



CURA

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Growth Management in the Twin Cities Region

The Politics and Performance
of the Metropolitan Council

William C. Johnson

**GROWTH MANAGEMENT
IN THE TWIN CITIES REGION**

The Politics and Performance
of the Metropolitan Council



William C. Johnson

A publication of the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, 330 HHH Center, 301 19th Avenue S., Minneapolis, MN 55455.

The content of this report is the responsibility of the author and is not necessarily endorsed by CURA.

1998

Publication No. CURA 98-3

This report is not copyrighted. Permission is granted for reproduction of all or part of the material, except that required with permission from other sources. Acknowledgement would, however, be appreciated and CURA would like to receive two copies of any material thus reproduced.

Edited by Thomas P. Zeit

Cover photo by Neil Kveberg, courtesy of the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)

Figures on pages 25, 26, 60, 63, and 68 are from the Metropolitan Council and reproduced here courtesy of the Metropolitan Council.

Text printed with soy-based ink on recycled paper, including 20% post-consumer fiber.

CONTENTS

Preface	1
Chapter 1: High Stakes and Hard Choices in Metropolitan Planning	3
Chapter 2: The Politics of Metropolitan Governance	6
The Twilight Zones	6
Regional Definition	9
A Complicated Network	10
Distinctive Concepts	13
A Planning Context	16
The Track Record	20
Chapter 3: The Twin Cities Planning Context	24
A Unique Region	24
Diverse Interests	28
Chapter 4: The Metropolitan Council and Growth Management in the Twin Cities Area	32
Growth Management	32
A Regional Solution	36
The Council Evolves	42
The Feedback	46
A Sharper Focus	57
A New Interdependence	69
Chapter 5: Housing Policy from Fair Share to Livable Communities	74
Two Societies	74
Filling the Need	76
Chapter 6: Toward Livable Communities: The Metropolitan Council's New Challenge	84
A Stronger Mandate	84
Distributing Resources	86
Chapter 7: Looking Backward and Forward	90
Transcending Symbolism	90
A Solid Record	91
A Healthy Cooperation	93
An Expanding Frontier	95
The Limits of Power	96
Prospects for Influence	97
The Big Questions	98
General References	105
About the Author	111

PREFACE

The Metropolitan Council is one of Minnesota's unique institutions, and its efforts to control the sprawl of the state's largest metropolitan area have won attention around the nation. It has drawn both praise and criticism over its thirty-one years of existence, yet most citizens know little of its powers and responsibilities if they are aware of it at all. Even many who are active in local public affairs have only a hazy understanding and may indeed hold serious misimpressions. The current debate over whether its members should be elected by the voters, for example, may be escaping voters who are busy enough tracking their state, county, and municipal representatives.

This study is an effort to open the information door on metropolitan planning a little wider. It is not a complete study of all that the Metropolitan Council has done over its thirty years, but instead it focuses on its mission of growth management—the primary concern that sparked its creation. As a secondary theme, it also traces the Council's endeavors to expand affordable housing, as closely entwined with land use policies.

The views presented here are both historical and contemporary. A careful appraisal of the thirty-year experience with metropolitan planning and its outcomes can help us form realistic expectations for the future. Regional planning is above all a political enterprise, shaped by the crosscutting forces of power in government and business. The Council operates within a network that enables it to take action in some ways, as in controlling sewer expansion, but restrains it from venturing into such sensitive areas as the affordability of dwellings in outer ring suburbs. We must consider these limitations when making our judgments.

This study presents an optimistic prospect for metropolitan planning, given these political forces. A distinct regional consciousness is strong among Twin Citians, aware of the economic and cultural interdependence of central cities, inner suburbs, and developing suburbs. A bold Metropolitan Council that nurtures its partnerships with local governments and other policy makers in government and business can draw strength from that consciousness. From these collaborations can come renewal of inner city neighborhoods, expansion of housing opportunity, continued development of jobs, and enhancement of the quality of life for all the region's residents.

For the information in this study I am indebted to many. The staff of the Metropolitan Council has provided documents, facts, and views. Other persons in local government, businesses, the news media, and the broader public policy community added many insights. I also thank Bethel College for a semester of sabbatical leave, and the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs for the opportunity to make this study public.

1

High Stakes and Hard Choices in Metropolitan Planning

The Twin Cities metropolitan area is governed by a complex of local, state, and federal institutions whose functions interlock and overlap in often confusing ways. Their centerpiece is the Metropolitan Council, which has a broad range of responsibilities but relatively little power in itself to shape the region's development. We do not have a "regional government;" we have "regional governance" in which the many participants—including a host of private organizations—interact on a wide range of public choices. Nevertheless, the Council holds a powerful strategic position among these institutions. As these forces contend for control over land use, highways, transit, sewer extensions, open space preservation, and housing investments, the Council has the opportunity to veto or forestall some matters that call for regulation in order to orchestrate the efforts of those forces toward reaching common goals.

In addressing Twin Cities metropolitan governance, this study focuses on the questions of urban growth management and housing. The Council's responsibilities extend beyond these to include sanitation, highways, parks, economic development, and similar issues, but I argue that the first two functions are at the core of its purpose and identity. The visions and goals it develops in these areas, in collaborating with various participants, shape the success of all of its policies.

This inquiry begins by viewing in Chapter Two the generic tasks of governing metropolitan areas in the United States and the current methods of coping with them. It is important to recognize the unique planning challenges that each area faces and to design means to address them. Chapter Three describes the Twin Cities region, in many ways like those found elsewhere in the nation, and identifies unique conditions and resources that have created the Metropolitan Council and empowered it to operate with a modest measure of success. A brief history of the Council's growth management policies and their impacts follows in Chapter Four, which includes a review of the various assessments that have been made by the Council itself and outside observers. This analysis continues in Chapter Five with the institutional reforms and policy revisions of the 1990s, including the *Regional Blueprint* and the Livable

Communities Act. Chapter Six examines the experiences with regional policies on the supply and location of modest-cost housing.

In Chapter Seven, several key questions emerge from this analysis. First, how has the Council survived for thirty years with its initial form and mission largely intact? Second, what has it actually accomplished with the development framework that was first put in place in the 1970s? Third, how has it interacted with the local governments of the region that are the actual implementors of Council plans? Fourth, how is regional governance responding to the growth taking place outside the seven-county region that is the Council's jurisdiction? Fifth, what is the political power structure within which the Council operates, and what kind of planning do those powerful persons and institutions enable it to do? Sixth, what are its options for future implementation of the *Regional Blueprint* and the Livable Communities Act, given the historical experience and the political power structure?

In assessing the thirty-year experience with metropolitan governance, we must keep in mind several larger issues steering the quality of our political life. (These are adapted from Kirlin's 1996 discussion of the "big questions" of public administration in a democracy.) First, what means of governance can we design that will be true to both our democratic political processes and the core values of society? Democracy is concerned with representation, accountability, and empowerment of citizens, and requires institutions that promote these aims. Can we find the organization that has the best prospects of providing these?

Second, how can nongovernmental institutions of societal cooperation and public service be protected and promoted? These include the private market and its profitmaking participants, nonprofit institutions, and voluntary associations that provide the region's social capital. They are essential to any community's quality of life.

Third, how can tensions and conflicts between various political bodies be managed and resolved? We have many governments at the local level, plus the state and national authorities and their diverse agencies. Each has its own constituents, budget, and sphere of authority to protect and serve, and they often interfere with each other. Assuming that we can never permanently resolve the resulting tensions, how can we find a balance in which the tensions stimulate productive relationships?

Fourth, what policy decisions are best made from the perspective of technical competence and thus should be isolated from the turmoils of pluralist politics? The means of paving a highway is best left to engineers, everyone would agree. The location of a hazardous waste facility or routing of a bus system is also covered by technical standards, although more controversial due to the effect on citizens' lives. How much popular intervention is warranted on each issue, and which public entity is most able to seek a democratic and workable outcome?

Fifth, how can the evaluation of institutional performance and policy outcomes enable citizens to learn how to improve their governance? One essential result of all public activity should be increased citizen competence for future activity. This can only occur when there is maximum openness and honest discussion of issues and alternatives. How can this be done on the regional level?

All of these questions pertain to our choices on metropolitan governance. None has a final and precise answer, since there can be many ways to reach a good resolution of the dilemmas, and the answers will change with external conditions and citizen preferences. To them this discussion will return at the conclusion of Chapter Seven.

2

The Politics of Metropolitan Governance

The Twilight Zones

Metropolitan areas are the “twilight zones” of American governance. Although they are arenas for intricate and expensive public policies and investments, their territory is the least well defined of any jurisdictional area. They are unlike the established units of local government, which have legal boundaries defined by their constituents or state authorities. A metropolitan area is more of a social and economic construct, defined by myriad interconnections of human activities, and its extent varies with each activity.

First, a metropolitan area has flexible socioeconomic boundaries. They may be defined by shopping trips, commuting to central city or suburban jobs, non-toll telephone calling, or newspaper circulation. If 20 percent of the workforce of a rural county commutes to a nearby metropolis for daily work, then the county is part of the metropolitan area for them.

Second, most metropolitan areas are difficult to define physically. Lake and ocean shores are precise, but rivers typically unite rather than divide urban areas, and suburban growth has often overrun the hills and wetlands that once limited expansion. The forests and pastures of parts of Chisago and Wright counties in Minnesota, for example, are sufficiently populated to require urban services and thus to deserve the “metropolitan” label. State boundaries, too, are relevant only in the political sense.

Third, the governmental network in metropolitan areas is complex. Dozens or even hundreds of municipalities, townships, counties, and special purpose districts provide a range of services to distinct publics. State governments and federal agencies add their functions and regulations. There is thus an abundance of government in each region, but that does not assure that their services and infrastructures fit together effectively. It is common for a metropolitan area to overlap two or three states, such that not even a single state authority can take full responsibility for it.

One definition of an urban region is that of the U.S. Bureau of the Census. A Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) consists of one or

more cities of at least 50,000 residents, the county or counties that contain it (them), and any adjoining counties with at least 50 percent of their population in the urbanized area or with some other linkage to the core city. Three hundred twenty-three such MSAs existed in 1990, and many of them were grouped into Consolidated MSAs that encompassed larger metropolises such as New York City, Chicago/Milwaukee, and Los Angeles/Orange County/San Diego. This definition is useful to organize the statistics that describe whole regions. But these MSAs are not units of government and thus do not form unified policy-making authorities.

As a result, metropolitan areas lack a unifying political identity. Residents typically tie their loyalty to their local community or neighborhood and to those issues and services that affect their homes and workplaces. A city or county has a set of recognized decision makers who must return to the voters regularly, and a typical resident or representative of Eagan or Blaine is likely to care little for what happens in the Phillips neighborhood of Minneapolis (and vice versa). In fact, the chronic animosity between central city and suburban residents has long been a major barrier to genuinely regional politics and policies. The region as a whole has no decision-makers of its own whom citizens can hold directly accountable, and thus no clear process of making its decisions.

While metropolitan areas are hard to delineate, the interactions that mark them are very real. Their built environment is the product of uncounted land use decisions by individuals, corporations, institutions and governments. These decisions flow in a stream of time, responding to previous choices and to the changing physical, economic, and cultural environments. Usually the decisions are aimed narrowly: a homebuyer seeks to live in a desirable neighborhood, a corporation pursues profit on an investment, a public agency supplies an essential service or protects natural beauty, and so on. They rarely take into consideration the larger effects on land values, traffic congestion, air and water pollution, or economic opportunity. Indeed, most players have no incentive to do so. Any one choice by itself may have a negligible impact on the region, but when it creates a need or opportunity for later choices, its effects multiply over time.

Americans have traditionally assumed that this lack of wholeness in governing urban regions is not a problem. They believe that when individuals seek their own well-being, an “invisible hand” guides those combined choices to the best advantage of the entire society. This view resists central direction, assuming that when a higher authority

overrules freely selected individual choices, it reduces liberty and utility at the same time. Thus, when homebuyers and corporations build anew on “greenfield” suburban locations rather than renew urban infill sites, they promote the highest level of efficiency. Even though some are hurt in the outcome—perhaps small downtown merchants after a Wal-Mart opens on the edge of town—the economy functions best, and the majority of residents benefit, in a market of free choices. In this interpretation, governments function best in small spaces, ideally through local communities that residents can understand and participate in.

Most American urban dwellers also value space—the room to spread out at a comfortable distance from their neighbors. The owner-occupied single-family home on its own lot is an ideal established in the pioneer days and now strongly endorsed by governments through Federal Housing Authority mortgages and local zoning codes. Particularly in the Midwest and western states, “density” is a bad word, a code for congestion, noise and unwanted neighbors. Not everyone can afford wide spaces, but even modest-income households seek as much room as they can pay for. In this sense, American culture is anti-urban, which significantly impacts the market for land and housing.

Urban life demonstrates, however, that the invisible hand is not an entirely reliable producer of public benefits, nor does it make public controls unnecessary. Low-density development has its own costs. There have always been some who use their land in ways that others objected to, and the wide array of public regulations, from zoning to health standards, are collective efforts to impose order and protect personal safety and property values. Generally, these rules are targeted at specific, localized nuisances and problems, and are prohibitive rather than inductive in their effects. Even large-scale public choices such as building highways, sewers, and parks can be seen as piecemeal actions. A new freeway must be designed to speed traffic flow through an area but very likely also encourages suburban sprawl and higher motor vehicle use.

Public problems inevitably emerge from the combination (and frequent incompatibility) of private and public decisions. Not everyone may define them as problems, or, for that matter, as ones that must be attacked by public action, but many of these issues nonetheless require management by governments and other public-serving entities. When persons choose a low-density living environment in a far suburb and commute an hour or more to a workplace, they add to traffic congestion along many miles of highway and to the air pollution in its corridor.

High vehicle volumes in a downtown area or around a major shopping mall could be a problem for many motorists, but for those who profit from their presence, it is a sign of prosperity. Only if congestion becomes severe enough to discourage some patrons from coming will the businesses appeal for public action to relieve or accommodate it.

Regional Definition

Metropolitan areas are defined politically by public problems that require solutions on a regional scale. The politics of these areas thus revolves around the major issues that must be resolved in a context larger than the individual municipality. The social and economic life of an urban region requires a set of public services and regulations to create a safe and orderly way of life. The most obvious of these are transportation facilities (highways, mass transit, airports, and facilities for freight movement by rail and water), management of sewage and solid wastes, water supply, and regional parks. Protection of the natural environment adds to this agenda. Housing also has become a regional issue, particularly in view of federal and private pressures to expand opportunities for modest-income households to live near suburban jobs. Finally, economic development is a major metropolitan concern, as seen in the location of major industrial and commercial employers, the renewal of inner-city locations, and the enhancement of the region as a site for growing entrepreneurs in global markets.

Savitch and Vogel (1996, 3-4) find regional politics to consist of political networks that arise to govern clusters of localities; economic linkages that shape the growth and decline of communities; and a complex web of transportation, human habits, and social arrangements that compose America's urban sprawl. Regional politics transcends legal jurisdictions because of the need to promote economic development, protect the environment, rebuild infrastructures, deliver new services, and above all manage public policy in a competitive world. . . .

Regional politics can be most acutely located at the point where business joins political power. Although one can rarely identify a formal authority at the top of this juncture, regions are held together by natural pressures for decision making and economic development.

Additionally, these regional issues are each “local” in that every problem and solution directly impacts one or more individual communities. Siting a waste treatment facility or truck terminal inevitably requires decisions by local governments, and local citizens regularly appear at hearings to support or oppose proposals. But while each individual decision may appear to achieve closure for those people and places directly affected, there will often be consequential effects across the region for some time to come. Because of this interdependency, public choices must concern not only isolated issues but the region-wide criteria for these choices as well—criteria that incorporate the interests of parties indirectly affected by an issue along with the interests of those directly affected. Every metropolitan area witnesses political conflicts in which neighborhood, regional, and even national forces contend over the future of specific parcels of land.

Presumably all decisions, once put into practice, will influence our expectations and plans for the future. Interested people hold mental images of desirable futures and link land use choices to them. Thus they will fight for or against such important choices as freeways, airports, and shopping centers because of their expected impacts on their surroundings. Once a new highway begins to carry traffic, it demands new considerations about the sites it accesses and the new development it enables.

A Complicated Network

The public decision-making structure in a metropolitan area consists of a large, overlapping, and shifting network of governmental and private actors. Largest of all is the federal government with its directly administered programs, grants of funds, regulations on economic activity, and court decisions. It remains generally remote from local politics but can intervene when Congress or an agency perceives a national issue to be at stake. Environmental Protection Agency rules, for example, limit choices on pollution control, transportation, and wetlands. The Department of Housing and Urban Development maintains a web of relationships with municipal, county, state, and private agencies that deal with its policies. The Department of Transportation works through metropolitan planning organizations and local transit agencies for distributing funds under the 1998 federal Transportation Equity Act (TEA-21) and other programs.

State governments dovetail with the federal in services and regulations but are more closely involved. Their agencies for transportation,

environmental protection, community development, health, natural resources, and many more often limit and constrain the local authorities and private users of land more directly than federal agencies. As state governments have become more professionalized over the years and have received more devolved authority from Congress, they have been diligent in applying their powers. It is often their task to coordinate the many effects of federal actions with their own on such matters as housing, highways, and environmental protection.

Local governments further divide authority both functionally and geographically. Although their powers are granted and limited by their respective states, they themselves decide how vigorously to exercise these powers. Many responsibilities are shared: cities build and maintain sewage collection networks while a regional authority typically operates the interceptor system and treatment facilities, for example. Such interfaces must be managed politically as well as administratively due to their potential to generate conflict or non-cooperation. Cities and counties wield a broad set of powers while special districts and authorities concentrate on one specific function. Among the latter are some giant agencies that have great impact on regional development: the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, for example, and the Metropolitan Water District in southern California.

Nongovernmental participants regularly influence what governments actually choose to do at any given time. Major development interests—including builders, landowners, and corporations—often dominate decisions that affect their investment. Chambers of commerce, trade associations, and other groups aggregate their various business concerns and have the funds to lobby public officials. Banks and other capital-investing enterprises select some sites for development and reject others. Media enterprises are significant influences, both as local entrepreneurs in their own right and in their newspaper and television portrayal of the conflicts and contestants. Law and real estate firms often conduct the negotiations that both raise and settle conflicts over the preferences of all of these parties.

A host of “third sector” organizations—neither profitmaking nor governmental—also enter the picture. Major foundations such as Ford and McKnight support programs for civic improvement, from housing to environmental protection. The nonprofit Local Initiatives Support Corporation draws funds from governments, foundations, and businesses and distributes them to community agencies for housing, small business

development, and neighborhood renewal. Each metropolitan area has a cluster of locally managed entities of this kind, and their bankrolls and expertise make them welcome at the policy-making table.

Closest to residents are the community and homeowners' associations in which they can easily participate. Many urban neighborhoods have citizen organizations with advisory roles on municipal plans and spending. Community development corporations mobilize funds for housing, small business, and other improvements. Also common are the associations of owners of condominiums, townhomes, and dwellings in common-property communities that function in part as surrogate municipal authorities over their territory. Because they represent shared interests and provide an organized voice for them, all of these groups can influence land use and investment choices by governments.

Each participant has certain resources and chooses whether and how to use them. Few can act alone on a large scale, however. Thus what emerges is a mutually influencing network in which each player watches others and responds to their actions. Over a period of time, choices emerge that may not have been at the top of anyone's list but represent the best options in a context that they all jointly created.

Within this network, some participants are fairly equal in power, each dependent upon the others. One player has access to part of the money or credit to undertake a major development but must also secure partners with additional funds and obtain legal permissions from one or more government bodies. A public agency may seek to upgrade housing in an area but is subject to other agencies' funding decisions and to local public opinion.

Many more relationships are asymmetrical: A's choices influence B's much more than the reverse. Thus, there is usually a certain hierarchy in a network. The most powerful players may be in governmental or business posts, media institutions, or at the top of a social ladder. They do not have to reside in the region; officials in a state or national capital or corporate headquarters may overrule local preferences or impose solutions on them. A person or group can be regarded as powerful due to a history of past successes or the ability to alter future outcomes. Power also accrues when a person intervenes decisively in a current contest through strength of personality, infusion of money, or forging of a workable compromise.

Certain individuals and groups regularly exert power in land use choices due to their vested interests. According to Elkin (1987, 90),

land use in the city is at the convergence of three streams of forces, and the public agenda represents the balance between them. Land is capital for those who own or manage it, a context for the day-to-day lives of the citizens who live in the city, and a source of political benefits and revenues for the officials who govern the city.

On most large scale issues, those in the capital and political streams join to shape the decisions affecting them where there is common interest, and the “city as community” groups are left out. “The land-use agenda of the city is, at least in part, simply a question of public officials following their job specifications” (91).

Elkin wrote the above about individual cities, and enlarging the scene to an entire metropolitan area complicates the picture. Major urban regions have hundreds or even thousands of local government units plus the relevant state and federal agencies. Their officials pursue political agendas reflecting their competing interests. Several seek lucrative commercial or public facilities, but few suburbs want more housing for the lowest income brackets. The “capital interests” are likewise dispersed geographically according to their desires. Downtown investors view the region differently from those whose stakes are in the suburbs, and various suburbs often compete with one another for revenue-rich developments. And the “community interests” are as fragmented as the political, since nearly all focus on their neighborhood or subregional space rather than on the metropolitan area as an entity.

Distinctive Concepts

The concepts of *regime*, *growth machine*, and *civic infrastructure* help to characterize the politics of metropolitan areas. Observers of urban regions use several terms to describe the complex interactions that mark their public decision making. Stone’s concept of *regime* incorporates influences from the private sector into public policy-making. He asserts that major development projects that involve the private sector with government call for predictable and pragmatic means of cooperation. Yet cities lack strong formal means for promoting agreement across governmental or institutional boundaries. He defines a regime as “the informal arrangements by which public bodies and private interests function together in order to be able to make and carry out governing decisions” (1989, 6). Their decisions manage conflicts and provide

adaptive responses to issues that the regime is uniquely qualified to address, and the relationships that form the regime extend the region's ability to act on matters which would otherwise be ignored or stalled. Stone argues that renewal of downtown districts and construction of rapid transit systems normally must be enabled by such regimes. This need for linkages in individual cities is multiplied in a large metropolitan area with many governments and competing urban-suburban interests.

The typical goal of such a regime is growth, and thus the regime can be labeled a *growth machine*. Molotch, (1993, 31) characterizes it by

the idea that nested interest groups with common stakes in development use the institutional fabric, including the political and cultural apparatus, to intensify land use and make money. Coalitions with interests in growth of a particular place (large property holders, some financial institutions, the local newspaper) turn government into a vehicle to pursue their material goals.

City and county governments and special districts act as crucial members of these "machines" in pursuing the tax revenue and intangible benefits that accompany population and economic growth. They are in symbiotic relationships with the private sector, as Molotch points out, because the public authorities hold veto power while depending on the private entrepreneurs for the initiatives and financing of the development they seek. The bias of such growth machines is toward the initiators and financiers of new projects; all other issues such as existing housing, transportation, and environmental protection receive attention only as they promote or serve the desired development.

The concepts of *regime* and *growth machine* focus attention on the wealthy and powerful. But a much larger circle of persons also influences the course of metropolitan development, particularly in its small-scale choices. This is the *civic infrastructure*, which Wallis (1992, 132) defines as the formal and informal lines of communication between stakeholders in the governmental, business, nonprofit, and community segments of the region. Use of this interactive term reflects the tendency of regionalists to speak of *governance* rather than *government*, refocusing attention on informal means of making and carrying out policy rather than formal structures (1994, 292). The civic infrastructure can provide essential arenas for discussing regional values such as orderly growth, efficient use of land, and adequate housing and public services. Only

through such broad cooperation can a region prevent narrowly based and parochial regimes from controlling key decisions on public investments and services. A broadly-based and inclusive civic infrastructure need not frustrate the goal of growth, but instead adds to that goal the demand that growth serve all segments of the population.

