

IMAGINE 2050 REGIONAL VISION, VALUES, AND GOALS

Public Comment Report

January 2025



IMAGINE²⁰₅₀
the region's plan for an equitable and resilient future

A prosperous, equitable, and resilient region
with abundant opportunities for all to live,
work, play, and thrive.

Regional core values

Equity | Leadership | Accountability | Stewardship

Regional goals

Our region is equitable and inclusive

Racial inequities and injustices experienced by historically marginalized communities have been eliminated; and all people feel welcome, included, and empowered.

Our communities are healthy and safe

All our region's residents live healthy and rewarding lives with a sense of dignity and well-being.

Our region is dynamic and resilient

Our region meets the opportunities and challenges faced by our communities and economy including issues of choice, access, and affordability.

We lead on addressing climate change

We have mitigated greenhouse gas emissions and have adapted to ensure our communities and systems are resilient to climate impacts.

We protect and restore natural systems

We protect, integrate, and restore natural systems to protect habitat and ensure a high quality of life for the people of our region.



Public Comment period

The Metropolitan Council accepted public comments from Aug. 15 through Oct. 7 through various channels, including email, phone, mail, recorded message, an online comment portal, and a public hearing on Sept. 25. During that time, approximately 2,000 total comments were received from approximately 500 organizations and individuals. The Imagine 2050 Vision, Values, and Goals section received 32 comments from six cities, one county, two non-governmental organizations, one Metropolitan Council advisory committee, one federal agency, and seven residents of the region.

Feedback on the regional vision, values, and goals

Question: How well do the regional vision, values, and goals support the future that you'd like to see in the Twin Cities region?

	Very well	Well	Neutral	Not well	Not very well
Regional vision	35%	24%	12%	5%	24%
Regional values	29%	29%	18%	0%	24%
Regional goals	29%	29%	13%	0%	29%

Question: What specifically resonates with you about the vision, values, and/or goals statements?

- Equity, health, climate
- Our region becomes more equitable and inclusive for ALL.
- I appreciate the concept of stewardship, acknowledging that our resources are limited. I believe it is too softly stated that these resources may be vulnerable, over time. They are vulnerable now, to climate crises, mass immigration, the COVID economy.
- Preserving Natural Resources while undoing past harm to certain communities.
- It's important for us to remain a place where research is used to make decisions and we call out prejudice when we see it and remain humble in our opinions so that we can hold on loosely.
- Nothing. It is not your job to eliminate alleged racial inequities. It is not your job to ensure communities live healthy with dignity and wellbeing. It is not your job to ensure choice, access and affordability of housing. It is not your job to address alleged climate change. It is not your job to protect natural resources. You are responsible for 3 statutory regional systems - wastewater, transportation and regional parks. That is it. This entire document you drafted is over-reaching, and to be honest, quite offensive.
- The desire to create abundant opportunities for all to thrive is a great vision that includes everyone. Being stewards and aware of our impacts to the environment and future generations is something we should prioritize. Our region is not equitable not inclusive so working towards that goal is very important.
- It sets a good tone for the future.
- Extensive research obviously went into this drafting of this report. It adds legitimacy to the points being made.
- I believe in tackling the issue of climate change. We should not be blindly pro-growth.

- That communities and the region are connected in them. We must work as local as possible while still collaborating and cooperating with our neighbors, whether that be next door, the next municipality over, or any other communities within the region.
- The focus on equity and environmental concerns is heartening.

Question: What do you think could strengthen or add to the vision, values, and goals?

- The vision doesn't seem to center people. It describes the region and starts with "prosperous," which may be desirable but seems to put the economy first over people. Put people first, not the economy. People are too often sacrificed to the economy.
- Including the voices of marginalized population including immigrants.
- I believe we need to include the Public Trust as a resource requiring our stewardship. Public trust goes hand-in-hand with business and a generative economy. Gratuitous violence in our schools and on our streets is detrimental to our resilience in a very real way. There should be consequences. We are too vague in our goals about climate change and natural resources. We need a resilient agricultural industry in the State, perhaps designing a transport system partially funded by the community? Finding opportunities to support this industry should be a primary goal.
- Make it easier for building affordable single family homes so more people can afford the benefits of home ownerships.
- We need to include a statement about our commitment to public discourse and objective problem solving
- The opportunities that are created for all to thrive should include fair wages, affordable cost of living, training opportunities, and less barriers for people to start businesses.
- A clear approach to reducing poverty.
- More concrete examples of how policies decisions of the past have led to current realities.
- Emphasis on stabilization or reduction of population. That will help the issue of climate change.
- That they hinge upon each other to be successfully implemented. For example: yes, we must protect and restore natural systems and yes, we must ensure our region is equitable and inclusive. Efforts made to accomplish each goal also need to address other goals. We need to consider the equity and inclusiveness of which natural systems we protect and restore.
- Expand the climate goals to include "greenhouse gas emissions and other forms of pollution."

