

Comments to the Met Council Committee of the Whole by Russ Adams, Executive Director, Alliance for Metropolitan Stability

I've been observing the Met Council since 1995. This will be the 4th regional growth planning process I've responded to. I learned two early lessons in this work ...

1. **Sewer is Destiny**
2. **Land Use is a Social Justice Issue**

And together, we are learning a new lesson ...

3. **Advancing Equity and Making our Region Economically Competitive are two sides of the same coin.** They are mutually reinforcing. More on that in a moment ...

The Growth Plans

Let me first acknowledge how we've progressed in the last 15+ years in terms of Regional Growth Planning

1. housing types and preferences have evolved and changed dramatically – in 1996, 60% of our region's housing was single family detached; 40% attached. That figure flipped many years ago.
2. the startling emergence of rail corridors and TOD
3. the fact that density doesn't have to be a "four letter word" anymore
4. the recognition that integrating policy and investments across government jurisdictions has got to be part of a unified growth strategy moving ahead
5. the success of LCA demonstration projects for gaining a foothold in the Twin Cities metro area for testing new forms of growth models and place making strategies
6. bike and pedestrian trails are a spectacular success - You probably know that in 2010, Minneapolis was named the number 1 bicycling community in the country, but did you know that more women bike in the Twin Cities than any other part of the country? And nobody knows exactly why?

And we know there's still room for improvement , for example ...

1. Our overall densities are still relatively low – it's difficult to save on infrastructure costs and better serve people with transit if we don't progress in this area
2. It's troubling that compact housing developments, especially those that have an affordability component, are still meeting local resistance
3. The troubling mismatch between workers, job growth and housing location, particularly for the urban core
4. And it's still difficult to talk about race, yet how critical it is to consider race if we want to better understand current trends and where we are heading as a region

The Met Council sent a very important signal early on in 2011: it reaffirmed Economic Development as a core priority for the Met Council

I commented on this in our Fall 2011 newsletter, Common Ground: *“There is a growing seriousness about equity from public sector leaders in our region. The Met Council has an opportunity to lay the groundwork for how cities and counties coordinate with workforce trainers to ensure women and people of color have access to jobs building our regional infrastructure. If you’re going to say economic development is a priority, workforce development has to be in the Regional Development Framework and we have to find creative ways to make it work.”*

For example, the *Corridors of Opportunity’s* interest in major institutions along our regional transitways (Ed’s & Med’s), and their purchasing and procurement power are a good starting point for making the connection between Equity and Economic Opportunity.

We are becoming more willing to explore racial and economic equity issues. 280 people attended an Equity forum we cosponsored with the Met Council and the Northwest Areas Foundation and our Community Engagement Team partners. 175 persons from the Twin Cities, by far the largest regional delegation, attended a national conference on Equity in Detroit last November.

Affirming Equity.

So, there are strong signs that our region’s decision makers wish to anchor their efforts with an eye towards equitable outcomes. That includes getting serious about designing public participation processes that are more inclusive of underrepresented communities. This needs to be encouraged. The Chicago regional growth plan may point the way on how to engage the public more effectively – recommendations on best practices will also be provided to you from our Community Engagement partner groups working on the Corridors of Opportunity initiative.

Carissa Schively Slotterback’s blog on her study:

http://blogs.planning.org/sustainability/2012/02/15/a-new-focus-on-sustainable-regions/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=a-new-focus-on-sustainable-regions

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning Go to 2040 <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/2040/main>

Racial Disparities

The Twin Cities region has topped several charts in a bad way in terms of racial and cultural achievement gaps in education, employment, health, housing and business enterprise - nationally we are leading on the wrong indicators. Many local institutions are rightly concerned with this, and we've all seen a number of helpful reports that document this problem. (they document institutional practices and processes that produce disparate impacts in communities of color; and they measure the deteriorating conditions in low-income communities and communities of color that have suffered the worst during the economic downturn)

The HIRE MN campaign, which we are a member of, has identified the goal of moving the Twin Cities from Worst to First in terms of our unemployment disparities (where we hold the unfortunate distinction of having the worst gap between white and black workers in the country). They've identified a list of "Sullivan Principles" that public and private institutions can sign on to in support of equitable workforce development strategies. I hope the Met Council will seriously consider supporting these principles. [these are attached to my notes]

Measuring our progress, and having the courage to set goals are two things we must do if we want to truly address this issue.

Thinking about how advancing equity helps people to reach their full potential, and in turn the untapped full potential of our region's economic engine is, as Chair Haigh has said, "not only the right thing to do, but the smart thing to do."

- a) The Met Council has stepped up on this by leveraging its contracting and investment power to yield more equitable outcomes. Like on the Central Corridor Light Rail project, where a commitment has been made to meet hiring goals for women and minority workers. In the process, you are helping to diversify the construction field while opening up good paying career pathways for a new generation of workers.
- b) You've also made a commitment to apply this approach to new sewer line construction. You see, you've also learned that Sewer is Destiny.

Beyond Disparities

It is equally important for us to figure out how to move from merely recognizing disparities in our region to identifying strategies for addressing them and implementing these policies and practices.

Those of us interested in policy reform and implementation also will soon have to grapple with "disparity fatigue." And because several of these disparity stories have been with us for multiple years, we run the danger that the media, the public and policy makers will become tired of hearing about seemingly intractable problems that don't seem to offer easy or immediate solutions. We have to be mindful that how we talk about these issues, and how we frame our solutions, will need constant adjustment and strategic thinking in order to overcome the "fatigue" issue.

At some point we will need to pivot the conversation, from solely focusing on racial disparities to identifying next steps, while not walking away from the core equity issues. We have a number of outstanding local and national resources at our disposal for thinking about how to move the needle on tackling inequity while lighting a positive pathway that emphasizes growth, the untapped human potential in communities that have been left behind, new opportunity, prosperity and the chance for all people to attain economic and educational success.