A metropolitan area is thus the epitome of a “shared power” realm, “a world where no one is in charge. No one organization or institution has the legitimacy, power, authority, or intelligence to act alone on important public issues and still make substantial headway against the problems that threaten us all” (Bryson and Crosby 1992, xi). Urban regions are functionally interconnected—dependent on large systems for their transportation, water, waste management, and other necessities of life but structurally divided into many distinct local service providers and regulators. Any person or agency that provides leadership on those functions must work to sustain the collaboration.

The civic networks through which the regimes and their leaders act differ according to the type of public choice made. Choices about sewers attract one group of specialists while those concerning renewal of old industrial “brownfield” sites attract a different group. Power structures in housing and highways may have a few members in common but most are specialized. Participants have limited attention and influence spans and concentrate their efforts where they can be most effective. Yet there must be certain “bridge influentials” who can compare and interrelate such choices in disparate fields, set funding priorities, and prevent negative spillovers. Generalist public executives and legislators are in the best position to play this role, but there is no assurance they will do so—or can do so amid the political pressures exerted on them.

The players in these networks often form coalitions to pool their information and influence. They recognize certain benefits to be gained from joint action and believe that they must make some compromises to get them. Some coalitions are relatively stable and long-lived, while others form and dissolve with each specific issue. The patterns of cooperation and conflict are fluid and may shift with each new proposal, participant, or outcome of a past action. The larger civic infrastructure is thus like a reservoir from which network participants can flow as the decision making shifts from one outlet to another.

It is thus tempting to liken the governance of a metropolis to international diplomacy (Holden 1964). Indeed, it resembles global politics with its many governmental actors, largely autonomous of one

another, interacting over common issues. Each pursues and protects its own interests as it perceives them and is politically rewarded by its constituents for doing so. The larger public interests may easily be neglected, however, in this pursuit of narrower ends, just as on the global scene.

Even so, there are important contrasts. Holden saw in an international system the lack of an overarching political community with authority over the nation-state participants. A metropolitan region, on the other hand, is within the governing arena of both the nation and one or more states. Those arenas may be competitive and may find it difficult to produce clear decisions on some matters, but they do have authority. Second, Holden argued that nongovernmental parties and initiatives are excluded from international diplomacy, but this is rarely true for the regimes in urban regions. (Today, private power centers are prominent in much global diplomacy as well.)

In such networks, the question of how authoritative decisions emerge and whose interests are best served by them can be perplexing. An obvious answer is that decisions represent compromises between the most active and resourceful contestants. But there are many ways to compromise, and they can have many different outcomes. In an ongoing controversy, the settlements can change over time.

Winners and losers thus may be hard to identify. One observer can classify an outcome very differently from another who operates within a different value framework. Most challenging, perhaps, is judging how the public interest is affected by a decision. There are certainly public benefits to enabling welfare recipients to take jobs throughout the metropolitan area, but whether those are worth the price paid in subsidies is a separate question. Costs and benefits are long-range as well as short-range considerations, and the highly diverse impacts always make them hard to discern. Certainly many political conflicts focus on how differently the players define “who gets what, when, and how” in relation to what they believe they deserve.

A Planning Context

Each metropolitan area has a planning context consisting of the conditions that shape the values and preferences held by the participants. A map of this context reveals the built environment with all of its previous investments, opportunities for change, and obstacles to change. We can distinguish four types of such environments in every metropolis. First, the *growth centers* offer the best opportunities for new commercial and

related development and thus experience the highest demand. Historically, these have been the downtowns of central cities, some of which today are not lucrative arenas for growth. They also include the “edge cities” (Garreau 1991)—the shopping centers, office complexes, and industrial parks that have sprung up along the freeways on the urban fringes.

Second, the *inner transition zones* usually are found near the centers of cities, with buildings and vacant sites that are deteriorated, abandoned, or underused. These offer the greatest potential for redevelopment, but their attraction to investors will be low if the market sets its eyes on other areas.

Third, the *stable established areas* have low change potential, occupied as they are by homes and small businesses in reasonably good condition. Their occupants want to preserve their land values and resist major changes.

Finally, the *outer transition zones* currently have low-density uses, often agricultural, but are on the edge of developed areas and ready for some kind of development. Land costs are relatively low and their physical settings are attractive to future homebuyers and light industrial firms. Planners must hold a realistic view of each type of area’s potential for change and must update it regularly.

The planning context is also shaped by constitutions, statutes, charters, agency rules and policies, and court decisions interpreting all of these. Governments have extensive powers to make and implement land use policies as long as they act fairly and reasonably. Many states have urban growth management laws that differ widely in their impacts. It is common, when a new policy or regulation is issued, that a lawsuit challenges it and the legal environment shifts in response to a judge’s ruling or negotiated settlement. Recent decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court have added limits on the regulation and taking of private land to serve public uses.

The ideals and values of the planning profession as developed over the past hundred years augment the legal thrust in producing metropolitan growth. As Sies and Silver (1996, 461-462) understand it,

the basic ingredients of our modern-day Edge City derive directly from the principal sources of planning theory and development practice established during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These include the expansion of

the railway and roadway networks to facilitate access to decentralized development, the location of manufacturing plants and working-class residences in self-contained communities along the periphery, separate exclusive enclaves for the affluent and the middle class, the creation of multiple centers of commercial activity, and the development of a more expansive urban form through the provision of abundant open spaces and reduction of overall residential densities.

Efforts to reshape metropolitan areas, therefore, run counter to strongly running trends that were set in motion decades ago and are well-reinforced by market choices. Local governments have enshrined these principles in their comprehensive plans and tend to follow them faithfully.

A host of economic factors direct land use choices, sometimes reinforcing and sometimes countering planners' efforts. Each region has certain market imperatives, claiming sites for some uses but not others. Cities with heavy tourist traffic provide land for hotels, specialized shopping centers, recreation facilities, and other "leisure consumption" uses. Cities in the Silicon Valley around San Jose, California have strong land markets for high-tech research and production plants and related support companies. On the other hand, many parts of such older cities as Detroit lack market demand for their deteriorated areas. National and global economic conditions shape opportunities from year to year and favor locations with the best access to freeways, international airports, harbors, and universities.

The demographic conditions of a metropolis also shape the planning context. Each one's map is marked by wide socioeconomic disparities with many consequences for employment, education, and personal safety. Some central cities and suburbs have drawn many immigrants from Asia, Africa, and Latin America who provide low-wage labor and thus attract companies that hire them. But many poor persons of color are virtually imprisoned in inner-city housing projects and lack access to the growing suburban job market. This condition also hampers suburban employers that cannot, in a prosperous economy, find enough semiskilled workers able to reach their workplaces. Although many of yesterday's poor have found pathways to economic success and not a few of them have moved to suburbs, the gaps remain a challenge to today's policy makers.

Accompanying these social and economic conditions is an anti-urban bias on the part of some metropolitan residents. Lingering in the minds of many suburbanites is a rural idealism that leads them to view large cities as dens of iniquity and peril from which they must insulate their own living environments. Those who must work in the central cities pass through the inner transition zones quickly, on freeways if possible, and try to exclude from their gaze those who have not prospered and migrated as they have. While some soberly realize that urban issues beset the suburbs as well and support cooperative policies, many more dread the expense that serious action on housing, employment, and inner-city reinvestment entails.

Downs (1994, ch. 1) asserts that the planning context just described has become dysfunctional for the emerging needs of large American metropolitan areas. He identifies the “dominant vision” of urban growth as five elements that have shaped public policies since World War II: ownership of detached single-family homes on large lots, ownership of motor vehicles, low-rise workplaces, small residential communities with strong local governments, and a poverty-free environment. This vision is flawed, however, in that it generates excessive travel and congestion, favors high-cost housing, absorbs too much open space, distributes costs and benefits unfairly among population groups, and, worst of all, provides no means to resolve conflicts between the public interest of the region as a whole and the concerns of individual communities and interest groups.

The flaws in the dominant vision become more obvious as metropolises grow. We have, as Downs sees it,

great difficulty solving the long-run problems created by policies that provide short-run benefits. Once people receive the benefits, they do not want to give them up. But they cannot agree how to distribute the long-run costs necessary to sustain the benefits. Each group of beneficiaries tries to shift as many of the costs as possible onto other groups...Ultimately, such a failure undermines or offsets the short-run benefits. Increased traffic congestion or air pollution offset some of the benefits people sought when they moved to low-density suburbs. Yet these problems are partly caused by the very low density these people insisted on. (1994, 15)

Thus the politics of metropolitan growth focus on the varied distributions of benefits and costs to different groups, and the groups' efforts to bend future allocations to their advantage. Usually, these benefits and costs are linked with specific inner-city, suburban, and fringe-area locations and with local governments' efforts to reinforce their claims.

Downs (ch. 3) also cautions that policies to limit or channel such growth, when successful, can have countereffects. First, when the supply of land for urban expansion is artificially restricted relative to demand, its price increases. This tends to favor high-value rather than modest-cost homes. Growth management programs can avoid this result only if they schedule enough new land to meet the anticipated absorption rates over a foreseeable period. But that may lead to a land use and density pattern little different from what would result if there were no policy at all.

A further concern of Downs is that growth limitation by one city or portion of a metropolitan area will simply shift that expansion to another area, with no net reduction of urban sprawl. This has been a widespread experience in California, for example. Even when applied to an entire metropolitan area like Minneapolis-St. Paul, the confinement of policies to the "inner counties" will induce growth to leap over them into the rural counties that are not so regulated. Since many of those exurban residents work and shop in the metropolitan area, they will still use its highways and other public facilities.

In general, Downs does not envision a single comprehensive answer to the fragmentation of metropolitan governance. Rather, each region must evolve a complex of arrangements, probably including several functional agencies to coordinate federal and state funding for area-wide facilities with state requirements and standards for local government planning. Yet, to be worth the effort, they must have the political incentives and institutional capacity to address the defects of the "dominant vision" noted above.

The Track Record

Nearly all efforts to create new structures for metropolitan governance in the past fifty years have failed. Since the 1920s, many scholars and civic activists have believed that the best structure for metropolitan governance is a single regional authority that replaced (or at least assumed many of the powers of) the municipalities and counties. Referenda for such consolidations were held in the 1950s in St. Louis and Cleveland

but failed to win voter approval. Later, city-county mergers were approved in Nashville, Jacksonville, and some smaller places, and the Indiana Legislature enacted a merger for the city of Indianapolis and Marion County. On the whole, the creation of such large entities has been too threatening to the local power structures to win their support. The voters, too, have seen nothing to gain from them and fear that a larger metropolitan government would increase their taxes and override local citizen preferences (Harrigan and Johnson 1978, ch. 1).

Such metropolitan cooperation as exists today depends largely upon the voluntary efforts of local officials spurred by federal and state mandates and grants for transportation, water quality, parks, housing, and community development. In many areas during the 1960s, councils of government were formed, in which local unit membership was voluntary. Some have been effective catalysts for regional planning and investment when backed by the prevailing regimes. But more typical is the ordeal of the Southern California Association of Governments, whose efforts at regional planning have been thwarted or ignored by local authorities and more powerful regional agencies (Fulton 1997, ch. 6). At present, the only effective regional planning in most places is sponsored by the metropolitan planning organizations mandated by Congress to allocate transportation funds.

Studies during the 1980s by the U.S. Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations in the St. Louis and Pittsburgh metropolitan areas found extensive voluntary coordination and sharing of services among their many local units. Municipalities, counties, and special districts created for functions such as fire protection had mutual arrangements that reduced costs and the overlapping of efforts. On a larger scale, Chisholm (1989) found that public transit agencies in the San Francisco Bay area had coordinated their schedules and passenger transfers without intervention by any higher authority.

One might conclude from these findings that a comprehensive metropolitan authority is not necessary for efficient provision of public services. There is no doubt that cooperative relations between local authorities, all more or less voluntary, “grease the wheels” of governance. Nunn and Rosentraub (1997) argue that there are many modes of cooperation to choose from, and regions are free to select and adapt the modes that best fit their goals and political realities. Indeed, some argue that a single structure would inhibit the competition and innovation necessary to govern in changing conditions.

Nevertheless, the larger metropolitan issues such as growth management, transportation, and environmental protection transcend the ability of neighboring cities to deal with them by voluntary agreement. The sheer size of many regions, and the costs and administrative machinery needed to carry out their functions, pose daunting obstacles to significant regional planning and growth management. Fulton (1997, 154) argues that the Los Angeles region, with its thousands of local authorities, “looks as though it was deliberately designed to be ungovernable.” There, public decisions emerge piecemeal from various arenas of power, and some that are needed may never be made. Federal and state agencies, by default, often become the sites for the Los Angeles area’s regional governance.

Only one metropolitan area besides Minneapolis-St. Paul has evolved significant institutions for regional governance: Portland, Oregon. That system, established in its present form in 1992, is governed by a seven-member elected Metro Council and chief executive who are responsible for growth management and land use planning as well as operating sports and entertainment facilities, garbage disposal, and a zoo. Together with the area’s counties and municipalities, it seeks an orderly expansion of the urbanized area and its service networks. It has adopted a Region 2040 master plan that calls for steady increase in population density in the suburbs as well as the central city. It maintains an urban growth boundary, outside of which only rural land uses and previously existing homes are permitted. Municipalities are required to plan for higher density growth inside that boundary in order to accommodate new residents. Local zoning ordinances and other planning choices must conform to state policies, and disputes over specific applications are settled by the state’s Land Conservation and Development Commission (Lewis 1996, ch. 4, 6).

Portland’s urban growth policy was first established in 1979, and the boundary was set well beyond the existing fringe of development. But, in the 1990s, the region has been growing rapidly and there are strong pressures from development interests to expand the urban zone. In October 1997, the Metro Council redrew the growth boundary to add 4,500 acres, expected to accommodate nearly 30,000 new dwellings. Builders wanted three times that amount, while no-growth advocates opposed any expansion (Egan 1997).

An unanswered question in Portland is whether the tight restraints are primarily responsible for the steady increase in land and

home costs which have reduced the affordability of dwellings. The growth control policies are vigorously supported by developers who specialize in high-density construction, downtown Portland interests, environmentalists, and suburban communities that want to restrain expansion. Favoring looser restrictions are other developers and businesses that want to expand onto new and cheaper land, although many of them accept the growth boundary in principle. Although there have been efforts to abolish the Metro Council and its controls, one observer comments that the institution of metropolitan planning is well-accepted there. "Portland's jurisdictions conceive of themselves as a combined entity, a problem-solving unit, in a way that they were unable to do two decades ago, and communities elsewhere are still unable to do" (Ehrenhalt 1997, 24).

In viewing Portland's unique experience, we should bear in mind that each metropolitan region is culturally and politically unique. However they may resemble one another's physical or economic qualities, each must search for its own way of managing its growth challenges. Minneapolis-St. Paul has done this in a way that no other region has attempted, and its future is a continuing pragmatic search for what is both effective and acceptable to the balance of political forces.

3

The Twin Cities Planning Context

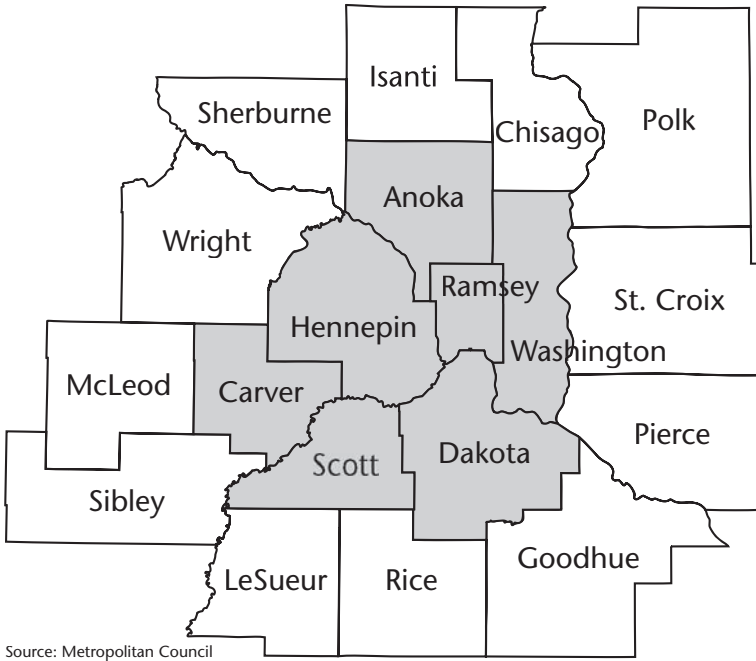
A Unique Region

The Minneapolis-St. Paul region is like many other American metropolitan areas in its political and governmental pluralism, yet it has important unique features. The seven-county region under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Council contains all four of the development zones identified in the previous section. It is overseen by a large number of local governments (188 cities and townships, 41 school districts, and 22 special-purpose districts), its social and economic boundaries are vague, and its topography permits suburban sprawl in all directions. The many lakes and woodlands in the suburban and rural areas decentralize the region by attracting homebuilders, who also find abundant ground water and soils suitable for on-site waste disposal. Population and employment have thus grown steadily in the suburbs, which have gained political influence as well.

By most standards, the “real” metropolis is much larger than those seven counties. A distinct urban corridor is forming between St. Cloud in the northwest (at the tip of Sherburne County) and Rochester in the southeast (in Olmsted County, just below Goodhue), passing through and wrapping around the Twin Cities. Figure 1 portrays the counties in this larger metropolis, and Figure 2 displays the extent of employee commuting from the outer counties into the seven-county region. This connection is clearly the strongest for the counties of Wright, Sherburne, Isanti, Chisago, and St. Croix.

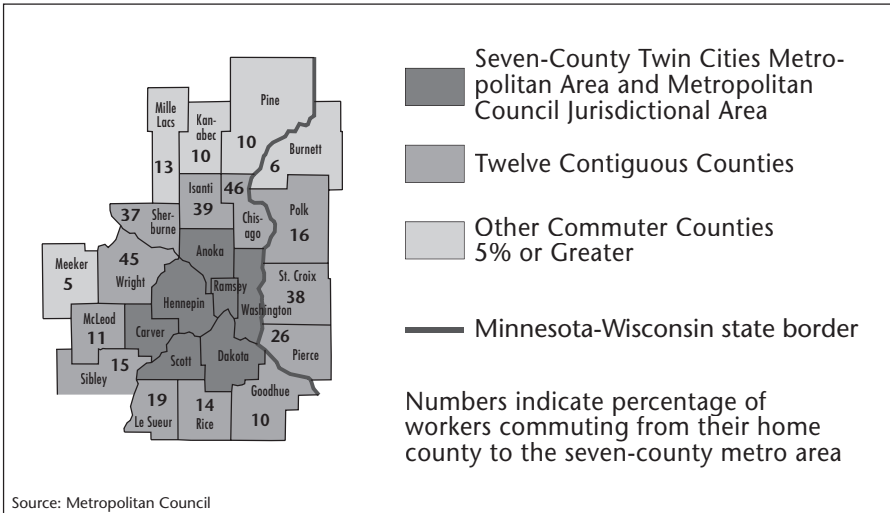
The transportation network has been a major influence on growth, as is the case in every region today. The interstate highway network, with routes passing through both central cities and around them via a beltway, was planned by the Minnesota Highway Department in the 1950s and much of the construction was completed by 1967, when the Metropolitan Council was created. It provided easy access both to the downtowns and to many suburban areas, spurring decentralization. As the population spread outward, the state and counties also improved their secondary roads, accommodating more growth in turn. Any attempt to restrain fringe-area settlement would have had to counter these factors.

Figure 1. The Seven-County Metropolitan Council Jurisdictional Area and Contiguous Counties



The region's most unique feature is its two central cities, whose historic rivalry for dominance of the state and Upper Midwest has been muted in recent decades by the growth of their suburbs. More significant for metropolitan affairs is the presence of the state capitol in their midst, and the fact that about half of the state legislators serve metropolitan constituencies. Thus "state" and "metropolitan" interests have a closer identity than they would in many other states. Much of the business of the Minnesota Legislature springs from and impacts the metropolitan area, and members both individually and through their committees have at times functioned as a regional lawmaking council. The Metropolitan Council was the creature of the legislature, and although their relationship has changed, their "compact" remains a fact of life. Many state agencies also affect metropolitan planning in some way, notably the departments of Transportation and Natural Resources, the Housing Finance Agency, and the Pollution Control Agency.

Figure 2. Percentage of Workers Commuting Daily into the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, 1996



The governor of Minnesota is potentially the most crucial figure for the Metropolitan Council, but the governor's impact has varied with the five men who have sat in that chair. The formal role is obvious: Council members are appointed by the governor and since 1994 serve "at pleasure" rather than for fixed terms. Nearly all members have been of the governor's political party. None of the governors has been highly supportive of the Council's agenda, while Perpich was probably the least interested and Carlson the most critical and assertive.

Regional governing agencies are also prominent. They were created by the state legislature rather than by local initiative, but they are local in authority and scope. The Metropolitan Airports Commission (dating from 1943) and the Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission (1977) draw regular public attention. Less visible is the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, which advises the Metropolitan Council on regional parkland acquisition as the Council funds city and county governments' purchases of that land.

Finally, the cities, counties, and townships that control land use and provide services are vital in regional choices. Each has state-granted powers to direct the flow and pace of urban development, and each is

expected to apply them for the benefit of residents and local businesses. These choices are written in comprehensive plans for future land use, zoning ordinances and maps, subdivision regulations, and capital improvement schedules. Local governments are allowed considerable leeway to regulate land use, provided they follow state-prescribed procedures and do not act arbitrarily or capriciously. Typical decisions begin with review and recommendation by a professional staff and a citizen planning commission, and they become law by action of the city council or the county or township board. The surrender of these powers to a “higher” agency would risk sacrificing local interests and would court political disaster. Local governments are obligated to conform their plans to the metropolitan systems policies as determined by the Metropolitan Council, but they have some leeway in the application of those policies.

These local governments in the region exert political influence through various channels. City and county elected officials and administrators, through their respective associations, lobby the legislature to shape and modify state powers and regulations. Increasingly, they are forming coalitions around sub-regional interests. For example, the North Metro Mayors Association speaks for a group of moderate-income suburbs in that sector, while the I-35W Coalition represents suburbs along the segment of that highway north from Minneapolis. The Southwestern Transportation Coalition competes with them and with the Metro East Partnership on development issues.

Many private associations interact with these agencies, depending on the specific issue. Homebuilders, employers, lending institutions, environmental associations, and highway and transit users provide the initiatives, resources, and political energy to keep the decision-making wheels turning. The number of participants expands and contracts with each issue; there are no major barriers to entry into the political game, but it takes energy and determination to remain active in the long run.

Several civic associations are prominent in this context. Since the early 1960s, the Citizens League has brought together persons with a commitment to public affairs. Through its study committees, it addresses metropolitan and state issues, and its recommendations always draw attention even when they are not followed. Local leagues of women voters have educated several generations on public issues, including regional policies.

