

## Jane Prince

The Metropolitan Council should address the negative impacts to our BIPOC majority neighborhoods impacted by MCES waste burning and wetland pollutant discharge.

Forty three years ago, Saint Paul and Ramsey County called for transfer of 80 acres east of the Waste Treatment Plant to the Regional Park System. The Metropolitan Council called for an agreement that would manage the area as parkland. The Metropolitan Council assured surrounding neighborhoods the ash ponds would be taken care of. How can the public trust new Met Council assurances with a record of 43 years of inaction regarding cleanup of polluted ash pits and 80 acres of public open space?

The Metropolitan Council should transfer 80 acres east of the Waste Treatment Plant to the Regional Park System. The Regional Park System and residents of BIPOC majority neighborhoods would benefit from management of the flood plain forest as part of the Regional Park. This flood plain forest was jointly owned by St. Paul and Minneapolis and should be managed as part of Pig's Eye Lake Regional Park. The flood plain is of Regional Significance and part of Saint Paul's Great River Passage plan. The area is a National Park, State Critical Area and State Scientific and Natural Area.

Planning for Pig's Eye Lake Park started over a century ago. The Metropolitan Council approved the 1975 Regional Recreation and Open Space Plan for Saint Paul. The Plan is a Regional Park complex including Indian Mounds Park, Battle Creek Park, and Pig's Eye Lake Park. The plan called for picnicking on the river shore, boating on the lake, access to the river, and protection of the heron rookery. The Met Council approved the plans.

In the 1980 Critical Area Plan review, the Met Council approved removal of 278 acres from the park plan. Saint Paul called for the 80 acres east of the levee be included in the park and ash pit area restored. The 80 acres serve as partial compensation for parkland loss.

The Metropolitan Council supported an agreement with the City and County for the interim recreational use and landscaping of the 80 acres east of the treatment plant. State Critical Area designation regulations call for parkland next to treatment plants.

The BIPOC majority neighborhoods that surround Pig's Eye have been waiting 43 years for a Met Council agreement with the City or County so recreational use and natural resource restoration can move forward on 80 acres of public land. An agreement should be a priority in any discussion about possible expansion tied to adding another burner.

The Met Council should support City or County efforts to remove the ash pit berms, built with pollutant, and wetland restoration. The public should not wait another 43 years.

Jane Prince  
Saint Paul City Councilmember, Ward 7