

Metro Governance Transparency Initiative

Bringing Greater Public Openness and Stability to the Metropolitan Council

The Metropolitan Council has responsibility and authority to guide the region's growth and to provide important regional services. A strong regional governing body is critical to maintaining and strengthening the vitality of the metropolitan region. Our coalition supports legislation that aligns local governments more closely with the Metropolitan Council, ensuring that the Council is more accountable to the interests of citizens, represents local and regional issues and values more effectively and benefits from continuity in leadership.

About the Proposal

HF 3273 (Rep. Tony Albright, R – Prior Lake)

SF 2809 (Sen. Eric Pratt, R – Prior Lake)

- » In 2011, the Office of the Legislative Auditor recommended an alternative governance model with local elected officials to improve accountability and transparency in regional government.
- » Conforms to Federal Law for MPOs.
- » Modeled after regional governing bodies in other major metropolitan areas (Minnesota's Metropolitan Council is the only one in the nation that is not made up of elected officials).

A Restructured Governance Model: How it Works

- » Conforms Metropolitan Council district boundaries to the seven counties it represents.
- » Respects the current sixteen Metropolitan Council districts within the seven counties.
- » Cities and Townships within each district appoint their own representatives.
- » The Mayors of Minneapolis and Saint Paul each appoint a local elected official to represent their respective city.
- » Each County Board appoints its own representative.
- » Includes four additional ex-officio members to meet Federal Metropolitan Planning Organization requirements (representing MnDOT, public transit, freight, and non-motorized transportation).
- » Expands total membership of the Metropolitan Council to 29 from the current 17.
- » Only requirement of an appointee is that he/she holds an election certificate of some type.
- » One Member. One Vote.
- » The Chair is appointed by and from the members of the Council.
- » Sixty percent super-majority required to adopt systems plans or levy tax dollars.
- » Members serve four-year staggered terms.
- » Effective January 1, 2019.

Communities passing resolutions of support for these principles:

Anoka | Crystal* | Mendota Heights | Blaine | Plymouth* | New Prague | Shakopee | Coon Rapids | Lexington | Chaska
Mound | Chanhassen | Greenwood | Centerville | Andover | Columbus | Lino Lakes | Farmington | Ramsey* | Coates
St. Francis | St. Bonifacius | Prior Lake | Forest Lake | Ham Lake | Jordan | Oak Grove | Hampton | Victoria | Bethel
Elko New Market | Cologne | Watertown | Norwood Young America | Nowthen | Loretto | Mayer | Hamburg | New Germany

* Modified principles adopted

Governance Proposals Compared

	Accountability to Taxpayers	Continuity and Stability in Regional Governance	Responsive to Local and Regional Issues	Greater Efficiencies in Government
Staggered Terms	No change. Council members serve at the pleasure of the Governor and have little accountability to the public for their decisions. The current model is the only one of its kind in the nation without elected officials.	Would allow half the council to continue serving for two years when change in Governor's office. Depending on election outcomes, half the council could change every two years, losing the opportunity to maintain institutional knowledge, momentum, and stability.	As the Governor has final decision on the members who serve, the Council would continue to be challenged in having credibility with transit stakeholders and local elected officials.	Would not provide an opportunity to reduce the number of transit organizations in the region or the corresponding overlap of responsibilities.
Elected Officials from Counties and Municipalities	Elected officials are representatives of and accountable to their constituents. Would ensure the Met Council is accountable to a regional constituency of those impacted by its decisions. Would enable the Council to develop its own regional priorities. Increasing transparency is critical step in establishing greater trust.	Would provide stability and continuity within the Council for its ongoing initiatives and priorities, rather than being potentially reconstituted every four years. Service on the council would not change based on the governor and his/her ideology.	Local elected officials are already engaged in their communities, and would bring greater awareness and connections with local and regional issues. Opportunity to leverage a greater mix of local perspectives.	The Transportation Advisory Board could be eliminated as the Council could act as the Municipal Planning Organization. This would reduce the number of transit entities in the region with overlapping planning and funding responsibilities.
Elected Council	Provide for a direct election by the public of Met Council members in each district. Require voters to become familiar with the roles and responsibilities of the Met Council. Extreme measure to current model of appointed members. Only one other metropolitan area is governed by a directly elected Council.	Members would serve at the pleasure of the public, seeking re-election at the conclusion of their term.	Election of members would focus on issues relevant to the Council.	Would establish a new bureaucracy and set of elections.