An important legal feature of the metropolitan context is the Fiscal Disparities Act, enacted in 1971. Essentially, it allocates 40 percent of each year's added commercial and industrial tax base to a pool that is then shared among all municipalities in proportion to their population. As a result, those cities that gain more than the average of this growth share part of its tax revenue with cities that gain less. It was intended by the lawmakers to reduce pressures on cities to subsidize and zone land for shopping centers and factories so as to capture their tax payments. Without this redistribution of the tax base, the per capita variation between the richest and poorest communities would be about 25:1; at present, the actual ratio is close to 4:1. That this act remains on the books despite grumbling from the "losing" cities represents the consensus among metropolitan legislators that sharing benefits the region as a whole. A bill to increase the program's redistributive impact passed the legislature in 1995 but was vetoed by the governor—an indication of the delicate balance of power that surrounds regional fiscal policy.

Diverse Interests

Each major policy choice draws a cluster of those who are most interested in it and able to make binding decisions. Consider, for example, those who are concerned with a proposed bridge across the St. Croix River that would replace Stillwater's creaking lift bridge. On the drawing boards for several decades, it was to be a simple project shared by the Minnesota and Wisconsin departments of transportation and blessed by the Federal Highway Administration. The National Park Service (NPS), which protects that part of the St. Croix under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, indicated in 1990 that it would only accept a span built near the present one, crossing the river at a relatively low level. The highway engineers, however, designed and approved a much longer and higher crossing farther to the south.

When the bridge plans were made public, the Sierra Club's North Star Chapter and the Voyageurs Region National Park Association feared its impact on the river's scenic qualities and sued to block construction. The NPS, seeing its earlier advice ignored, refused to issue the necessary permits. The cities of Stillwater and Oak Park Heights also entered arguments, one in favor of the bridge and the other in opposition. The Metropolitan Council favors the bridge as a necessary transportation link, even though it is likely to accelerate urban growth on the

Wisconsin side. Public opinion appears to favor it, particularly those persons who regularly cross on the existing bridge in downtown Stillwater.

Judges entered this debate in response to the suit. The Minnesota Court of Appeals ruled that approval of the bridge was within the Metropolitan Council's powers. But the critical blow to the proposal was landed by U.S. District Court Judge Ann Montgomery in April 1998, who held that the NPS acted within the law in blocking the project. The fate of this river crossing will require much more negotiation, and the above players will continue to offer appeals, proposals, and counterproposals. The governors of Minnesota and Wisconsin have asked Congress to clarify NPS authority on this site, hoping for an override of the court decision. At the same time, they are seeking a resolution directly with the NPS on a mutually acceptable bridge location and design. This case shows how metropolitan issues can draw many influences from outside the region.

A very different sort of network surrounds choices over transporting people to jobs, particularly persons leaving welfare dependency to take positions in locations not well served by bus. About 60 percent of potential job openings are in the suburbs, and a large share of the seekers live in Minneapolis and St. Paul. Some transportation services are provided now, but they do not match the anticipated demand. On this issue, the Metropolitan Council networks with county and state agencies, job placement organizations, and employers. They must decide what routes to operate and how to fund them, obtain needed vehicles, and train and deploy jobseekers as drivers. The Council has \$2 million in state funds to spur this development, and so two distinct groups must interact in this process: the providers of money and authority, and the suppliers who actually transport the workers.

Such diverse arenas and clusters of activists require the diplomatic skills that Holden identified above. He describes an "ambassadorial structure" in which the "senior diplomats" are assisted by a cluster of "adviser-messengers"—public bureaucrats, lawyers, and policy specialists. Many nongovernmental participants play similar roles in this region: chambers of commerce, trade associations, law firms, and civic associations such as the Citizens League. They consult with one another through many channels to generate innovative solutions to intractable problems, to frame and reframe questions in order to promote consensus, to find common ground between opponents, and to locate money and other resources.

The Twin Cities has profited from a rich network of such “diplomats” who have nurtured a stronger sense of regional identity than most areas of similar size enjoy. Knudson (Metropolitan Council 1976b, vi, 21-22) labels these persons “regional politicians.” They are closely involved with the planners in making broad policy rather than in seeking personal or constituent advantages. They then commit to implement the policies and can mobilize the power required when opposition and obstacles arise. He found these regional politicians in the Council itself, in the legislature, and in the private business and civic organizations that were often present in the decision-making coalitions. Now, more than twenty years since Knudson’s findings, many observers believe the region has fewer such leaders, particularly among the business community that contributed so much talent in that 1967-77 decade.

That supply of leadership is not adequately supported by a regional consciousness among most citizens, concluded a committee of the Citizens League in 1997. Its report on the prospects for livable neighborhoods described several hindrances to genuine metropolitan governance. First, the population growth and the increasing flow of commuters from the counties outside the Metropolitan Council’s seven-county jurisdiction undermine the ability to manage regional systems, particularly for transportation. In addition, there is

an uncomfortable rift between different geographical parts of the region, a general detachment of people and cities from regional issues, [diluting] the sense of regional identity and citizenship....It seems many people see regionalism—thinking and acting in a regional sense—as fundamentally opposed to the individual attainment of the American Dream of home-owning, car-driving, yard-mowing, private living....A strong sense of parochialism now pervades any discussion of growth and resource management. This all adds up to a region that is, in many respects, a whole that is less than the sum of its parts. (Citizens League 1997, 15-16)

Another common impediment to regional identity and leadership is the central cities versus suburbs dichotomy. This is present in the Twin Cities area, although its intensity varies from place to place. Recent

opposition to modest-cost housing in suburbs such as Maple Grove sends a message to “keep the wrong people out.” Persons who moved out of Minneapolis or St. Paul are typically happy to leave the problems of their old neighborhoods behind. On the other hand, the hearings held by the Metropolitan Council prior to adopting the Regional Blueprint in 1996 revealed considerable awareness among suburbanites that their well-being depended on the health of the region as a whole.

It is important to realize the cultural changes in the Twin Cities planning context since the Council was established. According to Keefe,

When the Council was created in the late 60s, most of the population was middle-class, white, third-generation Americans of northern European stock. A decision then about what was good for the region made by some planners in St. Paul, based on their own value structure, was much more likely to be widely agreed to than in the Twin Cities of the 1990s and beyond. The increased diversity makes it much less likely that such decisions will be consistent with the values of all the different cultural groups in the region. (Metropolitan Council 1991, 31)

This cultural change has had the most impact, perhaps, in choices on affordable housing. This does not prevent agreements from being reached, but it does call many more participants to the negotiating table, and it requires agreements to be more complex in order to balance out competing interests. The region must have institutions that can set up these negotiating tables and bring vital issues to it, and this study holds that the Metropolitan Council is in the most strategic position to do this.

4

The Metropolitan Council and Growth Management in the Twin Cities Area

Growth Management

The policy of growth management aims at the efficient placing and servicing of urban expansion. As urban areas around the nation spread over their surrounding countryside, many citizens and public leaders express concern. They foresee further loss of open space, despoilation of forests and wetlands, growing traffic congestion, and unnecessary public costs of servicing that spread. In response, growth management policies are increasingly common at the municipal, regional, and statewide levels. In placing various restraints on urban growth, they also aim to ensure that new homes and businesses have adequate sewers, water supply, roads, schools, drainage, transit, and parks. Some cities have limited their growth rates to match their fiscal capacity to provide these services. To be sure, some citizens and groups have sought to “bar the door” against all further growth, and more than a few municipalities and townships use zoning and other regulations to prevent or severely restrict new development. However, the growth management concept is not inherently for or against urban growth in general.

The evil which growth management seeks to avoid is urban sprawl, usually defined as “leapfrog” or “ribbon” development beyond the current limits of an urban area (Nelson and Duncan 1995, ch. 1). Serving these developments with utilities and roads is often costly and damaging to the environment, and it may displace productive agriculture. Critics view it as unsightly, with its parking lots, advertising signs, and loss of vegetation. Of course not everyone views such fringe-area development as bad—certainly not the builder who profits from the new homes, the corporation that finds low-cost acreage for a factory, or the farmer who gains a comfortable retirement from sale of the homestead.

Such sprawl has many causes, and any policy to control it must attend to each of them. The municipalities, townships, and counties are on the front line of decision making, but most of them have more financial and political incentives to accommodate growth than to restrict it.

Their permissive zoning and subdivision regulations openly invite developers and businesses. Local authorities are often willing to subsidize extensions of roads and water and sewer pipes, distributing their costs throughout the community rather than imposing them on the new occupants. New major highways are built with state and federal funds, and those who drive farther on them pay only the slight extra amount in gasoline taxes. Property taxes on newly developed land are usually lower than in built-up areas, and fringe-area lots appeal strongly to households who choose not to live in the central city but cannot afford homes in the suburbs where their jobs are. On top of this is the perception of suburbs as safe, clean, and free of the “wrong people,” and the newer they are the better. These concerns cannot all be addressed locally—tax policies are set by state legislatures, subject to a great variety of pressures—but others are targets for action at the metropolitan level.

As a result, growth management has sparked much political controversy. It is often seen by critics as opposition to all growth, or as a cover for expanding government regulations over private landowners. Indeed, it serves as a rallying cry for groups that want to prevent building on open space near their homes or residential and commercial developments that would attract poor people of color. On the other side, dedicated inner-city activists support growth limitation policies that direct investment into their neighborhoods rather than finance jobs and high-cost homes in the far suburbs.

The St. Cloud-Twin Cities-Rochester corridor is the fastest growing region between the northeast coast and the Great Plains, according to a 1997 study by the Sierra Club of midwestern metropolitan areas, and public agencies have not effectively contained it. The study did note, however, that Minnesota is the only state of the ten surveyed that was making any legal attempt to do so. Its data showed that fringe-area residential growth was costing local governments more to service than it was producing in taxes, reinforcing a finding of many previous studies. An additional concern was the increased risk of flooding in new suburbs due to the hard surfaces that speed water runoff (Kaszuba 1997b).

The Metropolitan Council staff also examined how new development is paid for, in response to a 1996 directive from the state legislature (Metropolitan Council 1997c). Its findings lacked precision, however, since the data on state and local finances do not clearly distinguish which governments pay for what improvements. The staff did

conclude that federal and state taxing and spending policies have much more influence on development locations than do local and regional actions.

Growth limitation or management policies have been pursued by many cities over the past decades, ranging in size from San Diego and San Jose to small suburbs on metropolitan fringes. Their success has been uneven, swaying with local economic and political winds. In general, it is not difficult for one community to limit or direct urban expansion if there is less-regulated land nearby to build on. To manage growth for a multi-county metropolitan region is much more challenging, however. Portland and its state of Oregon, described earlier, has the most directive program in place. Statewide programs in Florida, New Jersey, and Vermont have had modest impacts, again subject to resistance by many building- and property-owning interests.

In general, the Metropolitan Council (and any public planning agency) stands in the tension between two general approaches to controlling future land use. The first, the *public interest* or *market-directing* model, assumes a unitary set of public goods that can be expressed in choices on land use, housing, transportation, environment, and related development issues. Applied to an urban region, this public interest calls for assertive public action to limit urban sprawl, increase the efficiency of land use in currently urbanized areas, protect open space and farmland, and design communities with mixed uses and facilities for intensive social interaction. Its advocates argue that this is best in the long run for the public as a whole. Public planning, in this model, is proactive, defining the conditions in which the market shall operate and subtly shaping popular thinking to conform to the public interest. It becomes controversial when it runs counter to the interests and wills of powerful groups or vocal individuals.

The contrary position is the *market-responding* model, which assumes a pluralistic, even individualistic approach to land use choices. To its defenders, the highest “public interest” is the right of landowners and investors to make their own choices, and in a growing economy and population, urbanization must expand into new areas. They are not necessarily opposed to all the goals of the public interest advocates but argue that the choices must not be dictated by a central body. If a landowner wants to protect a wetland, he or she is free to do so but should not be arbitrarily deprived of its value. The role of government is to protect the liberty of the market participants and provide the essential

public infrastructures—highways, water, parks, sewers, schools—that make the expanded areas accessible and safe, and enhance the investments in them. Any public planning, then, must be responsive to these market imperatives and not intend to steer those choices, except as minimally necessary to avoid excessive public costs.

At the municipal and county levels, the role of planning has been accepted to an important degree. Zoning and other regulations are hallowed guardians of the property rights of homeowners and corporations. Economic development programs intervene in land markets by attracting companies with subsidies and tax reductions. But more proactive choices than these require strong backing by politically effective individuals and groups in the city or county councils, and so the policies rarely stray far from market imperatives and the desires of those who finance and implement the plans.

Planning in the larger metropolitan arena, however, is on less firm ground. To the extent that it asserts regional over local interests, it potentially limits the fiercely defended rights of local communities to serve the interests of their constituents. Thus the issue is not merely what regulations should be imposed on land use, but who should decide them, who should benefit from them, and who should pay the costs. Metropolitan politics involves players with larger-than-local stakes whose interests may benefit one geographic sector or economic class and disadvantage others. To improve highway access to some suburbs rather than others creates or limits opportunities for profits and jobs.

Planning, to be effective, must be the making of plausible promises. “If we do X now, desirable outcome Y will result at future time T, but not undesirable outcome Z.” Such promises must win the support of policy makers, first for the intended outcome and its likelihood of happening, and then for the means as the best way to reach that outcome. Those who advocate the wider availability of affordable housing have a long-range view of social harmony and economic opportunity that it promotes. But others disagree that mandatory quotas for low income dwellings in each suburb will lead to that end, believing they will spawn some social evils instead.

The Metropolitan Council is mandated by the state legislature to practice a limited degree of market-directing planning. There is a coalition of advocates for more directive planning, of whom State Representative Myron Orfield (DFL-Minneapolis), the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, and the Land Stewardship Project are prominent members.

Those who oppose this style of planning have been able to keep the Council's efforts at a modest level, and can prevent it from questioning projects they favor. This balance in the political climate protects the Council's existence but restrains its planning and level of activity.

A Regional Solution

When the Metropolitan Council was created in 1967, the need for growth management underlay most of the specific issues that concerned the region. At that time, the population of the region was projected to double to four million by the year 2000. Even then, the growing suburbs had pressing problems of sewage disposal, water supply, and transportation, and there was no consensus on how to respond to them. These were concrete problems that exceeded the ability of the cities and counties to deal with them yet were not of the geographic scale that demanded action by state agencies. The legislators were unable or unwilling to design those solutions themselves and concluded that a single organization was needed to ensure that the separate authorities for airports, sewers, transit, and parks worked in harmony. Ten years earlier, the lawmakers had established the Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) to that end, but since it had only an advisory role, it could do little more than research and disseminate information.

The legislature's choice of the Council's geographic jurisdiction was also logical at that time. The counties of Hennepin and Ramsey held the two core cities, while Anoka, Washington, Dakota, Scott, and Carver contained the developed and fast-growing suburbs. Since each of these counties had considerable open and agricultural land at the time, the urbanized area was well contained within those borders. Yet that choice also had the effect of locking the Council into a region that was to expand greatly in the coming decades, a concern that this report takes up later.

Forming the Metropolitan Council was thus a very pragmatic response to the current and anticipated need for public services. The lawmakers intended it to coordinate the mass of public choices and express a unified position. They further realized that there could be no real coordination without a plan that specified whom these services were to reach and laid out their costs and schedules. That plan had to take some form of growth management. Thus, the Council was founded on the concept that in order to control the rate of public investment, it should have a comprehensive land use planning process integrated with

the scheduling and management of regional services.

The role of the federal government in urban affairs was another factor in the Council's creation. In 1962, Congress mandated that each metropolitan area have an intergovernmental program for transportation planning that integrated highway and transit choices. The MPC was a participant in this process, along with the state and county highway departments, but since it was not a policy-making body, many felt that it could not adequately represent regional concerns. Additional federal aid programs were enacted in the mid-1960s for which the MPC was expected to provide comments and recommendations. For this role, too, its status was inadequate.

To remedy these concerns in 1967, the state legislature charged the Metropolitan Council with preparing a comprehensive development guide for the region's public facilities and related private developments. Minnesota Statute 473.145 requires the Council to

prepare and adopt...a comprehensive development guide for the metropolitan area. It shall consist of a compilation of policy statements, goals, standards, programs, and maps prescribing guides for the orderly and economic development, public and private, of the metropolitan area. The comprehensive development guide shall recognize and encompass physical, social, or economic needs of the metropolitan area and those future developments which will have an impact on the entire area including but not limited to such matters as land use, parks and open space land needs, the necessity for and location of airports, highways, transit facilities, public hospitals, libraries, school, and other public buildings.

This assignment was amplified in the 1976 Land Planning Act, based on a finding that

Since problems of urbanization and development transcend local boundaries, there is a need for the adoption of coordinated plans, programs, and controls by all local governmental units and school districts in order to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the metropolitan area and to insure coordinated, orderly, and economic development.

The Council was to oversee this effort and make the policies that were most crucial from a regional perspective. Such a broad mandate can be troublesome, however, since it lacks clear focal points to concentrate agency efforts.

Legislators did not see growth management as an abstract goal, as planners and policy analysts might. Steve Keefe, who chaired the Council from 1986 to early 1991, observed this about its founding:

The legislature did not choose regional government as a value intrinsically good for its own sake and reject the contrary values of selfishness and parochialism. Instead, it extracted the legitimate values that underlay arguments in favor of regionalism and local autonomy, and designed a system that accommodated both values simultaneously as much as it could. (Metropolitan Council 1991)

Like the U. S. Constitutional Convention of 1787, they chose to design a new institution, blending features of several proposals already on the table (Harrigan and Johnson 1978, ch. 2).

It is important that the Council was created as a planning and policy-making body without day-to-day operating functions. Its part-time members, selected by the governor, could not hold any elective office in local government. Other regional agencies governing transit, sewers, and airports were administratively autonomous, and the Council was limited to appointing their members (but not their chairs, whom the governor selected) and suspending any of their capital plans that would violate its development guide. Many observers saw this status as a virtue, for it enabled the Council to focus on the large issues and not become entangled in details of management. Others, including Knudson (Metropolitan Council 1976b, 42-43) were concerned that this design limited its power to implement its plans.

It is also important that the Council was created as an *intermediary* organization. Its powers, such as they are, were inserted between those of the state and the localities and were not stated in precise language. As both cause and result of this, legislators understood the powers differently and held diverse expectations for how they would be carried out. Whatever the Council did in practice would inevitably fail to meet someone's standards, and everything it did would, over time, tend to alter those standards. Cities and counties face the same variety of expect-

tations, but they at least have a concrete set of powers and responsibilities that define them. The Council thus had more room in which to maneuver but, for that reason, a less clear mandate for action.

In the early years, Council members and staff had to devise specific policies for the management of sewers and solid waste, parks and open space, highways, transit, and airport growth. It recommended in 1969 that the legislature establish a Metropolitan Sewer Board to extend sanitary facilities to the growing suburbs. In that year, it also used its power to veto a proposal of the Metropolitan Airports Commission to construct a new international airport in the north suburbs. This was a judgment both of the lack of need for a new airport at that time and of the inappropriateness of the site selected. This single-function planning gradually took the form of eleven separate functional chapters in a *Metropolitan Development Guide*, completed in 1974. Essentially, its charge was to ensure that adequate infrastructure in each functional area would be in place to accommodate the rapid growth anticipated in coming decades.

A general growth management policy emerged in 1975 as the *Metropolitan Development Framework*. One key choice was that the Council would make its own policies and expect the local governments to adapt their plans accordingly, rather than form its strategies to fit plans already made by the localities. Thus the development framework was not a mere composite of municipal policies. A further choice was to not channel future growth into or away from any particular sectors of the region; the Council would not intrude on people's choices of where to live. The framework was implicitly open to expansion in any direction the market determined, but favored the most compact development possible in order to limit costs (Metropolitan Council 1976b, 6).

The framework divided the region into five planning areas: the Minneapolis and St. Paul centers, the fully developed area of the central cities and its mature suburbs, the area of planned urbanization in the outer suburbs, the rural area, and the freestanding growth centers such as Stillwater and Hastings. Staff provided data input in the form of profile reports on a variety of issues, identifying several problem areas needing regional attention: shortage of reasonably priced housing, rapidly increasing public facility costs, deterioration of older neighborhoods, and environmental degradation.

Four steps were necessary to prepare a metropolitan staged-growth plan. First, the staff forecast the future demand for land for housing, employment, and other uses. This required the assumption that future density would be consistent with the region's current low-density pattern. Second, the "serviced" land supply (that which was currently accessed by sewers and highways) had to be identified and distinguished from the vacant land that had environmental limitations to development. The third step was to set criteria for the Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA) to provide enough land within each sector of the region to allow realistic growth opportunities for a five-year period while minimizing the public investments they require. The final step was to outline alternative density choices for the urban service area and the public investment these alternatives would require. Following these steps, the population increase previously forecast was recalculated from the most recent data and somewhat reduced.

Basically, the Council's focus was on accommodating the rapid population growth with specific physical facilities and services rather than directing it. As a result, when Council staff reviewed local plans and advised local officials, their comments had some difficulty assessing the long range regional impact. For example, there was lack of consensus on whether the MUSA boundary should be a firm line on a map or a general concept which the local governments through which it passed should have the flexibility to adjust.

The development framework was given its full effect in 1976 when the legislature passed the Metropolitan Land Planning Act, requiring all local units to prepare comprehensive plans consistent with the Council's designs for metropolitan systems (highways, sewers, transit, airports, and regional parks). The Council was to review and comment on these local plans and require any changes necessary to avoid a substantial departure from the system plans.

In that year the lawmakers also passed the Metropolitan Significance Act. This gave the Council power to review all proposed public and private developments deemed to be of significant impact on the region and to suspend for one year, or in some cases to block, those which do not conform to its plans. But the law lacked precise criteria for deciding what was significant enough to warrant intervention. The Council later prepared rules to define "thresholds of significance" with one rule labeling as significant any project that would generate 10,000 vehicle trips per day.

Implementation of these new powers began slowly as the localities began to draft their plans and interact with the Council staff on questions and potential conflicts. The staff, in turn, devoted much time to reviewing local plans, reconciling discrepancies, and updating the policy chapters and systems statements. Few sharp conflicts appeared, in part because the metropolitan systems policies did not impose drastic constraints and the Council, for its part, sought to avoid politically damaging disputes. The MUSA gradually acquired its actual boundaries as the local comprehensive plans were drawn and negotiated; the final line was not set until 1984. Although development proceeded in some suburbs faster than was anticipated, the MUSA as mapped contained more land in most areas than was actually needed at the time, due to very ambitious sewer expansions in previous years.

The development framework was supplemented in 1977 with the *Metropolitan Investment Framework*, a schedule of spending on highways, sewers, parks, and airports consistent with the regional land use policies. In the mid-1980s, these two frameworks were combined into one document. Census data arriving in 1981 allowed the staff to reduce growth forecasts further; ironically, these proved to be too low by the end of that decade.

Physical development issues, however, were not the sole focus of the Council's efforts. In 1968 the U.S. Bureau of the Budget mandated that local government applications for federal aid for housing, mass transit, health care facilities, criminal justice, services to the aging, and the arts be reviewed by a regional planning body in each metropolitan area. The newly created Metropolitan Council was logically the agency to take on that responsibility, which was known as the "A-95 review." For a short time in the 1970s, the Council even worked on a social development framework to integrate planning for human services. In such ways was "metropolitan planning" defined in the law and in the minds of many legislators. In retrospect, this definition was probably too broad for the actual powers that the Council had been granted. Decisions on these issues are still being made, but because most federal funding for the Council's efforts in these areas expired during the 1980s, other specialized networks now take responsibility for them.

