

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL
390 North Robert Street, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
Wednesday, November 21, 2012
9:00AM

Members Present: Chair Susan Haigh, Gary Cunningham, Jon Commers, Steven Chávez, Roxanne Smith, Lona Schreiber, Steve Elkins, Rich Kramer, Harry Melander, Edward Reynoso, Wendy Wulff, John Doan, Adam Duininck

Members Absent: Jennifer Munt, Sandra Rummel, James Brimeyer, Gary Van Eyll

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Chair Haigh called the Committee of the Whole to order at 9:04 AM on Wednesday, November 21, 2012. (The meeting was moved to the morning to accommodate the Thanksgiving holiday.)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved by Cunningham, seconded by Chávez to approve the agenda.
Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Kramer, seconded by Chávez to approve the minutes of the November 7, 2012 meeting of the Committee of the Whole.

THRIVE MSP 2040

A. Thrive MSP 2040: Status Report and Proposed Goals – Libby Starling, Thrive MSP 2040 Project Manager

Libby provided a status report of the Council's progress on Thrive MSP 2040. The working principles have been established, and today's discussion will focus on the working goals. The goals have been framed in terms of the broad outcomes, and are intentionally framed in such a way that there is more freedom about what the means and what the strategies are so they can also encompass contributions from outside the Council. We will be revisiting the goals discussion on December 5 and after that as needed.

The group will hear about the Council's investments to determine how they can be part of the overall Thrive effort.

The December 19 discussion will be on how we are measuring the progress toward the goals. There is a lot of interest on having the goals be measurable. When the Council decides on its goals, staff can determine what metrics should be used and how the goals will be measured.

In January, the group will be talking about the Fair Housing Equity Assessment and Thrive. In January and February there will be discussions on the alternative policy scenarios.

The six broad working principles that the Council has settled on are: Acting Regionally, Collaboration and Partnership, Economic Prosperity, Equity, Stewardship, and Livability

The Thrive Working Group is proposing seven broad working goals to start the discussion. The seven areas these goals are addressing are development and redevelopment, natural resources, multi-modal transportation choices, regionally significant economic assets, climate change, a range of housing choices, and parks. Council members should ask themselves whether these are the right areas for the goals to be, and whether seven is the number of goals they want.

The proposed goals are:

- **Compact new development and redevelopment of existing communities** – particularly along transportation corridors – result in density, land use and urban patterns that leverage proximity to public infrastructure, enhance livability, and safeguard rural landscapes. Sewered household growth to 2040 occurs in areas where communities have planned sewered development in their 2030 Comprehensive Plans.
- Land use and development decisions **preserve and protect the region's natural resources**, such groundwater recharge areas, the region's water resources (lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands), high-value natural resources, and prime agricultural soils. Agricultural land in the region supports increased local food production. Sustainable water supply supports the region's continued growth, health and prosperity.
- **Multimodal transportation choices**, supported by appropriate development patterns, provide reliable and timely access for people to connect to jobs, amenities and other destinations, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve public health. The region's transit system is easy-to-use, affordable, and efficient.
- Development decisions **support regionally-significant economic assets** such as airports, barge terminals, and industrial land in proximity to freight railways and highway interchanges. An intermodal freight system delivers what our greater region produces to the global marketplace. Previously environmentally-impaired land, particularly within transit and highway corridors, is restored to productive use.
- The region and local governments are prepared for and respond to the **opportunities and challenges presented by climate change**. Greenhouse gas emissions and energy use per capita decline.
- Communities across the region **offer a range of housing choices**, in both price and residential type, for people of all ages, incomes, races and ethnicities, fostering racial and economic integration.
- **Parks** are assets to communities across the region and are accessible to the residents of the region.

B. Discussion of Proposed Goals for Thrive MSP 2040, led by the Thrive Working Group

There was some confusion around the first goal (compact new development and redevelopment of existing communities). Chair Haigh clarified that the description

suggests that we will not expand sewer growth for the last decade (2030-2040) of the plan. CM Melander stated that he hopes the policy will be flexible with more rural areas where development is viewed a bit differently. Libby noted that if the language used in the goal proposals is concerning or raises questions about the related policies, then perhaps the goal isn't written properly and should be revisited.

CM Wulff stated that she is concerned about what compact new development means and what impact it will have on the affordable single family housing and of the region. She said she strongly advocates for keeping the 3 units per acre in developing communities to allow all types of housing to be created. She wants the flexibility to respond to market concerns, but not to push so hard for density that we cut out a segment of the housing market that is important for attracting young families. Chair Haigh stated that density makes it more expensive to develop single family homes and smaller lots are easier to develop single family homes on due to land value.

