

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL
390 North Robert Street, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Wednesday, March 7, 2012

3:30 p.m.

Members Present: Chair Susan Haigh, Steven Chávez, John Doan, Steve Elkins, Richard Kramer, Edward Reynoso, Lona Schreiber, Roxanne Smith, Gary Van Eyll, Wendy Wulff

Members Absent: James Brimeyer, Jon Commers, Gary Cunningham, Adam Duininck, Harry Melander, Jennifer Munt, Sandra Rummel

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Chair Haigh called the Committee of the Whole to order at 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 7, 2012.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved by Reynoso, seconded by Van Eyll to approve the agenda for the meeting of March 7, 2012. **Motion Carried**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Van Eyll, seconded by Kramer to approve the minutes for the meeting of February 21, 2012. **Motion Carried.**

1. Regional Development Framework Update – Framing Presentations

- *University of Minnesota (UMN), Humphrey School of Public Affairs*

Carissa Schively Slotterback, Associate Professor

Ms. Slotterback presented information on the analysis of 5 regional sustainability plans. She explained the regional content and approaches to regional planning. The Regional Framework should be a reflection of trends and local priorities and implementation strategies. The framework should indicate who has authority and who will provide leadership. Ms. Slotterback stressed the opportunities for engagement, and the challenges of changing development patterns. Ms. Slotterback asked the committee to think beyond statutory authority of the specific system plans, suggesting more integration, look at intersections across systems. She gave an example of Chicago's Metro 2040 plan which included themes of Livable Communities and regional mobility, beyond CMAP's authority. The two points emphasized are:

1. Identify system plan approach – regional priority, resources for communities, and coordinated implementation

2. Ask & listen beyond public hearings – engage communities and the public, day long meetings on sustainability, outreach and engagement efforts – engage and network with stakeholders via websites, social media, daily/weekly communications. Produce an attractive and inspiring plan that represents the aspirations and innovations of the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Ms. Slotterback thanked the committee for the opportunity to speak and asked if there were any questions.

Elkins asked if the PowerPoints will be available and staff answered yes.

Chair Haigh asked which engagement plan really nailed it.

Ms. Slotterback responded Chicago had the total package; a lot of resources, very attractive, and accessible via kiosks, online tools, and social media.

Elkins commented that TAB's plan focused on intersection of systems.

Doan requested more clarification on the implementation Chicago's plan.

Ms. Schively stated the implementation was a challenge, the content consists of major sections; actions, advocacy groups, roles beyond authority and SEMAC functioning as MPO.

Chair Haigh urged the committee to move on to the next speaker.

- *Transit for Livable Communities*

- **Barb Thoman, Executive Director**

Barb Thoman gave the committee a brief introduction of her organization Transit for Livable Communities stating it conducts research, education, and organizing to increase transportation options. They manage the federal program BWTC which expanded the network of routes and programs to make bicycling and walking safe and convenient options. They have a membership of 10,000.

The trends she acknowledged for new frameworks are due to differing social and economic environments; long commutes, more seniors and millennials, reduced property values, widening gap between rich and poor, families spending more on transportation than housing. She offered three strategies.

1. Be specific and measure results, the current plan is lacking in specificity. The new framework should identify priority growth areas on a map; suburban downtowns, regional centers, LRT and bus transit station areas, main streets and identify the percentage of growth. Once the new framework identifies high priority growth areas, with the new transportation policy should map out the investments needed to make those developments work best – local road networks, sidewalks and trail connections. The regional benchmarks are good in the current plan and should be updated. She suggested starting with the HUD sustainable matrix which outlines decreasing per capita VMT and increasing the percentage of low income households with transit access to employment centers.

2. Align transportation and land use investments

This strategy will help local governments, employers, and the region achieve more equitable and cost effective growth. She applauded Bill Hargis, chair of TAB for rewriting the funding criteria. For too long this funding allocation has subsidized growth at the edge of the region. She suggested consulting with other cities on their 2040 plan, such as Salt Lake City. It's critical that MnDOT investments are consistent with the regional vision like Salt Lake City. A new vision of compact growth won't succeed if MnDOT is prioritizing growth at new interchanges and subsidizing the longest commutes by adding lanes to our already large highway system. All regional investments need to be aligned; transportation, housing, sewers, and parks.

3. Sell the vision and provide new tools

Expand transit options, and better connections to bicycling and walking. Too many good development ideas died due to transit issues. Without these transportation options, new growth means more traffic. She gave an example of how Los Angeles with a voter approved ½ cent regional sales tax; the county is turning a city of 10 lane freeways into a city of transit.

Provide new tools and technical assistance for communities and neighborhoods. Communities new help implementing best practices in street parking, and measure rates of bicycling and walking.