The Council Evolves

After 1976, the Metropolitan Council appeared to lose its vision and momentum even while it implemented the Land Planning Act. In retrospect, 1976 was the first watershed year in the Council's history. It was endowed with significant powers to shape the region's growth, and it had enforcement policies in place. But history often shows that agencies' usable powers are not identical to the words in statute books; the former come hedged with unstated political and financial boundaries. The real effects on metropolitan growth would depend on how diligently the Council used its powers and on the many forces that would either support, resist, or redirect them. The Council also had to decide whether its existing policies fulfilled its assigned mission of metropolitan planning, or if it should seek to move beyond them. A metropolitan area is a dynamic environment, shaped by many forces not under any government's direction, and certainly not to be controlled by a set of static policies. The Council's visions were arguably suited to the conditions of the 1970s but it needed to anticipate the challenges of the 1980s. If it did not, its competitors in metropolitan politics would take the initiative away.

Beginning in 1977, the Council's formally imposing role in metropolitan development was undercut piecemeal by those competitors. Governor Rudy Perpich, who took office in that year, had less interest in metropolitan planning than had his predecessor, Wendell Anderson. As a result, he gave his appointees to the Council no particular mandates, and some did not even support its basic policies. Also, key members of the legislature who had sat on the relevant committees and guided metropolitan governance in the 1960s and 1970s left office for various reasons.

Over the following ten years, proposals emerged for a sports stadium, horse racing track, world trade center, and the world's largest shopping mall. These were lucrative investments for which several municipalities competed, offering big incentives to obtain them. The interplay that resulted in the Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome was dominated by a cohesive regime made up of key members of the state legislature, Minneapolis officials and downtown entrepreneurs, and the Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission, created by the legislature (Klobuchar 1982). The Council's role specifically did not involve any choice of location and was limited to approving the bonds that financed its construction. Indeed, Council members did not seek any larger influ-

ence, fearing that intervening in a conflict between the central cities and the suburbs would hamper its relations with local officials. Too, they were not convinced that the project was “significant” by the criteria of the Metropolitan Significance Act, since the Dome’s location in downtown Minneapolis was consistent with their policy to place high-demand land uses in the metropolitan centers. For their part, the legislators’ choice not to involve the Council was partly due to suburban members’ lack of confidence that it could act fairly in a locational conflict (Metropolitan Council 1991, 28).

The Council’s influence on the location of the arena in downtown Minneapolis that was later named the Target Center, which also fit the metropolitan centers policy, was similarly minor. Its staff analyzed the economic impact the new arena would have on other arenas and on downtown St. Paul, but found no significant conflict. It did recommend that the Timberwolves share the facility with the University of Minnesota, but the latter declined to do so.

This lack of influence was repeated in the case of the horse racing track. The state’s voters removed a constitutional bar to parimutuel betting in 1982, and powerful interests prepared to build a track somewhere in the region. Three cities were strong contestants for the site—Blaine, Woodbury, and Shakopee—and offered such financial incentives as tax increment financing and industrial revenue bonds. Shakopee was the ultimate winner of Canterbury Downs, as it was named, even though the Council and many critics judged its highway accessibility inferior to the others. Council members did not believe they had the authority under their metropolitan significance powers to influence its location (Harrigan 1994).

Of even greater metropolitan impact was the Mall of America, first projected in 1985 by the Ghermezian brothers, who had developed a similar facility in Edmonton, Alberta. It aroused intense discussion, not only over the choice of the Bloomington site for the mall, but over its impact on the health of other commercial areas, especially downtown Minneapolis and St. Paul. Since Governor Perpich, who had appointed the Council members, strongly favored the project, there was little political leeway to voice questions, let alone opposition (Harrigan 1994).

Even so, the Council became involved in the Mall of America in several ways. At the request of central city interests, it compared the mall’s likely impacts on the state and regional economies with the public subsidies that were proposed, and it examined means of financing the

major expansion in highway access that was required. It recommended that the mall include neither a convention center (having earlier endorsed a convention center's location in downtown Minneapolis) nor the great amount of office space that was first proposed. Lastly, the Council placed a cap on the number of vehicles that could be parked in that sector around highways 77 and I-494 in order to limit air pollution, although the cap was not particularly restrictive. While none of these were explicit commands, these actions helped form a broader consensus on the project which the developers found it prudent to join.

Reviewing the experiences with these projects, the Council staff admitted in 1993 that they were basically decisions of the political and business communities, excluding "outside" participants.

The Council has not had a major role in siting special facilities in the last 15 years. Its participation has been limited to reviewing such projects after a site had been chosen....The Council's reviews focused on the regional service needs of the facility, potential impacts on regional systems (like highways) and consistency with framework and other development guide policies....However, the Council did influence the size of a facility where regional systems were affected. And the Council's recommendations regarding public subsidies for the facilities may have been influential in legislative decisions. (Metropolitan Council 1993a, 18)

Keefe (Metropolitan Council 1991, 19-20) recalls that the metropolitan significance power had never, to that date, been used to delay a development. (As of 1996, this power to review was formally invoked fewer than ten times in its twenty-year life.) However, frequent requests for such review brought the Council into the negotiations, and project modifications often resulted. These reviews usually focused on the impacts of proposals on the metropolitan systems, especially sewers and transportation. A common situation was the location of a shopping center in one city that would create traffic congestion or water runoff for an adjacent community.

In 1984, the legislature established the Regional Transit Board to take initiatives in transit planning. This was interpreted by many as a rebuke to the Council, which had its own transportation planning staff, for its lack of energy in this realm, and to the Metropolitan Transit Com-

mission, which had a history of feuding with the Council. It was also a time when Hennepin County established its own agency to develop light rail transit, to which technology the Council had been cool. (No rail system was subsequently built, due to the decline of federal funding and the lack of a regional consensus supporting it.)

The Metropolitan Council was subsequently given a significant role in determining whether a new regional airport should be built and if so, where it should be. In 1988, its staff concluded that traffic demand would likely exceed the current airport's capacity within twenty years, even with the construction of new runways. The legislature, not confident in those projections, created a two-track planning process in its 1989 session. One task force was to propose a site for a new facility and a plan for reuse of the existing one, while the other was to show how the present airport could be expanded to meet the needs of the next twenty-five years. The Council and the Metropolitan Airports Commission were assigned to share the work and make a final recommendation in 1996. After a search, the "new airport" team proposed a site in rural Dakota County, a considerable distance from the present facility. The second-track planners asserted that sufficient capacity would be present after adding two runways and a completely new terminal early in the next century.

Late in 1995, the two agencies agreed to retain the present airport, the least costly option by far, and this was ratified by the governor and legislature in the following spring. The cost differential was perhaps the overriding consideration, and no significant political forces found reason to back the new location. Additionally, if a new airport were to be built on the Dakota County site, it would greatly stretch the MUSA line in that sector and destroy a substantial amount of high-quality farmland and open space, which the development framework was designed to prevent. The Council retains the power to veto major capital expenditures by the Metropolitan Airport Commission, although the two agencies now have a sufficiently collaborative relationship to avoid such clashes.

The Council adopted its first major revision of the development and investment framework in 1986. It changed the emphasis of investments in regional systems from expansion in the outer areas to development and renewal in the fully developed area. This reflected a greater awareness of poverty and physical decline in the core areas of the central cities. The immediate effect of this policy change was not significant

since the highway and sewer infrastructure was already present in the fully developed area, but a forecast of growth in the following decade and a half led to the decision to expand the MUSA only in the few cities in which the supply of vacant land would be inadequate and no additional investment in regional systems was needed to service it.

MUSA expansion returned to the Council's agenda after 1988. The demand for suburban land continued to increase, and in the next four years cities requested inclusion of an additional twenty thousand acres. The Council approved twelve thousand acres for which the applicants were able to demonstrate their need, as in Plymouth and Woodbury. In other instances, land trades were approved; a city could extend the MUSA to one parcel if it withdrew an equal or larger parcel elsewhere. These additions increased the urban service acreage by 2 percent. This flexibility has been denounced by some environmentalists as insufficient control of sprawl; other observers claim that a rigid policy could bring a political backlash that would doom the entire growth management program. From this concern came the choice of the long-range urban growth boundary that was incorporated into the *Regional Blueprint* of 1996.

A crucial influence on these events of the 1980s and early 1990s was the substantial decline that occurred in federal aid for regional programs in housing, transportation, water and sewer facilities, human services planning, and open space. The "701" grants, begun in the 1960s, that supported local and regional planning ended early in the Reagan Administration. The A-95 review of federal grants to local governments, mentioned in the previous section, which provided the Council with leverage over them, was effectively terminated during the same period. These cuts reduced the Council's ability to promote its policy goals in vital areas. At the same time, the state increased its financial aid to cities and counties, where the Council had no role in how the money was spent.

The Feedback

As the implementation of the development framework began and continued, evaluations of its process and outcomes came from several sources. As the Council pursued its growth management program, the need arose to evaluate its ongoing progress, focusing both on the process by which it reaches its decisions and on their outcomes. Evaluation is not just a device to hold public agencies accountable and detect wrong-

doing; it is equally important as a “school” for learning what works and does not work. The sooner an organization learns these lessons, the more quickly its programs can reach maximum effectiveness. Yet evaluation is hard for an agency to do, for it consumes staff time, requires agreement on criteria, and opens the door to criticism that may be politically or administratively damaging. When serious assessment is done in government, it usually emerges from an independent source outside of the organization whose work is under scrutiny.

Israel (1996, 14) reports that most of the criticisms of the Council in the early years were of three types. Some focused on a specific policy statement, as in transportation or housing, as inadequate or wrongly directed. A second type grew out of a concern that the Council had too much power for an appointed body, and its members should be popularly elected. Third, a few voices advocated its abolition altogether, seeing it as a usurpation of local government powers. After 1980 the tone of criticism changed to focus on its structure, institutional relationships with other governments and agencies, and its function as a long-range planner. This section discusses the latter expressions of concern and the Council’s responses to them.

Two reports emerged in 1976 that reviewed the policy process to that point and began to set the terms for future assessment. According to Peggy Reichert, a policy planner on the Council staff, there was no “consistent and coordinated development concept,” and the development framework chapters were not fully consistent with one another in their time spans, growth projections, and underlying concepts. “Comprehensive planning was continually postponed” in the 1967-72 period “because of time and money constraints. Community interest was stronger in resolving immediate conflicts rather than taking a long and hard look at seemingly abstract...issues (Metropolitan Council 1976a, v). Looking ahead, she asserted that a strong master development plan is essential to linking all of the specific functional plans with one another and providing direction for the local comprehensive plans. Too, this policy should not be implemented without setting up a process to monitor its impacts. Only with constant evaluation could the Council keep its plans current with changing conditions.

The second report presented the views of Ed Knudson, an outside consultant who examined the political process of adopting the development framework during the 1971-75 period. All concerned realized that they were exploring new territory and groped for both the

substance of the policies and the methods by which to formulate them. The most intense interactions took place among the Council members, the planners on the staff, the local officials who saw their own prerogatives at stake, and the major housing developers whose opportunities for large projects were on the growing fringe. Knudson reported that the Council was not able to “stand above politics” in formulating the development framework. Rather, a regional political process conducted by persons with political experience was necessary to work through the alternatives and win legislative approval for the implementing powers.

It can be argued that the Development Framework became “watered down” through this political process, that it is not as “strong” a growth policy as some people believe is necessary to manage development in the Area. It can be argued that the political process was oriented to the suburbs since the many smaller units of government are represented by many local officials and central cities have relatively fewer officials, resulting in an emphasis on the suburban fringe more than on rebuilding central cities. But it can also be asked whether any growth policy would have been adopted if interaction between the Metro Council and its external social/political environment had not been managed through a deliberate political process. (Metropolitan Council 1976b, 40)

Knudson voiced concern that the Council’s status as a policy maker rather than an operating agency limited it to a reactive role. It was able to say “no” to certain big proposals, such as a new airport in the north suburbs, a heavy rail transit system, and a risky new method of waste treatment. But, he asserted,

The Council has tended to react to the initiative of others rather than to strongly propose specific new programs or projects. The Council adopts its broad policy but tends to wait for others to propose the specific projects to carry out that policy... Despite the fact that the Metro Council has considerable power and authority and has evolved political processes to exercise that power, it has not developed to the point of strongly advocating positive new programs, proposals, or projects to meet metropolitan needs. (Metropolitan Council 1976b, 42)

The Council could only exert a positive role, Knudson argued (41-42), if it were given enough power to control directly programs for waste management, transit, airports, and similar regional systems, and if its members were elected by the public. This advice was not heeded until 1994, when the legislature assigned the Council direct operating responsibilities for wastes and transit.

It was impossible to foresee in 1976 the impact that the development framework would have, or state with confidence what expansion would take place in its absence. Its goals were framed so generally that almost any degree of planning could be said to fulfill them. One claim that the Council itself made, that full implementation of the framework over twenty years would save \$2 billion in infrastructure costs, was largely speculative. On the other hand, it generated local comprehensive plans where there had often been none and stepped up the pace of planning activity. The very attention given to growth management caused proposals for major fringe-area developments to be publicized and scrutinized more intensively, and some were modified as a result.

The MUSA boundary was expected to be most successful when it fitted the ambitions of the communities on either side of it. A city inside the line that wanted development would certainly benefit if growth were restricted beyond it. Similarly, a rural community on the outside, such as Grant Township in Washington County, which banned high-density development, would also cheer the policy. Individual cities bisected by the line had some flexibility to include or exclude specific sites when they prepared their comprehensive plans. Such local wishes were considered when the MUSA line was drawn, and thus conflicts over its general location have been few.

Harrigan and Johnson asked in 1978, "Can the Council monitor the impacts of its policies?" The fact that it was not burdened with direct implementation of its policies could have been an asset for this effort. It had the time to collect data and monitor performance, and did not have vested interests in concealing problems of other agencies or exaggerating successes. Also, it was in a position to evaluate relationships between programs that might be missed in a narrower perspective. Despite these advantages, however,

the Council may easily concern itself too much in planning and policy making to involve itself sufficiently in assessment of policy outcomes. To "look back" in this way might violate the

ethos of an inherently forward-looking agency. Negative evaluations might also threaten the Metropolitan Council's relations with the operating agencies....Finally, it may have more difficulty obtaining timely and accurate data that could be generated by those who are closely involved in administration. (Harrigan and Johnson 1978, 142-143)

This proved to be a realistic concern in time.

Naftalin and Brandl (Metropolitan Council 1980, ch. 5) viewed the regional strategy as highly ambitious and thus open to a variety of assessments, given the Metropolitan Council's limited legal authority and the size of the regional planning task. It stood in the crossfire between "confirmed regionalists" who favored a strong agency and the vigorous defenders of local autonomy and small government. By 1980, however, it had become a focal point for regionwide thinking, a mechanism for resolving complex problems, and an expanding information source about the region. In demonstration of its authority, the Council vetoed investment in a heavy rail system proposed by the Metropolitan Transit Commission and a new international airport in the north suburbs, which the Metropolitan Airports Commission advocated.

However, Naftalin and Brandl (ch. 6) expressed concern that the Council had become less assertive and innovative. Its commitments to local plan review and other assigned responsibilities were leaving it less able to reflect on new challenges. They urged the legislature to define the Council's authority more precisely and give direction for its continued development. They urged the Council to identify some meaningful indicators for evaluating the development framework's impact over time, indicating that Reichert's admonition of four years earlier to do the same had not yet been heeded.

Developments in the early 1980s sparked further evaluations of the Council's mission and effectiveness. When Rudy Perpich returned to the governor's office in 1983 after a four-year hiatus, he appeared to regard it as an economic development agency, and appointed as its Chair Gerald Isaacs, a political supporter who sought to make it such. But when that appointee was forced to resign a year later due to financial indiscretions, critical attention came to focus on the agency as a whole. His successor, Sandra Gardebring, viewed the Council's role as more regulatory in purpose, which did not contribute to a long-range vision either.

The Citizens League, one of the leading private influences on the creation of the Council, reported in 1984 that a lack of clarity in its mission was hindering it from exercising leadership on such major issues as funding of regional services, economic development, waste management, and maintenance of housing quality. Too, relations with local governments and the regional commissions that administered transit, sewers, airports, and regional parks were prickly or distant.

When the Council was created, it had a clear mandate from the Legislature to take on certain issues, which it did. Such a legislative mandate is absent today. In the years immediately preceding and following the creation of the Council, both the House and Senate had formal committees dealing with metropolitan affairs. Those were dropped....The Twin Cities area community, the Legislature and the Council itself appear to be uncertain what it means for the Council to exercise leadership. (Citizens League 1984, 11)

The League strongly asserted that the Council was needed, but only if it addressed those high-priority issues, proposed solutions to them, and saw that adopted solutions were implemented.

In 1985, the Office of the Legislative Auditor did a more comprehensive study of the Council's performance at the request of the legislature. It found that no systematic evaluation of the growth management framework or of the implementation process had ever been done, and thus there were no formal criteria for judging its impact. Analysts found it difficult to distinguish the outcomes of the Council's efforts from the many other influences operating in the region.

The auditor concluded from impressionistic indicators that: (1) since 1970, several costly airport, transit, and sewer projects that other agencies had proposed were avoided; (2) a declining proportion of the region's single-family homes were in the rural area—6 percent at that time compared to 20 percent in 1973; (3) no unplanned sewer interceptors or highways had been built since 1976; (4) 20 percent of the metropolitan land available for agricultural preserves had been set aside under the 1980 Agricultural Preserves Act; (5) the overall supply of vacant land serviced with sewers appeared to be less than what would be expected without the program; (6) every local government but one had completed a comprehensive plan and was following the Council's

amendment process prior to starting new development projects; (7) the vitality of the central cities had been maintained and increased; and (8) rural communities in the region had better land use controls and sewer facilities than might otherwise be expected. These developments, plus the lack of any pressing problems or conflicts, could be interpreted as a signal that the Council was on the right track. The auditor, however, judged the lack of systematic appraisal of the relationships between planning, land use, and public expenditures as a major weakness.

The Council staff responded to the Legislative Auditor's study later in 1985 with a review of the development framework's accomplishments (Metropolitan Council 1985). It cited many of the outcomes that the auditor listed but further claimed that these judgments of success rested on considerable evidence. For example, it reported that the suburban area served by sewers had increased only 5.8 percent from 1973 to 1982, whereas the area with public water, bus, and full-time police service had grown by at least 29 percent. Nearly all of this sewer expansion occurred within the MUSA.

This response by the Council staff also reported that all but forty-four acres (one very small city) of the metropolitan area had been planned in accordance with its policies, and the local governments were continuing to comply with them. Every community in the urbanizing fringe had adopted a MUSA line, and a substantial drop in new housing permits had occurred outside of that line. It cited a 1981-82 study by John Bryson of the University of Minnesota, which found that local government officials believed that the quality of their own planning improved as a result of the Land Planning Act mandate. The report concluded by outlining some directions for a revised development and investment framework based on new demographic data and the need to maintain the infrastructure built in the preceding decades.

The Citizens League revisited the Council's performance in 1989 through a study committee chaired by John Boland, a former Council Chair. It saw the need for active policy leadership to confront emerging issues that would not otherwise be viewed in a metropolitan perspective, such as highway and transit planning. But its chief lament was that "the Metropolitan Council has not actively sought responsibility from the legislature in the last decade as it once did" (Citizens League 1989, 5). Further, Council coordination of the transit and wastewater commissions remained inadequate, as it had been for years. It concluded by reiterating an established Citizens League position that the Council members

should be popularly elected and prepare a biennial legislative program that speaks with a single voice on metropolitan policy to the state's lawmakers.

Oliver Byrum, who as a Council staff member had been an architect of the Land Planning Act and later was planning director for the city of Minneapolis, provided another outsider's view in 1991. He applauded the Council's accomplishments in regional planning and systems, which had allowed for new development while respecting concerns for the environment and restraints on road and sewer funding. However, Byrum found that the Council was not adequately addressing inner-city housing and economic decline, which were consistently given a low priority (Byrum 1991, 38-39). His voice joined several others who were by then calling for reorientation of the Council's priorities.

The Association of Metropolitan Municipalities (AMM) added its perspectives in a 1992 report observing the Council's steady loss of vision and energy.

Its first members took what could be called a pro-active stance and, over time, became involved in issues such as land use planning, parks and open space, and transportation....During the years since its inception to the present, however, the Metropolitan Council is perceived to have become more politicized and is offhandedly referred to as the "State Department of Metropolitan Affairs." It has, either by design or happenstance, become an enforcer of rules and regulations. It has become enmeshed in minutia and dealing with the here-and-now, functioning less as an institution of forward-thinking planning. (Association of Metropolitan Municipalities 1992, 1)

AMM's recommendations focused on renewing the Council's visionary role, for no other agency was in a position to think regionally on a public stage. It suggested the creation of a permanent committee on long range planning as a principal idea source. From this the staff would generate action plans and strategies. AMM did not favor the Council's assuming greater control over the metropolitan service functions (as the legislature provided two years later), fearing that when entangled in day-to-day operations it would lose the long range view. Since it is one of the most influential public interest groups in the region, the AMM's judgments and recommendations were given careful attention.

The Council staff provided a cursory review of the development framework accomplishments in a 1993 document entitled *Evaluation of the Metropolitan Development and Investment Framework*. First, the region grew faster in the 1980s than was planned for, but the urban service area accommodated about 93 percent of it. Second, there was very little growth outside the Council's seven-county jurisdiction, less than in the 1970s.

A third and less positive finding was that nineteen square miles of vacant land were added to the MUSA at the request of local governments, even though the region as a whole had more than enough space for that growth. The current practice was to let demands from individual cities determine expansions in the urban service area, and the Council was thus unable to steer new developments to other sites that were already serviced. In some cases, the Council members approved expansions in spite of staff recommendations to the contrary.

In a number of reviews recommending that the urban service area be expanded, no analysis or finding of consistency with the framework was made. Instead, the recommendation to add additional acreage was based on whether capacity in the regional system was available....Although system plans are based on framework forecasts of growth, the Council and its staff have at times been reluctant to apply framework criteria to deny urban service area expansions when an immediate impact on metropolitan systems could not be demonstrated. In such cases, the regional systems are driving the framework rather than the framework driving the systems. (Metropolitan Council 1993a, 8)

Additional comments noted the Council's political sensitivities to the demands of local governments for growth space.

Cities have not been required to forego development because vacant land existed elsewhere in the sector. This approach reflects the Council's concerns that more stringent controls on land supply would result in higher land prices and less choice for Metropolitan Area residents. The approach may result in lower private land costs but higher public costs for serving land that is not used.

A final observation asserted that the Council's method of calculating land demand and supply supports continued low-density development. This method should be reviewed and adjusted for the sake of consistency with its higher-density policies.

A 1995 study by the University of Minnesota's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (Lukermann, Luce and Mohring 1995) examined the effects of certain fiscal policies on the urban core areas. It found that the practice of charging a uniform fee for sewer service despite local differences in cost amounts to a subsidy of the outer and more affluent parts of the region at the expense of lower income households in Minneapolis and St. Paul. The effect is to reduce the expense of urban expansion at the extremities of the sewer lines and thus unduly encourage it. Additionally, the study determined that constructing highways in the suburbs without charging for the additional congestion they impose also encourages sprawl and reduces the cost of suburban locations. These policies are set by the state government, not by the Council, but negatively affect regional growth management goals.

The many studies done in the 1980s and early 1990s, whether by outside evaluators or by the Council staff, conveyed three general conclusions, according to Israel (1996, 21). First, they tended to endorse the maintenance of dispersed power among metropolitan agencies, although "concern was growing that the Council had let everyday operational concerns interfere too much with its most important policy-making and policy integration functions." A second recommendation was to "retain a federalism-type system of limited regional government, with most powers and responsibilities to remain at the local level." Third, they assumed it best to have large service delivery structures at the regional level. These findings did not, however, give the legislature an agenda for reform.