Question: Is there anything unclear or confusing about the vision, values, and goals statements?

- In the linked chapter for the vision and goals, some editing is needed to counter a lack of clarity on COVID to better address the health goal. Page 5 - section on the pandemic needs to specify when the shutdown happened. Not mentioning the short duration gives an impression it was a larger chunk of time in the years referenced in the heading (2020-2024). The heading itself needs to delete 2024 and say ongoing. COVID is not over and is not endemic. Rewrite any references to COVID that make it sound like it is strictly in the past unless referring to specific time periods or events. In October 2024, the US still has over 1,000 deaths from COVID each week right now, which is likely an undercount, and this does not include the many who are still becoming disabled from long COVID. Page 6 - We are not "post-COVID." If you want to specify after the COVID emergency, say that. COVID is very much still here, and it is irresponsible for any level of government to pretend otherwise. This type of poor, inaccurate communication leads to inaction in the public such as incredibly low vaccine rates for updated vaccines, lack of prevention, etc. while people continue to become disabled from COVID and some are still dying. Government needs to communicate

more clearly to lead to actions that actually support health.

Page 7 - Third paragraph, same thing - we are not in a "post-pandemic" recovery. Do not conflate the declared emergency with the overall pandemic, which is happening in this narrative.

Page 19 - Good acknowledging that COVID is a mass disabling event, but it's not past tense - it's still happening to people. The virus causes, not caused, illness and death. It's still here, still doing that. Be accurate.

- If we start with core values of stewardship and accountability, how can we not include any studies of cost-benefit analysis in the plan? We need to be investing in generative solutions for youth.
- No, though they do adopt some corporate speak, which is pretty typical and pedestrian.
- I don't think it's clear how the met council is going to eliminate poverty. Address inequality, especially around race? Yes. But eliminating poverty? That seems absent, yet is entirely possible.
- More detail on suggested policies
- "Our region meets the opportunities and challenges faced by our communities and economy including issues of choice, access, and affordability." What does it mean to "meet" an opportunity or challenge? This sounds very passive. Perhaps, "Our region takes advantage of opportunities and overcomes challenges faced by our communities and economy, including issues of choice, access, and affordability."

Question: What other expectations do you have for the next 30 years?

- We aren't acting boldly enough on the climate crisis. If we can't be honest about COVID still being here, that doesn't give a lot of confidence we'll do the bold steps needed to stem and address rapidly accelerating climate change that's also here now (and which is also likely to create additional pandemics). We just keep on the same path.
- That the issue of land use and housing policy are strengthened so that people who have been historically marginalized can benefit from these new initiatives, That is, people from marginalized communities can begin to build generational wealth for their families. These reforms are long overdue. The fact that Minnesota is currently rated as one of the worse places to live as a person of color in the United States means that we have our work cut out for us.
- Please reference Minnesota's Statewide Preservation Plan:
<https://mn.gov/admin/shpo/planning/statewide-plan-new/>
For this new plan and ensure that regional vision, values, and goals statements do not conflict, and are incorporated with the goals statements within the ten-year preservation plan for Minnesota.
- Woman-only homeless shelters and resources to protect young and old women at risk for sex trafficking.
- Increase the number of single family homes in the most North West Metro area. Homes are outrageously expensive and one cannot afford to live in the area they may work in. (Dayton, Rogers).
- I want to see us become a leader in infrastructure development that precedes and anticipates growth.
- Population will keep growing so infrastructure should be evaluated now to accommodate that growth. We should also evaluate the impacts that growth will have in the environment and prioritize protecting natural areas, so wildlife isn't displaced/impacted by human growth.
- It seems like we will have a big population growth, so need to develop enough housing to handle that without the price of housing dramatically increasing.
- For me...stabilize or start on reduction of population.

- We need to return much of the urban land dedicated to large roads and highways to more productive and human-focused uses such as housing, businesses, parks, and transitways. The public transit system needs massive investments toward expansion, speed, frequency, reliability, comfort, and safety in order to shift demand away from private vehicles and meet our climate, equity, and health and safety goals.

Selected feedback:

“Overall, we would like to offer strong and qualified support to the goals and policies described in the current Housing, Land Use, and Transportation drafts of Imagine 2050.”

“I hope everyone has a home, and no one has to live on the streets.”

“We need more apartment buildings for people who can't afford big houses.”

