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Public Comments for City Council Meetings - Submission #11945

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Public Comment

My name is Dr. Bibi Neumann, and I am a Saint Anthony Village resident.

I am submitting these comments in response to tonight's agenda, particularly the resolutions addressing immigration-related impacts, the authorization of public funds, and the approval of City programs that involve access to private property.

First, regarding Resolution 26-019, I appreciate the Council's decision to explicitly acknowledge the fear, disruption, and instability residents are experiencing as a result of increased federal immigration enforcement activity. Naming those impacts matters. However, value statements are only as strong as their implementation. In this moment, public safety must be understood to include psychological safety, housing stability, and residents' ability to engage with City services without fear of exposure or unintended consequences.

Second, with respect to Resolution 26-020, I recognize the intent to mitigate additional harm by authorizing limited use of City funds to address vehicle towing and storage impacts. I respectfully request transparency in how these funds are administered, including clear eligibility criteria, public reporting on use, and defined measures for evaluating effectiveness and equity. Clear guardrails and reporting are essential so residents understand how compassionate responses are implemented responsibly.

Third, I want to address the Metropolitan Council Private Property Inflow & Infiltration (PPII) grant. While the program is presented as voluntary infrastructure assistance, it necessarily involves entry onto private property, contractor access, inspections, documentation, and administrative determinations. In the current enforcement climate, many residents are avoiding contact with government systems altogether — even when programs are designed to help — because government contact now feels unsafe.

Without explicit protections, programs requiring private-property access risk becoming functionally inaccessible to the very residents most in need, or unintentionally deepening fear and disengagement. This is not hypothetical. Our city's leadership and community organizers across Minnesota are hearing from families who are avoiding infrastructure repairs, vehicle recovery, school engagement, and even emergency services because interaction with public systems feels risky.

As a resident, I respectfully ask the Council to clearly and publicly affirm that:

- I. participation in the PPII program is strictly voluntary,
- II. information gathered through the program will not be shared beyond what is legally required for grant administration,
- III. no City, contractor, or partner role will be used for civil immigration enforcement purposes, and
- IV. residents will receive plain-language explanations of their rights, risks, and options before any private-property access occurs.

Fourth, as the Council considers adoption of the 2026 Strategic Plan and Pyramid, I encourage explicit alignment between tonight's actions and the City's stated goals of being an Informed & Engaged Community and a Safe & Secure Community. Quarterly reporting on action steps is an important accountability tool, and I ask that immigration-related impacts, community safety responses, and public communication efforts be clearly reflected in those updates where relevant.

Finally, I want to underscore the importance of continuity and trust. The City has invested significant time in planning processes, commission work plans, and public engagement. Following through with visible, scheduled discussions, transparent reporting, and clear protections when City actions intersect with residents' homes, vehicles, or personal circumstances is essential so residents can participate in City programs without fear and understand how decisions evolve within the City's governance framework.

Thank you for your time and for considering these concerns.