

Good day Mr. Chair and members of the Metropolitan Governance Task Force.

I would like to provide a personal perspective on governance changes of the Met Council. In the summer of 2022, our quiet neighborhood in rural Credit River learned of a concept plan for an 86-acre development that was being considered. For a multitude of reasons, many in our community were alarmed and feared losing our idyllic surroundings to this development. We live less than a mile away from a 2785-acre park reserve. There are farm fields, wetlands, a remnant of the Big Woods, abundant wildlife, and homestead properties around us ranging from 2.5-acres to 40-acres. This area can best be described as rural residential and literally a slice of heaven. The aforementioned reasons account for why our citizens moved to Credit River and desire to protect it from dense population expansion.

Many of us banded together as a group of concerned citizens. We actively attended city council meetings, city planning meetings, surveyed our residents, hosted neighborhood meetings, hosted our own citizen led citywide meeting, sent emails, and a few from our group even met with a Met Council Representative that is knowledgeable about “all things sewer”. Our goal was not to stop development from occurring but to ensure that the citizens had a say in the destiny of their city.

Through conversations with the City Council, we were informed that the Met Council and the comprehensive plan have already determined the number of “toilet flushes necessary”. The Met Council said we can work with our City

Council to reach an agreement. The City Council said we can work with the Met Council. There seems to be a lack of accountability and transparency here. When active and engaged citizens are stepping up and standing up only to learn that all avenues to an alternate plan seem to be thwarted...then I say "Houston, we have a problem here". Our forefathers designed our government to operate from the bottom up. Not the top down. Government Of, By, and For the People.

I suggest a reduction in scope, power, and reach of the Met Council. A down-sizing. The Met Council in its present form is no longer functioning as it was intended. Outside of the boundaries of Minneapolis and St. Paul, the needs and desires of the citizens are quite different and should be addressed locally by the officials they elect. Cities should be allowed to grow as their citizens desire for their communities. We should not be mandated to provide 3 to 5 homes on 1-acre plots to meet Met Council requirements. The market and the citizens of the community should determine this in concert with their elected officials.

I am in favor of a council of governments selecting candidates from their own district who were already elected and are willing to serve. Alternatively, or in addition to, I suggest candidates who are chosen through a submittal of qualified applicants, that reside in that district and are chosen by the local council of governments. Or, as another alternative, if the task force is unable to agree upon a change model. May I suggest a weighted voting system that grants

an extra vote to each voting member in the district being impacted by the decision.

The Met Council wields far too much power and control with no real over-site, and needs to be reined in. It is my hope that the task force will put forth meaningful changes to the legislature for a new and improved governance structure to the Met Council.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and for the opportunity to provide input on governance changes for the Met Council.

Denise Peterson