A recent Chamber of Commerce poll indicated that nearly 70% of respondents want to ride transit more, and there is a 1,500 person waiting list for senior housing along the Central Corridor, and a 52% increase in bicycling since 2007.

Ms. Thoman repeated the three main themes and thanked the committee for this opportunity to speak.

The committee had no questions.

▪ *Envision Minnesota*

Sally Wakefield, Executive Director

Sally Wakefield of Envision Minnesota, formerly 1000 Friends of Minnesota, stated she is encouraged by the draft vision, commenting it helps Minnesota grow without wrecking the place. The vision is living close to jobs and schools, and the vision offers strategies for different scales.

Ms. Wakefield explained the challenges with this opportunity of providing more access, sustainability; use what already exists vs new development, preserves

affordability with more dense development. This is a reverse of the trends of outward expansion, consuming more land and costly infrastructure. Families were moving out further to get more bang for their housing buck. Need new strategies for housing near transit, and better connections between jobs and transit options.

Ms. Wakefield commented household sizes are shrinking, and aging populations want to remain in their communities. She suggests creating attractive mixed use development, which will attract a talented workforce. Explain the benefits to people, and bring people into the process. Involve people in as many public dialogues as possible.

In summary Ms. Wakefield encouraged the committee to:

- Retain strategies that “Support land-use patterns that efficiently connect housing, jobs, retail centers and civic uses within and among neighborhoods.”
- Encourage the preservation and reuse of existing assets
- Target new growth in the core and in proximity to transit accessibility - increase densities when possible
- Focus on investments that align systems and realize multiple benefits (cost savings, connectivity, attractive to business and talent)
- Involve as much public dialogue as possible to build support among diverse constituencies
- Identify, measure and report outcomes to increase trust
- Provide technical assistance and incentives to help local governments adopt and adapt framework strategies

Chair Haigh asked if the committee had any questions.

Smith asked if increased density lowered school costs.

Ms. Wakefield responded with higher density comes more access.

▪ *Metro Cities*

Patricia Nauman, Executive Director

Patricia Nauman introduced herself to the committee and explained Metro Cities is a partner, liaison and watchdog of the Metropolitan Council and in collaboration supports public services, partnerships, and constituents.

The first major issue Ms. Nauman addressed is shifts in demographics, the changing needs in transportation, housing and the diminishing resources. The lack of vision affects all stakeholders and reduced regional competitiveness. The resources are out of synch with need.

Ms. Nauman commented the 2030 Framework has some good themes, and important benchmarks; Central Corridor, water supply, Livable Communities monies, Livable housing goals.

Themes for the new vision; better identification of resources, goals, benchmarks, and developed areas need more attention. The new vision should include a housing section, working as a partner with state and regional governments. The Metropolitan Council's roles should be flexible, providing strength and resources.

Flexibility is necessary with shifting demographics, and economic development. She suggests working with DEED and other stakeholders focusing on resources and leveraging marketing bodies, link transit to good jobs. Core cities lost a lot of jobs, focus on replacing those jobs. And broaden goals, levy increases, and more linkage to LCA funds. She strongly encouraged partnerships with regional and local governments, stating the scrutiny of the Council is at an all time high.

Chair Haigh questioned the remark "all time high"

Ms. Nauman continued encouraged a higher buy-in from stakeholders, strong communication, and flexibility.

She suggested a more streamlined Comprehensive plan process; avoid duplications, and to be more accommodating to cities. She offered advice to the committee to reach and inspire, stating the Metropolitan Council's functions are siloed, focus on primary sources of information and support. Keep the regional vision in the fore-front.

Chair Haigh asked for questions.

Chávez recommends increasing levies for LCA.

Nauman supports flexibility and increased funding.

Elkins suggested a comprehensive needs study.

Nauman remarked one stop shopping would be wonderful. Must see the needs of the region as a whole, how does the Council meet needs? Usually done in pieces.

Chair Haigh asked for an example of local needs.

Nauman responded to the Chair she will submit examples for the committee at a later date.

Doan asked for the examples to include the counties.

Ms. Nauman stated we represent the 7 counties, and the collar counties are engaged, she suggests non-threatening engagement of outer counties, and to reduce leap frog development.

Doan commented census data includes Wisconsin, what are the impacts regarding transportation for example the St Croix Bridge.

Ms. Nauman responded that is an impact of sprawl, we need to get a handle on transportation issues.

Elkins stated that is an example of the partnership of Metro Cities and the Metropolitan Council, providing regional forums, increasing communications, serve as facilitators, and address reform issues.

- *ISAIAH*

- **Lars Negstad, Strategic Campaigns Coordinator**

Mr. Lars Negstad introduced himself to the committee and described his organization as faith based organization focused on health, education, and housing. He explained were not policy experts, we value people and reduce barriers. He had 3 points to express to the committee.

