

January 16, 2024

Chair Hornstein, Vice Chair Pratt, and Members of the Metropolitan Governance Task Force:

Thank you for your time and commitment to considering the matter of Metropolitan Council governance. The City of Minneapolis would appreciate the Task Force taking the following comments into consideration.

Governance of the Metropolitan (Met) Council is a perennial topic and reflects the challenge of working across a region with diverse interests. Despite the differences that exist across the seven-county metro, we see great value in working together for the welfare of our region.

Questions or controversies around the Met Council have often surfaced around transportation planning and funding, but the Met Council carries out many other functions such as wastewater treatment, helping to address the region's housing needs, and maintaining regional parks. As you do your work, we ask that you are mindful of all the functions of the Met Council and potential impacts of any proposed changes.

We ask the Task Force to be mindful of circumstances that may trigger federal redesignation of the Met Council and to ascertain the implications of going through that process. The Met Council serves as a legally designated entity for planning and for the allocation of significant transportation funds. The impacts must be understood as the Task Force makes a recommendation.

We are aware of concerns about the transparency and accountability of the Met Council, and we share many of those concerns. Any changes to the Met Council should help ensure that Council Members have the time and resources to build and maintain relationships with the communities they represent.

Representation on the governing body of the Met Council should be proportional to city and county responsibility for land use, wastewater, community development, housing, parks and open space, transportation, and environmental protection. A combination of population and communities of interest (central cities, developed areas, and developing areas) should guide the apportionment of Council Members.

Population alone does not capture the unique roles, responsibilities, and contributions of the largest city in the region. Federal law governing Metropolitan Planning Organizations recognizes that the role of the largest city is unique, which is why redesignation requires the support of the largest city.

We appreciate the thoughtful dialogue that the Task Force has been having, and we look forward to further discussion.

Sincerely,



Katie Topinka
Director, Intergovernmental Relations