

Re: The Metropolitan Council Comment

“In 1967, the 7-county metro region faced major challenges: inadequately treated wastewater, a failing privately owned bus company, development on sensitive natural areas, and fiscal disparities that left some communities unable to provide essential services and intensified competition for development.

At the urging of many local government, business and civic leaders, the Minnesota Legislature created The Metropolitan Council to deal with regional issues that transcended boundaries.”

The Met Council is an appointed group of people that are tasked with the most important jobs of sewer and water management, transportation, and most recently, housing. How is that working? Well,

1. Our lakes, rivers, streams, and underground aquifers are so contaminated that we now require additional filters or bottled water to have “safe within the limits” drinking water.
2. It has minimized the busing system in exchange for light rail that no one will ride because the trains belong to the crime ridden and homeless people. Our tax dollars are pumping into a black hole that we will never be able to recover from.
3. Thousands of people living homeless in tents on our boulevards, parks, and trails. Again, our tax dollars are being invested in these amenities that we can’t use because it’s not safe. Another black hole sucking in our tax dollars with no benefit to us.

Counties, Cities, Townships, and other government entities are required to submit a 10-year comprehensive plan to The Met Council for its approval. They are expected to be in line with and supportive of the overall long-range vision and goals of The Met Council. That’s become hard to do when the vision, the financial support and the beneficiaries become divided. Unity and support are lost.

The Met Council should be required to read and have discussion on all comprehensive plans it requires, and when they approve those plans the Met Council needs to uphold that approval for the duration of the comp plan. The Met Council should not be allowed to make changes that affect counties, cities, and/or townships without approval and discussion with those government entities after the approval of the plan.

The Met Council does not understand the governance and finances of a city vs. a township. They operate very differently, and the townships never fare well because of this lack of key information and resources.

The Met Council is in serious need of re-organization. If a council of sorts is necessary to direct these growth projects, the members should be bi-partisan, **knowledgeable of the assigned project(s)**, and certainly require oversight to keep them on-task and on-budget. Members should not be appointed or elected, but seated on the council based on the knowledge and skill they can bring to the table.

Following is a clear example of changes made to the comprehensive plans of the City of Lake Elmo, Baytown Township and West Lakeland Township.

In the case of Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC), their LTCP was automatically approved by the Met Council without any council member ever opening the front cover to read it, or glance thru it. A large group of residents that would be impacted attended every Met Council meeting relating to the airport changes and asked specifically for a show of hands as to which members read or even looked at the LTCP and none of the members raised a hand. Both Baytown Township and West Lakeland Township submitted a Resolution of Opposition to MAC regarding the expansion of the Lake Elmo Airport in August 2015. In addition, the approved City of Lake Elmo's 2015 comprehensive plan states that they will continue to vigorously oppose all initiatives to broaden the operating capabilities of the Lake Elmo Airport from the existing recreational aviation to corporate or commercial aviation by runway lengthening or other related improvements. The Lake Elmo City Council unanimously adopted a Motion advising MAC that the city endorses no additional hangar or runway development during the planning period to 2024. However, The Met Council moved their vote forward with 100% in favor of the plan to expand the Lake Elmo Airport runways and relocate the main runway 700 feet east, putting the path of arrivals and departures directly over homes.

By ignoring the resolutions from the townships and the Lake Elmo's comp plan, and passing this MAC Project, the Met Council stripped the townships and city of their only means of voicing their opposition to this expansion. This is why The Met Council requires reorganization, clarity on its structure and purpose, and serious oversight on the projects it serves. It also needs a civics lesson on the governance procedures of those they are supposed to represent.

Like the Met Council, the Metropolitan Airports Commission is another group – not a government agency -who is notorious for overstepping its bounds and deliberately clouding issues to achieve their personal goals. It is in dire need of reorganization. Please make it happen!

Sincerely,

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