnicities, religions, economic status, gender identities, sexual orientations, (dis)abilities, and zip codes.

Guiding Principles

- Practice servant leadership
- Treat everyone with respect and dignity
- Do the right thing, especially when it is difficult
- Ask how your actions are reinforcing or removing structural inequity
- Promote the common good over narrow special interests
- Be accessible, transparent, and accountable
- Include voices from communities who will be most impacted

Priorities

Minnesota does best when state agencies and community partners collaborate to achieve common goals. We will solve problems in education, health care, environment and energy, housing, jobs, transportation, and so much more by focusing on these key priorities:

- Healthy Minnesotans and COVID-19 Protection
- Economic Recovery and Working Minnesotans
- Children and Families
- Equity and Inclusion
- Fiscal Accountability and Measurable Results
- Minnesota's Environment

One Minnesota Priorities

The Metropolitan Council works in alignment with the One Minnesota Plan by addressing regional problems through regional solutions and working to assure a high quality of life for residents in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Our role is now more important than ever, as we work with others to help resolve the challenging problems we face at this moment in our state's history.

As we did before our current crisis, the Council helps build and plan for strong communities, by assuring that people have a stable home, by creating an interconnected transportation system, by providing access to parks and open spaces, by providing affordable and sustainable wastewater infrastructure, and by assuring the water we put back into the river is cleaner than what's already there.

We're all working together for something bigger than ourselves. And we're engaging people and critical stakeholders in that process.

The following highlight some of our significant strategies for each of the One Minnesota priorities.

Healthy Minnesotans & COVID-19 Protection

- The Metropolitan Council provides essential transit services in safe way by taking steps to reduce risks for riders and employees, including instituting enhanced cleaning, limiting capacity on buses, requiring face coverings, and installing barriers between operators and customers.
- Metropolitan Council's Environmental Services division deployed a detailed pandemic response plan to support uninterrupted essential service to its 110 customer communities by its nine wastewater treatment plants and continued maintenance and construction of the overall system of more than 600 miles of sanitary sewers, 224 metering stations and 61 lift stations.
- Staff of our Environmental Services division have developed in-house capabilities for extracting the viral RNA from raw wastewater, and, with advanced analytical support from the University of Minnesota Genomics Center in Minneapolis, have begun regular monitoring of SARS-CoV-2 RNA in treatment plant influent.
- The Environmental Services division also provides samples for two studies to determine whether wastewater can offer additional insight on the prevalence of COVID-19 in the areas served by the Council's collection system. This information could lead to earlier recognition of increasing disease prevalence in the community, as virus shedding in human waste may begin up to a week before symptoms appear. MCES is partnering with study leads at Biobot Analytics in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and the University of Minnesota Medical School in Duluth.
- Our Metro HRA is piloting and employing virtual inspections to keep our residents and their homes safe.
- We continue to develop innovative ways to engage with the public through virtual communications.

- Metro Mobility is following the guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) for cleaning, mask use, social distancing, and other COVID-19 preventative measures to keep customers safe.
- Metro Mobility enables its certified customers to order groceries and household essentials online from stores with online shopping and local pick-up, then pick up the order and deliver to their house.
- Transit Link continues to partner with food shelves across the region to delivery groceries and goods to those most in need.

