

## MEMO

TO: STAFF  
FROM: M. David Lee III  
SUBJECT: Opinion Section of Crosscut  
Date: November 10, 2021

There are a lot of priorities that need to be attended to and one of the top ones is the “Opinion” section of Crosscut.com, which has been a fixture of the organization since its inception in 2007. With the section, the goal, at the time and to this day, is to engage our community in conversation regarding important issues.

Listening to the communities that we serve is one of the most important things we need to do as a non-profit public news organization. We must reflect the landscape in which we live and serve.

Change is also important. Adapting and retooling how we engage with the community is what we must do moving forward and, because of that, we will be sunsetting the traditional “Opinion” section of Crosscut.com effective November 30<sup>th</sup>.

I personally appreciate all of the effort that has been put into the section, especially the work that Mason Bryan has done over the last several months in particular and over the years. This is not an easy decision, however it is one that I believe we need to make as we evolve and grow. Mason will be transitioning within the newsroom; we’ll have more information on that in the near future. Skip, who has also been a huge part of this section, will continue to write and publish pieces during the transition. He will also join the new planning team, along with Mark, Mason, and Anne moving forward.

What this means moving forward:

- November 11 - We will begin the process of notifying those previous contributors about the decision.
- November 30 – We will stop publishing the section. Previous stories, already posted will continue to remain on the site. There are ongoing discussions regarding what we’ll do with that real estate on the website
- December 1 - I’ll pen a letter to the community that can be posted online... along the lines of this memo. We’ll also schedule our first planning committee meeting for the new section. We are already beginning the process of looking at how we’ll reach out and engage the community differently and will continue moving forward.
- If you have suggestions regarding how this process should look, please share them. A great idea can come from anyone.
- Tentatively, by February 7th, we will develop our new process of engaging community voices.
- Tentatively, by March 3rd, we will begin implementation of our new feature
- Tentatively, by March 21<sup>st</sup>, the first new story of this section will publish

The overall goal, moving forward, is to bring more community voices into our newsroom and our storytelling. The opinions of our communities are important and we will continue to strive to bring more of them to light.