



Governor's Housing Task Force Update

The Governor's [Task Force on Housing](#) continued its work this week as the Homeownership and Housing Stability & Opportunity work groups met. The full task force will meet next Wednesday, February 21st. The homeownership and rental work groups focused discussion on housing unit preservation and production, while the housing stability and opportunity work group is discussing barriers to housing and how to serve residents who need services. The public is welcome to attend the full task force and work group meetings.

A series of regional forums around the state will be held later this spring. Metro Cities advocated for hosting some of the forums in the metropolitan area, and at least two are expected to be held in the metro region. The forums will provide opportunities for task force members and the public to engage on a range of housing issues and inform the work of the group. Metro Cities will provide more details on the metro forums when the information is available.

Contact Charlie Vander Aarde at 651-215-4001 or charlie@metrocitiesmn.org with any questions.

Metropolitan Council Transportation Committee Concurs with Regional Solicitation Release

The Metropolitan Council Transportation Committee has concurred with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) to approve the 2018 Regional Solicitation for release. The Regional Solicitation is the method by which federal transportation dollars from the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program and Congestion Mitigation Air Quality program are allocated within the metro area. The funding is distributed among roadway, transit and travel demand management, and bicycle and pedestrian projects. To view the Regional Solicitation, click [here](#). The Regional Solicitation will be forwarded to the Metropolitan Council for concurrence and will be considered at their February 28th meeting. If the Metropolitan Council concurs, workshops and a formal application release date will follow in the spring.

Metro Mobility Task Force Report

A Metro Mobility Task Force has submitted recommendations to the Legislature. The task force was mandated by the Legislature and tasked with identifying options for improving efficiency, identifying potential service level approaches that involve partnering with and incorporating transportation network companies, taxi service providers or both, and identifying any recommendations for the program. The task force was comprised of representatives from Metro Mobility, counties, transportation network companies, taxi service providers, the Council on Disabilities, and other state agencies. For more information, click [here](#).

The task force report includes several recommendations to the Legislature and Metropolitan Council. The recommendations call for changes to the current system that will increase service options, maximizes funding sources, complies with federal and state requirements and meets the needs of people with disabilities.

The task force recommends that the Council create a pilot program to promote an on-demand service provision that would include a variety of service options, provide for investment in public information and outreach to explain current and new service options, and conduct routine market

analysis to evaluate driver wages and workforce stability.

The task force recommends that the Legislature create a dedicated funding source for the service. The recommendations also include support for statutory changes that allow Department of Human Services (DHS) and Metro Mobility to share data and leverage federal money, and to fund a study to determine how County/DHS and Metro Mobility can coordinate services and funding to capture all eligible federal dollars for waived service and medical assistance client transportation. To view the Metro Mobility Task Force Report, click [here](#).

Questions? Please contact Steve Huser at 651-215-4003, or steven@metrocitiesmn.org.

Livable Communities Work Group Holds Second Meeting

The Livable Communities Work Group, convened by Metro Cities and comprised of several city officials, met this week to review specific program criteria and scoring. Metropolitan Council staff reviewed criteria and scoring processes for the Livable Communities Demonstration Account and Tax Base Revitalization Accounts as well as both Transit Oriented Development Accounts. Conversations on the LCA program included requests for enhanced outreach and more information for cities on the review process, as well as a request for predevelopment and planning grants. The group will meet again in March to continue its discussion and make any recommendations for the programs. Metro Cities' goal with the Livable Communities Programs is to ensure that the programs are accessible to participating communities, and that criteria are consistent with statutory goals and flexible enough to meet both regional and local goals identified through regional systems planning and local comprehensive plans.

Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP)

MnDOT has released its list of Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP) project recipients. 2017 legislation allocated \$115.9 million in General Obligation Bonds for the LRIP, with \$90 million going to projects specified in legislation and \$25 million available for solicitation. Of the \$25 million, \$3.75 million went to projects in the metro area. Statewide, MnDOT received requests totaling \$151 million. Metro Cities supports the inclusion of additional LRIP funding in capital investment proposals that will be considered this session. For more information on the LRIP program and this year's solicitation, including the list of funding recipients, click [here](#).

Questions? Please contact Steve Huser at 651-215-4003, or steven@metrocitiesmn.org.