Economic Recovery & Working Minnesotans

- In partnership with cities, counties, the Center for Economic Inclusion, and Greater MSP, the Metropolitan Council developed and adopted the *Regional Economic Framework*, a federally accepted regional Community Economic Development Strategy plan, to ensure alignment of economic development strategies and to make local jurisdictions eligible for federal EDA money to which they currently do not have access.
- We continue the partnership between our Metro HRA and our Metro Transit Police Homeless Action Team (HAT) to connect people experiencing unsheltered homelessness to permanent, safe housing opportunities using Mainstream Vouchers from HUD.
- We enhanced our workforce through Workforce Development training for construction opportunities that lead to apprenticeship selection and active on-site careers.
- Our Urban Scholars program for interns from underrepresented communities lead to entry-level opportunities in government and planning careers;
- The Council has established a path for increasing our workforce with people who have varying physical and mental abilities
- We lease or sell excess land that is ripe for redevelopment that expands transit-oriented development and housing in our region and enhances the regional tax base.
- We continue to advocate for additional resources and explore intergovernmental and multisector partnerships to respond to the needs of people in the region experiencing homelessness.
- The Council completed construction and begin revenue service for METRO Green Line Extension, Orange Line, B and D Line and begin construction of the METRO Gold Line and two additional rapid bus lines by 2023.

Children and Families

- Partner with Minnesota Housing, the Department of Human Services and philanthropic organizations to support the strategies to reduce homelessness in the Twin Cities region. The Council has dedicated \$1 million to this effort in 2020.
- Engage in the Children’s Cabinet to partner with agencies across state government and prioritize the needs of children and families, providing leadership in transportation and housing services.

- Expand the Transit Assistant Program (TAP) to more families with children to ensure parents are able to get to and from work, school, daycare and home affordably. The Transit Assistance Program (TAP) is designed to make public transit more affordable for lower income residents. It allows customers to use a bus or train for just \$1 per ride. Work with DEED to provide TAP to every Unemployment Insurance participant in the metro area.
- Work with Department of Higher Education and higher education institutions to expand reduced cost, universal transit passes to more colleges (currently being piloted at Augsburg) to ensure access to opportunity for youth.
- Work with MNDOT and the Children’s Cabinet to propose and explore surplus land donation policy that might enable state agencies and local governments to donate land to a non-profit or land bank to be used for affordable housing.
- Continue to add general fund dollars to the Local Housing Incentives Account (LHIA) each year, with funding prioritized toward housing affordable to households earning 30% of the Area Median Income or less and permanent supportive housing. In 2020, the Council will offer more than double the largest previously available LHIA funding by using reserves and general fund dollars to expand this funding availability.
- Along with Minnesota Housing, develop in-place strategies in high poverty areas to assist with resident and child success, such as a Homework Starts with Home program – a partnership with school districts in high poverty areas, to provide rent assistance and supports for students experiencing homelessness or housing instability.
- Reduce administrative barriers and red tape in our Section 8 program to make it friendlier to families and help them succeed through the new Moving to Work designation.

Equity and Inclusion

- Implement a ride hail service as an alternative to Metro Mobility’s current premium on demand taxi service to expand mobility opportunities to people living with disabilities.
- The Metropolitan Council is partnering with the Citizens League to facilitate a regional safety conversation – for customers, transit operators, business owners, employees, our neighbors near transit stops and stations, community leaders, and members of the broader regional community. This conversation will begin with deep, intentional community engagement, to understand what safety means for different people and how that affects enforcement. It will help establish the next steps for the deeper review of Metro Transit Police Department policies, procedures, and relationships with other agencies, into mid-2021.
- Create and enhance partnerships to build new neighborhood initiatives in areas of concentrated poverty that have been underserved in the region.
- Explore additional affordable homeownership strategies that the Council might take on with a focus on wealth-building for households of color and Indigenous households.
- Evaluate outcomes of equity scoring in the Regional Solicitation and Transportation Funding processes. The Regional Solicitation uses criteria and measures to evaluate which projects best contribute to

regional goals and objectives and therefore warrant federal transportation funding. As part of the application there is an equity scoring measure to focus less on where equity populations are concentrated in the region, and more on the benefits to equity populations and equity engagement specific to the project.

