

# Minneapolis, I love you and I might leave you

All this change plays out differently on a practical level than it does intellectually.

By D. Roger Pederson | SEPTEMBER 20, 2019 — 6:01PM

We have lived in Minneapolis for 13 years now, but both my wife and I have lived in this area for most of our lives. So we always have had an understanding if not an affinity for this great city.

Alas, we are thinking the impossible: It might be time to move on.

We live in the Bryn Mawr, in my opinion the greatest community in the city. It's close to everything we love and is home to the best neighbors we've ever had. That makes this no small decision. Admittedly, part of the reason is that now that I have had more than 70 trips around the sun, we think we want to find a nice condo somewhere and get away from a lot of the pains of owning a house.

But there is more to this than just downsizing, and that's the dilemma; we feel we need to leave the city.

I like to fancy myself as either a conservative liberal or a liberal conservative. You know, one of those Americans who are hard to tell apart and who once were the norm in our society. Anyway, I also like to think that I avoid the old-man syndrome of hating pretty much every aspect of change and the younger generation who are, of course, going to ruin the country. (Unlike us baby boomers who have managed things so well.)

In fact, I do embrace change and I have great faith that the kids will be all right, as will our country.

Certainly, Minneapolis is a liberal city, probably more liberal than I am. I have often made fun of our one-party rule. However, virtually everywhere in the world, city folk are more liberal than people in rural areas or small towns, even in red states, so that's OK. (Besides, our City Council members seem to argue enough among themselves to almost cancel out the Politburo-nature of our government.)

And yet, and yet ... there are the bike lanes. There are to be apartment buildings on every block of the city. Renaming landmarks. Landlords aren't to be allowed to do background checks. Goodbye, drive-throughs; hello, walking or biking everywhere. New York City (minus the subways), here we come!

Now here's the irony — I generally support all these things. Among the many truths in nature is "grow or die"; there is no stasis. You either get larger and more complex or you go extinct. This is equally true of cities; the future will look nothing like the past or today, and the only way to grow is through density and all that goes with that. I get it.

So what's the problem, old man? Well, I guess it's the feeling that while I understand and accept that most of these things are necessary and/or inevitable, I don't feel up to living through the pain that these changes are going to cause getting from A to B.

As important is the nagging feeling that the people managing these changes don't really have the proper skills for the difficult job they have embarked upon. For example, there appears to be an attempt to solve every single societal problem — from climate change to income inequality to affordable housing and individual inequities — for everyone, all at the same time, and immediately.

While laudable, such ambitions are also a recipe for disappointment.



GLEN STUBBE - GLEN STUBBE, STAR TRIBUNE

The Minneapolis downtown skyline.

Then, too, it might be helpful having better empathy toward people who have spent their entire lives operating under one set of rules only to have those rules thrown out. There is far too much of “This is the way it is, get used to it” and “You were so dumb to buy a single-family home!” (Actually heard that at a 2040 Plan meeting from a city representative. Trying to win us over, I guess.)

Finally, our peerless leaders might display a bit more respect for the laws of economics — i.e., the money to pay for these endeavors — which are essentially immutable no matter how noble our goals might be.

I don’t know, it just seems like a bunch of amateurs stirring a pot, throwing in ingredients and hoping it turns out. (OK, it also doesn’t help that we apparently need another 400 or so cops, but that’s another story.)

In the end, we love the city and most of what it has to offer, and the experience will be hard to replace. Yet life without turmoil and stress will hopefully balance it out wherever we land, and at my age that can’t be a bad thing, right? Besides, with any luck a nice young couple will buy our house and join the others on our street, which is exactly the kind of people the city needs, not old farts like me.

Good luck on your journey, City of Lakes. When we go we’ll miss you, but we also know you will be just fine.

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