“In 2050, I hope we still have wide open spaces and farms, but with better access to nature trails and parks where kids like me can explore the outdoors. It’s important to keep rural areas peaceful and full of wildlife.”

“By 2050, I hope we have better internet and more technology so kids in rural areas have the same learning opportunities as kids in the city. It would be great to have more activities and spaces for youth to get involved, even in small towns.”

Public comments – Regional vision, values, and goals

Comment	Response
City of Brooklyn Park	
<p>Visions, Values, Goals The City of Brooklyn Park supports the draft Imagine 2050 values, vision, goals, objectives, policies, and actions. The City recommends that the Metropolitan Council recognize religious groups and associated discriminatory behavior.</p>	<p>We acknowledge that our region has a long history of discrimination, xenophobia, and racial prejudice in many forms. We believe it is important to continue to engage with groups that face discrimination of any kind in the region as we implement Imagine 2050. We appreciate your continued partnership and highlighting this issue and have made a revision to reflect this type of discrimination.</p>

Comment**Response****City of Credit River**

In general, the statements made in the Vision, Values, and Goals Chapter does not meaningfully reflect the actual vibrant region that we are very fortunate to live in. Our region thrives with quality transportation, robust recreation and a strong economic base. Those qualities should be the foundation of this plan and for the future growth and development of the region. The current draft document sets a very negative and apologetic tone and should instead focus on our prosperous region and how we all move forward.

In addition, this Chapter should be shorter as the current content gives very little value or clear guidance to local governments who are compelled to utilize this plan. The overall draft plan is long, repetitive and hard for agencies to read let alone incorporate into our local planning process. It reaches far beyond the purposes of what a "Regional Plan" may include which is fundamentally limited to transportation, regional park planning, and long-term sanitary sewer operations.

We have updated the introduction section (Landscape of the Region) to highlight the strengths of region and the successes of the region's coordination of planning together. The Council is tasked with creating a long range plan for the orderly and economical development of the region and is directed to consider a broad range of issues under statute. We have revised the introduction to include the full statutory text of guidance for the development guide. It should be noted that the Council has responsibilities in addition to the three regional systems, including planning responsibilities around water supply, climate change directives, our discretionary funding programs, our Housing and Redevelopment Authority, and other directives as outlined in Chapter 473. Imagine 2050 identifies the Council's priorities for the programs and responsibilities as they relate to the growth and development of the region.

City of Elko New Market

Vision, Values & Goals. This component of the Draft Imagine 2050 Plan describes almost exclusively the social inequities of the past and there is little focus on any positive growth, planning and development that has taken place in the Region.

We have updated the introduction section (Landscape of the Region) to highlight the strengths of region and the successes of the region's coordination of planning together.

City of Minneapolis

Regional Goals: "...feel welcome, included, and empowered." While empowered may make sense colloquially, it does not align with avenues of public participation that are often possible or practical for local agencies.

Thank you for your comment. The inclusion of the word "empowered" in this goal is not limited to public participation in civic activities, but rather more broadly refers to agency every resident feels to direct the outcomes in their lives.

Comment	Response
<p>Regional Goals: "...protect habitat and ensure a high quality of life for the people..." While this is a document written to center the human experience in the region, this assumes the only value in habitat protection is for use and enjoyment of human beings. This disregards or ignores any inherent value in our natural world and systems and implies that we must protect and restore the environment solely for what we can extract from it. While this comment may err philosophical, the sentiment aligns with the core value of stewardship - creating a world where all beings are thriving and free. This includes non-human residents who share our region.</p>	<p>The Met Council intentionally moved away from a 'natural resources' framing for Imagine 2050 in order to focus on the interconnectedness of the natural, built, and human world and the need to recognize the intrinsic value of natural systems outside of the services they provide for human needs. This policy framing was intentional and a direct response to engagement efforts, where Council staff heard a lot from natural systems advocates, professionals, and local residents about the need to focus on biodiversity value, connectivity, kinship with nature, and the need for protection, restoration, and enhancement of natural systems.</p>
<p>Page 4: The narrative and data supporting the section on the "Landscape of the Region" is helpful – good baseline information to ground further policy discussion.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. We are glad that you find the content useful information.</p>
<p>Pages 11 and 12: "We live in a warming, wetter region." Additional data that supports policy guidance might be useful here. Acknowledging the Met Council's need to tie this topic to areas directly under its influence, addressing climate change as a regional goal could use more specifics/data on the elements of concern. Perhaps it is covered later in the document, but what are the outcomes we are trying to avoid? What are the inevitable outcomes we need to prepare for? How should this show up in regional investments and local plans?</p>	<p>Additional data regarding changes in the climate that we are already experiencing, as well as further goal and policy direction, is contained in the regional goal "We lead on addressing climate change" as well as within each of the policy chapters where there are specific climate-related impacts.</p>
<p>Page 23: It would be helpful to have a resource that you could direct readers to about the engagement that is mentioned that was done to inform the vision, values, and goals. I can see the engagement update item from the November 2023 council meeting, but including a summary of some kind in the policy document or as an appendix would be useful as we start working on our own engagement efforts.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. We intend a consolidated public engagement report for the entirety of Imagine 2050 that can be referred to going forward. We have a number of reports that have been prepared along the way and agree with the value of consolidating that information</p>
<p>Page 25: The narrative on "patterns of historical injustices" appears to be very thorough – well done, helpful context setting.</p>	<p>Thank you. We are glad that you find the information useful.</p>