- Expand Metropolitan Council Underutilized Businesses (MCUB) spend to achieve 10% professional technical contracts and goods/services and 14% for non-federal construction, growing the overall Council spend on MCUB businesses. The Council's total MCUB spend in 2019 was just over \$11M.
- Explore additional small business spend goals to continue increase of spend and targeted to reduce the disparities gap in spend of underutilized businesses owned by people of color.
- Implement council-wide Racial Equity Strategy and Framework focused on workforce equity, community engagement, and investments and procurements.
- Use the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) to assess and increase intercultural competency of Council Members, executive leadership, supervisors and managers.
- Host a leadership forum on racial equity in 2021 with complementing training for all staff on racial equity topics.
- Create and enhance the Economic Values Atlas for the region, with the help of the Brookings Institution, to better align public and private investments that will improve the economy for all residents, but especially those who experience the most significant racial disparities.
- Update our Transit Oriented Development Policy to better reflect our equity goals, FTA direction and our understanding of shared use mobility and other emerging modern transit concepts.
- Work to achieve the enterprise goal of 75% retention of BIPOC, individuals with disabilities, and Veterans.
- Engage in government-to-government consultation, collaboration and cooperation with the 11 federally recognized Tribal Nations in Minnesota.

Fiscal Accountability and Measurable Results

- Leverage our investment opportunities to do high impact investing in the communities we serve. For example, the Council is embarking on a pilot Certificate of Deposit Program with local banks who then use deposits to make loans within the community to support small business and affordable housing projects.
- Utilize our capital financing authority effectively to maintain critical infrastructure by preserving the Council's triple-A bond rating allowing borrowing at the lowest available market rates.
- Maintain Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the Council's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. The Government Finance Officers Association awards the Certificate to governmental entities that go beyond the minimum requirements of generally accepted accounting principles to prepare comprehensive annual financial reports that evidence the spirit of transparency and full disclosure.
- Reduce barriers and increase opportunities for historically underutilized small businesses owned by people of color, indigenous people, women and people with disabilities, and veterans by expanding our underutilized business program.

- Maintain full funding of other post-employment benefits (retiree health care) program invested with State Board of Investment.
- Ensure smart fiscal management of health insurance plans through self-insured program that provides competitive benefit coverage, wellness programs, and on-site clinics that help manage claims costs and premium rates for Council employees and their families.
- Continue to measure wastewater rates compared to national average and maintain our competitive advantage despite a large program of rehabilitation throughout the system. We consistently achieve near-perfect compliance with federal and state water discharge standards while holding rates 40% below the national average.

Minnesota's Environment

- Create a regional greenhouse gas inventory, that will help us identify where greenhouse gases are being generated, and then set a baseline we can use to measure our success. The data will be used by the Council and the cities and counties in the Twin Cities region. Following the inventory, the Council will put in place goals to reduce our own emissions.
- Achieve 100% clean energy for Council services/operations no later than 2040 via the Green Energy Partnership with Xcel Energy. Accelerate this timeline as much as possible and work with other utilities where applicable.
- Create an agency-wide sustainability plan in 2020 to streamline, accelerate, and coordinate all the Council's work in this area. Develop emissions and infrastructure targets and goals for Council wastewater, transit, and general operations, such as resource recovery, energy consumption, treatment capacity.
- Reduce transit emissions through fleet replacement with no or low emissions buses, electrification, or alternative fuels. Partner with suburban transit providers and state-wide providers to share information around new technologies.
- Expand technical assistance and support for local governments, climate planning tools, and model ordinances and plans, such as SolSmart, to increase renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Metropolitan Council

Mission

The Metropolitan Council's mission is to foster efficient and economic growth for a prosperous region.

Vision

The Metropolitan Council has listened to the aspirations voiced by the region's residents, civic, nonprofit and business leaders, and government officials and woven their thoughts and hopes into five desired outcomes that define our shared regional vision.

To address the changing needs of our communities, *Thrive MSP 2040* identifies five outcomes to guide the vision for the region:

- Stewardship: Responsibly managing the region's finite resources, including natural and financial resources, and its existing investments in infrastructure.
- Prosperity: Investing in infrastructure and amenities that create regional economic competitiveness.
- Equity: Connecting all residents to opportunity and creating viable housing, transportation, and recreation options for all races, ethnicities, incomes, and abilities.
- Livability: Focusing on enhancing the quality of residents' lives and experiences in the region.
- Sustainability: Protecting our regional vitality for generations to come.

