



February 10, 2023

RE: Support for Metropolitan Council's Mapping Infrastructure Climate Risk and Resiliency Opportunities

Dear Members of the Minnesota Legislature:

My name is Ross Bintner and I am a Professional Engineer and Engineering Services Manager for the City of Edina.

I am writing in support of a Metropolitan Council initiative to establish an infrastructure risk and investment toolset that is included in the Governor's budget recommendations. This proposal has been vetted through the Governor's Climate Change Subcabinet and the Governor's Interagency Coordination Team.

Extreme weather events that have happened across the region and nation over the past decade are a visceral reminder that our climate is changing. Flooding, severe weather, and even drought are already impacting Minnesota's transportation, power, internet, water, sanitary and stormwater systems just like they have in other parts of the country and the world. In our community, we have already seen the impacts of extreme weather when early summer 2014 storms caused widespread flooding, road closures, sanitary sewer backups into homes, and emergency wastewater discharge to a surface pond near Yancey Park. The City of Edina sustained damage to streambanks and the foundation of its Browndale Bridge downstream west wing wall. Nearly 5,500 sandbags were delivered to approximately 50 homes. A major disaster was declared for the State on July 21, 2014. Tensions were high again in 2019 as the state received record precipitation causing Lake Minnetonka to rise over the emergency spillway at Gray's Bay Dam resulting in two weeks in the spring when flows to Minnehaha Creek could not be controlled.

Our organization is concerned about extreme weather events impacting our community in many different ways, including degraded water quality, overwhelmed and aging infrastructure, and structural flooding. We are preparing for extreme weather events by using updated precipitation statistics when we install and replace infrastructure as well as visualizing the risk for engineers, residents, and decision makers through an interactive web map. This tool has increased our collective awareness of the risk so that we can make better informed capital investments to reduce exposure to flooding as well as planning, programs, and outreach to reduce vulnerability to flooding across the community. While Edina has made significant investments over many years and been at the forefront of visualizing flood risk, we know many of our peer communities don't have access to these same planning tools. Further, while we're using the industry standard for updated precipitation statistics in our models, it does not look forward to future climate change scenarios. These tools are essential to prioritizing projects and spending funds in a way that best minimizes exposure and vulnerability to flooding across the community, both now and into the future.

The Metropolitan Council is proposing to use \$5 million to develop a set of tools to help local partners quantify the risks of a changing climate and prioritize strategies that mitigate risks while providing

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resources to adapt to a new climate. As the regional planning agency for the Twin Cities metro area, Met Council is the right fit to lead this effort. Climate impacts will cross jurisdictional boundaries, and many of the data needs for the toolset should be developed and maintained at a regional scale. The Met Council has shown a willingness to partner and collaborate with metro area communities and entities before on planning and wastewater efforts and their work is important for future-proofing the infrastructure across communities.

The City of Edina recommends the Senate and House support the Metropolitan Council request in the supplemental budget for the '23-25 biennium.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ross Bintner".

Ross Bintner, PE
Environmental Services Manager
City of Edina
7450 Metro Blvd
Edina, MN 55439

Cc: Judy Sventek, Manager, Water Resources, Metropolitan Council
Judd Schetnan, Director, Governmental Affairs, Metropolitan Council
Hannah Pallmeyer, Government Affairs Liaison, Governmental Affairs, Metropolitan Council
Chad Millner, Engineer Director, City of Edina
Brian Olson, Public Works Director, City of Edina

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