

Information Item

Metropolitan Council



Meeting date: October 8, 2025

Topic

Imagine 2050 Outcomes Measurement Program – Next steps on the proposed amendment and measures

District(s), member(s):	All
Policy/legal reference:	Minn. Stats. §§ 473.145-147
Staff prepared/presented:	Sarah Nelson, Senior Researcher (651-602-1396); Krysten Ryba-Tures, Research Manager (651-602-1821)
Division/department:	Community Development / Research

Background

With the adoption of Imagine 2050 in February comes the opportunity to develop a new measurement program that centers outcomes related to intersectional regional policy direction and regional goals.

Imagine 2050 Outcomes Measurement Program direction

On June 4, 2025, community development research staff shared final updates for indicator projects under Thrive MSP 2040 (the previous regional development guide) to Committee of the Whole. Discussion included the trade-offs between:

- “Indicator project” approach—a limited number of high-level indicators selected to describe progress on pre-defined outcomes or goals; or
- “Programmatic” approach—a strategic alignment of monitoring, research, and policy that uses thematic structures to organize expansive sets of direct and indirect measures.

A programmatic approach to Imagine 2050 outcomes measurement received the strongest support. This approach includes pairing regional indicators with measures that describe the efforts of regional partners as well as Met Council’s direct roles for a more holistic understanding of regional change.

On September 3, 2025, community development research staff shared an update on program direction in the context of Imagine 2050’s five regional goals to Committee of the Whole. While discussion was limited due to time constraints, the direction of the Outcomes Measurement Program received support.

On September 15, 2025, staff presented proposed measurement slates for community development policy areas (Land Use, Housing, and Parks and Trails) with the Community Development Committee. Council members provided feedback, offered suggestions related to select topics, and asked questions about specific measures (answers were provided in a follow-up email the following day).

On September 23, Environmental Services staff shared proposed measures for the Water Policy Plan with Environment Committee. Council members again discussed the program, talked about logistics and the importance of partnerships, and provided recommendations to refocus proposed measures about “dollars spent” to more directly describe purpose of funds.

In addition, proposed measures for regional parks and trails have been presented to and discussed with Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission (MPOSC) on July 1, September 4, and October 2, 2025.

Together, these presentations have created a full picture of the proposed measures for regional goals and policy outcomes. Staff have explained that the refinement of proposed measures will continue throughout the amendment adoption process—and after. Unexpected changes in data availability and Imagine 2050 implementation efforts planned for 2026 both play a role, though iteration is also a guiding principle of the program. This point is particularly pertinent to Imagine 2050’s adopted equity frameworks and American Indian Advisory Council commitments.

Imagine 2050 Outcomes Measurement Program amendment

Staff have continued the development of the Imagine 2050 Outcomes Measurement Program, including further refinement to proposed measures and documenting the program’s scope, commitments, and guiding principles into a program narrative, forming the basis of the amendment.

At Metropolitan Council’s October 8 meeting, research staff will present the program narrative of the draft amendment and resume the discussion on proposed measures for regional goals. An additional presentation is planned for the Committee of the Whole meeting on October 15 in the event further discussion on any aspect of the program is needed ahead of the draft amendment release.

At Metropolitan Council’s October 22 meeting, staff will seek authorization via business item to release the Imagine 2050 Outcomes Measurement Program amendment for public comment (October 23 to December 22, 2025) and set a public hearing date of December 10, 2025.

The full list of proposed measures is available on the program’s webpage:

<https://metro council.org/Planning/Imagine-2050/Outcomes-Measurement-Program.aspx>

