

Information Item

Community Development Committee



Meeting date: September 21, 2026

Topic

Land Acknowledgement Art Project Update

District(s), member(s):	All
Policy/legal reference:	Imagine 2050 Land, Water, and People Acknowledgement Statement / Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan, Section 7: Recreation, Facilities, and Programming
Staff prepared/presented:	Thony Thao, Parks Ambassador Manager (651-602-1310) Erika Herrmann, Art + Policy (651-602-1449) Allison Waukau, Tribal Liaison (651-602-1590)
Division/department:	Community Development

Background

In 2025, As part of the development of the regional development guide, Imagine 2050, the Metropolitan Council established the American Indian Advisory Council (AIAC) in March 2024. AIAC developed the Land, Water, and People Commitments, which identify ways the Council can better serve and support American Indian communities in the Twin Cities region.

Building on those commitments, AIAC developed the Land, Water, and People Acknowledgement Statement, which recognizes the Indigenous peoples, histories, lands, waters, and communities connected to the region. The Council adopted the Acknowledgement Statement and guidance for its use on March 12, 2025, through Resolution 2025-07.

One of the recommended ways to carry the Acknowledgement forward is to adapt the written statement into permanent public art at each of the Council's three primary facilities: Robert Street, Heywood, and Metro Plant. The project is intended to create a visible expression of the Acknowledgement and increase awareness and representation of American Indian communities within these Council spaces.

The Art + Policy team is leading project execution, guided by and in partnership with Council Tribal Relations staff and AIAC, with support from Council staff and division leadership.

Project Goals

The project will commission artists to create artwork that reflects and provides visual expression of the acknowledgement while creating opportunities for artists to interpret themes of land, water, people, history, culture, and place.

The goals of the project are to:

- Carry the Land, Water, and People Acknowledgement forward through action.
- Create permanent and visible expressions of the acknowledgement at Council facilities.
- Increase awareness and understanding of Indigenous histories, cultures, and communities connected to the region.
- Create meaningful opportunities for artists to interpret and respond to the acknowledgement.

- Continue building on the Council's partnership with AIAC.

Partnership with the American Indian Advisory Council

The AIAC developed the Land, Water, and People Acknowledgement and recommended uses, and continues to guide and inform the public art project.

As the project has developed, the Art + Policy team has continued to engage AIAC for guidance on the project's overall direction and approach. AIAC members have emphasized the importance of connecting acknowledgement with action and creating an artist opportunity that is thoughtful and accessible.

Feedback from AIAC has helped inform considerations related to artist outreach and recruitment, application requirements, artist support and mentorship, and Native representation throughout the artist selection process.

Project Progress and Procurement Process

Staff are advancing several areas of work simultaneously to maintain momentum on the project, including installation site identification, advisory committee planning, and finalizing the artist selection process.

Staff are working with representatives at Robert Street, Metro Plant, and Heywood to identify potential locations for permanent artwork. Site considerations include visibility, accessibility, site conditions, and the ability to accommodate a range of artistic mediums.

Artist selection and advisory committees are being formed, with representation from AIAC, Council Tribal Relations staff, and key contacts at each of the three main Council facilities.

Staff are continuing to work with Procurement to refine the solicitation, contracting approach, and project timeline, with the goal of reducing barriers to participation and avoiding requiring significant unpaid creative work during the artist selection process.

Next Steps and Timeline

Over the coming months, staff will continue to:

- Finalize art installation locations at Robert Street, Metro Plant, and Heywood.
- Complete development of the artist solicitation and selection process with Procurement.
- Continue incorporating guidance from AIAC and project partners.
- Prepare outreach and communications to build awareness of the upcoming artist opportunity.
- Launch the artist solicitation.

The project team anticipates advancing artist selection and contracting by December 31st, 2026.

Following artist selection, artists will move into research, design, fabrication, and installation. Installation is currently anticipated in spring/summer 2027 in coordination with facilities staff at each location.