Guiding Principles

These principles reflect the Council's understanding of its roles in integrating policy areas, supporting local governments and regional partners, and promoting and implementing the *Thrive* regional vision. These principles govern how the Council will implement the *Thrive* systems and policy plans and how the Council advances these outcomes, individually and collectively.

The *Thrive MSP 2040* plan is grounded in three principles to guide the Council's work:

- Integration: Intentionally combining related activities to achieve more effective results and greater efficiencies.
- Collaboration: Encouraging partnership between governments, and among public and private sector entities, to bring the best ideas together to address complex regional issues.
- Accountability: Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of policies and practices toward identified outcomes.

Priority Areas

Metropolitan Council members have identified four key priority areas related to the Council’s mission, vision, principles, and scope to focus particular attention on over the next three years. Namely the Council will be using its authority to create regional plans, use its role in regional infrastructure investments and as an employer and purchaser, and in the systems, it manages and maintains to advance this work. This work will establish the foundation for long-term planning and assessment in these critical areas.

- **Transportation:** Expand and improve our regional transportation system, offering safe, reliable and accessible transportation options for everyone that support our region’s economic competitiveness.
- **Reducing racial disparities:** Make a measurable impact on reducing racial disparities experienced by people of color and indigenous people and who are historically underrepresented people through our work in the region.
- **Housing:** Become a region with a broader housing spectrum where all people can thrive.
- **Sustainability:** Build a resilient region that mitigates its adverse contribution to climate change, with a focus on degraded air and water quality, and meets the challenge of the climate crisis.

Transportation

Goal: Expand and improve our regional transportation system, offering safe, reliable and accessible transportation options for everyone that support our region’s economic competitiveness.

For long-term priorities, the Metropolitan Council uses its [2040 Transportation Policy Plan](#) as a course of action to maintain and enhance our existing facilities, better connect people and communities, and provide more transportation choices that will make the region stronger. The objectives below encompass more immediate strategies the Council will prioritize in the next 3 years.

Regional Planning Objective

Develop plans and policies that guide investment in highways, transit, freight, aviation, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities to achieve regional transportation goal of a safe, reliable, accessible transportation system.

Strategies

1. Lead and participate in major corridor and regional studies to ensure that regional transportation and development policies are implemented.
2. Lead the Transit Service Allocation Study to understand the region’s transit trade-offs between geographic coverage and ridership.
3. Complete Network Next, Metro Transit’s two-year effort to develop a vision for the bus network of 2040.
4. Oversee the planning of the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network, coordinating with state and local agencies.

5. Generate travel models across modes that forecast regional travel demand, inform emerging trends, and identify changes in travel behavior.
6. Continue prioritizing the MnPASS policy and other transit advantages and implement congestion mitigation projects.
7. Evaluate and incorporate into our planning the long-term impacts of COVID-19, including how travel needs and demands are changing due to the pandemic.

Investment Objective

Secure, align, and track federal, state, and local transportation funding for regional investment.

Strategies

1. Secure sufficient funding to operate our current system and to expand the network of fast, reliable, safe, and efficient public transit to ensure that more people can easily travel from home to work within 30 minutes.
2. In concurrence with the Transportation Advisory Board, select transportation projects and distribute federal transportation funding through the Regional Solicitation for projects that will begin in 2024 and 2025.
3. Continue reviewing transportation sections of 2040 comprehensive plans of local governments, their comprehensive plan amendments, and environmental review documents for major developments.
4. Direct transportation investment to modes and corridors that improve access to employment.

Council Operations Objective

Operate a regional transit system that is valued by customers and communities because it reliably gets people to the places they want to go, provides a safe and enjoyable experience, and works seamlessly across all services.

