

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

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Wednesday, July 18, 2012

4:00PM

Members Present: Chair Susan Haigh, Steven Chávez, Richard Kramer, Gary Van Eyll, Lona Schreiber, Wendy Wulff, Edward Reynoso, Jon Commers, Steven Elkins, James Brimeyer, Adam Duininck, Jennifer Munt, John Đoàn, Sandra Rummel

Members Absent: Roxanne Smith, Gary Cunningham, Harry Melander

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Chair Haigh called the Committee of the Whole to order at 4:06PM on Wednesday, July 18, 2012.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved by Reynoso, seconded by Chávez to approve the agenda for the July 18, 2012 meeting of the Committee of the Whole.

Motion Carried

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Van Eyll, seconded by Wulff to approve the minutes of the June 20, 2012 meeting of the Committee of the Whole.

Thrive MSP 2040

Chair Haigh announced that she has appointed a group of Council members to serve as region-wide Council spokespeople for the Thrive MSP 2040 project. The Thrive MSP 2040 Working Group includes Gary Van Eyll (chair), Steven Chávez, Jon Commers, Sandra Rummel, and Lona Schreiber. They will meet twice a month with Council staff to review Thrive MSP 2040 policy issues prior to their discussion at Committee of the Whole meetings. They will also work with a small group of members from the Corridors of Opportunity Policy Board to develop substantive policy recommendations for Thrive MSP 2040, focusing on the policy areas on economic development, housing (including the Fair Housing and Equity Assessment) and transit way development.

1. Inspiration and learning from regional planning efforts across the country—Mariia Zimmerman, principal, MZ Strategies, LLC, and former Deputy Director of HUD's Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities

Mariia Zimmerman has nearly twenty years of experience working with transit-oriented development, federal agencies, and in congressional offices. She now operates MZ Strategies, LLC which provides strategic assistance on infrastructure, housing, and development matters to policy makers, practitioners, and community leaders working to create thriving, inclusive communities.

For the past three years, the federal administration has been engaged in the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, which includes HUD, DOT, and EPA. The 6 federal livability principles are: provide more transportation choices; promote equitable, affordable housing; enhance economic competitiveness; support existing communities; coordinate policies and leverage investment; value communities and neighborhoods. No single federal agency owned any of these principles. The principles were created to inform at the federal level how funding decisions, how rules, regulations, etc. could be better aligned and interpreted by those three federal agencies. In this effort to look at better coordination, there was a keen understanding that increasingly regions were developing regional strategies, but 99.5% of federal programs are not regional. Most federal funding goes to the state, some goes directly to cities, a little bit goes to counties, and a tiny bit goes to metropolitan planning organizations (through the transportation program). The question that was asked then was how can the federal level programs better support regional action? Regional transportation planning is being coordinated with access to housing and opportunity. The public needs to have a better sense of the return on investments, so performance measures and locally defined outcomes are key. We want to make sure we are creating resilient regions with economies that are built to last.

Commonalities across regional efforts: led by regional agency but focus beyond traditional authority; strong private sector partners; equity is explicit; building upon past planning efforts; dynamic and transparent (celebrate milestones and create dashboards); public leadership and local support; economic competitiveness in the global market.

The Met Council has several planning efforts underway which may be difficult for the public to distinguish. The efforts need to be aligned and the public needs to be involved.

Chair Haigh asked, what are the things we should watch out for to prevent us from getting mired down? Mariia answered that public fatigue is one thing to be aware of. She encouraged the Council to set milestones and celebrate them along the way.

CM Brimeyer asked for clarification on "affordability redefined." Mariia stated that HUD is funding an effort that is looking at affordability in terms of housing and transportation. Housing and transportation are the top two expenses for most households in America.

2. The Metropolitan Council and the Metropolitan Land Planning Act—David Theisen, Deputy General Counsel

Dave previously gave this presentation at the Community Development Committee. The purpose of his presentation is to give an understanding of what the Council's statutory framework says, where the strengths are, and what kind of impact it has on the Thrive MSP 2040 plan. The Metropolitan Council was created in order to coordinate the planning and development

of the metropolitan area. At that time, the Metropolitan Council was required to develop a metropolitan development guide, which consists of (according to statute) a compilation of policy statements, goals, standards, programs, and maps that prescribe guides for orderly and economic development, both public and private, of the metropolitan area. In connection with that enactment, local governments were required to develop local comprehensive plans that were consistent with the guide. In 1967, legislation also required cities to submit those plans to the Metropolitan Council for review. At that time the Council's review authority was limited to written comments and recommendations. In 1976, the Metropolitan Land Planning Act was enacted, which gave the Council some real authority to advise cities on regional planning and require them to modify their plans if necessary. In 1995, cities were required to start reviewing their comprehensive plans at least once every ten years to ensure conformity with metropolitan system plans and review fiscal devices and local controls (cannot conflict with the cities' comprehensive plans). The Metropolitan Council can mandate plan modifications if they have a "substantial impact on or contain a substantial departure from metropolitan system plans." Cities have nine months to modify their plans.

3. Discussion

CM Brimeyer asked Theisen whether the Council has ever taken civil action against a city. Theisen stated that, to his knowledge, the answer is no. CM Brimeyer also asked what "fiscal devices" meant. Theisen stated that he did not have the official definition in front of him, but basically it would be something like a tiff.

CM Commers asked if the term "substantial impact" was defined in state law or if it was a policy definition at the Council level. Theisen stated that it is not defined in state law, but there are examples in the Council's policy.

CM Munt asked Theisen how the Council would hold cities accountable if affordable housing isn't a system plan. Theisen said that the Council has flexibility when it comes to LCA funds and grants, and in regard to density.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 5:32PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Randleman
Recording Secretary