

Minutes

Committee of the Whole



Meeting date: August 5, 2026

Time: 4:00 PM

Location: 390 Robert Street

Members present:

- ☒ Chair, Robin Hutcheson
- ☐ Judy Johnson, District 1
- ☒ Reva Chamblis, District 2
- ☒ Tyronne Carter, District 3
- ☒ Deb Barber, District 4
- ☒ John Pacheco Jr., District 5

- ☒ Robert Lilligren, District 6
- ☐ Yassin Osman, District 7
- ☒ Anjuli Cameron, District 8
- ☒ Diego Morales, District 9
- ☐ Peter Lindstrom, District 10
- ☒ Gail Cederberg, District 11

- ☒ Mark Jenkins, District 12
- ☐ Chai Lee, District 13
- ☒ Toni Carter, District 14
- ☐ Victor Obisakin, District 15
- ☐ Wendy Wulff, District 16
- ☒ = present

Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgment

The Metropolitan Council acknowledges that the land we currently call Minnesota and specifically the seven-county region is the ancestral homeland of the Dakota Oyate who are present and active contributors to our thriving region. As part of the Metropolitan Council's commitment to address the unresolved legacy of genocide, dispossession, and settler colonialism and the fact that government institutions, including the Metropolitan Council, benefitted economically, politically, and institutionally after the forceable removal of the Dakota Oyate, the Metropolitan Council is dedicated to instilling Land, Water, and People Commitments in regional policy. These commitments support the Dakota Oyate, the eleven federally recognized Tribes in Minnesota, Ho-Chunk Nation, and the American Indian Communities representing over 150 diverse Tribal Nations that call the seven-county region home.

Call to order

A quorum being present, Council Chair Hutcheson called the regular meeting of the Metropolitan Council's Committee of the Whole to order at 4:02p.m.

Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgment

The Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgment was read by Council Member Morales.

Agenda approved

Council members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda.

Approval of minutes

It was moved by Chamblis, seconded by Morales to approve the minutes of the July 15, 2026, regular meeting of the Metropolitan Council's Committee of the Whole. **Motion carried.**

Information

1. Small Business Voices: Operation Metro Surge Effects and Business Contribution to Regional Resiliency (Asha Warsame, Zhu Gong, Darcie Vandegrift)

Darcie Vandegrift, Qualitative Research Manager - Community Development; Asha Warsame, Qualitative Researcher - Community Development; and Zhu Gong, Qualitative Researcher - Community Development, presented the item.

Vandegrift provided an overview of the project rationale for the research focusing on small business voices and effects of Operation Metro Surge and business contribution to regional resiliency. Warsame discussed methodology key points of the study that focused on “main street” small businesses in eight economic nodes that represented different business types, communities, and geographic locations.

Gong provided data on the businesses that were interviewed for the study. Gong noted that the study adds to existing research and shared the preliminary research findings on economic impact with revenue losses and ripple effects of reduced spending. Warsame discussed the emotional and social impacts that reshaped daily activities. Businesses adapted to changes that showed regional resiliency and filled important gaps in community support. Vandegrift discussed patterns in receiving financial relief – Minneapolis and St. Paul communities heard about opportunities for funds and were eligible, but suburban areas did not hear or were not eligible for funds. Vandegrift summarized the final findings and business needs. Asha provided information on next steps as the study continues. Gong presented discussion questions for Council to consider.

Council Members thanked the presenters and provided comments on the research findings and discussion questions, offering ideas for audiences to share the research results. Council Member Jenkins asked if there is data to discern which parts of the community were directly impacted from those that were voluntarily impacted through actions of resiliency and community support. Vandegrift explained the study questions did not ask directly about loss of revenue from donations but is confident the results show business losses were directly from economic impacts based on clear responses. Presenter added some business types were impacted directly since the businesses were services that could not be donated. Chair closed with comment highlighting that the research findings are publicly available for use and dissemination.

2. Lessons from 2025 Population Estimates (Samuel Limerick)

Samuel Limerick, Principal Data Scientist - Community Development, opened the presentation by stating the goals of population estimates: to capture an approximation of population every year, with a focus on totals instead of characteristics or demographic information. The Metropolitan Council works with the State Demographic Center and with other local governments to supply data and review preliminary estimates.

Limerick outlined the estimates timeline, which includes preliminary estimates, local review, and final estimates. The presenter explained that estimates are calculated by counting every housing unit and the number of people occupying each unit. Between 2010 and 2020, steady population growth has resulted in an 11% total increase in population in the region. The presenter reported on average annual population growth by decade and compared average annual change in population by city, noting that recent growth is concentrated in suburban edge communities.



Limerick compared data about housing production, occupancy rates, and household size and contextualized this data within domestic and international migration trends. The presenter summarized that the region's growth occurred most significantly in the developing edge and the redeveloping core of the region. Limerick closed the presentation by addressing factors that may impact next year's estimates, such as immigration restrictions, the housing market, or climate change.

Council Members thanked the presenter and asked questions about population growth factors such as immigration, urbanization, and student populations.

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 5:52 p.m.

Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing narrative and exhibits constitute a true and accurate record of the Metropolitan Council's Committee of the Whole meeting of August 5, 2026.

Council contact:

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