
COUNCIL OF METROPOLITAN AREA LEAGUES (CMAL)

The Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues (CMAL) was established in 1962. It is an inter-league organization composed of all the local Leagues in the seven-county metropolitan area which includes Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington counties. Through CMAL, League members work to address governmental issues of metropolitan concern.

Summary of Positions

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

CMAL: Support the Metropolitan Council as the decision-making body for metropolitan needs in accordance with these criteria: efficiency and economy, equitable financing, flexibility, citizen control and responsiveness to the electorate through appointment of its members, including the chair, by the governor.

Support provision for coordinated metropolitan services focused through the Metropolitan Council. Support retention of a gubernatorial-appointed Metropolitan Council with use of its existing powers. (1969, 1976, 1993, 2001, 2019)

Details:

- The appointed Council is seen as less parochial, less subject to special interests, and better able to adopt and maintain positions for the good of the entire area. The most important qualifications for appointees are knowledge of regional issues, having a regional perspective, demographic diversity, and the ability to effectively meet the time requirements for service as Metropolitan Council member.
- The appointed council is responsible to the governor and the residents of the metropolitan area as a whole.
- CMAL supports an open appointment process including publicized vacancies, a nominating committee that recommends to the governor a slate of potential appointees, with citizen, local government and legislative influence on appointments.
- CMAL supports fixed staggered terms for Metropolitan Council members, removal only for cause, and districts of equal population.
- CMAL does not support the appointment of local elected officials to, or direct election of, members to the Metropolitan Council.

HOUSING

CMAL: Support the Metropolitan Council as the Housing and Redevelopment Authority acting as an administrative agency providing technical assistance to communities requesting service. CMAL opposes an independent regional body separate from the Council to own and operate subsidized housing. (1981)

HEALTH

CMAL: Support the continuation of health planning and coordination at the metropolitan level with state and/or regional funds, if federal funds are reduced. (1981)

FUNDING/FINANCING FISCAL DISPARITIES

CMAL: Support area-wide sharing of fiscal resources, to move toward the solution of problems created by fiscal disparities and to finance services which benefit the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area as a whole or affect the lives of all its citizens. (1970)

The integrity of the area-wide pool used in the sharing of fiscal resources should be maintained with no exceptions. (1997)

Loans from the pool should be discouraged and if made should not be forgiven. (1997)

FINANCING METROPOLITAN SERVICES

CMAL: Support operating and maintaining the metropolitan systems and services with a mix of funding sources specific to each service (federal, state and local funds and user fees). If a supplemental fund is created, CMAL supports additional user fees, new or increased, appropriate to the service. (1985)

CMAL supports:

- Improved accountability of metropolitan agencies by:
 - » Uniform reporting and submittal dates of agency development programs to the Metropolitan Council
 - » A responsible, uniform system of administrative procedures for all metropolitan agencies
- Improved accountability of the Metropolitan Council by:
 - » Establishing a permanent legislative committee/commission for metropolitan affairs
 - » Regular reports to the legislature on regional programs for financing
 - » Regular reports and discussion sessions with local elected officials
 - » Responsible administrative procedures

SCHOOL INTEGRATION/DESEGREGATION

CMAL: Support the following measures to achieve school integration/desegregation in the metropolitan area: mandatory participation by the school districts; voluntary participation by students; combination of student exchanges, magnets and incentives; combination of incentive plans for school districts and individuals funded by state money; redrawing of school district lines (as necessary). (1991)

HOUSING/HEALTH CARE FOR THE AGING

CMAL: Support local planning for the housing and service needs for the elderly and disabled in the community. Support the preparation of a local "Blueprint for Action." (1989)

CMAL supports:

- Providing a single telephone number at the local level for information and referral for senior housing and services available in that area (CMAL supports the city as the most appropriate provider of this service)
- Local ordinances which allow for the provision of housing and services necessary to meet the needs of the aging
- Providing additional health, home care, and housing support services as they become necessary
- Flexibility in the provision of these services – providers can be in the private sector (profit or non-profit), the county, city, school district, community center, the informal network, or any combination of these