CM Kramer inquired as to whether the word "compact" was being applied to new development or redevelopment? He stated that we should be flexible in not joining those two.

CM Cunningham stated that he was glad we were having this conversation as it is not easy to grapple with the urban, suburban, exurban issues. He would like to see more development occurring in some of the denser areas. He is in favor of the development along the transit corridor, but struggles with the areas not along a transit corridor that need development and investment. If we only focus on developing areas along transit corridors, we will be left with pockets in the region that desperately need investment and development.

CM Wulff stated that so far we have not focused on joining transit corridors and unused sewer capacity. She said we should get rid of the silos and make sure that sewer capacity, redevelopment, and transportation are all matched up in the same place so we don't make unnecessary sewer investments or vice versa.

CM Cunningham suggested that climate change should somehow be included in the second goal, since it will likely have a significant effect on natural resources. Chair Haigh pointed out that goal 5 focuses specifically on climate change.

CM Wulff said that she represents a significant part of the region's agricultural land, and does not believe farmers would be too keen on having the Council determine what they could grow on their land. She stated that so far, we are really failing at protecting the agricultural land in our region.

CM Melander said that groundwater should stay in the natural resource goal as it is a very significant issue, but should not be called out separately as that could result in bigger issues. CM Kramer suggested adding other important elements to the "local food production" sentence so it doesn't focus solely on local food production. Chair Haigh said we should be prominent in our focus on water, but she wasn't sure whether the second goal did that adequately. CM Wulff said it's important to coordinate water preservation with our other areas, but making it a higher priority goal may cause problems.

In response to goal 3, CM Duinck said he would like to see a connection to school/education added. CM Cunningham said adding the word "accessible" would ensure that the disabled population is included.

In response to goal 4, CM Kramer said that the intermodal freight system not only delivers, but also brings in goods. Chair Haigh said she would favor some language about brown field redevelopment, which is one of the most challenging types of redevelopment throughout the region. It is very difficult for local governments to address on their own and it requires significant resources. She said that while the freight railways are really important, they seem to be sort of disconnected from local government conversations.

CM Melander asked whether the items in goal 4 could be wrapped into other areas/goals. CM Chávez replied that his bias is the two words global marketplace. His view is that these are strategies under an economic competitiveness goal; we have already talked about transportation for moving people and this is referring to transportation for moving things.

CM Cunningham agreed and stated that the broader constituency may not understand the regional significance, but they will understand economic competitiveness. He also said he wanted to second the issue Chair Haigh raised about the freight rails, and this would be a good opportunity to align the language with other organizations' efforts (Greater MSP, for example) so that people actually understand it.

CM Elkins expressed that he agreed with CM Chávez. CM Wulff also agreed, and stated that perhaps the previous goal is too narrow in talking about transit, and said the movement of freight is very important in our transportation network. CM Đoàn said that if the transportation portion of goal 4 gets consolidated into goal 3, he wants to make sure we don't lose the last sentence of goal 4 which refers to brown field redevelopment because in his opinion it is important enough to be a goal and not lost in the strategies. Chair Haigh agreed.

Libby stated that goal 5 does not have a lot of specifics laid out because this is a relatively new area for the Council and it is not clear what some of the underlying details might need to be. The broadest question is whether this Council wants to identify climate change in its goals, and then think about where it might take the Council. CM Cunningham said the goal would have to have something in it for the Council to accomplish. Chair Haigh said she liked having the goal included so we could include some type of metrics on energy use. CM Elkins asked what the policy related to this goal would look like, and what would keep it from being included in other goals. Libby said that this goal would be more about being proactive and how we can adjust to the changes that climate change will bring. She said there is also a lot of work happening with this issue on the local level, and perhaps some of these local groups could come before the Council to explain the issue and the work that can be done. CM Schreiber said that the conversation the Working Group had about this goal included the Council as a convener and providing assistance to groups working on this issue. CM Schreiber stated that given the recent natural disasters/events in our world, the Working Group felt this was an important topic to include. CM Chávez said he would lobby to include the word opportunity. The Council could provide assistance and opportunity to communities struggling with the after-effects of natural disaster and/or communities developing plans for emergency situations.

