

Business Item

Management Committee



Committee meeting date: September 23, 2026

For the Metropolitan Council: October 14, 2026

Business Item: 2026-163

2026 Policy Update: Government-to-Government Tribal Relationship Policy

District(s), member(s):	All
Policy/legal reference:	Minn. Statute 10.65 Metropolitan Council Policy RF 4-2
Staff prepared/presented:	Sam O'Connell, Director of Community Relations Allison Waukau, Tribal Liaison and Native Relations Coordinator Gillian Greenberg, Senior Climate Planner
Division/department:	Regional Administration/Community Relations

Proposed action

That the Metropolitan Council adopt the attached version of the following policy:

- RF 4-2 Government-to-Government Tribal Relationship Policy

Background

To comply with Minnesota Statute 10.65 and in alignment with the Metropolitan Council's commitments to the American Indian community in Imagine 2050, the Met Council recognizes the sovereignty of Tribal Nations and commits to develop and maintain meaningful relationships with Tribal Nations and American Indian communities.

The Council's existing Government-to-Government Tribal Relationship Policy was adopted in 2016 and called for regular review. The proposed updated policy was developed with intentional engagement, feedback with Native communities, and through formal consultation with Tribal Nations. This effort was led by the Met Council's first full-time Tribal Liaison and Native Relations Coordinator. The updated policy before the Committee today includes substantive changes including:

- Formalizing and strengthening government-to-government relationships between the Met Council and Tribal Nations;
- Committing to relationship building and partnership with the Metropolitan American Indian Community;
- Clarifying staff positions that are required or encouraged to attend Tribal-State Relations Training; and
- Outlining the Chair's role in consultation and communication with Tribal Nations as well as other leaders' roles in implementation.

Rationale

Compliance with Minnesota Statute 10.65 requires state agencies including the Met Council to:

- Recognize and maintain the unique legal relationship between the state and Tribal Nations;
- Implement a Tribal consultation policy;
- Offer consultation to each Minnesota Tribe at least annually;
- Designate a Tribal Liaison; and
- Send leaders and appropriate staff to Tribal-State Relations Training.

This updated Government-to-Government Tribal Relationship Policy brings the Met Council into compliance with statutory requirements. Additionally, the updated policy integrates the commitment the Met Council made to the Metropolitan American Indian Community in Imagine 2050. This commitment makes the Met Council unique among state agencies and reflects the Council's geographic focus and dedication to serving the American Indian community in the seven-county region.

Thrive lens analysis

On Feb. 12, 2025, the Council adopted Imagine 2050, which builds on policy direction in Thrive MSP 2040. Under the Thrive lens, this policy update advances the outcome of Equity by ensuring that Tribal Nations and the Metropolitan American Indian Community are engaged in decision-making and have a meaningful voice in influencing the Met Council's investments.

Funding

No funding is tied to the proposed action.

Small business inclusion

The proposed action has no direct impact on small businesses.