Comment	Response
<p>Page 31: The equity framework is great as well – it could be useful to know how the Met Council is planning to operationalize the framework by sharing a process/outcome example. Would be helpful to see a demonstration (something like this probably already exists) of a program the Met Council administers where these commitments are operationalized.</p>	<p>We have revised the equity framework section to include an example of how the Council applied the Community-Centered Engagement Framework during this planning cycle.</p>
<p>Pages 42 through 44: As we are all still exploring how best to address displacement, the content on pages 42 through 44 is incredibly useful. It would be great if it could take the next step in identifying specifics about strategies that directly impact displacement – not just conceptual outlines, values, and goals. Guidance and leadership from the Met Council in this way would be helpful in preparing us for our next comp plan update. The research and best practices might not be well established on the topic, but we should start defining those practices more clearly together.</p>	<p>Comment noted. As Met Council builds on the Anti-Displacement Framework and strategies and implements this work, we will work with communities on specifics and desired impact on communities. We appreciate Minneapolis' interest in and partnership here.</p>
<p>Page 46: This helps to answer some of the questions raised above about Page 23 content, but a summary of the engagement done to prepare these draft documents would be great – perhaps these are found in the individual policy topic documents. The actions on Page 47 are great, would suggest supplementing with ways to hold the agency and its partners accountable for making decisions that reflect the values described in this section.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. As noted in your previous comment, we intend a consolidated public engagement report for the entirety of Imagine 2050 that can be referred to going forward.</p>
<p>Page 51: Glad to see such detailed attention paid to health and safety.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>
<p>Page 79: Noting that the natural systems info is helpful and might be a good framework for cities to use in addressing environmental concerns.</p>	<p>We are glad to hear that you find this information helpful.</p>

Comment	Response
<p>Page 66: Work from home is mentioned, would be useful to explore the fiscal impacts in more detail. The statement about reimagining our downtowns is great, but also touting/exploring/analyzing benefits such as a potential to reduce the burden (and spending) on our freeway system as an effect of telework would be good. Then more directly tie this issue to the next section regarding leading on climate change.</p>	<p>The Travel Demand Management Investment Plan includes a detailed description of the value telework can provide to our region, including reduced wear and capacity demands on highways. See pages 4-9 of that section.</p>

City of Rogers

<p>Under the first goal: Our region is equitable and inclusive: it states: racial inequities and injustices experienced by historically marginalized communities have been eliminated. I would recommend amending the wording to read: racial inequities and injustices being experienced. The way it currently reads gives the impression that the past is being eliminated. It is important to recognize that these items took place so we can continue to recognize the impact and work to create a more equitable region moving forward.</p>	<p>The regional goal identifies the future that we aim to have, one without inequities and injustices. We agree that recognizing the past is important as part of the context setting that we discuss in our equity framework. Additional language has been added under the "Patterns of historical injustices" section that describes the importance that you highlight.</p>
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City of Woodbury

<p>The Imagine 2050 Plan establishes robust goals and desired outcomes but, in most cases, does not identify the implementation roadmap. The City of Woodbury reserves a significant portion of our comments until the implementation plans and system statements are provided for evaluation.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. We recognize the complexity of achieving regional goals and the variety of actors and partners across the region that are important to success in those goals. The policy chapters outline objectives, policies, and actions that the Council can undertake, that we encourage and support local governments in leading, and additional partnerships we wish to build or strengthen to advance those regional goals.</p>
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Comment	Response
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The Imagine 2050 Plan has a significant number of goals and forward-looking statements. When evaluating the plan, it is nearly impossible to discern what portions of the plan will create a requirement/obligation and what portions are aspirational. This ambiguity makes commenting on a document of this length challenging. In several places the term incentivize is used. The Council should not create plan requirements that obligate financial allocation of local resources to meet plan elements. In several places the term support is used. It is difficult to comment on these statements without understanding if the Council intends on requiring communities to support initiatives or if the Council is providing best practices in a facilitative role.