The Council staff continued its own program evaluations during this time, producing a further study of the effects on land costs of expansion of the MUSA (Metropolitan Council 1995b). This was in response to a concern raised by State Senator Steven Morse in the 1995 legislative session that the current growth control policies unduly raised the costs of developable suburban land (recall Downs' argument in ch. 2). This study examined three major additions to the MUSA in Chanhassen (2,780 acres in 1991), Plymouth (1,800 acres in 1989), and Inver Grove Heights (660 acres in 1987), and compared them with areas in the same

cities that remained outside the line. Data on land value changes were obtained from the respective assessors' offices. The researchers found large increases in land value for the MUSA additions, but about 75 percent of these increases were due to the cost of developing the sites—land grading, road construction, utility connections, park dedication, interest, and fees and charges levied by the city and various specialists. The balance presumably consisted of overhead costs and profits to the sellers, builders, realty firms, and other participants. These costs are largely borne by the buyers.

This finding suggests that the MUSA policy, by itself, did not inflate the land values to an identifiable degree. Where demand for land is strong and cities set high standards for new residential development, such increases are inevitable. Land values reflect many influences, and the three suburbs examined in this study have a strong appeal to developers and new residents. Even so, it is difficult to conclude that the demand, and consequently the price, was not inflated by the limited availability of land within the MUSA.

The most recent evaluation of the development framework by the Council staff (Metropolitan Council 1996a, 10) concluded the following:

Overall, the plan worked as intended. Between 1980 and 1990, 93 percent of the region's development occurred in areas planned for it. This percentage was significantly higher than it was in the pre-MDIF (Metropolitan Development and Investment Framework) period. An effort to enroll farmland in an agricultural preserve program had considerable success. The number of people moving to rural parts of the region or locating to outlying counties dropped, compared with the previous decade. Local planning and regional service provision were coordinated. However, the region's growth in single-family homes surged in the late 80's and 90's, leading to somewhat more growth than anticipated in the region's rural areas and in adjacent counties. At the same time, declining economic and social conditions in the region's older core area intensified as a regional problem.

Significantly, this evaluation accompanied the Council's 1996 report to the legislature laying out the growth options that the Council had

considered prior to final adoption of the Regional Blueprint. Its message is that the blueprint shall redirect and sharpen a set of policies that had largely achieved their purposes. Curt Johnson, Council Chair, stated in 1997 that between 1980 and 1990, more than 90 percent of metropolitan growth occurred within the MUSA. This meant a savings in public investments estimated at more than a billion dollars from the expected costs if the development framework were not in place (Metropolitan Council 1997a).

The most recent calculation of MUSA expansions by the Council staff indicated that from 1987 through 1996 a net 25,282 acres were added (actual expansions totaled 30,039, but another 4,757 were withdrawn). Some of these additions were controversial and the justifications given for them varied; most were either deemed to be consistent with the given city's comprehensive plan or had unique conditions such as preexisting sewer availability or the need for developable land for parks. Still, many viewed the expansions as unnecessary.

These outside and inside evaluations support a conclusion that the growth management policies imposed some restraint on suburban expansion to a degree that was probably within the expectations of most legislators and local officials. Criticisms that it accomplished too little were countered by claims that it took away local autonomy and made expansion too costly.

A Sharper Focus

A renewal of the Metropolitan Council's growth management mission began in 1991, leading to the adoption of the *Regional Blueprint* in 1996. By 1991, there was serious questioning of whether the Council still had a role to play. The new governor, Arne Carlson, called for it to be either renewed or abolished. He made three demands on the Council: to provide a vision for the region, to exert leadership on major issues, and to promote sharing of services by local governments to cut costs. An ideological dispute also rose in importance with the return of a Republican to the governor's office: the power of an appointed regional authority versus elected local governments over high-stakes issues. The Council, by that time, lacked a vigorous political constituency of its own that would defend it on the policy battlefield. Stephen Alnes observed, late in 1992:

Now the Council is being pushed and drawn into taking on major new responsibilities that fit under the big tent of the law but are not what it is accustomed to doing. At the same time, it is being told to keep on doing what it has been doing, only better.

This redirection had several internal and external sources. In 1992, the Council issued a vision statement of what the region would look like in 2015 (Metropolitan Council 1992a), addressing issues that had been in the agency's own realm, such as transportation and the environment, plus the broader issues of telecommunications, economic development, and the arts that are the responsibility of other governments and the private sector. Many organizations and focus groups provided input to the goals and visions. However, the document drew criticism from Minneapolis and St. Paul planners and officials for its lack of attention to the social and economic challenges of the urban core.

The brief document, *Purpose and Role of the Metropolitan Council: Focused for the Future*, issued by the Council in the fall of 1993, conceded many of the critics' points. First, it admitted that in implementing the Land Planning Act and complying with other legislative mandates, "Council work on other issues in the region was choked off or slow in getting under way." Second, it recalled that "for a decade, Minnesota's governors told the Council not to stir up the pot, so the Council kept an extremely low profile....Governors and many legislators assessed the Council's performance based on how well it carried out existing mandates. State leaders saw the Council as an organization for the 1970s and 1980s, not one for the 1990s and beyond."

The report also expressed a *mea culpa*. "Over the last decade, it hasn't been proactive...choosing instead to keep a distance from controversial issues....In recent years the Council tied its own hands by choosing to operate from a community-wide consensus model of decision making, even though it often had authority to decide. If there was no consensus, the Council didn't go forward." The major issues of the 1980s included hard economic and public investment choices on which consensus was difficult to reach. And when a decision had to be made, it was usually passed to another body that was more secure politically, as we have seen.

This report promised a shift in focus "from an emphasis on long-range planning to incubating solutions to the region's emerging

issues.” In order to become a regional problem solver, the Council pledged a new and more systematic internal process for identifying issues, developing and implementing solutions in partnership with other organizations, and evaluating the results to ensure public accountability.

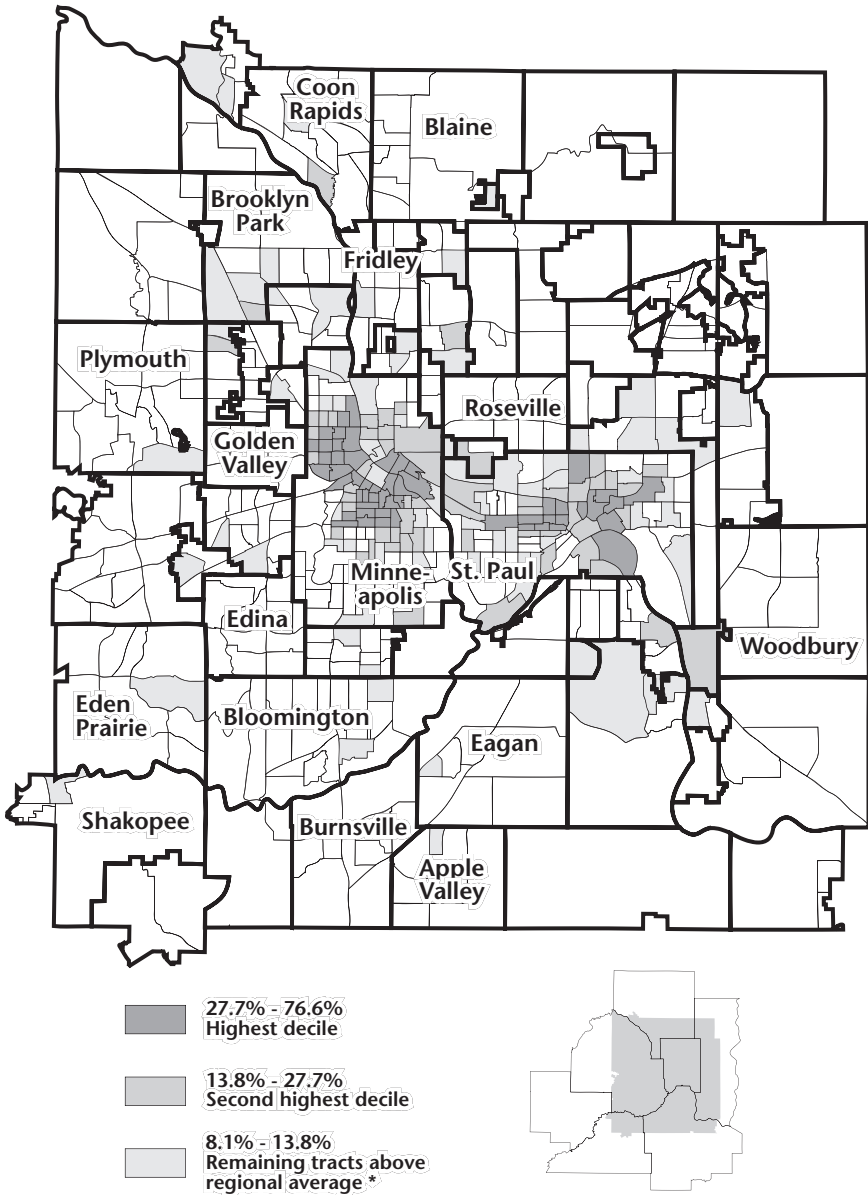
Focused for the Future also promised greater attention to such inner-city problems as poverty, crime, unemployment, and deteriorating housing. This was not a new concern, admittedly; the staff’s Fully Developed Area Task Force complained in 1977 that the development framework tools were inadequate to direct growth and reinvestment into that sector. That theme was renewed with greater urgency in a 1992 staff report, *Trouble at the Core: The Twin Cities Under Stress*, which documented the growth and concentration of poverty, the loss of inner-city jobs, the escalating crime rate, and the rise in minority population amid these conditions. It forecast that these trends would continue and warned that only a comprehensive regional policy could reverse them. This position was clearly supported by census data on the location of persons whose incomes were below the poverty level; Figure 3 shows its concentration in the central cities.

The Council was cast in a more internationally relevant role when the Citizens League in 1993 urged the Twin Cities region to strengthen its position in the globally competitive economy. Its six “critical success factors” included high priority infrastructure investments that have been long-term Council concerns, but the report reissued this mandate in a larger context. “The region should choose a more compact and less costly pattern of development, freeing its infrastructure resources to be used on public amenities such as parks, and for investments in air transportation, telecommunications, and shipping capacity needed for future economic competitiveness” (Citizens League 1993, 112-113).

Other metropolitan areas have mobilized their economic and political resources for global competitiveness. Kanter profiled three—Boston; Greenville/Spartanburg, South Carolina; and Miami—for their entrepreneurial approach to whole-region development and competitiveness. Governments and private participants worked together to build infrastructures and planning capacity. She argues that communities need “social glue,” described as:

a means for social cohesion, a way to bring people together to define the common good, create joint plans, and identify

Figure 3. Census Tracts Above the Metropolitan Average in Percent of Persons Below the Poverty Level, 1989



* Tracts 701.01 and 612.00 not shown on map Source: Metropolitan Council Data: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990

strategies that benefit a wide range of organizations and people in the community. In addition to the physical infrastructure that supports daily life and work—roads, subways, sewers, electricity, communications systems—communities need a social infrastructure...for collaboration to solve problems and create the future. (Kanter 1995, 32)

The Metropolitan Council has the power and expertise to play a strategic role in this network and to mobilize the many public and private partners who can make necessary contributions.

The fully developed area was explicitly addressed in a 1994 set of proposals by the Council as part of a study which had been mandated three years earlier by the legislature. The primary focus of the study was on the job growth and skill development required to combat poverty and stabilize the core areas.

Metropolitan areas with a declining core do not compete as effectively economically in the marketplace as urban areas with a stable and healthy core....True regional economic growth must include both new development in outlying suburbs and investment in the older parts of the region. The goal is a net increase in jobs for the region overall instead of simply shifting resources from one city to another, often at the expense of the center cities. (Metropolitan Council 1994b, 1-2)

This study was accompanied by socioeconomic statistics on the extent of the disparities in jobs and income between ethnic groups and sectors of the region.

The stimulus for Council renewal from Governor Carlson was complemented by the efforts of State Representative Myron Orfield from south Minneapolis. He began in 1992 to raise issues of equity and balance between the “favored quarter” of the region, located in the growing southwestern suburban quadrant, and the central cities and less favored suburbs (Orfield 1997b, ch. 1). That quarter, he argued, has received a disproportionate share of public investments in highways and sewers, which have stimulated their growth over the other areas. In addition, by not accommodating homes for middle- and lower-income households, they experience fewer social problems and the costs associated with them. Those burdens thus fall on the sectors that are less financially

able to carry them. Orfield (178-180) further charged that the Council was more concerned with facilitating growth than with directing it and lacked the will to guide it so as to ensure fair opportunities in jobs and housing for inner-city residents locked in poverty. The Council was, to a great extent, “captured” by the development interests working through the state and the suburban local governments and through the Council’s own membership.

Orfield’s concerns attracted a coalition of central city and suburban activists in the region that took the name Alliance for Metropolitan Stability. In 1992-93 they pressed the legislature to pass a package of reforms, collectively called the Metropolitan Community Stability Act, that would significantly reallocate development resources in the metropolitan area. These included expansion of affordable housing, election of the Metropolitan Council, tightening of MUSA expansion, and protection of farmland from assessments. Only the last-mentioned became law.

Most legislators opposed Orfield’s program of redistribution as too radical, yet conceded that some reorientation of priorities was due. Further, they agreed with Orfield that the Council needed a change of organization to remedy the loose and often contentious relationships between it and the autonomous transit and wastewater agencies.

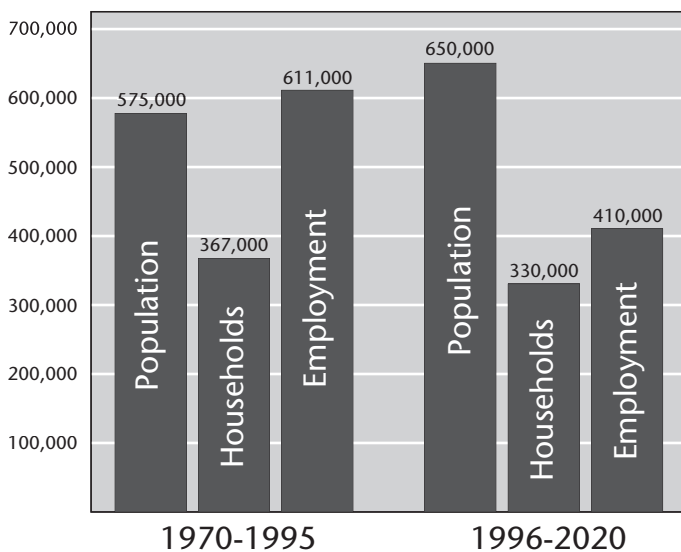
The structural change came in 1994, which has proved to be the second major watershed year for the Council. Lawmakers abolished the Regional Transit Board, Metropolitan Transit Commission, and Metropolitan Wastewater Control Commission, assigning the waste and transit functions directly to the Council. It thereby became an operating as well as a planning agency, contrary to its founders’ intentions, thus merging the responsibilities for short-term tactical choices and coordination with long-term planning. The Chair’s office became part-time, and the full-time post of regional administrator, appointed by the members, was created with a specific list of qualifications. Council members continued to be appointees of the governor, but would thenceforth serve at his or her pleasure rather than hold a fixed term—a move intended to clarify their accountability. The agencies in charge of airports and sports facilities were left in their previous position, with continued limited oversight by the Council.

To fulfill its promises and carry out its expanded legislative mandate, the Council began to compose the *Regional Blueprint* as a revision of the *Metropolitan Development and Investment Framework*. The prelimi-

nary version, adopted in late 1994, emphasized six goals: to strengthen the region's economy for global competition, to reinvest in distressed central cities and older suburbs, to strengthen community identity and cohesiveness, to preserve the natural environment, to guide growth in order to contain urban sprawl, and to expand choices for affordable homes. This proposal initiated rounds of staff and public deliberations to give the blueprint a final form.

A major research effort identified the anticipated population, household, and employment growths, and also the public investments necessary to service them (Metropolitan Council 1995a). Council staff forecast a growth of 410,000 households and 650,000 people for the seven-county region by 2020, with 380,000 more jobs (see Figure 4). The new homes would be accommodated at an average residential density of 2.5 households per acre, while the new residents would require one hundred million more square feet of commercial and industrial space in which to work. The growth will cause a steady increase in motor vehicle trips to accommodate the larger number of travelers and the longer distances covered.

Figure 4. Forecasted Growth in Population, Households, and Jobs in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area Over a Fifteen-Year Period Compared to Growth Over the Previous Period



Source: Metropolitan Council

The Council staff envisioned this urban expansion could be arranged in three alternative types of development. The first, *spread development*, simply provides space for homes and jobs wherever the market chooses and individual local governments allow. This is likely to be in a ring around the currently built-up areas but at a relatively low level of density. This option is closest to the current development trend, which the growth management policies in place have only gently restrained. The MUSA would be expanded wherever demand for it occurred.

The other two options would impose tighter constraints on the market and local authorities. *Channeled development* would direct growth into nodes along selected highway and transit corridors. The MUSA would be expanded only in those nodes and corridors. The most restrictive, *concentrated development*, envisions all urban growth taking place on vacant or redeveloped land within the existing MUSA which would not be expanded. These options, it was stressed, were hypothetical rather prescriptive, intended to spark public discussion and feedback.

Each of these options entailed certain public costs for sewers, water, and transportation. Naturally, the more concentrated the new development was in areas with existing services, the lower its costs would be. Thus, the spread development option would require an additional \$13.3 billion in such investments by 2020, while the channeled development option would demand \$11.8 billion. Least expensive was the concentrated development scheme, at \$11.0 billion. These numbers are projections and could prove to be high or low, depending on unforeseen influences over the time period.

The forecasts of growth in population, households, and employment were prepared both on a regional basis and segmented into four subregions—the northeast, northwest, southwest, and southeast quadrants. These forecasts were further allocated to the central cities, the fully developed area, developing area, rural service area, and the free-standing growth centers. The final step was to identify the growth that individual cities can accommodate. For those with substantial open space, this forward look is crucial but also politically sensitive. The Council does not intend, nor is it legally able, to force any city to meet a specific forecast, but instead it uses the projection to encourage local officials and residents to consider how they can provide for economic growth and life-cycle housing at a higher density, with a minimum of additional public spending (Metropolitan Council 1996d).

In 1996 the Council invited public reactions to the amended *Regional Blueprint*. There were five scheduled public hearings, ten meetings of different focus groups, six informational open houses, and a telephone survey of five thousand randomly selected residents. More than eighty meetings were held with organizations in cities and neighborhoods. Hundreds of comments arrived by letter, telephone, and email. A wide variety of views were expressed, most of them supporting the broad growth strategy.

Dissenting responses focused both on the strategy itself and on the means of pursuing it. Some expressed the concern that it would weaken city and county authorities' power over their own growth choices and impose a single standard on varying local conditions. For example, the Anoka County Board of Commissioners viewed the proposal as limiting commercial and industrial expansion in much of the county, thus denying it the expanded tax base it requires to support the expected residential growth. Further, it envisioned that urban growth would accelerate in the counties to its north, outside the Council's realm of authority, and make heavier demands on its roads that were not scheduled for improvement in the following twenty years. The board thus declared that it would not support any plan that failed to address these concerns.

The North Metro Mayors Association, representing the less affluent suburbs in that sector of the region, offered several recommendations in late 1996. First, it urged action by the legislature (enacted the following year) to control urban sprawl outside the seven-county region. Second, it requested that more financial resources be allocated to the less affluent communities through revision of tax base sharing in order to spur their revitalization. Third, the association wanted the Council to give priority to maintaining and upgrading existing public facilities over new construction. Additional statements supported the close linking of transit with housing and employment, incentives to communities that have a fair share of affordable housing, and vigorous enforcement of policies to promote higher density development. In general, the association backed the *Regional Blueprint* while advocating vigorous use of its policies for the benefit of the fully developed areas.

The Builders Association of the Twin Cities, always a prominent voice, commissioned a study by several planning and legal firms on the region's supply of land for new construction. Completed in 1996, the study included a survey of the actual amount of buildable land remaining

within the MUSA at that time and compared it with the anticipated growth in households. One finding was that when the area taken up by parks, industry, public uses, and wetlands is subtracted, there remains less land for homebuilding than will accommodate growth beyond the year 2000, assuming an average of two homes per acre. Such a land shortage inevitably inflates land prices. The researchers concluded that the Council's program of growth management in the 1970s and 1980s had succeeded because the MUSA was large enough to accommodate growth at reasonably low land costs, but that there was an immediate need both for MUSA expansion to avoid cost pressures in the near future and for a simplified process by which cities can continue to expand it as needed. A further recommendation supported the *Regional Blueprint* policy of redevelopment and increased density in the already built-up areas but urged additional public incentives to make this happen quickly enough to accommodate the sixty-six thousand households that the Council projects will want to live there. Only with such policies, the association argues, will there be enough moderate-cost housing for the region's current and future residents.

A contrasting position is argued by the Land Stewardship Project and its partners in an environmental protection alliance. They are concerned about the rapid loss of farmland and other open space, and they fear its gradual consumption by a permissive Council policy of expanding the MUSA. They have targeted sensitive areas such as central Washington County for protection in the Green Corridor Project, relying on voluntary action by landowners. The alliance also opposed the new bridge across the St. Croix River south of Stillwater as an unwise invitation to urban sprawl and traffic congestion. Thus the Land Stewardship Project is on record for tighter restraint on municipal expansions of the MUSA.

Respondents from the central cities and older suburbs, led by the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, often expressed the concern that the blueprint's goals for reinvestment had little financial backing. Promoting renewal of brownfield sites and rehabilitation of older homes is expensive and the Council by itself had meager resources to commit to it, depending heavily on others' support. For many urban residents, the size of the MUSA may be of no concern, since inner-city renewal and fringe expansion appear to have no connection. Yet the Alliance responds that growth not permitted to occur at the fringe could well find a place within the already developed area, and thus seconded the

call of the Land Stewardship Project. Basically, the Alliance argues that the Council's policy of voluntary local compliance with the blueprint is not strong enough to counter the economic and political forces for suburban development.