1. Creating racial and economic equity

Mr. Negstad stated Minnesota has the worse racial disparities in the nation. In the 7 county Metro area there is a \$50,000 income gap between black and white residents. The disparities continue in homeownership rates, 30% black household own their home compared to 81% of white households own their own home. And mortgage lending discrimination, African Americans are five times more likely to receive subprime loans than whites. In the Twin Cities, a white family earning \$39,000 is more likely to receive a mortgage than an African American family earning \$157,000.

2. Examine and assess policies

Mr. Negstad asked how to do create racial equity, it is a tough conversation. To shape the path to healthy, equitable and livable communities' policies have to focus on investments in marginalized communities, access/benefits for all, and growing together, integrating and connecting communities. This requires courage, enforcement of existing policies, and new decision making should focus on equity for all.

3. Measure outcomes

Mr. Negstad last point is to measure outcomes, but what do you value? To just change any given policy without reassessing the values, is only partially successful. We need to unmask barriers in order to achieve racial and economic equity. We need to work with Council members, incorporate need and measureable goals into the framework. Mr. Negstad concluded by stating ISAIAH values collaboration, this Regional Framework is an incredible opportunity to take the lead and unite us.

Chair Haigh asked the committee for questions.

Schreiber commented that what we measure is what we value is the message in the Framework.

- *Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce*

- **Todd Klingel, President**

Mr. Todd Klingel introduced himself to the committee and started his presentation asking what are the major issues and challenges facing the region. And we all have the same goal; prosperity. Prosperous cities have robust transit systems, diverse housing options, healthy colleges, and they retain and attract talented workforce. Mr. Klingel commented the workforce is a factor in the Regional Development Framework; with increased transit use, reduce household sizes, people are ready to invest in public transit. 76% of voters agree to expand transit, which attract employers increasing the value of a growing transit system. He suggest building out transit systems now which will save money on future infrastructure.

The criteria Mr. Klingel explained is with changes in driving trends, many Minnesotans are already using transit, biking and walking and desires walkable neighborhoods. The Chamber of Commerce is focused on building a region, want collar cities to be part of the region, for example Sherburne was the first to get involved, and we continue focusing on the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul area.

He thanked the committee and there were no questions.

- *Trust for Public Land*

- **Jenna Fletcher, Program Manager**

- Ms. Fletcher introduced herself to the committee and her organization. We are a national non-profit that conserves land for people to enjoy as parks, gardens, and other natural places, ensuring livable communities for generations to come. Not only do we facilitate park and natural area real estate transactions, we provide research through our Center for City Park Excellence and Center for Conservation Economics. In Minnesota, we work statewide, both in Greater Minnesota and in the metro region, in urban, suburban and rural park making projects (Prior presenters and Steve Berg's Metrospective's report) nicely lay out the changing demographics and economics that are creating market demand for location-efficient development, which entails infill development and higher density.

The major challenge for this 2040 Regional Development Framework is to examine Met Council's policies and programs to determine if they meet the changing regional situation in guiding future growth, and more specific to our interests in parks and trails and natural resource protection, the challenge is to ensure the Framework helps guide the Regional Parks System towards meeting these changing needs.

As you likely know, parks and trails are at the very top of "single most attractive" feature of Met Council's Annual Resident Survey (2005-2009) for the last 5 years. However, while we currently have an incredible parks system, we cannot rest our laurels. Three demographic changes require a new view of parks: 1) the "millennials" – that large demographic group that will replace the Baby Boomers as the dominant

demographic – will be seeking an active, dense lifestyle, and walkability and access are critically important. 2) the silver tsunami are seeking increased parks and trails. 3) increasing populations of color who want different park features. Given these evolving changes, it is critical that Met Council think about the Parks System in a new way.

We need to reframe our thinking about parks: our regional park system is more than just quality of life amenities that provide recreation. More and more, parks are the green infrastructure that generates economic development, stormwater management benefits, and trails can be more than recreational, but also transportation.

In 2001, Dallas was jolted by a decision unlike any other before. The Boeing Company chose to move its headquarters to Chicago rather than Dallas. Chicago was chosen because the city had been greening its riverfront. In Dallas, Boeing saw a stagnant city center, a place that Boeing did not want to call home for its new corporate headquarters. The decision was a wake-up call for Dallas' city officials and a new emphasis was placed on revitalizing their downtown, with particular interest in urban parks. In response, the city of Dallas instituted a Renaissance Plan, and raised \$45 million to implement it.

We want to avoid the Twin Cities from facing a similar situation.

