

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

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Wednesday, October 17, 2012

4:00PM

Members Present: Steven Chávez, Roxanne Smith, Lona Schreiber, Steve Elkins, Sandra Rummel, Rich Kramer, Wendy Wulff, Harry Melander, John Đoàn, Gary Van Eyll, James Brimeyer

Members Absent: Chair Susan Haigh, Edward Reynoso, Gary Cunningham, Adam Duininck, Jennifer Munt, Jon Commers

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Vice Chair Melander called the Committee of the Whole to order at 4:00 PM on Wednesday, October 17, 2012.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved by Chávez, seconded by Đoàn to approve the agenda.

Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Chávez, seconded by Van Eyll to approve the minutes of the September 19, 2012 meeting of the Committee of the Whole.

Thrive MSP 2040

Analysis of the Regional Development Framework—Libby Starling & Denise Engen
Libby and Denise gave a PowerPoint presentation illustrating the implementation analysis of the 2030 Regional Development Framework.

At the last meeting (Sept. 19), the Council tentatively adopted some of the principles that had been proposed at the previous meeting. Libby stated that this meeting would include discussion about the Regional Development Framework as it will be used to inform the Council for further policy discussions for Thrive MSP 2040. It is important for the Council to understand solid connections between the Framework (where the Council has been) and Thrive MSP 2040 (where the Council is going). The Framework represents a 30-year history of regional planning in this area, and so the Thrive MSP 2040 process cannot be an abrupt departure because regional planning does not change on a dime. Comprehensive plans in the region are using the Framework as the overall governing document, so the Thrive MSP 2040 process needs to build on that history and effort.

The Council needs to determine what worked in the Framework and what might be adjusted and improved in the Thrive process. A key piece is thinking about what wisdom has been gathered over the last ten years, and what worked and what did not work.

The discussion today reflects the work of about 30 staff from all areas of the Council who have been looking very carefully at the policies in the Framework from an

implementation perspective. Libby asked the Council to look at the Framework from a policy perspective, as well as an implementation perspective. She also stated that the Councilmembers would be asked two questions: What do you think worked in the Framework and should be kept for Thrive MSP 2040? And what aspects of the Framework should be changed/removed/or added to for Thrive MSP 2040? Staff is looking for guidance from the Council to determine about how much of the Framework document they want to hold onto for Thrive MSP 2040.

Denise stated that the Thrive document does not need to solve everything, but it should provide enough direction so that it can be implemented into and across system plans and policies. Defining roles, intent, and desired outcomes will be key, as it allows flexibility and innovation when a desired outcome is described.

It is imperative to think about what kind of policies can be resilient and relevant through changes in the economy. One challenge is that Thrive MSP 2040 should strike a balance between being flexible and being strategic. After the 2030 framework was finished, the housing market crashed. The reality is that over the next 30 years, there will be ups and downs in the economy.

The Council is currently in the beginning stages of TOD and must think about what expertise will exist in 30 years. Redevelopment will be a bigger and bigger issue. We are also wiser now about what the region's water supply will be and what opportunities and challenges that presents.

Discussion of Policy Ramifications for Thrive MSP 2040

Wulff stated that Lakeville's comprehensive plans were amended over time and that the group should keep a flexible mindset. She stated that while transportation is more about resources, community development is much more at the mercy of the market. For instance, affordable housing should be looked at in its context: what wasn't affordable when it was built may be affordable now. She stated that the group should revise how it looks at redevelopment and be more flexible with zoning, but without making it too cumbersome.

Chávez agreed that policies for community development need to be more market sensitive as they rely on the market. He stated that recessions are triggered by technology, but technology doesn't help the market recover.

Đoàn referenced page 8 of the Regional Development Framework regarding working with our neighbors. He would like that language strengthened, and expand the idea to include our neighbors beyond our region and globally. He stated that it should be included because it will be beneficial to the Council to remain connected.

Wulff suggested more coordination between our water resources and stormwater, and that some land is better for recharging.

Melander added that we have the opportunity to take on some of the bigger issues and concerns that people have from a regional standpoint.

Van Eyll agreed, and said that at some listening sessions people have expressed that they want the Council to take control of water, while others want the Council to leave it alone. Water is, and will continue to be, a big issue.

Wulff asked about our numbers (for affordable housing) not being attainable for a community. Denise responded that the community is asked to at least acknowledge the Council's numbers in their comp. plan and provide a path to make them attainable.

Wulff said the Council should be more realistic about numbers for communities.

Chávez suggested documenting everything for our successors, including what the reasoning was behind everything, and our foundation for making various choices. Doãn asked about including something to provide credits or allow communities to opt out.

Smith countered, saying that it wouldn't be wise to allow high opportunity communities a chance to opt out when the Council has invested a lot of infrastructure there.

Chávez stated that anytime there is a voucher option, there is tension.

Schreiber referenced page 20 of the Regional Development Framework, asking whether it would work for continuous communities to join forces for affordable housing.

Wulff responded that Dakota County does the affordable housing for the entire county, which works really well.

Doãn said that transportation shouldn't bear market forces. He inquired about a mechanism for the Council to charge a fee for access to transportation. It would be included in property tax, but Elkins said it's called development impact fees and it is not allowed by state law in MN.

Doãn also suggested that the Council be more transparent about the costs and benefits to our regional customers, so people know exactly what they are getting from the Council for their money.

Wulff suggested changing the map to reflect the various infrastructures in the developed area.

Chávez said that some of the tactics/ideas the Council comes up with could be pilots.

Libby stated that the next meetings will include scenario development. The Council will take sets of choices that make sense and look at those that are in the realm of reality.

Wulff said that there is an underlying assumption that redevelopment is cost effective, but it isn't usually the case. She asked Pat to weigh in.

Pat stated that redevelopments that don't seek money aren't heard about by government. The government only hears about redevelopment when they are seeking money, rezoning, etc. Also, developers ask for a lot of things, and not always what they really need.

Brimeyer stated that some cities are more willing to leverage their own resources than others. He gave the example of St. Louis Park and the beautiful work that has been done on Excelsior Blvd.

Kramer said that it's nearly impossible to get back to a level playing field in inner-city redevelopment. He described a redevelopment project near his home that encountered many challenges that were caused by previous usage of that land.

Van Eyll closed by asking the group to share their ideas with the Thrive MSP 2040 Working Group members. He said we have a great opportunity to make big changes.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 5:34PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Getty
Recording Secretary