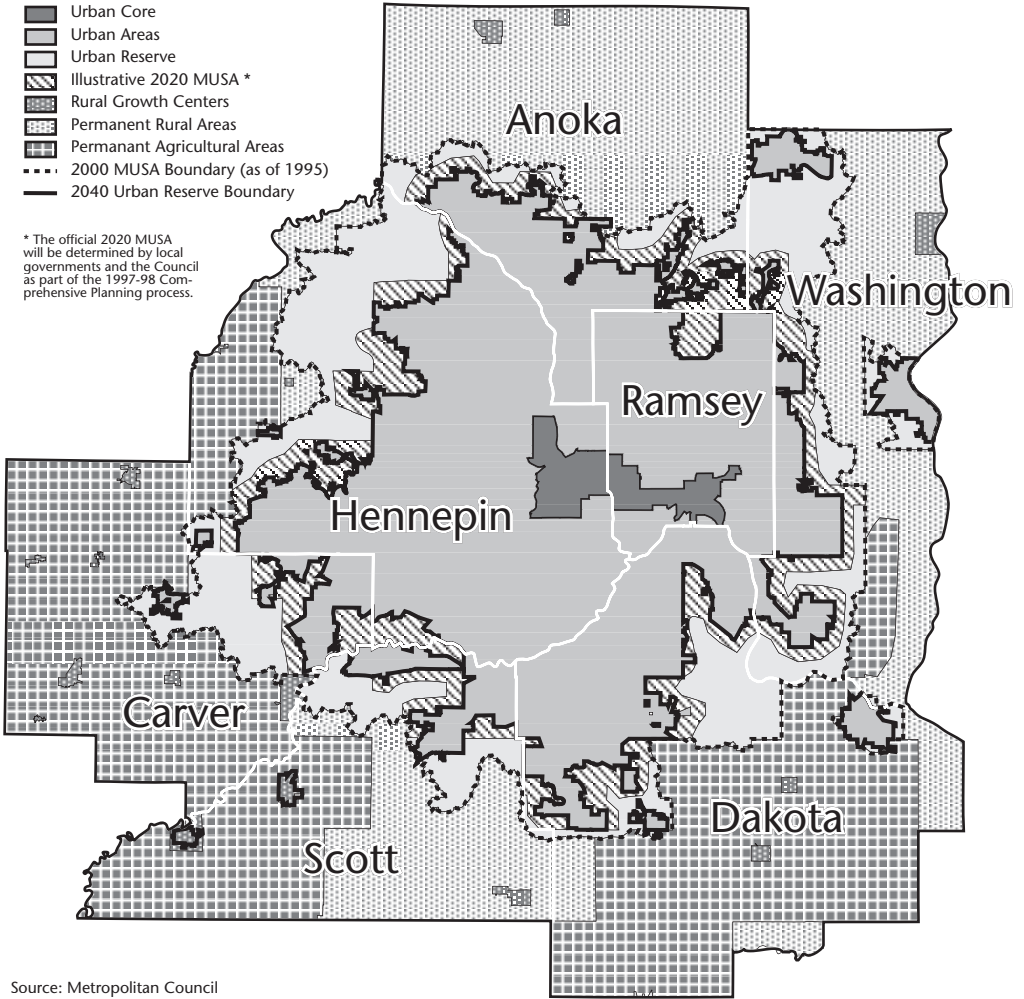
The Council amended the *Regional Blueprint* in December 1996 with a *Metro 2040 Regional Growth Strategy*. It took into consideration its own research, opinions expressed in the public hearings, and its larger sense of what the public and the leading political forces wanted. Attention is focused on five basic strategies: economic development and its infrastructures, reinvestment in declining sectors of the region, building strong communities through promoting local partnerships, environmental protection, and, as an apparent link between the first four, a regional growth strategy with priorities for public investments.

Metro 2040 is a composite of the three growth options rather than an exclusive choice of one of them. Figure 5 portrays the strategy policy areas as projected in 1996. About 55 percent of future growth is expected to occur inside the current MUSA line, labeled the *urban area*. A significant effort is planned to renew residential and industrial areas within the smaller *urban core*, consisting of the older portions of Minneapolis and St. Paul and the University Avenue corridor that links them. Job growth will be concentrated at the urban core and at activity centers along the transit routes within the Interstate 494-694 beltway.

An illustrative 2020 MUSA area was designated for the remaining growth, to which sewer service will be gradually expanded as needed. In addition, a long-term urban reserve area was created with a gross size of 564 square miles, of which 305 are considered suitable for development. Its boundary line generally follows the outer limits of the watersheds now served by the metropolitan sewer system, and Council staff expects that this will accommodate anticipated growth to the year 2040. In practical terms, the 2040 urban reserve boundary is the region's urban growth boundary.

Outside the urban reserve are two other areas, the *permanent agricultural area* and the *permanent rural area*. The former consists of land enrolled in or eligible for the agricultural preserves program, while the latter has a variety of farm and nonfarm uses with a residential density of no more than one unit per ten acres. Land of either of these two types will not be eligible for sewers before 2040, if ever, and only minimal transportation facilities consistent with a rural lifestyle will serve them. Metro 2040 also identified several *rural growth centers*—

Figure 5. Regional Growth Strategy Policy Areas, 1996



small communities like Belle Plaine, Marine on St. Croix, and St. Francis—allowed to plan for modest growth that could be serviced by local sanitary facilities.

The MUSA line remains in this revised program, subject as before to negotiation with local communities. However, the Council will encourage them more strongly to develop at higher densities so as to use the available space and public investments more efficiently rather than simply accommodate demand at the current lower density rate. Thus it rejects the Builders Association case that those communities should be able to expand the MUSA boundary at will, yet refuses to draw the firm line that the Land Stewardship Project and the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability favor. In its view, the supply of “buildable land” is not readily determinable, since political, economic, and environmental uncertainties affect many vacant areas.

A New Interdependence

The Metropolitan Council implements the *Regional Blueprint* through the municipal and county governments. Units of local government are mandated by state law to review and, if necessary, revise their comprehensive plans to conform to the revised strategy produced at the end of 1996. This process began when the Council sent to the localities its growth forecasts to the year 2020, the changes in system plans, and the proposed urban growth boundaries. Local officials and staff have the opportunity to negotiate growth and land use assumptions within certain limits. If a revision is needed to accommodate the changed conditions, the city, county, or township has until the end of 1998 to complete it. Council staff reviews each plan for its conformity to the blueprint’s goals and system policies, to adjacent jurisdictions’ plans, and to other state and federal regulations. If a plan review discovers a conflict with any of these, the Council negotiates to resolve it. It will give priority in distributing grants and other benefits, such as the Livable Communities funds, discussed in the next chapter, to communities whose comprehensive plans support the regional goals. It has full authority, as the operating agency of the wastewater system, to determine where sewer extensions will be built. It can allocate major highway improvement funds and may tie those choices to local conformity to the blueprint.

The effort is now underway to secure conformance of local governments’ comprehensive plans to the blueprint in terms of population

density, infill of already serviced lands, and provision for modest-cost housing. The *Local Planning Handbook*, issued in 1997, outlines the subjects that each plan must address. They include a land use component covering current and proposed uses, staged development plans to address redevelopment and infill within the already urbanized area, and, for those communities on the fringe, any addition of new land to the urban area for future development. These comprehensive plans are to be staged in five-year increments, beginning in 2005, so as to enable the Council to anticipate demand on the wastewater and transportation systems.

The comprehensive plans must also provide a housing component to ensure that projected needs of various income groups will be met, and a surface water management scheme. An additional section must describe the location, timing, use, and capacity of the highways and streets, sewers and private waste systems, parks and open space, water supply, and airports if applicable. Finally, there must be a description of the zoning controls, capital improvement schedules, and other programs that will implement the plans.

A further requirement of the state law is that each city and township submit its revised comprehensive plan to adjacent units of government and school districts. The intent is to avoid site conflicts at their borders and ensure that transportation and water management plans are compatible. The receiving unit may comment about any concerns it has, and such statements should be included in the plan submission. The burden is on the communities to work out a resolution, but Council staff stand ready to assist them.

The Council intends to negotiate with each community over how much land it will need to meet 2020 expectations. This will be based on an inventory of land that is either vacant or capable of redevelopment, and on forecasts of household and employment growth in the community. Once the plan is in place, the Council will annually review local data to see what growth actually takes place. Municipal officials play a significant role in this review, and the burden is on them to justify their plans in regional terms and keep them current. These comprehensive plans are to be the cities' most authoritative documents, and zoning ordinances and capital improvement plans must be consistent with them. Obviously, local politics will strongly influence these choices, and there is continuing potential for disagreement with regional positions.

For example, the city of Dayton lies mostly in the urban reserve area outside the 2000 MUSA line (but partially within the illustrative 2020 MUSA line), and the Council schedule calls for staged development in five-year increments. Some of its residents want to preserve the semirural atmosphere while others want to sell their farmland for development. Dayton officials have begun negotiations with the Council, both parties seeking an agreement that offers some flexibility while not seriously compromising the overall plan (Grossfield 1997). In some other suburbs within the MUSA, the Council suggests future housing densities higher than currently exist, and local officials and residents prefer the status quo.

Lino Lakes is another suburb bisected by the MUSA line. The Council projects it to reach a peak population of about twenty-five thousand in 2020, which presumes a growth rate comparable to that of the past decade. The MUSA would be gradually expanded to accommodate this. However, some local officials and residents argue that this is too fast a pace and support city policies to slow the approval of residential subdivisions. Road congestion is also a factor in their thinking, since no addition to capacity is anticipated. If the demands for homesites in the northern sector of the region are as strong as the Council anticipates, officials in Lino Lakes and its neighbors will be under strong pressure from the market.

A further example concerns Baytown, a township in the St. Croix River valley in Washington County that is relatively rural and wants to stay that way. Its neighbor to the north, the city of Oak Park Heights, wants to annex 235 acres of the township for housing development. In its defense, Baytown proposed to the Minnesota Municipal Board that Oak Park Heights annex to Lake Elmo, a city on its western border that plans for low-density development. The Council, in its advisory role, envisions this contested part of the township for future urban expansion and so supports the Oak Park Heights request. Finally, the Municipal Board, which must approve all annexations and consolidations, is an independent state agency that typically seeks the most cost-efficient solutions to such disputes (Broede 1997).

Preserving high-quality farmland requires identification of specific areas and workable means to prevent their development. About 40 percent of the region's 2,900 square miles remained in some kind of agricultural use as of 1992. In 1997, the Metropolitan Council formed a

Permanent Agricultural Land Preservation Task Force made up of farmers, local elected officials and planners, state legislators, county tax assessors, and representatives of the Land Stewardship Project. This group set goals for the effort and established criteria for choosing sites, such as soil quality and proximity to already built-up areas. The agricultural preservation programs that worked in the past are now less effective due to changes in land valuations and property tax laws, and task force members have disagreed over how much land to preserve, what kind of farming to favor, and the ideal size of land parcels in this area, but ongoing work in 1998 should produce legal and financial tools and practices for better protecting the selected areas.

Transportation planning is a vital ingredient in the *Regional Blueprint*. Metropolitan Council power over regional highways is based on a close accommodation with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT). From the early 1970s, MnDOT has had a surface transportation plan prepared by its Transportation Advisory Board (TAB). The most recent plan was adopted in 1996 to conform to the federal requirements of ISTEA (International Surface Transportation Efficiency Act) and the 1990 Clean Air Act amendments as well as the *Regional Blueprint*. Its five policy goals are to reduce travel demand, increase the capacity of roads through better management, maintain the existing roads, improve the transit system, and expand some parts of the highway system. The last goal, however, will not be reached without additional state funding, since federal grants have been reduced. TAB is a thirty-three-member body, half of whom are elected local officials, and remains central to the planning process and allocation of federal and state funds.

MnDOT relies on the Council's plans for controlled-access roads within the seven-county area. Keefe (Metropolitan Council 1991, 22) reports that the Council also serves as a political intermediary for the state agency in its freeway planning, helping to work through controversies over policies and locations. In the furor of the mid-1990s over the proposed bridge to Wisconsin near Stillwater, the Council defended the governor's position in favor of it, while realizing that the span would probably accelerate sprawl in St. Croix County and beyond.

Mass transit, a direct function of the Council, is also part of the regional strategy. One purpose of increasing residential and commercial density is to encourage bus ridership and thus reduce vehicle congestion. The legislature in 1995 enacted a further incentive for this, granting a

modest tax incentive to businesses that locate or expand close to transit routes. The Council has the task of identifying the zones in which this benefit would occur. The 1998 session of the legislature provided funds to begin planning a light rail transit corridor from downtown Minneapolis along Hiawatha Avenue to the airport and Mall of America, which will be a major task of the Metropolitan Council.

The Metropolitan Council staff has greatly improved its capability to monitor the effects of its policies through its Geographic Information Systems (GIS). This makes it possible to link vast quantities of data with spatial locations and display them graphically. These can be updated constantly, and so offer policy makers quick feedback on the direction and pace of development. Officials, planners, and the public can see current displays of housing types and values, traffic volumes, the condition of natural open spaces, and the land available for new construction or redevelopment, and they can respond intelligently to the opportunities and problems presented. The Council also has a state mandate to develop a metro GIS. Major challenges to this, however, are the difficulty of obtaining the data that are stored in many databases, arranging them in a format that is both usable and accessible, and updating them regularly.

5

Housing Policy from Fair Share to Livable Communities

Two Societies

Housing poses a dual problem for metropolitan planners. Sternleib (1986, 164) makes a distinction between the “shelter society” and the “post-shelter society.” In the first group are households with an unmet need for basic housing at a reasonable proportion of their income, who depend on government or charitable support for what shelter they have. Those in the post-shelter group not only have security in their homes, but regard them as symbols of accomplishment and means of financial accumulation. Their fears are not for the loss of shelter as such but for declining property values and disruption of living amenities in their neighborhoods.

Local and state governments seek to protect the values and amenities of residential environments through building codes, zoning, and a variety of public services. They have readily accommodated the market demand for new housing by opening up new land to developers and individual builders. The Council has constantly supported these practices, and the *Regional Blueprint* maintains that support.

The needs of the shelter society require more assertive government action, however. In older cities a large proportion of the housing stock has an “investment deficit,” where over the years insufficient money has been spent to maintain and modernize the aging single-family dwellings and apartments. As both cause and result, these have become the homes of the very poorest, and when the deficit becomes so great as to render the homes unlivable, they are demolished. In addition, many inexpensive living units on the edge of downtowns and in the inner transition zones are typically replaced by more profitable uses of the space, from office buildings and higher-cost dwellings to parking ramps. As the supply of inexpensive housing declines, the cost of the remaining units increases but reinvestment in them or in new but affordable housing does not necessarily follow.

Government action, increasingly aided by nonprofit organizations, has been necessary to fill that deficit in housing supply and investment. Central cities began to build and operate residential complexes in the

1930s with infusion of federal money, and their housing and redevelopment agencies survive today both as operators of the projects that remain and financiers of privately owned dwellings for lower-income households. But they now clearly recognize that many housing projects, laden with rules that admit only the lowest-income households, have concentrated the poor to a very unhealthy extent. Today, there are strong efforts to change those projects, either by replacing them with more desirable and lower-density homes, or by enabling tenants to manage them and so better control their living environments. In Minneapolis, these efforts were the spur to the Hollman consent decree, described in the next section.

Recent studies show that various government actions have aggravated poverty and market factors that hinder the provision of affordable housing. A 1991 federal study by the Advisory Commission on Regulatory Barriers to Affordable Housing identified many federal, state, and local regulations that either prevent modest-cost dwellings from being built in communities or unnecessarily raise the price of those that are built. NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) choices by cities to zone out smaller homes and apartments are most prominent in the suburbs that attract commercial and industrial developments employing low-wage workers. Building and environmental regulations and financing restrictions, enacted with good intent, also reduce the availability of such homes. Twin Cities municipalities are well stocked with such barriers, and one of the lowest-cost types of dwelling, manufactured housing (or mobile homes), is not allowed in many developing suburbs. In addition to the regulations noted above, Lukermann and Kane reported in 1994, are higher property tax rates for rental than for owner-occupied dwellings, high development costs for new multi-family buildings, concerns over long-term maintenance of high density housing for lower-income persons, and lack of public subsidies sufficient to overcome these financial disincentives. They recommended creation of a regional funding pool that would enable communities and builders to provide such homes and locate them in dispersed areas to avoid concentration in any one block or neighborhood.

The politics of urban housing involves an intricate network of interest groups, government agencies, and private financing sources. Goetz and Sidney (1997, 490) characterize this as a *policy subsystem*. Many policy issues attract only specialized participants who are highly interested in that area, and since others who have a stake in the choices

don't participate, the specialized interests dominate the process by default. The Minneapolis subsystem for modest-cost housing consists of the city's Community Development Agency, fifty-nine neighborhood citizens' organizations, a group of community development corporations, foundations such as McKnight that support housing programs, lending institutions, and profit-making residential developers.

This subsystem has long been concerned with expanding the supply of multi-family dwellings, but in the 1990s it shifted its efforts to facilitating home ownership and reducing the concentration of low-cost apartments in inner-city neighborhoods. Pressure for this shift has come from resident groups active in the city-sponsored Neighborhood Revitalization Program begun in 1991. The federal Community Reinvestment Act spurred banks to expand credit for renewal of lower-income areas, but this has likewise emphasized owner occupancy, and none of these efforts has been very effective for those at the lowest end of the income scale.

This housing policy orientation in Minneapolis is an important aspect of the environment in which the Metropolitan Council must implement its affordable housing efforts. The subsystem participants do not fully agree on what they want, but their preferences will determine municipal policies on who gets homes and where they are built. Indeed, the Council does not seek to increase the concentration of poor households in any one neighborhood, yet affluent residents resist shifting any large bloc of the poor in their direction. Another factor in this issue is the fear of crime that many Minneapolis residents hold; to them, "low-cost housing" is a code term for a hotbed of violence and drug dealing. Residential relocation will be accepted only when it does not appear likely to create new centers of crime and disorder.

Filling the Need

Providing for the shelter society is of growing importance as a metropolitan issue for Minneapolis-St. Paul. The key terms now used are *affordable* and *life-cycle* housing. Basically defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, an *affordable* home is one that a family earning 80 percent of the particular region's median income is able to buy and make payments on at the prevailing interest rate while spending no more than 30 percent of that income. A rental unit is affordable when it costs no more than 30 percent of the income of a family making 50 percent of the region's median. In 1995, the

maximum amount for an affordable home purchase in the Twin Cities area was \$115,000, and the affordable monthly rent was \$638. These amounts can be adjusted annually as median income and interest rates change.

Life-cycle housing is defined by the Metropolitan Council as a mix of housing types that meet the full range of the needs of a community's citizens over their lifetimes. Dwelling needs differ with life situations and incomes, from small apartments and condominiums for single persons and childless couples to homes with several bedrooms where children are present. The Council currently forecasts a declining relative demand for large homes as the baby boomers age, with a correspondingly greater market for apartments and owner-occupied units for the future "empty-nesters." Of course, single persons and couples with ample incomes may choose more space than they really "need," and their demands will also drive the market.

The Council's housing program began very modestly in 1966 when its predecessor, the Metropolitan Planning Commission, issued a policy statement favoring a wide choice in residential location for all homeseekers, regardless of their income, race, or ethnic origin. No funds or legal tools were allocated to implement this goal, however.

1971 saw a more significant effort when the Council adopted the first housing chapter of its *Metropolitan Development Guide* with the goal of distributing modest-cost homes throughout the region. This time, with the A-95 powers drawn from the federally mandated grant review process, the Council could give the highest preference in reviewing local governments' applications for grants for parks, sewers, and water facilities to those which were complying with the Council's housing policy. The federal agency that awarded each grant was not bound to follow the Council's recommendations, but it usually did. Amplification of this housing program followed in 1973, at which time the Council also acquired direct authority to review local requests for federal housing grants. One year later, it demonstrated its power by rejecting an application for a park grant by the city of Golden Valley because that city fell short in providing for affordable dwellings.

One tool was added in 1974 when the legislature designated the Council as the Metropolitan Housing and Redevelopment Authority. As such, it could enable smaller communities to take part in federal housing programs without establishing their own agencies. One reason for this was to make sure that suburban cities were not short-changed in the

distribution of federal and state housing subsidies; Minneapolis and St. Paul were then drawing the lion's share. By 1997, the Council was administering the federally-funded Section 8 program in 134 communities in Hennepin, Ramsey, Anoka, and Carver Counties, providing rent certificates in privately-owned dwellings to nearly 5,200 low-income households.

In 1976 and 1977 the Council studied modest-cost housing needs as required by the Land Planning Act. It prepared advisory standards for municipalities on size, density, and other land requirements for single- and multiple-family dwellings. Some years later, the 1985 Council response to the Legislative Auditor's evaluation reported that many cities had responded favorably to these standards. More than one-quarter of all housing units built in the suburbs from 1980 to that date were either subsidized or of modest cost (Metropolitan Council 1985, 27).

The 1970s-era housing policy was complete when the 1977 revision of the housing chapter established the Fair Share plan, which set numerical goals for subsidized homes within each city based on a formula that favored the central cities and inner suburbs. There were separate goals for the elderly and non-elderly families. The federal Housing and Community Development Act, passed in 1974, provided funds for several programs of this type, and the Council was given power to recommend for or against federal funding of local requests. It used the Fair Share criteria in its recommendations, but also helped local officials to plan for compliance with them.

These efforts to expand suburban housing opportunities had positive results, particularly in communities directly adjacent to Minneapolis and St. Paul. When the development framework was adopted in 1975, 82 percent of all subsidized dwellings were located in the two central cities. At the end of 1983, by contrast, those cities had only 59 percent of such homes (Metropolitan Council 1985).

In relation to the demand, nevertheless, the supply of low-cost housing fell short. The 1970s and succeeding years were times of rapid expansion of commercial and industrial jobs in the suburbs and decline of the same in the central cities. This outward movement of employment far outpaced the building of homes that many of the employees could afford. During the 1980s, federal funding for modest-cost housing declined sharply, and neither state nor private support was sufficient to keep up the pace of new construction and rehabilitation. Too, housing

costs escalated, leaving a smaller proportion of existing homes in the affordable category. As a result of all this, the “opportunity gap” widened, while officials and citizens in the growing suburbs offered little or no support for the shelter society. They feared the crime and lowered property values that “the wrong kind of people” might bring to their communities, and argued that low-value homes do not provide enough property tax to cover the additional expense of schools and public services.

In 1989, the legislature mandated that Minneapolis and St. Paul replace, on a one-for-one basis by number of bedrooms, all low-cost rental units that had been demolished or converted to other uses. This act was inspired by the loss of a large block of inexpensive homes when the Minneapolis Convention Center was enlarged, although the requirement was not extended to suburban cities, some of which also lost low-cost homes for various reasons. From 1989 through 1995 (when the mandate was repealed) the two cities replaced 572 units and produced 473 more with the aid of funds from several sources. However, the two cities expressed the concern that the law limited their options to redevelop neighborhoods for other than housing purposes, as when an industrial or commercial use was judged more appropriate for a given site. The repeal came in 1995 with the enactment of the Livable Communities Act, discussed at length in the next chapter, wherein the Council was directed to study the issue of replacement housing and any legal changes that might be required (Metropolitan Council 1996b).

By the 1990s, the tension over the supply of modest-cost homes had set the stage for the campaign by Representative Myron Orfield and his supporters to redirect metropolitan housing policy. He presented evidence that the region had only 58 percent of the affordable housing needed by those in the lowest income categories, most of it in the central cities and inner-ring suburbs. Those who had to pay out a larger share of their income for “unaffordable” dwellings were also in those areas. This was, he argued, clear evidence of social polarization, with broader consequences for the entire region.

The presence of a disproportionate share of low-income earners and housing they live in increases the demands for local services and limits the tax base of their communities, the main source of financing these services. On the other hand, in the areas with large tax bases, where there is less social need and

where most of the new jobs are, there is little affordable housing. (1997b, 55)

The Council staff drew a similar conclusion in 1992 from its study, *Trouble at the Core*. Referring to the trends of decline and distress that accelerated in the 1980s, they reported that

with poverty and the shortfall in affordable housing, they are now approaching alarming proportions. In the core area, nearly one out of three people lives below the poverty line....Factors have conspired to make the central cities a place of concentrations—of poverty, of governmentally subsidized housing, of people who are denied choice in where to live (minorities, in particular), of older housing in need of repair, of social services and of public transit. Opportunities for economic betterment, for many of its residents, remain out of reach. (Metropolitan Council 1992b, 5)

The staff asserted that solutions must not be found in “top-down” paternalistic policies that have been inadequate in the past. Nor can solutions be demanded solely of the people where the worst problems exist, as if they were at fault. Rather, action must grow out of a realistic and accepted explanation of the problems and employ decision-making partnerships that bring together resources from the entire region.

The Council expanded on its housing policy in a 1994 position paper that identified five strategies as central to progress. Two of them directly involved housing: to expand the variety of types and prices of “life-cycle” home choices in the suburbs, and to “promote maintenance and rehabilitation of older housing to preserve vital healthy neighborhoods, but remove and replace dilapidated housing with other uses in order to start breaking up concentrations of low-income housing” (Metropolitan Council 1994a, 4). The three other strategies are necessary to reduce the concentration of poverty that reduces households’ ability to afford decent dwellings: better transportation to job centers, improved work skills of low-income residents to match available jobs, and employment growth in central cities and older suburbs.