Strategies

1. Ensure a safe, welcoming, and accessible environment for people at our facilities and on our vehicles.
2. Improve service reliability and travel times.
3. Secure legislative authorization to shift fare enforcement to a system of administrative citations issued by non-sworn staff and redeploy police to address more serious incidents.
4. Secure funding for additional maintenance and security initiatives and staffing.
5. Provide complete, accurate, timely, and accessible transit information to our customer via enhanced data, real-time signage, computer app development, and other new technologies.
6. Address the shortage of operators and other critical transit workers through workforce initiatives.
7. Implement a ride hail service as an alternative to Metro Mobility's current premium on demand taxi service.
8. Make investments that correct ADA-related infrastructure-compliance issues as identified in the Council's ADA Transition Plan.
9. Understand and respond to transit customers' changing needs and expectations during and after the pandemic.

Measurable Goal Outcomes

- Adopt the 2020 update to the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*.
- Complete construction and begin revenue service for the METRO Green Line Extension, Orange Line, B and D Lines, and begin construction of the METRO Gold Line and two arterial bus rapid transit lines by 2023.
- Rebuild transit ridership region-wide once it is safe to do so.
- Increase on-time performance.
- Increase customer satisfaction.
- Increase perception of transit as a safe and desirable service for both riders and our employees.
- Decrease crime on Metro Transit properties.
- Fully implement administrative citations for the fare-evasion program, pending legislative authorization and funding.
- Meet or exceed national standards for Metro Mobility's on-time performance for pick-ups (90%) and appointments (90%), and on-board time performance (95%).

Reducing Racial Disparities

Goal: Make a measurable impact on reducing racial disparities experienced by people of color and indigenous people, who are historically underrepresented people, through our work in the region.

For long-term priorities around equity, the Metropolitan Council uses [Thrive MSP 2040](#) and its Equity Policy. Thrive MSP 2040 provides a vision for the Metropolitan Council to use equity as a lens to evaluate its operations, planning and investments, and use of resources. The Equity Policy is used to operationalize that vision and begin using our assets and authority to serve the needs of the metropolitan area. The objectives below encompass more immediate strategies for reducing racial disparities that the Council will prioritize in the next 3 years.

Regional Planning Objective

Convene regional partners to gather, create, and strengthen best practices and create measurable goals in reducing regional racial disparities.

Strategies

1. Improve equitable outcomes for residents of color by working with regional partners.
2. With other regional partners, increase spending with underutilized businesses by developing a model to implement small business contracting goals.
3. Create a single Minnesota certification system and/or adopt a reciprocity program for non-federally assisted contracts.

4. Increase access to capital to meet the needs of underutilized business owners by bridging the financial gap to maintain operations during contract performance by strengthening partnerships with government, private, and community-based organizations.
5. Increase diversity in organizational leadership positions by working with local partners to develop regional strategies.

Investment Objective

Use Council resources – including the procurement of goods, grant funding, external funding and contracting – to invest in historically underrepresented communities

Strategies

1. Remove barriers to Council contracts and procurement for small businesses owned by people who have been historically underrepresented.
2. Continue refining equity measures for Council-wide grant funding opportunities that require partners to include data and methods for decreasing racial disparities in their programs.
3. Request disaggregated demographic data on utilization of Council grant funds.
4. Provide technical assistance to local governments (grantees and individuals) that provides guidance on how to apply for Council grant programs, including the steps to be take locally before applying.
5. Leverage our investment opportunities to impact investment in the communities we serve (Impact Investing). For example, the Council is embarking on a pilot Certificate of Deposit Program with local banks, who then use deposits to make loans within the community to support small business and affordable housing projects.

Council Operations Objective

Advance internal infrastructure that institutionalize change by using practices, policies, engagement, and hiring to reduce racial disparities.