Where we are today: Our current regional park system is weighted towards rural and suburban communities. Our analysis shows that less than 20% of current regional park and regional trail acres are in urban areas (defined as core cities and the 21 communities that surround them), compared to 32% in suburban communities and 50% in rural. (Note: we adjusted the park reserve acreage in the same manner as performed by fund allocation) The key point is that, esp. in light of the changing demographics and the need to be regionally competitive, urban residents should have equal access to regional parks as suburban and rural communities.

The Met Council oversees infrastructure in the metro area...but we argue it is more than sewers and roads/transit – it includes parks. Infrastructure investments promote economic development. Urban parks help maximize return on investment in infrastructure, because of the private investment that they spur. The goal of government is increasingly working to maximize public benefit from public investments in infrastructure, including parks. With that goal in mind, we feel that there should be concurrent park investments with transitway investments.

So, we suggest that the 2040 Framework puts more emphasis on the value and role of parks as economic drivers integral to the region, and ultimately, to regional competitiveness. This entails thinking differently about green space. While we need to big parks and park reserves, it is just as important to have regionally important park and green space in more urban areas, as respites close to where people live in

higher density, to help manage stormwater, and to drive regional economic competitiveness.

In addition, we believe the 2040 Framework should promote alignment and leverage as unifying, organizing themes. More specifically, that could take the form of cross-silo, e.g. cross-system” approaches that provide multiple benefits. Why wouldn’t we want projects that give a “two-fer” or “three-for” (when you get two things for the effort and cost of one). For example, initiatives and programs should encourage transit and/or housing proposals that include complementary parks, trails and open space.

Green infrastructure is critical to balanced growth in our region. Accommodating regional growth in compact mixed use developments rather than low density, single use developments should be the future direction. And when density increases, the need for parks, trail and open space also increase. The question is, how do metro communities assure that funds and land are available as density increases? Need to consider urban parks as part of the framework strategies for urban infill areas. In a move in the right direction, we have seen a trend in park dedication ordinances that are moving towards density based calculations. Should we think about the regional park system policies and funding based on density? This would require more creative thinking about how to create parks in denser infill situations, near transit. We feel that as the region invests in transit and housing in higher density areas of the metropolitan region, there should be concurrent investment in new and expanded urban parks and trails that complement these investments.

There are examples and opportunities for parks and green space that are cropping up.

Did you know, that there is a vision for a linear park from central business district to the Mississippi River?

Did you know, that there is a vision for a urban farm called Frogtown Farm and Park, which is close to the Central Corridor and could provide an underserved neighborhood with an important amenity.

In summary, we’re hopeful that the 2040 Framework will:

- 1) Think about our investments, including park investments, as part of developing a competitive region for the future.
- 2) Encourage cross-system, cross-jurisdictional approaches that reinforce parks and trails’ investments concurrent with transit, other investments

- 3) Accommodating regional growth in compact mixed use developments rather than low density developments should be the future direction. And when density increases, the need for parks, trail and open space also increase.

We stand ready to support Met Council, and to roll up our sleeves and work with the staff and Council members. We can bring real examples of park needs in higher density areas.

Chair Haigh commented she is excited about acquisition of the Wilder site.

Ms. Fletcher stated it is a 12 acre parcel.

Doan asked how to get developers to develop near regional systems.

Ms. Fletcher commented developers want to develop near parks, and accessible amenities.

Van Eyll alerted the committee to a changing demographics and the upcoming "Silver Tsunami".

Ms. Fletcher stated visitors 65 and older have increased needs and preferences for the regional park system.

Chair Haigh thanked all the stakeholders for speaking to the committee.

2. Response and reflection on today's framing presentations

Chair Haigh asked the committee for input on today's presentations.

Chair Haigh thanked all the stakeholders for speaking to the committee.

Van Eyll commented the Metropolitan Council is not working with people as well as we should. We may not always agree but must work together.

Chair Haigh stated we've raised a lot of questions, no answers yet.

Doan remarked this is the one year anniversary of this new committee, and they have used this year to understand the issues. He thanked staff and leadership for this opportunity. He also appreciates the list of stakeholders; we want to hear from people, and for them to be involved in the process.

Chair Haigh commented for the need to see value, and need from a regional perspective. The stakeholders are a great resource, and we have a lot of partners to create and communicate strategies.

Elkins stated the theme should be the need to work with intersection of systems.

Chair Haigh asked regarding the assessment process, what would you like to happen?

Doan asked about the cost and risk of doing nothing? This is an opportunity to do a risk assessment.

Chair Haigh suggested some scenario planning.

Wulff asked about the cost of different densities with Livable Communities projects.

Does increased density cost more per unit? She suggested an internal look at the process, and find the best uses of dollars to maximize benefits.

Chair Haigh asked the committee members to submit their written responses to the stakeholders' presentations to staff.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business. Noted the next meeting on March 21th will start at 3:30

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Wenner, Recording Secretary