CM Melander suggested including this in our principles and was not completely sure it should have its own goal. CM Wulff stated that she is the naysayer on this

one, and communities already have disaster preparedness plans and procedures. Chair Haigh stated that she feels it's very important to include this in our goals. On goal 6, Libby asked if the group wanted to call out specifics including age, race, ethnicity, etc. CM Smith advocated strongly for keeping everything in and provided an example of how all children do better in school when they are integrated. CM Wulff said she did not want to call out race specifically in the goal as it inherently creates racism. CM Kramer said the phrase "residential type" seems to cover so much that it covers nothing; it isn't the way people really talk. In response to CM Wulff's statement and concerns, CM Cunningham said there are certain groups in this community that have the lowest employment rate, are segregated, and don't have the same choice for housing that others do. He said he agrees in principle that we'd like to be in a racially neutral world, but he thinks the realities are that race matters within our community. Chair Haigh agreed with CM Cunningham and CM Kramer's comment about housing type. She also said the goal should address preservation, but it may be more of a strategy than a goal. CM Kramer agreed. CM Wulff stated that one of the problems is that when the Council does housing analyses, it does not include what already exists. CM Chávez stated that the housing goal should include connectedness to transportation. Chair Haigh said it should include connectedness to more than just transportation (health care, jobs, etc.).

The final proposed goal is about parks, which is a regional system of the Council. CM Cunningham stated that there was some data shared in a committee meeting that showed the accessibility to parks for colored people was much lower than one would expect, and wanted to know if this goal was getting at that issue. CM Commers stated that the proposed goal language was somewhat of a placeholder and needed to be flushed out and better established by the group, because parks are such a big part of the Council's work. CM Kramer said there is a lot more that can be included in the parks goal language including how they are an asset to the region and the benefits. CM Chávez posed the question of whether it should be a standalone goal, or if it should be included in the natural resources goal. CM Kramer asked if parks had its own goal because it is one of the Council's charges. CM Melander said if we are going to give parks its own goal because it is one of the Council's charges, then how are we going to handle the environmental services issues, etc.

C. Council's Investments: What roles does the Council play in controlling and influencing investment decisions? How are investment decisions made? Who makes which decision?

Beth Reetz introduced this portion of the meeting by saying the Council may be wondering why, at this point in the process, we're talking about Council investments, but as staff has been working for the past several months along with the Council, looking at the past framework, and learning the areas where this Council wants to have influence, they have been looking at ways in which they will be able to do so using the Council investments. The Council makes investments in a lot of different areas and in a lot of different ways, from division to division, from

service area to service area, there are many differences. There are many resources provided and levers to implement policies across the region.

i. Wastewater Infrastructure—Bryce Pickart

Bryce Pickart showed the statutes that give the Council the authority to acquire, own, build, and finance the wastewater infrastructure. He showed a map of the wastewater infrastructure. The planning and looking ahead goes very long term because of the physical infrastructure that is in the ground. Thrive MSP 2040 and the System Plans lead to system statements to communities and comp plans; from the ES perspective, those are amongst the things that feed into the development of a capital improvement program, which is our investment program. Regulatory agencies, primarily the MN PCA, drive the need for some investments. Metropolitan Development Guide and Regional Wastewater System Plan guide location, timing, and capacity of investment decisions for new service and capacity expansions. They also spend a lot of time annually talking to our customers and coordinating with local communities. The Council has the authority to make the investment decisions for wastewater, but it is a highly regulated utility. Some of the big ticket items are influenced by regulatory agencies and we will be talking about some of those issues on an ongoing basis over the next year.

ii. Regional Parks—Arne Stefferud

There is an average of \$30 million in capital funding spending per year. The revenue sources from that include the Parks & Trails Legacy Fund which is the largest revenue stream (\$16 million) and supports regionally significant parks and trails in the metro area as well as around the state. The State Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund appropriations are used for buying land (\$1.5 million); state bonds contribute about \$5.25 to \$8 million, and Met Council bonds make up about \$7 million/year. Those are spend through grants that are distributed among 10 park agencies. Operating funding comes from the State General Fund (\$2.87 million) and the State Natural Resources Fund (\$5.67 million). The Met Council decides what parks and trails are regionally significant enough to include in the Parks Policy Plan, approves regional park and trail master plans consistent with the Parks Policy Plan, determines park agency share of Regional Parks CIP financed with State bonds, determines the Council bond match to State Bond-financed Parks CIP, and determines grant eligible items for projects in the Parks Policy Plan.

iii. Livable Communities—Beth Reetz

Due to time constraints, this portion will be presented at the next COW.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 11:00AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Getty
Recording Secretary