Strategies

1. Identify and eliminate structural impediments, to advance equitable outcomes in administrative work and revising internal policies.
2. Provide diversity, equity, and inclusion training to increase our intercultural competency for employees and Council Members.
3. Implement targeted equity plans to close disparity gaps in the areas of selection, wage, and promotion for people who have been historically underrepresented.
4. Implement programs to increase employment opportunity for people with disabilities.
5. Use data to identify current racial disparities and to make better decisions for those most impacted by our actions.
6. Maintain integrity of equity by ensuring that public transparency and participation is provided when edits/amendments are considered to toolkits, assessments, and plans that are adopted by the Metropolitan Council and its affiliated committees, commissions, and boards or State.
Create a dashboard using disaggregated data to drive practices related to equity and inclusion in areas such as workforce equity and small business spend.

Measurables Goal Outcomes

- Increase share of underutilized businesses of Metropolitan Council's total direct spend to reach 30%.
- Increase the dollars spent with business owned by people of color that reduces the disparities gap.
- Increase the number of organizational leadership positions filled by people historically underrepresented.
- Increase partnerships created to build new neighborhood initiatives in areas of concentrated poverty that have been underserved in the region.
- Review all Metropolitan Council policies and procedures to eliminate barriers and increase equitable outcomes.
- Review base line data of Certificate of Deposit impact on loans made within communities.

Housing

Goal: Become a region with a broader housing spectrum where all people can thrive.

For long-term housing priorities, the Metropolitan Council bases its strategies on its [2040 Housing Policy Plan](#). The 2040 Housing Policy Plan presents multiple strategies that advance the Metropolitan Council's overall housing policy priority: Create housing options that give people in all stages of life and of all economic means viable choices for safe, stable, and affordable homes. The objectives below encompass more immediate strategies the Council will prioritize in the next three years.

Regional Planning Objective

Assume a leadership role developing a toolkit to help regional stakeholders eliminate unsheltered homelessness and support more local governments in making measurable progress toward meeting affordable housing need as established in their comprehensive plans.

Strategies

1. Share expanded housing technical assistance (such as toolkits and model ordinances) and convene or participate in workshops to share housing strategies, tools, and resources to support local governments.
2. Participate in, or convene when necessary, helpful workshops or tables to share housing strategies, tools, and resources among local governments.
3. Explore developing a housing-choice indicator tool to provide more specific recommendations about housing needs in specific communities in the region.
4. Develop in-place strategies in high-poverty areas to support resident and child success, such as a Homework Starts with Home program – a partnership with school districts in high-poverty areas – to provide rent assistance and support students experiencing homelessness or housing instability.

5. Maintain and improve data infrastructure to advance knowledge and awareness of the region's housing stock and demographic characteristics.
6. Build regional capacity and technical assistance to support the expansion of housing opportunities for people with disabilities.

Investment and Operations Objectives

Increase Council-supported affordable housing production (at incomes of 60% AMI or lower) and housing preservation (by 40%), targeting higher production when increased funds are available; and increase the rate of homeownership for people of color and indigenous people across the region.

Strategies

1. Explore additional affordable homeownership strategies that the Council might take on with a focus on wealth-building for households of color.
2. Create and contribute to a new collaborative fund to support smaller, low-barrier supportive housing options for people experiencing homelessness throughout the region.
3. Continue to add general fund dollars to the Local Housing Incentives Account each year, with funding prioritized toward housing affordable to households earning 30% of the Area Median Income or less.
4. Review Livable Communities Act programs to ensure alignment with the key objectives above.
5. Incorporate more nuanced analysis into Council actions and technical assistance to best balance the differing priorities of supporting more housing choice in high-income areas and improving livability outcomes in lower-income areas.
6. Explore the use or repurpose of other revenue streams to contribute to affordable housing preservation and production.
7. Explore a first-time home-buyers program through the Housing Choice Voucher program.
8. Explore employer-provided housing benefits for employees.
9. Conduct a research project to measure residential preferences of Housing Choice Voucher holders in the region.
10. Apply for new funding opportunities as they become available through federal or other partners to expand the number of households assisted with rent assistance.
11. Explore the Council's ability to use Council-owned land to support affordable housing development.

