

Business Item

Metropolitan Council



For the Metropolitan Council: January 28, 2026

Business Item: 2026-21

2025 Regional Economic Framework: Adoption and Authorization for Submittal

District(s), member(s):	All
Policy/legal reference:	U.S. Economic Development Administration Guidelines for CEDS
Staff prepared/presented:	Baris Gumus-Dawes, Planning Analyst, 651-602-1331
Division/department:	Community Development Division

Proposed action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Accept the attached public comment report and adopt the 2025 Regional Economic Framework.
2. Direct Council staff to finalize the 2025 Regional Economic Framework and submit it to the U.S. Economic Development Administration.
3. Direct Council staff to use the Regional Economic Framework to guide technical assistance to local governments and other entities throughout the region.

Background

In August 2020, the Metropolitan Council adopted the region's first Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Alternative, known as the Regional Economic Framework. A Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is a planning document that informs a region's economic development efforts. The U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) requires each region to create and adopt a CEDS or a CEDS-Alternative every five years to remain eligible for EDA grants and funding opportunities. The Council has updated the [2020 Regional Economic Framework](#) to meet this requirement.

2025 Regional Economic Framework Components

The EDA provides clear guidelines for the required content of a CEDS or CEDS-Alternative. Each plan must include:

- An overview of the regional economy, including strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
- Economic development priorities, based on input from key stakeholders who shape the regional economy.
- Strategies and actions for the priorities, including examples of existing or emerging initiatives.
- An implementation framework and indicators of success.
- Plans for economic resilience that identify potential shocks to the economy and how the region would respond and recover.

Engagement

The EDA emphasizes that a CEDS Alternative must represent a collective and collaborative vision for a region's economy. For the 2025 update, the Council's engagement efforts went beyond those of the 2020

Regional Economic Framework, and incorporated multiple avenues for regional input, including:

- A 26-member CEDS Committee composed of a wide range of economic stakeholders
- Individual interviews with economic subject matter experts
- A survey distributed to more than 200 municipal staff and officials
- Small group discussions with the Land Use Advisory Committee, Metro Cities Regional Planners Advisory Group, and an American Indian focus group
- A public hearing and comment period on the draft 2025 Regional Economic Framework

More detailed information about the stakeholder engagement process can be found on [the project website](#).

Council Process

On [August 27, 2025](#), Council staff provided an update to the Council on the 2025 Regional Economic Framework. After that briefing, Council staff and the consultant team developed a draft version of the Framework, which was presented to the Committee of the Whole on [October 15, 2025](#). The [draft 2025 Regional Economic Framework](#) document incorporated the revisions made in response to the feedback received during the October 15, 2025 Committee meeting. At the November 12, 2025, Council meeting, the Council took action ([Business Item 2025-289](#)) to:

1. Release the 2025 Regional Economic Framework for public comment.
2. Authorize a public comment period from November 13, 2025, to December 22, 2025.
3. Conduct a public hearing at 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 3, 2025, at the regularly scheduled Metropolitan Council meeting.

Public Comment Process and Response to Comments

The public comment period for the 2025 Regional Economic Framework occurred from November 13, 2025, to December 22, 2025. A public hearing was held on December 3, 2025, and no comments were offered during the hearing. During the public comment period, the Council received 7 comments: 4 from residents, 2 from local governments, and one from an economic development organization. Comments were received through an online portal and over email.

Updates to the draft 2025 Regional Economic Framework resulted from public comments. Responses to all public comments are included in the Public Comment Report for the 2025 Regional Economic Framework and attached separately with this meeting agenda. Overall, commenters noted minor issues and expressed no significant disagreements with the findings of the report. The comments and responses are summarized below.

Some commenters requested that the Council incorporate into the report additional information they provided. Others requested minor clarifications and changes to two maps. One commenter questioned the designation of a census tract in their jurisdiction as an economically distressed area. One commenter stated the importance of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAs).

Consultants added the information provided by public commenters to the Framework and incorporated the requested clarifications. Council staff enlarged two maps to make them more legible. They also double-checked and confirmed the status of the specific census tract as an economically distressed area. Staff also responded to the comment about PFAs by providing additional information to the commenter in the Public Comment report.

Red-lined and clean versions of the 2025 Regional Economic Framework are posted with the agenda.

Rationale

After extensive engagement, data analysis, and development of the 2025 Regional Economic Framework, the Framework is ready for Council adoption and authorization for submission to the U.S. Economic Development Administration. Through the public comment process, the 2025 Regional Economic Framework has become clearer and more responsive to regional needs. The Framework includes all the required components and reflects Council priorities as laid out in Imagine 2050.

Imagine 2050 lens analysis

On February 12, 2025, the Council adopted Imagine 2050, which builds on policy direction in Thrive MSP 2040. The 2025 Regional Economic Framework advances the Imagine 2050 goal of “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.” The 2025 Regional Economic Framework was heavily informed by the Dynamic and Resilient Region section of Imagine 2050 and directly advances the commitment to update the Regional Economic Framework with a committee of stakeholders ([Imagine 2050, Regional Vision, Values, Goals, p. 79](#)).

Funding

Funding for this project comes from the Community Development Division annual budget. Having a current Regional Economic Framework that meets the CEDS Alternative requirements also opens up eligibility for entities across the region to compete for and receive funding from the U.S. EDA.

Small business inclusion

There are no direct impacts to small businesses with the proposed action.