The Citizens League added its voice to the housing issue in that same year. The key recommendation of its study committee was that the legislature designate housing in the metropolitan area as a “regional

system,” which would increase the Council’s authority to set and enforce numerical goals for affordable housing throughout the region and would apply some mandates and incentives to cities to comply. The housing market is undeniably regional, the committee asserted, and “actions—whether by individuals or institutions—taken in one part of the metropolitan area profoundly affect the rest of the region” (Citizens League 1994, 49). This view called for a much stronger stance on the issue than the Council had previously taken.

As Representative Orfield was campaigning for strong affordable housing legislation, the Council first endorsed it as consistent with its own long-standing policies. However, in 1993, the Council members reversed that position after pressures from the governor, local officials, and some Republican legislators (Israel 1996, 70-71). This further demonstrates the Council’s insecure position within the state’s power structure.

The Association of Metropolitan Municipalities added a voice to the housing debate in 1995. Its task force on urban strategies recommended that the Council produce a region-wide housing plan using the criteria of income levels, transportation, jobs, and support services. To finance this plan, it urged the legislature to create a metropolitan enterprise fund with \$35-40 million per year to be granted by the Council to cities and to housing and redevelopment authorities for building or renewing affordable dwellings.

An analysis of the regional housing market by Council staff in 1996 confirmed the above-described trends but painted a somewhat brighter picture. Compared with other metropolitan areas, housing in the Twin Cities region is affordable for a significant portion of its population. Home ownership is strong and those owners paid a relatively low 16.7 percent of their income for housing—although that percentage has risen since 1980. Data from the National Association of Homebuilders showed that 80 percent of the home sales in the first quarter of 1997 were in the affordable range, with no change from the previous year.

Renters were less well off, though, having to pay a larger portion of their incomes for their apartments than they did ten years earlier. The analysts labeled the housing market as “healthy” overall but repeated the need to address its affordability for the lowest income sector (Metropolitan Council 1997e). During 1997, the housing market tightened with the continuing loss of low-rent apartments, and the vacancy rate in Minneapolis was reported to be as low as 2 percent. The supply of

subsidized housing remained at less than 5 percent of the total, a figure that had not changed since 1989 (1998b, 36).

In 1996, the Council revisited the issue of housing replacement, as mandated by the legislature the previous year. It concluded that the Livable Communities Act addressed affordable housing on a regional scale and had the potential to substantially increase its supply in the suburbs as well as central cities. Thus it urged the lawmakers to evaluate its effects before taking further action (1997b).

The *Regional Blueprint's* strategy for expanding housing opportunities does not differ markedly from previous statements.

The Council will work with local communities in a partnership to meet the range of housing needs of people at various life-cycle stages; broaden locational choice and access throughout the region for people of all income levels; and support use of public funds to help achieve these goals. The Council will use the state Livable Communities Act to further this goal. (1996c, 57)

Its goal is not to increase the supply of modest-cost housing in places where it is already abundant, such as the central cities, but to expand it where little or none now exists. As part of the revision of their comprehensive plans, municipalities and counties must address a variety of housing issues, including the relation of current and needed housing types to the community's demographic composition and employment base, opportunities for new higher-density dwellings near transit lines, areas with substandard and lower-cost homes and their maintenance needs and prospects for redevelopment, and the relation of their housing plans to the policies in the *Regional Blueprint*. Further discussion must address the legal and financial means to reach the housing goals.

The intent is to ensure that careful and realistic planning takes place and that there is serious commitment to carry it through. However, unlike the systems policies for sewers and transportation, the Council cannot require changes in these housing plans. It thus depends on community leaders and residents coming to understand the long-term dwelling needs of persons throughout the life-cycle.

A further move in affordable housing provision developed from the *Hollman v. Cisneros* Consent Decree of 1995. In that year, a discrimination suit by residents of public housing projects against the city of

Minneapolis was settled with an agreement to demolish 770 subsidized rental units on that city's north side and resettle the 519 displaced families elsewhere in the city and suburbs. The \$117 million cost is to be borne by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, including the cost of an additional nine hundred certificates for Section 8 housing. The goal is to establish 590 of those replacement dwelling units in the suburbs by 2002, further emphasizing the aim of decentralizing the poor, and a major task in today's political climate.

6

Toward Livable Communities: The Metropolitan Council's New Challenge

A Stronger Mandate

The Livable Communities Act and related policies gave a new impetus to the expansion of affordable housing and to the renewal of older areas by substantially augmenting the Council's mission. In passing the act during the 1995 session, several legislators sought to respond to the issues that Representative Orfield had raised but in a form that would be acceptable to the majority and to the governor. Whereas Orfield advocated mandating affordable housing in suburbs, this program calls only for voluntary participation by cities. It focuses on the economic well-being of the central cities and older suburbs, and establishes three accounts from which funds are granted to local communities: 1) the Local Housing Incentives Account for expanding the supply of affordable and life cycle homes, 2) the Tax Base Revitalization Account for supporting clean-up and reuse of brownfields contaminated by previous industrial users, and 3) the Livable Communities Demonstration Account for financing projects with compact, higher-density development incorporating a range of housing types with commercial services and access to transit.

A further component of this act is the Home Buyers Tax Break Program. It offers tax exemptions to households below certain income thresholds who purchase homes in specified neighborhoods in St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Columbia Heights, and in residential areas affected by aircraft noise from the International Airport.

The process by which this act became law further illustrates the complexity of the metropolitan power structure. After the efforts of Orfield and his supporters were thwarted by the governor, a coalition came together to back as strong an act on affordable housing as could win majority support (Israel 1996, 71). Several legislators of both parties, notably Senator Ted Mondale and Representative Steve Kelly, both of St. Louis Park, spearheaded the search for agreement. From outside the legislature, Curtis Johnson, Chair of the Metropolitan Council, Lyle Wray, Executive Director of the Citizens League (who suggested the name "Livable Communities"), and several city officials added their

input. The Association of Metropolitan Municipalities was a key broker.

The Livable Communities Act, following the structural reorganization of the Council in 1994, indicates that the region's influentials are still able to achieve substantial reforms in metropolitan governance, Israel concludes.

These changes have been accomplished with legislators who are less interested in metropolitan government than their predecessors were, with much stronger county commissioners who are wary of metropolitan government, with a Governor who has not been friendly to the Metropolitan Council, and with an increasingly conservative political climate. (1996, 111-112)

The Citizens League examined the concept of livable neighborhoods in a 1997 study and drew a clear link between the well-being of small communities and that of the region as a whole. It supported the objectives of the *Regional Blueprint* made public just two months earlier but added some principles believed necessary to enable the growth management efforts to succeed. First, the goal should be communities that are inclusive rather than exclusive, and compact and connected while valuing open spaces. Second, the state should enact means to seek more efficient land use wherever urban growth occurs, and replace the MUSA line in the metropolitan area with a set of incentives and disincentives to achieve the desired urban form.

The third principle in the Citizens League report is that all new development must bear its full costs; this would have the effect of raising the prices of fringe-area public services and thus discourage the demand for them. Fourth, future metropolitan growth should be redirected inward to the already developed areas, aided by a metropolitan development fund. The fifth point emphasized the alignment of municipal taxes with specific services delivered, and a tax system that makes it clear to citizens which government they are paying to perform which service. Finally, the League seeks to make citizens more aware of and sensitive to regional issues, particularly by popular election of Metropolitan Council members. Overall, this report offers strong backing for the *Regional Blueprint* and the Livable Communities program but seeks a greater emphasis on both the mindset changes needed and the specific means to implement them most effectively.

In retrospect, the politics of the Livable Communities endeavor are complex. Of this, Israel observes,

In the end, the Livable Communities Act skirted the more explicitly political choice/constitutional design strategies sought by Representative Orfield, the kinds of strategies that have been most difficult to accomplish in Minnesota since the Metropolitan Council was created. The Council staff would thus once again be expected to effectively broker a highly controversial political issue like affordable housing without clear, specific direction from the Legislature and in a way that neither offended reluctant local officials nor the strong regional advocates in the political, civic, and media communities. (1996, 76)

Israel also reports that the Council members and administrators have mandated that the voluntary incentives be given a serious opportunity to work, despite the preference of some staff members for a more assertive, regulatory strategy for locating affordable housing.

Distributing Resources

The Council began in 1995 to implement the Livable Communities Act by setting goals and distributing funds from the three Livable Communities Accounts. The first step toward implementation was to create goals for negotiations with local governments. The Council established benchmark ranges in four categories: the percent of owned and rented homes defined as affordable, the percent of dwellings that were either attached or mobile homes, the owner/renter split of the housing stock, and the density of single-family and multi-family residential development. These criteria allow the varied conditions of cities to be considered in plans for further housing development.

This done, the Council asked communities to establish goals to increase the affordability and diversification of their housing stock by the year 2010, though not in terms of specific units. Overall, ninety-seven cities and townships initially passed resolutions to participate in the local housing incentives program, which could qualify them for grants and loans. These include all of the region's largely developed cities and a majority of those on the urbanizing fringe. (A very few dropped out later.)

The legislature's initial funding commitment for Livable Communities draws on several sources: a portion of the growth in new high-value residential tax revenues, proceeds from bonds sold for the financing of regional solid waste operations, the Metropolitan Council's general tax levy, and a demonstration account using new state funds. Participation by other public and private organizations, as well as community groups, is another central feature. The Tax Base Revitalization Program, for example, is a partnership among the Council, the state Department of Trade and Economic Development, and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. A fifteen-member advisory committee with expertise in the relevant subjects advises the Council on selecting proposals for funding.

The funds have supported a wide variety of projects (Metropolitan Council 1997b, 1998a). The Local Housing Incentives Account requires assisted dwellings to be affordable at varying income levels, from 30 percent of the regional median for a four-member family (\$54,600 in 1996) to 50 percent, 60 percent, and 80 percent of that figure. This account is under the purview of the Metropolitan Housing Implementation Group, which represents the Council, the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority, the Minneapolis-St. Paul Family Housing Fund, the Local Initiative Support Corporation, the Federal National Mortgage Association, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. These members are able to mobilize capital and expertise from foundations and lending institutions as well as governments. The Council is thus in a central position to blend its own resources with that of many other national and local providers.

In 1996 this account provided eight grants totaling about one million dollars for affordable housing projects, both for rental and purchase, in seven communities. It aided land acquisition and construction for new townhouses, apartments, and single-family homes, plus renovation or replacement of older dwellings, in eight suburbs. The grants provided only a small portion of the total costs of these projects, with the remainder coming from several public and private sources. Another \$625,000 was allocated in 1997 for townhomes in Eden Prairie, Lakeville, and Plymouth, all suburbs with fast-growing employment bases.

The Tax Base Revitalization Account distributed \$6.5 million through seventeen grants in 1996 to help clean up nearly one hundred

acres of polluted land in eight communities. The largest site, in southeast Minneapolis near the intersection of highways 280 and I-94, has been redeveloped for office and warehouse use. In 1997 another \$7.9 million was awarded for another eleven sites in St. Paul, Minneapolis, Fridley, and Roseville. The most visible project in this group is the redevelopment of the Sears Roebuck site on Lake Street in Minneapolis, where a large amount of private investment is expected to add to the \$2.7 million in public grants.

The Livable Communities Demonstration Account disbursed \$4.5 million in 1996 to seven cities as partial funding of projects ranging from mixed-use suburban centers to an eight-block renewal of Franklin Avenue in the Phillips neighborhood of Minneapolis. Each related to one or more goals of the *Regional Blueprint*, a major criteria for funding choices. Four million dollars more were added in 1997 for ten projects in the central cities and suburbs.

The success of the Livable Communities program rests heavily on the cooperation of municipalities. Local officials must secure political support from their own constituencies and so have to show that projects serve local as well as regional goals. If a proposal calls for the renewal of a commercial area around a major intersection, business operators and residents may well disagree over specific sites. Commitment of city funds and other resources will spark competition for them from other neighborhoods. Local officials' backing is also crucial to the legislature's decisions on preserving and expanding the program. To gain this support, however, the Council must take care to distribute the funds widely and not to concentrate them on Minneapolis and St. Paul projects.

The implementation of this program thus requires the Council to function well in several overlapping networks. Increasingly in American public policy, innovation must come through collaboration between autonomous persons and organizations, both within and outside of government. The relationships in networks such as those for affordable housing are usually fluid enough to create uncertainty among the players as to the extent of each other's commitment and the outcomes of their joint action. This uncertainty calls for a structure that enables them to predict with some confidence the benefits and costs that will result. Yet it must not be so rigid as to prevent them from reshaping the program as the results come in, political preferences change, and new opportunities appear. This networking for Livable Communities has been successful thus far, at least in financial terms; the Council claims that its grants

over two years have leveraged more than \$776 million in investments from other governments and private sources (1998a, 16).

The Council is thus in a good position to serve as a network broker. It has much experience at this, notably its work in establishing the 911 emergency telephone system and many other regional programs. The Livable Communities program sets a much larger task, however, and will require a great deal of commitment to carry out.

7

Looking Backward and Forward

Transcending Symbolism

The Metropolitan Council's survival during these periods of ups and downs is due to its dual role as symbol and problem solver. Its very existence declares that there are common public interests inherent in a large and diverse metropolitan area, that its issues and choices affect all residents and businesses, and that some approaches to these issues are better for all in the long run than others. The *Regional Blueprint* seeks to capture the popular imagination by vividly portraying the region's localities as compatible and on the verge of a higher quality of life.

The Council's challenge is to translate this symbolism into the language of practice. The organized political interests in the region that constitute its growth machine recognize the need for planning on the large scale, if only to ensure that public facilities are in place when needed to service the new neighborhoods. But there are many other interests affected by the growth machine's choices, either positively or negatively, and they have the right to be heard as well. The Council stands as the broker between them, despite its limited powers over actual municipal and county choices. To eliminate it would not make metropolitan planning unnecessary but instead transfer it to other players whose accountability is uncertain. As the Association of Metropolitan Municipalities stated, if there were no regional planning body, the planning function would still be undertaken in some fashion.

Groups such as the Citizens League, League of Women Voters, private business and the educational establishment will identify some situations and some choices. The problems with this scenario are that some situations would be missed (meaning "do nothing" is the course of action) and the range of choices would be limited when a situation is identified because of the nature of the group(s) examining the issue. (1992, 2)

Perhaps the Council's existence reminds the region's political leaders that in a democratic system its concerns must be worked through in a manner open to the observation and participation of all citizens.

Keefe expressed this duality:

The Metropolitan Council...is the center of a regional governance scheme that includes other metropolitan agencies, local governments, and the legislature itself. That scheme represents not a triumph of regional over local interests but, rather, a carefully constructed balance of the valid aspects of the two conflicting values. Its success is based, in part, on the recognition that regional government is not an unmitigated benefit. It has a potential for providing both positive solutions to complex regional problems, and excessive interference in the individual liberty and local control of smaller communities....The political support for the Council's regulatory powers is based on its usefulness as an instrument to accomplish these widely shared goals, not on the much less widely shared belief in the general benefits of regional government. (Metropolitan Council 1991, 1-2)

The consensus that the Council ought to exist is rooted in the public acceptance both of the concept of limited regionalism and the pragmatic solutions to problems that it helps bring about.

A Solid Record

The Metropolitan Council's accomplishments in the realms of growth management and housing have been modest yet significant in their context. We have seen that the state's decision-makers did not seek or expect a radical reform of policy or planning practice when they established the Council. They recognized the need to allow the growth of all urban land uses, and, in view of the market imperatives and geographic setting, they expected most of it to be on the suburban fringe. What they did not want, and intended the Council to avert, were wasteful extensions of sewers and highways, unnecessary destruction of valuable open space and farmland, and individual projects by cities and counties that did not conform to any land use plan. It was not to be a full-scale metropolitan government but neither was it to be a mere advisory body without any effect on the pace and direction of growth. Its creators walked a narrow line between competing designs, confident that if their product showed flaws later they could make the adjustments needed.

One accomplishment of the Council is that it has provided a

public arena in which issues of metropolitan growth and governance can be discussed. Most other regions lack this. The state legislature has provided this forum only sporadically and has often failed to rise above contests between very localistic views. The five governors during the Council's era have not given metropolitan governance a high priority either. However, more public participation might have been elicited if regional concerns had been covered more consistently by the region's news media, but the Council as an institution gets very little press coverage.

A further role of the Council in growth management, housing, and related policies is to orchestrate the many decisions made by other governments, corporations, and nonprofits that constantly recreate the region. If infill development in Minneapolis and St. Paul is to succeed, it needs not only the willingness but also the linkages and specific plans for it, plus investment from many different sources. In late 1997 the Council helped organize "urban economic summit" meetings to focus on strategies for renewal of the brownfields, bringing together organizations that have stakes in the renewal but would not otherwise be in contact with one another. The Council has limited staff time to form such networks on its own, but through relationships such as those described in the preceding section, it can create arenas and publicize the opportunities.

As for more substantive achievements, these are difficult to identify and measure. The policies of the Council have been blended with many other influences, both supporting and hindering. There has been less urban growth outside the MUSA line than many observers expected after the controls mandated by the Land Planning Act of 1976 went into effect, and the Council's restraint on extending sewers to those areas was probably an important influence. The extent to which this policy accelerated building outside the seven-county area cannot be reliably determined, since so many other factors are involved. To be sure, lower land costs in those counties attracted many buyers who compared them with prices inside the MUSA that had increased substantially, but the land development market is sensitive to a host of changeable conditions, many of them set by individual municipalities and townships according to their own standards.

In the realm of housing, a significant number of modest-cost homes were built in the suburbs, which in several cases probably would not have existed but for Council policies. But here, too, there is no way of knowing what would have happened otherwise. The dominant political

climates and land use traditions tend to endure over time, and no radical changes in Twin Cities housing policies have occurred. The search for alternatives has remained alive, though, and the Livable Communities program stands as a monument to those concerns.

A Healthy Cooperation

The local governments whose cooperation is essential to the success of the Council's policies have largely conformed to them. These relationships have not been consistently good throughout the past thirty years. The first half-decade was marked by friction as local elected officials and administrators perceived Council staff members as arrogant and unreceptive to local viewpoints. Indeed, staff members in the early years saw themselves as charged to uphold metropolitan policies and not to compromise with municipalities that disagreed with them. This discord also reflected a lack of consensus over the exact role that the Council would play, as well as local suspicion that "those planners downtown" were trying to dictate to them.

Relationships improved after John Boland was appointed Chair in 1973; he sought to transform the Council's image into that of a service agency. The growing volume of research conducted by the staff and its dissemination to local communities was influential in shaping policy, according to Keefe (Metropolitan Council 1991, 26). In subsequent years the relationships varied, depending on which staff member was contacting which local official on which issue, but the built-in policy tensions certainly did not disappear.

While many local officials have ignored or merely tolerated the Council's presence, a few actively watch and participate in its politics. Israel reports:

One of the reasons that both the [1994] merger [with the operating agencies] and Livable Communities legislation passed is that, for the most part, the Region's cities did not oppose them. Some cities, particularly those that wanted more widely shared city-level efforts toward affordable housing, were actively supportive but many were more quietly so....While tension remains between the Metropolitan Council and city governments on particular issues, most of the Region's cities have long since come to terms with the notion that the Metropolitan Council is a permanent fixture and that it is needed to address

some issues that are beyond the scope of single cities or even groups of cities to handle. (1996, 114)

Since 1994, reports indicate a generally improved level of mutual understanding, which is crucial to the implementation of the *Regional Blueprint*. Still, the interactive process requires some regional/local differences in policy and implementation, and even healthy working agreements should not erase them entirely.

Indeed, a residue of animosity remains, which is probably strongest in the outermost suburbs of the seven-county region. In 1997 the city councils of Ham Lake and East Bethel, in northern Anoka County, backed legislation that would abolish the Council (but which drew little support in the legislature). This position reflected their view that the Council was trying to dictate where and how their residents were to live, and that the northern suburbs were being deprived of a proper share of highway money (Kaszuba 1997a). Those communities face a paradox in their planning: they often want higher residential densities than the Council recommends, yet they complain about traffic congestion when the new residents arrive with their cars. Sprawl is both an evil that many suburbanites deplore and a means of growth in property values and tax base that landowners and city officials favor. This ambivalence in attitudes will persist no matter how the Council and local lawmakers respond.

The seven county governments have taken an increased role in metropolitan affairs in recent years, paralleling their rise in budgets, responsibilities, and professional skills. Holding various interests, they do not speak with a single voice, and many see the Council as a competitor for power and funds and distrust its control of sewer and transportation policy. Commissioner Paul McCarron of Anoka County expresses the wish of some county officials that the Metropolitan Council be replaced by a council of governments composed of elected municipal and county officials. Many observers find it hard to believe that a body of local lawmakers will be able to take a regional perspective, however, particularly in the light of the minimal impact that councils of government have had in most other metropolitan areas.

An Expanding Frontier

An emerging challenge to the Metropolitan Council's regional diplomacy is the urban growth outside its seven-county jurisdiction. Lower land prices and relatively easy access to metropolitan-area jobs has spurred the strongest regional demand for homesites in a semicircle of counties from Wright in the northwest clockwise to Pierce, Wisconsin, in the southeast that are not part of the Council's territory (see Figure 1). In 1996, the total number of residential building permits issued in those seven "outer" counties was 72 percent higher than in 1990, while the increase in the Council's seven counties was only 8 percent. And where residents go, industrial and service jobs follow. Among legislators from the outer counties, there is strong resistance to extending the Council's controls over their regional systems, reflecting a sharp urban/rural dichotomy, yet some planners and administrators in these counties already foresee the costly road and sewer expansions that growth will require.

The *Regional Blueprint* expresses concern over this extended growth and offers the Council's data and planning support to the local units there. Its members and staff have held conversations with rural representatives on mutual planning coordination, but no agreements have been reached to date. Those municipal, township, and county officials argue that the land use standards and restrictions which may be suitable to the urban core have no place in their communities. Indeed, most welcome employers and businesses that add to their tax base and the new residents that will accompany them.

In 1997, however, the legislature recognized the need to rein in urban sprawl and restrain growth in public investments outside the seven-county area. The Community-Based Planning Act set state-wide goals for resource conservation, economic development, orderly infra-structure expansion, community design, and intergovernmental cooperation. It offered to groups of cities or counties modest grants to coordinate such planning, which they could keep only if their resulting plans conformed to state environmental and other policies. A specific \$350,000 grant was tagged for the local governments surrounding the city of St. Cloud, which were encouraged to form a joint planning authority, and all eight cities and counties subsequently agreed to participate.

To aid the process of implementing the community-based planning goals stated in the act, the Council may need to make minor

changes in the *Regional Blueprint*. Also, counties and joint planning consortia adjacent to the metropolitan area must submit their plans to the Council for comment, and must show no conflict with its development policies. Beyond this, the Council can make no specific requirements of any plan, however, and so the Community-Based Planning Act on the whole offers opportunities rather than mandates. This is the strongest move that the political climate now permits.

In the long run, the Twin Cities region must be defined broadly, since “urban is as urban does.” As long as the Metropolitan Council’s authority is limited by its 1960s-era boundaries, the state legislature must either take on the burden of growth management itself or place it more forcefully on the local units. The outer counties may not need the same regulations as those in the Council’s jurisdiction, but as they grow they must make a similar pragmatic search for effective controls to protect their environments and living amenities.

