



DANE COUNTY

Joe Parisi
County Executive

February 3, 2016

Larry Palm, Chair
Capital Area Regional Planning Commission
210 Martin Luther King Blvd, Room 362
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Chairman Palm:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on proposed changes to the by-laws of the Capital Area Regional Planning Commission.

I have asked Dane County's Corporation Counsel to review the proposed changes being considered by the Commission and ask the agency refrain from making alterations pending the outcome of that thorough review.

In the wake of action by the state legislature constraining CARPCs authority and scope in reviewing environmental and water quality impacts of proposed new developments, it's not clear to me why the agency hasn't embraced more sweeping, comprehensive reforms in the best interest of our taxpayers.

The workload has changed. The staffing, work priorities, and budget have not.

CARPC is governed by a 13 member board. The entity that funds it to the tune of over \$800,000 a year - Dane County - is allowed to only appoint 3 of the 13 members on the CARPC Commission. This governance structure has failed, and with it so too has the public's trust that proper oversight is given to how the agency uses the tax dollars it's provided.

Similar disproportionate representation was cited as recently as last year to justify sweeping governance changes to the Madison Metropolitan Sewage District Board.

Years of efforts to have the Commission better engage its own Budget and Personnel Panel on operating expenses, hiring decisions that impact the budget, and staffing levels, failed to result in substantive changes.

With vast natural resources it is critical that decisions on growth and its sweeping impacts be vetted regionally. Given changes mandated by the state legislature in the past state budget and resistance to governance and budgetary reform, CARPC in its present form is not an effective entity for genuine conversations about regional growth.

Funding CARPC accounts for nearly half Dane County's state allowable operating levy increase each year.

Local leaders are rightly concerned about improving mental health services, addressing poverty, and helping stabilize kids and families so young ones can succeed across our County. Those needs compete each year for dollars against the \$900,000 the county is required to spend on CARPC - - funding that neither the Dane County Board nor Executive have direct approval or oversight of.

Dane County voluntarily offers local communities millions in grant funding each year for a wide variety of non-mandated projects. Similar to how we partner with our trails, roads, sewer pipes, and community enhancement projects, regional planning is something we should all get behind and all have a financial stake in. Like everything else we fund with public money however, we should get behind regional planning that is accountable, and efficient.

CARPC hasn't worked in a very long time. Instead of year to year legal battles over how big of a budget increase the agency needs from Dane County, it's time to stop the predictable annual cycle.

It's time for real reform. It's time for the Cities, Villages, Towns, and the County to start over on regional planning. Many of us had nothing to do with reconstituting CARPC many years ago. It is incumbent on us however to fix what has failed.

Sincerely,



Joe Parisi

Dane County Executive

Cc. Dane County Board of Supervisors
City of Madison Mayor Paul Soglin
City of Verona Mayor Jon Hochkammer

Dane County Cities and Villages Association

Town of Bristol Chair Jerry Derr

Dane County Towns Association