Our task as business leaders, citizens, advocates, funders, public officials and agency staff is to ***help people to find ways to have honest conversations about these equity issues, openly weigh the real life tradeoffs and implications, and forge a better way forward.***

EJ Communities Along Rail Transitway Corridors

It's important that as the Met Council moves forward working with its agency partners on building out and expanding our rail corridor network, that it find ways to identify and reach out to Environmental Justice communities. Anticipating adverse impacts on these communities is not just the right thing to do, it's expected by the FTA.

WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE?

There are three fundamental environmental justice principles:

1. To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations.
2. To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.
3. To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

[from FHWA FTA Environmental Justice <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/ej2000.htm>]

And lifting up and helping these communities to attain a prosperous future is not just the equitable thing to do, it doesn't just secure our shared future, it's a down payment on our economy.

Economic Development/Widening Diversity/Future Needs

We know that the economic downturn has exacerbated existing racial disparities. While our state's demographics are changing (people of color make up 20% of our region), there is still work to do to educate a majority-white population about the need to specifically address race when designing public policies that create jobs or invest in training. ***But a deficits-only analysis may miss one of the most startling transformations occurring in our region's largest suburbs***, which became much more diverse in the last decade, with many cities reflecting populations of color that are in range from 12% to 53% of the population and this trend will have significant cultural and civic implications in the years ahead.

[see Attachment A: Regional Diversity]

We should be talking about leveraging the strength that diversity gives our region and individual communities – economically, culturally and socially:

- How can station area planning along the SW LRT corridor identify business incubator opportunities, as is being done in Eden Prairie with one of our Community Engagement grantees?
- Where is the next commercial corridor revitalization going to happen in our region?

This is why tying together the notion of **Growth** that's focused on ***improving Community & Economic Development prospects*** with the ***demographic certainty of our emerging Diversity*** can be a powerful tool towards addressing ***the areas and the people*** that have been left behind by the new economy. Think of it as Growing our Future, Together.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Russ Adams

Alliance for Metropolitan Stability

POPULATION CHANGE FOR MINNESOTA'S 36 LARGEST CITIES, 2000-2010

[Excerpted]

View: Population change for Minnesota's largest cities, 2000-2010

Description: Census 2010 data

Date: March 17, 2011

Subject(s): Demography; Census 2010

Creator(s): Minnesota Department of Administration. Office of Geographic and Demographic Analysis. Office of the State Demographer
Publisher: Minnesota Department of Administration. Geographic and Demographic Analysis Division.Contact: Tom Gillaspay, 651-201-2461; State Demographer

City	2000	2010	Change 2000-2010	% Change 2000-2010	2010 Minority Population	% Minority
Minneapolis	382,747	382,578	-169	0.0%	151,928	39.7%
St. Paul	286,840	285,068	-1,772	-0.6%	125,631	44.1%
Rochester	85,806	106,769	20,963	24.4%	22,161	20.8%
Duluth	86,319	86,265	-54	-0.1%	9,081	10.5%
Bloomington	85,172	82,893	-2,279	-2.7%	18,919	22.8%
Brooklyn Park	67,388	75,781	8,393	12.5%	37,833	49.9%
Plymouth	65,894	70,576	4,682	7.1%	12,336	17.5%
St. Cloud	59,111	65,842	6,731	11.4%	10,988	16.7%
Eagan	63,557	64,206	649	1.0%	13,340	20.8%
Woodbury	46,463	61,961	15,498	33.4%	12,945	20.9%
Maple Grove	50,365	61,567	11,202	22.2%	9,345	15.2%
Coon Rapids	61,607	61,476	-131	-0.2%	9,617	15.6%
Eden Prairie	54,901	60,797	5,896	10.7%	12,143	20.0%

City	2000	2010	Change 2000-2010	% Change 2000-2010	2010 Minority Population	% Minority
Burnsville	60,220	60,306	86	0.1%	15,743	26.1%
Blaine	45,014	57,186	12,172	27.0%	10,134	17.7%
Lakeville	43,128	55,954	12,826	29.7%	7,097	12.7%
Winnetonka	51,102	49,734	-1,368	-2.7%	5,653	11.4%
Apple Valley	45,527	49,084	3,557	7.8%	9,122	18.6%
Edina	47,425	47,941	516	1.1%	6,406	13.4%
St. Louis Park	44,102	45,250	1,148	2.6%	8,505	18.8%
Mankato	32,427	39,309	6,882	21.2%	4,653	11.8%
Moorhead	32,177	38,065	5,888	18.3%	4,493	11.8%
Maplewood	35,258	38,018	2,760	7.8%	10,420	27.4%
Shakopee	20,568	37,076	16,508	80.3%	9,532	25.7%
Richfield	34,310	35,228	918	2.7%	12,968	36.8%
Cottage Grove	30,582	34,589	4,007	13.1%	5,678	16.4%
Inver Grove Heights	29,751	33,880	4,129	13.9%	6,329	18.7%
Roseville	33,690	33,660	-30	-0.1%	6,960	20.7%
Andover	26,588	30,598	4,010	15.1%	2,428	7.9%
Brooklyn Center	29,172	30,104	932	3.2%	16,289	54.1%
Winona	27,069	27,592	523	1.9%	2,204	8.0%
Oakdale	26,653	27,378	725	2.7%	5,720	20.9%
Fridley	27,449	27,208	-241	-0.9%	7,588	27.9%
Savage	21,115	26,911	5,796	27.4%	5,121	19.0%
Owatonna	22,434	25,599	3,165	14.1%	3,427	13.4%
Shoreview	25,924	25,043	-881	-3.4%	3,487	13.9%

