

Thank you and let me also welcome you to the north metro. As you know, this part of the region holds special meaning for me. It was just up the road, in Brooklyn Park, that I took my first step into public office as mayor. So for me, it is quite fitting that we are holding this historic event in the north metro.

When I was mayor, I was not a fan of the Metropolitan Council. I felt that they spent their time telling us what to do, rather than helping us to build a better community. When I appointed Ted Mondale, I directed him to change the focus of the Council, to be a positive, problem solving agency, that helped our mayors, city councils and citizens plan for the future.

I believe that this initiative is historic because it represents a fundamental shift in how the Council and government does its business.

This afternoon, by working together, we have a unique opportunity to make a difference in the future and prosperity of this region.

Historically, this process has been dictated from the top, down.

But today, we're here to head in a new direction, because we're asking the question, first, of you as regional stakeholders, and then later of citizens in their communities, how do we want our region and communities to grow?

Through this process, we are taking hold of our own future and deciding what kind of communities we want. To me, this is Smart Growth.

As part of my Big Plan for Healthy, Vital Communities, the Metropolitan Council, with generous support from the McKnight Foundation, will invite public input about how they want to grow in the future. The Council will invest financial and urban design resources to make growth models a reality, and help build communities that work.

Today's workshop kicks-off a series of 10 public workshops to design development models for regional growth as communities plan for future growth of 500,000 more people living in the metro area in the next 20 years.

I'm proud to say that the Twin Cities' region is one of the best places for growth in the future. This too has been a matter of choice. Development policies and smart public investments in development have helped trigger a renaissance in our cities, even as other urban areas have suffered decline.

As recent census findings for population growth show, smart government investments have made a difference. Public investments have restored confidence and jump-started private investment as older cities and suburbs redevelop and newer cities seek to build community in their neighborhoods.



You can see evidence of this in Brooklyn Center, a Smart Growth Twin Cities' Opportunity Site, as the central business district prepares to redevelop for the future.

Future success in our region means building on smart development choices. To remain competitive, the region must further invest in smart growth and make good choices in development, transportation, affordable housing and the environment.

I want to thank you for your dedication, and for committing half of your day to help make smart growth real in our community.