



January 15, 2024, Update
Metropolitan Governance Task Force Public Input
Topic: Most Large Infrastructure Projects Fail – 92%

How many public projects of this magnitude across the world result in an on-time, on budget or under budget outcome? Read this from a recent report and/or read this associated book:

1. Washington Post Article: [Expert explains how to finish infrastructure projects on time, budget - The Washington Post](#)
 2. 2023 Published Book: [How Big Things Get Done: The Surprising Factors That Determine the Fate of Every Project, from Home Renovations to Space Exploration and Everything In Between: Flyvbjerg, Bent, Gardner, Dan: 9780593239513: Amazon.com: Books](#)
- Summary Level Startling Conclusion: *In fact, no less than 92% of megaprojects come in over budget or over schedule, or both. The cost of California's high-speed rail project soared from \$33 billion to \$100 billion—and won't even go where promised. More modest endeavors, whether launching a small business, organizing a conference, or just finishing a work project on time, also commonly fail.*

If our global airline industry operated that way, with only an 8% on time performance, they would be totally out of business. In brief, is it too much to expect excellence at this simple, straightforward level, where on-time, on budget or under budget is the norm not the exception for only 8% of all projects? That is what I would like to see in the United States and beyond in the leadership and management of these massive projects in the year 2024 in the 21st Century.

Our Twin Cities Metro Council should be willing to lead the world in such an endeavor by employing proven performance excellence frameworks, principles, and best practices in the leadership and management of its major infrastructure projects.

Sincerely,

Dale F. Weeks, President, and CEO
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January 12, 2024

Taylor Koehler, Staff Member
Metropolitan Governance Task Force
St. Paul, MN

E-Mail: taylor.koehler@lcc.mn.gov

Dear Task Force Staff and/or Members:

Please consider this as further public input on the current deliberations of your Metropolitan Governance Task Force. I have been tracking your progress over the past few months. As further consideration, please submit this background information as part of your public deliberations for January 17, 2024.

A. Professional Introduction

My name is Dale F. Weeks, President and CEO of Global Leadership and Benchmarking Associates, a performance excellence, global benchmarking, and executive leadership focused consulting service located here in Minneapolis.

From 2000-2011, Dale was Deputy Executive Director/Senior Executive Benchmarking Officer for the Florida Department of Revenue, the 6th largest state agency in Florida, and winner of the State of Florida Performance Excellence Award.

I have also served in similar performance excellence leadership capacities at the Minnesota Department of Revenue from 1994-2000. And, for 20 years, Dale directed major private sector initiatives for **Control Data Corporation, General Mills, and Xerox Corporation**. I also hold an MBA Degree in Finance from the University of Minnesota and a BS Degree in Mathematics from St. Lawrence University in Canton, N.Y.

B. The Current Global State of Leadership and Management

Recent studies have shown that organizations across all sectors globally are not realizing their full potential regarding exactly how they are being led and managed on a broad performance excellence basis. This reality is in spite of the fact that performance excellence frameworks have been available for several decades, from 1987 – 37 years ago!

1. Source: First Global Assessment of the State of Organizational Excellence:



[Global OE Index – Organizational Excellence Specialists](#)

2. Source: Why Do We Undervalue Competent Management, Harvard Business Review, September – October 2017.

<https://hbr.org/2017/09/why-do-we-undervalue-competent-management>

In brief, these recent world-wide (30-40 countries, 12,000 businesses, 18 business practice areas as a sample) studies of management and excellence reach a similar startling conclusion: 10% or less of the organizations examined demonstrated exceptional leadership/management of their enterprises.

Or, said another way, 90% or more are considered “stuck in the middle,” managing by “muddling around”, managing by mediocrity, or other explicit indications of inadequate leadership and management competency.

We in the 21st Century can and must perform at a higher level or risk the continuing decline of our world today. That is indeed the stark reality we face today. Our citizens and customers deserve a much higher level of performance.

C. Specific Application to Our Metropolitan Council

1. The Local State of Affairs

As others that have testified to this task force, Government organizations at all levels, like the Metro Council, are faced today with tremendous challenges. Cities and counties and regional governments across the country are confronted with similar fiscal problems.

Yet even as government managers and leaders are working to meet the mandates of providing public products and services, a substantial number have the grim task of reporting that their citizens will not get “more with less.”

More directly, the recent results and extensive cost overruns on the current Southwest LRT extension project demonstrate that large numbers of citizens have lost faith in the Metro Council’s leadership and management capacity to improve, let alone, achieve excellence.



Less widely known are the remarkable efforts and achievements of many in government. Pockets of excellence exist at all levels, in many places. Our 35+ year celebration of our Baldrige Performance Excellence Award process has included a select few government organizations. In addition, several State and Federal improvement initiatives are using the Lean Six Sigma method to drive process and results improvement.

2. The Broader, Global Perspective – Other Nations are Exceeding Our Performance and We Are Being Left Behind

As I synthesize my thoughts from recent conferences where I have spoken/presented, I would offer the view that there are hundreds of global success stories in the broad arena of Citizen Friendly or Customer Friendly government management category. The guiding light is being provided by countries like Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Singapore, Malaysia, South Africa, United Arab Emirates, the Philippines, and beyond.

These global success stories demonstrate a leadership commitment and passion for performance excellence I have rarely seen in our United States, in Minnesota or beyond. Entrepreneurs are alive and well across the globe in all types of government organizations.

Nevertheless, despite the good efforts and work done by many in government improvement, there is no endeavor that I have observed over the last 5- 10 years at the Metro Council to apply and use performance excellence frameworks or global best management practices comprehensively and systematically over a long period of time.

Our Twin Cities citizens across our region and the entire state today deserve a QUANTUM LEAP in operational performance excellence in the coming years across all levels of Metro Council operational management. The approaches and strategies being used today in 2024 are not working on a broad scale, I would advise.

D. My One Major Strategic Leadership Recommendation

I would highly recommend that the leadership at all levels of our Metro Council become immediately familiar with, and begin the active implementation of, the principles and practices involved with proven global performance excellence frameworks.



This would be implemented on a broad, universal, total organizational scale across the entire Metro Council enterprise of 4,000+ employees, its entire budget of \$1.2++ Billion budget, to include all divisions and departments.

We, as citizens of the Twin Cities, the State of Minnesota, and of the United States, expect this level of exceptional global performance excellence bold leadership from our Metro Council.

I await your response so we can move forward together to make this visionary direction a reality in the shortest time possible. Our urgency is now. This deserves your highest priority. Our world beckons for more performance excellence.

Please feel free to call on me if you would like to discuss this in more depth.

I look forward to sharing in greater depth during deliberations with our Metropolitan Government Task Force in the coming weeks in 2024.

Thank You.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dale F. Weeks". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line under the name.

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