The Limits of Power

The political power structure of the Twin Cities region both permits and restrains the Metropolitan Council’s activity and places conflicting demands on it. One can liken the politics of the region to a network in which various groups and influential persons seek either to promote certain goals or to prevent others from reaching them. In the early days of the Council, a strong alliance of business and civic leaders set it in motion with the moderate policies for public services and growth management described above. Opposition was scattered then and more oriented to methods than to goals.

The trend of the Council in the past decade has been toward greater dominance by the state, according to Israel:

As the Council has drifted or has been pulled toward state government since the 1970s, it has become more enmeshed with the Governor’s agenda and state politics in general, and it has, therefore, been less able to be proactive on both sensitive political issues and on its advocacy with state government on behalf of the Twin Cities Region. (1996, 118-119)

The Council, for this reason, has been unable to generate an independent agenda for the Legislature’s consideration. Governor Carlson requires that all of its recommendations must first be approved for

inclusion in his program. Under such a condition, local officials do not see the Council as acting on its own. The more that regional residents see it as an arm of the state, the less willing they may be to back its policies, Israel concludes.

Over the years, new influences have come to apply pressures in different directions. Governor Carlson, though not consistently intervening in regional affairs, represents one force. Representative Orfield and his allies present another. It would be too simplistic to claim that those two public figures alone have driven the Council's development in the 1990s, but they have been the most obvious influences. In the middle of this opposition are the Council members, the legislators, and the leading local officials who negotiated the actual legal and policy changes. There exists a delicate balance of power based on common public understandings of how the region should grow and provide for its citizens, and while it can change marginally with the efforts of someone like Orfield, this network lacks much flexibility.

For this reason, public policy in the Twin Cities area must steer a middle course between the politically unacceptable (and perhaps administratively unworkable) rigid controls on local growth choices and the merely advisory approach that makes no difference in the end. Promoting cost efficiencies, as the Council emphasizes, is a noncontroversial goal in itself. Protecting sensitive areas and valuable farmland also draws wide support. Yet there are many tradeoffs to be negotiated since every land use choice entails gains for some and costs for others. This reality has required the legislature, the Council, and local governments to move cautiously, avoiding the political minefields awaiting each step.

Prospects for Influence

In view of the evidence, the Metropolitan Council can expect to operate within a politically defined window of opportunity. This will chiefly involve seeking continued orderly growth in both the central cities and suburbs while serving the ambitions of the private market and local residents, yet placing some restraint on excessive costs. The Council lacks the power to undertake extensive preservation of open space, for example, though with cooperating organizations it can offer incentives to do this. It also lacks the financial resources for major residential and industrial renewal in the central cities and inner suburbs, yet it can play a role in assembling funds from others and orchestrating action. This

“middle course” was well described in 1997 by Mary Hill Smith, a Council member.

Council policies seek a balance among all regional interests—attempting to accommodate most future growth in the already-urbanized area and encourage smarter policies about how we use land and existing infrastructure. At the same time, we recognize the role public preferences and choices play in shaping the region’s growth, and respect the region’s strong tradition of local government.

We want to work cooperatively with communities so local as well as regional objectives are met. We make it our goal to engage local officials in regional discussions and facilitate efforts toward realistic and workable solutions.

This approach is, essentially, what both supporters and critics call “consensus-based realism,” doing as much as the broad spectrum of regional interests can accept as necessary and beneficial.

Where the Council can make a substantial difference in the future is in reshaping that consensus. Chair Curtis Johnson has on several occasions described its mission as that of a broker “selling equity shares in ideas.” In a region whose economy and technology are so rapidly developing and regrouping, citizens need a growing supply of possibilities for creative action on transportation, housing, employment, and the region’s other challenges. With the aid of the media and organizations such as the Citizens League, the Council can solicit the broadest range of opinions and stimulate the informed public to support new initiatives. Representative Orfield is a valuable contributor but needs to be followed by advocates from all sides of the policy spectrum.

The Big Questions

The future development of metropolitan governance for the Twin Cities must be viewed in light of the five important questions asked in the opening.

First, what means of governance can we design that will be true to our democratic political processes and to the core values of society? Some people argue that creation of an authority that centralizes power on the regional scale violates the democratic principle that public deci-

sions should be made as “close to the people” as possible. When city and county authorities are doing their jobs honestly and efficiently, the argument goes, there is no reason to transfer power to a larger entity which would likely cost more and be less responsive to constituents. Proponents of metropolitan government have been unable to convince many that a unified authority would be more democratic by being better able to provide the regional facilities and services the public demands.

The concept on which the Metropolitan Council stands is that a regional agency can enable the governments “closer to the people” to make more forward-looking choices for the futures of their own communities. It can supply information on their likely growth prospects and the price of servicing that growth. Also, the “people” who should be consulted on these public decisions are not simply those of each municipality taken separately but residents of the larger region who pay the costs and depend on the facilities. This is the logic of placing choices on sewers, surface water management, open space, and transportation in an authority with a wider geographic scope.

The Council was not intended, at its creation, to be a representative governing body like the city and county governments. Although the districts served by Council members reflect the population distribution throughout the region, the Council is primarily an administrative agency, and this ambiguity is reflected in modern debates. Representative Orfield (1997a) asserts that the Council is the second largest local government in the state, after Hennepin County. But this is not, as has been noted, the view or intention of the governor and many legislators; in their view, the Council lacks the policy-making powers of a “true” government. Whether this arrangement is detrimental to the Twin Cities’ urban democracy depends on the actual power that the Council is able to exert independently of the elected authorities.

One possible remedy for the Council’s lack of visibility and accountability is direct election of its members, with its Chair as a “regional mayor.” Orfield argues that it is too powerful to be allowed to remain a tool of the governor and the interests that influence him. An elected Council will, in his view, limit sprawl more vigorously and allocate more resources for the improved livability of older communities. The Citizens League also favors election, anticipating that it will empower Council members to stand on equal footing with local and state officials in setting a proactive regional agenda.

Direct election has passed the state legislature only once, in 1994, after many unsuccessful tries. Governor Carlson subsequently vetoed it. His view is that the Council is a state rather than local agency, and as such it should be accountable to the chief executive rather than the voters. Additional opposition is voiced by those who expect an elected Council to become stronger and overpower the local governments. This debate, it seems, reflects the larger disagreement over the Council's role and will only be settled if a consensus emerges over how metropolitan growth is to be directed and by whom.

Behind the issue of the Council's membership lie the complex and confusing patterns of local government in the region. Those who fear adding another layer of government are rightly concerned that it will further burden the citizens' task of holding their governments accountable. The 1994 reorganization which concentrated control of the wastewater and transit systems in the Council reduced this complexity in a minor way, but transportation planning remains a major problem, as a February 1998 report of the Legislative Auditor asserted. The existing gap between the powers of the Council and those of the seven county governments could be filled by Representative Orfield's proposal of early 1998 to integrate the offices of county commissioner and Metropolitan Council member, but this raises questions about the dual loyalties such persons would incur.

Second, how can the public sector's collaboration with nongovernmental institutions of societal cooperation be protected and promoted? All governments today are seeking new relationships with businesses and nonprofit entities that will enrich public services. Local governments have much experience with park and library volunteers, housing collaboratives, economic revitalization by chambers of commerce, and contracts for services of all kinds. Yet the frontier of cooperation is broader than this, particularly in its opportunities for community development corporations, local foundations, religious groups, and partnerships that blend the efforts of all of these.

One example of public/private collaboration is the Green Corridor Project, involving Washington County with the Land Stewardship Project, the Minnesota Farmers' Union, the Minnesota Land Trust, and the Trust for Public Land. Aided by a state grant, the project is creating a corridor of open space from Washington County north into Chisago County, that links publicly-owned land with private parcels that are withheld from urban development. The willingness of private owners to

donate land or forego development on it is vital to the success of the project, and several legal tools have been developed to encourage them (Pressman 1997). This kind of effort is essential if the areas designated in the *Regional Blueprint* as “permanent agricultural” and “permanent rural” are to remain so for the long term.

The Council can aid private groups as well as local governments with its long-range policy guidance, its research, and its readiness to establish settings for negotiation. But the Council benefits from these private groups as well, and may even find the success of its efforts to be dependent upon them. The very concept of livable communities, so integral to the Council’s agenda, calls on a rich network of citizens with the talent and commitment to turn abstract policies into everyday reality.

Third, how can tensions and conflicts between various political entities be managed and resolved? The metropolitan arena is a beehive of strongly advocated and defended interests. In the large social context, these interests will never be fully united and in a changing society we should not expect them to be. Federal, state, and local authorities represent their publics with different priorities, and a conscientious city council or county board properly takes a more localistic view on growth-related issues than does the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, for example. The Metropolitan Council, as well, is charged by state law with forming and defending a regional perspective that may not be easily reconciled with a particular local one.

But the highly fragmented American system of government only works as well as it does because its members are ready to bargain and compromise when necessary. Its autonomous governments have vast experience at seeking accommodations with one another when their responsibilities intersect. The Metropolitan Council has thirty years of such experience, and its *Regional Blueprint* envisions that cooperation to continue. It will do so most fruitfully if the Council continues to provide what it is best at producing: timely and accurate research data that enable all partners to gain a common understanding of reality, and well-crafted goal statements that embody common interests to the greatest extent possible.

Fourth, what policy decisions are best made from the perspective of technical competence and thus should be isolated from the turmoil of pluralist politics? We assume that decisions in cases where there are accepted standards for quality and efficiency can be made by specialists who are competent in the given field. Thus, federal and state agencies

and local authorities choose highway routings, construct waste treatment plants, set transit schedules, and design airport terminals with no reference to elected officials. But should the allocation of land for future urban growth be treated as a similarly “technical” issue? Are there objective criteria for placing affordable housing in communities? Perhaps so, but these particular technical decisions would heavily impact constituents, and the “expert” criteria could unintentionally disserve a large group of people.

Urban planning stands where technical and political choices intersect, blending elements of both. Neither legislators nor the public want to give up their access to choices that have real political content. Thus they limit technical planners to advisory roles and surround them with others who can examine and challenge their recommendations. The planning coalition that considered both a totally new airport and enlargement of the present one recognized the value of this compromise. The Metropolitan Council planning staff, together with professionals in other governments and agencies, were able to express the “technical” viewpoint while Council members and their constituencies in local and state politics provided the political input. This balance, although uneasy at times, must be maintained.

Fifth, how can these debates over institutions and the evaluation of their performance enable citizens to improve their governance? One of the goals expressed in the *Regional Blueprint* is to build a civic infrastructure that will involve citizens from all demographic groups in decision-making and will deliver sufficient information to enable them to do this intelligently and confidently. Similarly, it seeks to enlarge the pool of regional leaders, an action that has been called for repeatedly over the past twenty years.

It is vital that the *Regional Blueprint* and other plans put forth by the Council stimulate debate. In most cases, the agency's plans do not have the same purpose as those of local governments, consisting as they do of forecasts and frameworks to guide the specific plans of local decision-makers. Several planning scholars cited by Baer hold that plans ought to be viewed

as vehicles for reasoned argument rather than as depositories of scientific and rational findings....They should facilitate doing the right thing, but the rightness, if there is one, may emerge

only in the course of the argument of which the plan is but a part. (1997, 340-341)

Any plan, therefore, should provide sufficient detail as to stimulate informed dialogue over alternatives and consequences. Even rejected alternatives should be retained in the collective memory for possible later reconsideration.

The Council has had mixed success in drawing citizen participation. Knudson (Metropolitan Council 1976b, 29) tells how, in the early years, it communicated with already organized groups rather than seeking to bring new individuals into the arena. It could have used town meetings and similar means to do the latter, but it had to take care not to bypass the local governments' channels of communication with their citizens. A further deterrent to new participation is that most citizens do not see any reason to influence the abstract principles and criteria on which Council policies focus; their attention is drawn only to specific proposals that affect their neighborhoods. Planners use maps and charts as essential tools, but many citizens find their symbols hard to relate to the realities they see. Even so, the Council's citizen education efforts appear to reach a crucial minority of influentials, either directly or through other channels, and will continue to do so.

A major concern for many observers is that the news media do not give regional policy issues the kind of coverage that would provide citizens who are not otherwise informed with an appreciation for what is stake. The tendency of both the printed press and television is to portray issues in personal terms of how individuals are affected rather than to frame them as institutional questions with broad impact. As they compete for market share, the news outlets are strongly tempted to provide what they believe the audiences already want to read or see rather than to make a judgment on what information it is necessary to provide. It is thus no surprise that growth management lacks "bite" as a public issue, and even affordable housing draws attention only in how such units affect a specific site.

As discussed earlier, one remedy for this lack of visibility would be the direct election of Council members, with the Chair acting as a regional "mayor." While this move would have uncertain administrative effects, it would certainly provide the desired visibility and inject regional issues into the political debating arena. At the same time, however, as

the Council members and staff help to shape the many public service partnerships in the region, they are presently building this consciousness among those who can influence policy most strongly.

In a world of shared power, where governance is becoming increasingly more collaborative and flexible, regionalism is a more effective approach than ever before. The Metropolitan Council is the centerpiece of this governing process in the Twin Cities area but not its controller, and so the Council has a promising future. Its strength lies in its ability to bring together the many competing elements of powers into creative alliances, and, however its members are chosen, they must see this as their primary mission.

General References

Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations. 1987. *The Organization of Local Public Economies*. Washington: Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations.

Advisory Commission on Regulatory Barriers to Affordable Housing. U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. 1991. "Not in My Back Yard": *Removing Barriers to Affordable Housing*. Washington: U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Alnes, Stephen. 1992. "Met Council Faces Push for New Roles Amid Calls for More Power in Old Ones." *Minnesota Journal* (December 15): 1, 7.

Association of Metropolitan Municipalities. Metropolitan Governance Task Force. 1992. *Metropolitan Council and its Role in Regional Governance*. St. Paul: Association of Metropolitan Municipalities.

———. Urban Strategies Task Force. 1995. *Report on Urban Revitalization in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area*. St. Paul: Association of Metropolitan Municipalities.

Baer, William C. 1997. "General Plan Evaluation Criteria: An Approach to Making Better Plans." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 63 (Summer): 329-344.

Broede, Jim. 1997. "Town and Turf Wars." *Saint Paul Pioneer Press* (10 October).

Bryson, John M., and Barbara C. Crosby. 1992. *Leadership for the Common Good: Tackling Public Problems in a Shared-Power World*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Builders Association of the Twin Cities. 1996. *The High Cost of Sprawl: A Twin Cities Metropolitan Area Urban Land Supply Analysis and Recommendations for Managing Growth*. St. Paul: Builders Association of the Twin Cities.

Byrum, Oliver. 1991. *Old Problems in New Times: Urban Strategies for the 1990s*. Chicago: APA Planners Press.

Cassano, Dennis. 1997. "Fencing Off the Urban Frontier." *Minneapolis Star Tribune* (31 August).

Chisholm, Donald. 1989. *Coordination Without Hierarchy: Informal Structures in Multiorganizational Systems*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Citizens League. 1984. *The Metro Council: Narrowing the Agenda and Raising the Stakes*. Minneapolis: Citizens League.

———. 1989. *The Metropolitan Council: Strengthening its Leadership Role*. Minneapolis: Citizens League.

———. 1993. *Compete Globally, Thrive Locally*. Minneapolis: Citizens League.

———. 1994. *Why We Should Build Inclusive Communities: The Case for a Regional Housing Strategy*. Minneapolis: Citizens League.

———. 1997. *It Takes a Region to Build Livable Neighborhoods*. Minneapolis: Citizens League.

Downs, Anthony. 1994. *New Visions for Metropolitan America*. Washington: Brookings Institution Press; Cambridge: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.

Egan, Timothy. 1997. "Seattle and Portland Push to Avert a Paradise Lost." *New York Times* (1 November).

Ehrenhalt, Alan. 1997. "The Great Wall of Portland." *Governing* (May): 20-24.

Elkin, Stephen L. 1987. *City and Regime in the American Republic*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Fulton, William. 1997. *The Reluctant Metropolis: The Politics of Urban Growth in Los Angeles*. Point Arena CA: Solano Press.

Garreau, Joel. 1991. *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier*. New York: Doubleday.

Goetz, Edward G., and Mara S. Sidney. 1997. "Local Policy Subsystems and Issue Definition: An Analysis of Community Development Policy Change." *Urban Affairs Review* 32 (March): 490-512.

Grossfield, Edie. 1997. "Growing Pains." *Real Estate Journal* (24 March): 11-12.

Harrigan, John J. 1996. "Minneapolis-St. Paul: Structuring Metropolitan Government." Pp 206-228 in *Regional Politics: America in a Post-City Age*, ed. H. V. Savitch & Ronald K. Vogel. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage.

Harrigan, John J., and William C. Johnson. 1978. *Governing the Twin Cities Region: The Metropolitan Council in Comparative Perspective*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

———. 1986. "Trouble in River Cities: Metropolitan Governance Under Attack." Paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago.

———. 1987. "Political Stress and Metropolitan Governance: The Twin Cities Experience." *State and Local Government Review* 19 (Fall): 108-113.

Holden, Matthew. 1964. "The Governance of the Metropolis as a Problem in Diplomacy." *Journal of Politics* 26: 627-647.

Israel, Roger R. 1996. *Images of an Organization: A New Historical and Theoretical Perspective on the Twin Cities Metropolitan Council*. D.P.A. dissertation, University of Southern California.

Kanter, Rosabeth Moss. 1995. *World Class: Thriving Locally in the Global Economy*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Kaszuba, Mike. 1997a. "Met Council Has Found Few Friends in Northern Metro." *Minneapolis Star Tribune* (6 October).

Kaszuba, Mike. 1997b. "Study Cites the Costs of Sprawl." *Minneapolis Star Tribune* (26 September 26).

Kirlin, John J. 1996. "The Big Questions of Public Administration in a Democracy." *Public Administration Review* 56 (September/October): 416-423.

Klobuchar, Amy. 1982. *Uncovering the Dome*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland.

Legislative Auditor, State of Minnesota. Program Evaluation Division. 1985. *Metropolitan Council*. St. Paul: Legislative Auditor, State of Minnesota.

Lewis, Paul G. 1996. *Shaping Suburbia: How Political Institutions Organize Urban Development*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Lukermann, Barbara, and Michael P. Kane. 1994. *Land Use Practices: Exclusionary Zoning, de Facto or de Jure?* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Center for Urban and Regional Affairs.

Lukermann, Barbara, Thomas F. Luce, Jr., and Herbert Mohring. 1995. "Public Policies that Hurt the Urban Core." *CURA Reporter* 25 (March): 1-7.

Molotch, Harvey. 1993. "The Political Economy of Growth Machines." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 15 (1): 29-53.

Nelson, Arthur C., and James B. Duncan. 1995. *Growth Management Principles and Practices*. Chicago: Planners Press.

North Metro Mayors Association. 1996. *Response to the Metropolitan Council's Proposed Regional Growth Management Strategy*. Brooklyn Park: North Metro Mayors Association.

Nunn, Samuel, and Mark S. Rosentraub. 1997. "Dimensions of Inter-jurisdictional Cooperation." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 63 (Spring): 205-219.

Ohm, Brian W. 1993. "Growth Management in Minnesota: The Metropolitan Land Planning Act." *Hamline Law Review* 16 (Winter): 359-387.

Orfield, Myron. 1997a. "A Big, Unelected Government." *Minneapolis Star Tribune* (19 October).

Orfield, Myron. 1997b. *Metropolitics: A Regional Agenda for Community and Stability*. Washington: Brookings Institution Press; Cambridge: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.

Pressman, Michael. 1997. "The Green Corridor Project." *Planning Minnesota* 15 (September) 1-2, 8.

Savitch, H. V., and Ronald K. Vogel. 1996. "Introduction: Regional Patterns in a Post-City Age." Pp. 1-22 in *Regional Politics: America in a Post-City Age*, ed. H. V. Savitch & Ronald K. Vogel. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage.

Sies, Mary Corbin, and Christopher Silver. 1996. "Planning History and the New American Metropolis." Pp. 449-473 in *Planning the Twentieth Century American City*, ed. Mary Corbin Sies and Christopher Silver. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Smith, Mary Hill. 1997. "Orfield's Picture Of Met Council is Opinion, Not Fact." *Minneapolis Star Tribune* (15 November).

Sternleib, George. 1986. *Patterns of Development*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Center for Urban Policy Research.

Stone, Clarence N. 1989. *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946-1988*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.

Wallis, Alan D. 1993. "Governance and the Civic Infrastructure of Metropolitan Regions." *National Civic Review* 82 (Spring): 125-139.

———. 1994. "The Third Wave: Current Trends in Regional Governance." *National Civic Review* 83 (Summer-Fall): 290-310.

Whiting, Charles C. 1984. "Twin Cities Metro Council: Heading for a Fall?" *Planning*, 50 (March): 4-10.

Metropolitan Council Publications and Reports

1976a. *Growth Management in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area: The Development Framework Planning Process*. Peggy A. Reichert, author.

1976b. *Regional Politics in the Twin Cities: A Report on the Politics and Planning of Urban Growth Policy*. Ed Knudson, author.

1977. *A New Urban Policy*. Fully Developed Area Task Force.

1980. *The Twin Cities Regional Strategy*. Arthur Naftalin and John Brandl, authors.

1985. *Managing Growth in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area: A Response to Land Use Issues Raised by the Legislative Auditor*.

1986. *Future Growth and Development in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area: A Metropolitan Directions Report*. Linda Tomaselli, author.

1986. *Making One Community Out of Many: Perspectives on the Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities Area*. Arthur Naftalin, author.

1991. *Twin Cities Federalism: The Politics of Metropolitan Governance*. Steve Keefe, author.
- 1992a. *Metro 2015 Vision and Goals*.
- 1992b. *Trouble at the Core: The Twin Cities Under Stress*.
- 1993a. *Evaluation of the Metropolitan Development and Investment Framework*.
- 1993b. *Purpose & Role of the Metropolitan Council: Focused for the Future*.
- 1994a. *Housing Policy for the 1990s*.
- 1994b. *Keeping the Twin Cities Vital: Regional Strategies for Change in the Fully Developed Area*.
- 1995a. *Choosing an Urban Development Option for the Twin Cities Area: 1995-2020*.
- 1995b. *MUSA Expansion and Land Value*.
- 1996a. *Growth Options for the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area: A Report to the Minnesota Legislature*.
- 1996b. *One-for One Housing Replacement*.
- 1996c. *Regional Blueprint*.
- 1996d. *Regional Blueprint Forecast Procedures*.
- 1997a. "Continuing Metro Area Growth Puts MUSA to the Test." Curt Johnson, author. *Council Directions* (January/February).
- 1997b. *Metropolitan Livable Communities Fund: Report to the Minnesota State Legislature*.
- 1997c. *Paying for New Growth*.
- 1997d. *Report to the Minnesota State Legislature on Affordable and Life-Cycle Housing*.
- 1998a. *Annual Report, 1997*.
- 1998b. *Maintaining Our Competitive Edge*.

About the Author

William C. Johnson is a professor of political science at Bethel College, where he has taught for nearly thirty years, and a member of the community faculty at Metropolitan State University. He is a member of the Planning and Zoning Board and Economic Development Advisory Committee of the city of Lino Lakes, where he resides. His most recent publications are *Public Administration: Policy, Politics, and Practice* (2nd edition, Brown & Benchmark, 1995) and *Urban Planning and Politics* (American Planning Association, 1997). He has long studied metropolitan planning in the Twin Cities region, dating back to 1978 when he co-authored (with John Harrigan) *Governing the Twin Cities Region* (University of Minnesota Press).



**University of Minnesota
330 HHH Center
301 19th Avenue S.
Minneapolis, MN 55455**

Phone: 612/625-1551, fax: 612/626-0273

WWW: <http://www.umn.edu/cura>