We recognize the importance of providing additional clarity in the plan and have proposed revisions in the policy chapters to provide that clarity. In addition, local comprehensive plan requirements will be further detailed in the Council's Local Planning Handbook, which is planned for an update to support the 2050 round of local comprehensive planning.

Freshwater

We appreciate the four core values of stewardship, accountability, leadership, and equity. One area to highlight further within these values is partnerships and the collaboration needed to achieve the goals of the plan. Partnerships with other agencies, utilities, community members, etc.

We agree on the importance of collaboration and partnership, which you will find interwoven in the Regional Values as well as throughout Imagine 2050.

Another point to drive within these goals is to balance economic development while also meeting existing ecosystem and community needs.

Comment noted.

Metropolitan Council American Indian Advisory Council

The Council will work to increase regional understanding of the American Indian communities, including historical and contemporary environmental injustices faced by the American Indian communities to address community concerns and maximize direct community benefits for the future.

In the section titled Our region is equitable and inclusive, we have included a commitment to provide technical assistance and training for our government partners to increase the regional understanding.

Comment	Response
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The Council will ensure that it produces data and metrics that are clear, accessible, and relevant to the American Indian communities and be accountable to its commitments.

In addition to the Council’s commitment to reporting on and evaluating the implementation of Imagine 2050, the Council recognizes the importance of reflecting the experiences of American Indians and understands that to be successful in achieving the Our region is equitable and inclusive goal, we must ensure that those experiences are reflected in the supporting data and analysis. This commitment is reflected in our Equity Framework, under the heading “Conditions for success” within that goal section.

MN350

One aspect missing from the Imagine 2050 plan is food. The Climate Action Work Plan states that it is the responsibility of the Environmental Justice Task Force to create communities where residents can “live in a clean, safe environment and have a healthy quality of life.” If this is to be the case, it is crucial that food justice is woven into various aspects of the plan. Minnesotans facing health issues from food insecurity, agricultural pollution, and chemical food enhancers deserve a plan that will put their dietary health first. The MN350 Food Justice Team believes that aspects of the Imagine 2050 Plan should incorporate factors such as community gardens in parks, public transportation to grocery stores, and affordable housing outside of food deserts.

In Imagine 2050’s goal “Our region is equitable and inclusive,” the document describes the intertwining of present day food access, or lack thereof, with former redlining. In addition, in the Environmental Justice Framework as a part of that goal, the Council also commits to “supporting access to jobs, housing, transportation, funding, education, healthy foods, and a clean environment for overburdened communities.” The importance of access to healthy and culturally relevant foods are also woven throughout the regional goals as well as in the Land Use Policy.

The Council will integrate environmental justice work across divisions. Council leadership at all levels will support it through staffing, funding, and integration into project work

Thank you for your comment. The inclusion of the Environmental Justice Framework in Imagine 2050 is our first step toward integrating the Framework across our work at the Council.

Comment	Response
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National Park Service

<p>Support for Vision and Goals We fully support the Land Use Policy's commitment to compact growth and environmental stewardship, which resonates with NRRA's efforts to balance sustainable development with the preservation of the river's unique natural and cultural assets. We are also in support of the Parks and Trails Policy's focus on increasing equitable access to parks and open spaces, particularly for underserved communities. The vision of expanding natural systems protections and integrating more open space into the regional framework will undoubtedly strengthen the region's ecological health.</p>	<p>We appreciate your support and shared goals. We look forward to continued collaboration to advance this vision.</p>
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Washington County

<p>Washington County is pleased to see objectives, policies and actions woven throughout Imagine 2050 and the various Policy Plans that recognize the connection between the built environment (land use, transportation, access to food, parks, and housing) and opportunities for health.</p>	<p>We appreciate your review of the policies in Imagine 2050 and look forward to working on implementation in the coming years.</p>
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Feedback from people in the region

<p>For me...stabilize or start on reduction of population.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment</p>
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<p>We need to return much of the urban land dedicated to large roads and highways to more productive and human-focused uses such as housing, businesses, parks, and transitways. The public transit system needs massive investments toward expansion, speed, frequency, reliability, comfort, and safety in order to shift demand away from private vehicles and meet our climate, equity, and health and safety goals.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments.</p>
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390 Robert Street North
Saint Paul, MN 55101-1805

651-602-1000
TTY 651-291-0904
public.info@metc.state.mn.us
metro council.org/imagine2050

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