

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

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Wednesday, June 20, 2012

4:00PM

Members Present: Chair Susan Haigh, Steven Chávez, Richard Kramer, Roxanne Smith, Gary Van Eyll, Lona Schreiber, Wendy Wulff, Harry Melander, Edward Reynoso, Jon Commers, Steven Elkins, James Brimeyer, Adam Duininck

Members Absent: Jennifer Munt, Gary Cunningham, John Đoàn, Sandra Rummel

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Chair Haigh called the Committee of the Whole to order at 4:03PM on Wednesday, June 20, 2012.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved by Chávez, seconded by Wulff to approve the agenda for the June 20, 2012 meeting of the Committee of the Whole.

Motion Carried

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Council members expressed a desire to have more time to review the meeting minutes.

Thrive MSP 2040

1. Peer Cities and Regions:

- **Setting the Stage: Snapshot and Context—John Kari**
One year ago, John Kari and Ann Beckman gave a presentation on the 2030 regional framework, and received questions from the Council regarding how the region compares to others in terms of policies, policy implementation, issues, etc. This presentation is a result of that request. Overall, Minnesota has a very strong economy. We are doing better than one would expect given our ranking in terms of our population. The metro area is the economic engine for the state, as well as an education and service center.
There are three basic questions we want to look at as we listen to these presentations: how do we compare, who are our peers, and what can we start learning from others?
The study was started in January along with the Land Use Advisory Committee, chaired by CM Commers.
In terms of regional parks, we are peerless. The closest peer would be San Francisco, but the Twin Cities region is really a trailblazer for the country.

The Met Council is a unique organization that has not been directly copied anywhere in the country. Different states have different constitutions, different histories, and so forth. If you look at the governance structure and the organization and when they were formed, there is a lot of difference. The economy also has a big impact on organizations. Cities and regions are influenced by what the economy was doing at the time they were established and how they have grown. In many ways, we are at the cusp of the west and we are the last remains of the east in terms of the influence of the economy. We are a unique place.

When comparing our region with others, we can come up with different peers depending on the topic: economy, population, etc. In regard to socioeconomic status, we use the same peers, but when we look at environmental services and transportation, we have different peer groups.

- **Environmental Services: Peer Cities Comparisons—Judy Sventek**
ES looked at peer cities in relation to our core business areas: operating/owning wastewater systems; planning and coordinating activities related to water supply and surface water management. There were 7 peers that ES identified: Cleveland (NE Ohio Regional Sewer District which covers the greater Cleveland area), Cincinnati (Metro Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati), Hampton Roads (a regional sanitary planning district in Virginia that represents 16 local governments in the Chesapeake Bay area), King County (assumed authority in 1994 for Seattle and 34 local jurisdictions), Milwaukee (Metropolitan Sewage District which is a regional governmental agency that represents 28 communities, including the greater Milwaukee area), Phoenix, and Portland.
Cities on the NACWA (Nat'l Assoc. of Clean Water Agencies) list were also considered potentially one our peers. Some of the other criteria for selecting our peers included their net operating revenue, their population served, the nature of their service (most wastewater treatment agencies in NACWA are retailers—about 80%, and about 20% are wholesalers; on our list of 7 there are 2 wholesalers—Milwaukee and Seattle), system capacity, similar topography, and the receiving water that they discharge into (most were rivers).
Council members asked to see the comparisons per capita, as well as residential compared to commercial areas.
- **Peer City Assessment: Transportation Planning and Performance—Cole Hiniker and Connie Kozlak**
Transportation has been using their measures to do a yearly analysis of the transportation system for at least the past 15 years (due to legislative requirements).
In 2012 and 2013, Transportation is working on the Transportation System Performance Evaluation. It is required by the legislature and should be carried out before any major update to the TPP (Transportation Policy Plan). The TPP will be updated in 2014.

Transportation is also working on a technical look at performance measurements in general and how to incorporate more performance measurements into the policy plan.

The National Transit Database was used to gather transit statistics and data. The Texas Transportation Institute is used to gather highway data. We have the second largest bus ridership of all of our peer regions. As the light rail expands, we can expect some of our bus ridership to shift to rail. From 2001 to 2010, some of our peers experienced a significant drop in ridership due to the economy. The Twin Cities region had already begun its ridership recovery in 2010, while some of our peers are still working to regain their losses.

We are second in bus system efficiency, and fourth in light rail efficiency.

2. Policy Themes from the Framing Presentations—Denise Engen

Council members requested their reactions to the stakeholder presentations be organized into key themes.

Some of the major themes that were heard from the stakeholders were that the fundamentals of our regional growth strategy are there and they are sound. They also touched on our system benchmarks, our livable communities program, and our ability to keep up with our wastewater services as the population continues to grow. A number of additions, enhancements, suggestions for how we think about things and some ideas regarding our principles and actions were also recommended to us.

We were told that we need regional leadership in a number of areas, but particularly around engaging and acting around a regional vision. We were told that we should think beyond our statutory authority of our region's systems, and that our updated plan needs more integration. We also heard about the need to organize around the ability to have a robust and competitive economy. Livable communities, committing to sustainability and equity, and transportation were also common themes.

The notion of organizing our planning and acting around themes was also a suggestion. We also heard that we should respond to the needs of local communities, and coordinate rather than guide growth.

Valuing and pursuing partnerships was also a very prominent theme.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 5:31PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Randleman
Recording Secretary