LAND USE & ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

CMAL: CMAL recognizes that increased pressures for development in the entire Twin Cities area indicate the need for a strong public voice in land-use decisions. CMAL supports metropolitan-level planning, programs and policies directed toward channeling development in ways that will:

- (1) preserve and enhance the natural environment;
- (2) use public investment to the best advantage; and
- (3) provide area residents with diversity in choice of facilities and amenities. (1972) (*Also see LWVMN and LWVUS positions.*)

CMAL supports:

- Channeling growth so that necessary public services are provided in an efficient, orderly pattern
- Preserving the natural environment to the extent possible by protecting land and water during and after development, and from development where necessary, and preserving open space for recreation, protection and amenities
- Using land in the seven-county area to implement social goals, such as a full range of housing choices, adequate transportation, parks and the necessary facilities and amenities to enhance the quality of life
- Authorization of the Metropolitan Council to develop the policy tools necessary to implement these goals, provided local governments are involved in decisions affecting them

ENVIRONMENT

CMAL: Support a requirement that local governments adopt implementation ordinances for protection of environmental quality for review and approval by the Metropolitan Council. (1981)

Support the Metropolitan Council as the agency to plan and coordinate the water supply needs of the region. (1995)

CMAL supports:

- Water supply as a regional system with Metropolitan Council review and approval of local plans and implementation of the water supply system through local water utilities
- Consideration of water supply availability in shaping the growth of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area and the Metropolitan Council

should have the authority to deny approval of development in areas with limited water supply availability through approval of amendments to land use plans

- Protection of water supply resource, emergency response, and water conservation as high priorities in a regional water supply plan with plans for alternative sources of water a slightly lower priority
- Water supply becoming a regional operating system only if implementation of local water supply plans is ineffective and threatens the water supply of the region, or major regional investments are needed for interconnections to provide for the water supply of the region, and/or if supplies of water must be brought in from outside the region
- Metropolitan Council having a role in educating the public.

TRANSPORTATION

CMAL: Support the Metropolitan Council as the single metropolitan agency planning and coordinating a diverse transportation system, meeting varied needs, and having approval authority over this system's major capital expenditures. New funding sources should be service related. (1983) (*Also see LWVUS position in Impact on Issues.*)

CMAL supports:

- Various modes of transportation, both public and private, including ride-sharing, carpools, vanpools, paratransit, buses and deregulated taxis. A light rail transit mode can be supported if assured high ridership, economic feasibility and integration into the total transportation system
- Transportation service for the handicapped, fringe parking and feeder services, High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes, bikeways, walkways and selected reduced fares

COUNTY GOVERNMENT

CMAL: Support measures to ensure accountability and visibility of county government. Support measures to improve cooperation and communication between the Metropolitan Council and county government within the metropolitan area. (1975)

CMAL believes that accountability of a governmental body is obtained by effective communication of its policies and procedures to

residents of its jurisdiction. CMAL also recognizes the responsibility of citizens to become adequately informed and involved, and to participate in the election process.

Accountability of county government would be increased in a number of ways, including the following:

- Public access to the budget process where priorities and policies are set, including citizen review of revenue-sharing allocations and funding for public services and citizen review of methods of setting budget priorities
- Systematic and objective evaluation of county programs:
 - » Creation of a public information system to ensure not only public access to meetings of the county board and advisory committees but also more understanding of the issues being considered by the county board
 - » Ample publication of location, time, date and agenda of meeting and publication of background information prior to the decision-making time when policy is set
 - » Dissemination of information on the procedures for citizen appointments
 - » Regular communication between county and municipalities and other levels of government
 - » Full disclosure of campaign financing by every candidate in county elections

CMAL views the Metropolitan Council as the regional planning and coordinating body, while the counties are viewed as administrators, implementers, and enforcers of regional policy. CMAL believes that counties should be involved in the initial planning and policy-making stages of Metropolitan Council activities in order for counties to carry out their eventual implementation.