Measurable Goal Outcomes

- Increase Council funding levels dedicated to affordable housing.
- Increase homeownership among eligible housing choice voucher holders by 1% by 2023.
- Increase total number of affordable housing units produced with Council funding.
- Increase homeownership rates by race/ethnicity.
- Increase number of communities making progress toward their affordable housing-need allocation.

Sustainability

Goal: Build a resilient region that mitigates its adverse contribution to climate change, with a focus on degraded air and water quality, and meets the challenge of the climate crisis.

For long-term priorities around the climate crisis, the Metropolitan Council will use the [Thrive MSP 2040](#) and the [2040 Water Resources Policy Plan](#) as guiding documents for growth and development of the Twin Cities toward economic success and vibrancy in the decades ahead. The 2040 Water Resource Plan is a framework for building strategies that integrate wastewater, water supply, and surface water as related areas of a comprehensive water picture. It provides for continued high-quality, affordable wastewater collection and treatment to support economic growth and development in ways that protect our valued water and land resources. The objectives below encompass more immediate strategies the Council will prioritize in the next three years.

Regional Planning Objective

Collaborate with regional leadership and state agencies and convene local governments and the broader community to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Strategies

1. Expand technical assistance and support for local governments, climate planning tools, and model ordinances and plans, such as SolSmart, to increase renewable energy and energy efficiency.
2. Partner with local governments to identify emerging mitigation and adaptation issues, and design approaches and solutions to address those issues.
3. Explore opportunities to address climate resilience – for example, through the Brightfields initiative, a collaboration on solar energy projects with local, state, and federal regulators.
4. Continue to participate in and convene regional conversations regarding adaptation and resilience, including identifying the costs of inaction and addressing environmental justice.

Investment Objective

Accelerate the reduction of the Metropolitan Council's per-capita greenhouse gas emissions.

Strategies

1. Achieve 100% clean energy for Council services and operations no later than 2040 via the Green Energy Partnership with Xcel Energy. Accelerate this timeline as much as possible and work with other utilities where applicable.
2. Reduce transit emissions through fleet replacement with no- or low-emissions buses, electrification, or alternative fuels. Partner with suburban transit providers and state-wide providers to share information around new technologies.
3. Design and construct any new Council facilities to meet Minnesota sustainable building 2030 energy standards (SB2030), address environmental justice issues, and improve natural resource conservation and restoration on site. Improve energy-efficiency of existing facilities.

4. Work with the Transportation Advisory Board to fund unique, climate-focused projects proposed through Regional Solicitation.
5. Reduce regional greenhouse gas emissions from transportation to meet State of Minnesota's Next Generation Energy Act Goals.

Council Operations Objective

Create an agency-wide sustainability plan in 2020 and 2021 to streamline, accelerate, and coordinate all the Council's work in this area.

Strategies

1. Develop emissions and infrastructure targets and goals for Council wastewater, transit, and general operations, such as resource recovery, energy consumption, and treatment capacity.
2. Develop direction and strategies integrating the Council's climate-related research and analysis to support future regional planning efforts.
3. Integrate climate-adaptation goals and strategies into the Council's operations, infrastructure investments, and regional planning principles.
4. Identify and implement actions for meeting and exceeding air and water quality standards.
5. Research the role of the regional parks and open space system in mitigating climate change and contributing to a more resilient region.

Measurable Goal Outcomes

- Complete agency-wide sustainability plan.
- Complete regional greenhouse gas emissions inventory.
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the Council's operations consistent with the Next Generation Energy Act.
- Increase clean-energy usage to 100% by 2040 for Council services and operations.
- Improve operational energy efficiency.
- Sustain compliance with regulatory and reliability requirements for water and air.