Governor Seeking City Input on Naming Opportunity Zones

Responding to a [provision](#) in the federal tax reform package, Governor Dayton is seeking to identify and prioritize "Opportunity Zones" in Minnesota, to encourage investments in low-income and urban communities nationwide. Dayton is seeking local official input and participation.

The Minnesota effort is being spearheaded by the Department of Employment and Economic Development. More information is available on [DEED's website](#). A webinar to learn more about the program and how to participate was held on Friday, February 16. The webinar was recorded and is available on DEED's Opportunity Zone webpage.

Dayton, with local input, will select and submit 123 eligible Opportunity Zones. These zones represent the state's lowest income census tracts. The DEED website has a map that shows [Minnesota census tracts eligible](#) for Opportunity Zone designation. Click on metro region, then county, to zoom in.

First-class cities are being asked to prioritize and rank Opportunity Zones within their city's boundaries and will be strongly encouraged to collaborate with the county in which they are located in providing feedback. Minnesota's first-class cities are Minneapolis, St. Paul, Rochester and Duluth.

Each of Minnesota's 87 counties are being asked to prioritize and rank Opportunity Zones within their county. Second, third and fourth-class cities will be able to participate through their county. Each of Minnesota's eleven tribal nations are being asked to prioritize and rank Opportunity Zones within their reservation or community.

Stakeholders with additional questions about this process can contact [Darielle Dannen](#), government relations director at DEED, or [Ryan Baumtrog](#), Assistant Commissioner of Policy and Community Development at Minnesota Housing.

Metro Cities is interested in knowing of your community's involvement in this process. Please notify Charlie Vander Aarde at charlie@metrocitiesmn.org or 651-215-4001 with your participation or if you have any questions.

Connecting with Your Legislators During the Session

The 2018 Legislative session begins next Tuesday, February 20th. As the session gets underway, Metro Cities encourages city officials to be in touch with your state senators and representatives on issues of importance to your city. We also encourage you to stay abreast of legislative activity affecting metro area cities through Metro Cities' newsletters, legislative alerts and other information. Please also feel free to contact Metro Cities staff for information on the legislative process and other Capitol-related information.

To find out who represents you, click [here](#). If you have any questions on how to contact your legislators, please contact Casey Casella at casey@metrocitiesmn.org or 651-357-4700. You can access Metro Cities' 2018 legislative policies [here](#).

Save the Date for the Metro Cities Annual Meeting!

Mark your calendars and save the date for the Metro Cities Annual Meeting! This year's event will be held on Thursday, April 19th at the Como Park Zoo and Conservatory in the Bullard Rainforest Auditorium. The evening will again start off with a social hour, followed by a guest speaker, and will wrap up with a brief (but important!) business meeting to elect members and officers to the Board of Directors. All member city staff and elected officials are welcome and encouraged to attend! (More details to follow.)

There is no registration cost, but please register by April 6th if you plan to attend. To register, or if you have any questions, please contact Kimberly at 651-215-4000 or kimberly@metrocitiesmn.org.

Webinar on Brownfields Financing

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) and Metropolitan Council will be hosting a webinar on local public brownfield financing on February 27th from 10:30 am to 12 pm. The webinar will provide information about grants that help pay the cost of cleaning up contaminated sites often known as brownfields. In the metropolitan area, there are multiple opportunities for funding to remediate contaminated sites. Representatives from Hennepin County, Ramsey County, the Metropolitan Council and DEED will discuss how to apply for public financing. For more details and access to the webinar, click [here](#).

Bills of Note

During the legislative session, Metro Cities will provide information on introduced bills of note and interest to metropolitan area cities. Below are bills that have been pre-filed for introduction in the 2018 legislative session.

[H. F. 2736](#), Green: Bill clarifies criteria for establishing groundwater quality regulations. State cannot enforce a water resources protection requirement unless groundwater monitoring indicates 15% of wells in an area exceed or will exceed a health risk limit within five years.

[H. F. 2747](#), Green: Bill prohibits the application of groundwater quality regulations to parcels of land that are partially within or are wholly outside of a protected area.

[H. F. 2748](#), Green: Bill restricts establishment of groundwater protection regulations until after all voluntary methods to minimize water degradation by pollutants have been proven to be ineffective.

[H. F. 2751](#), Garofalo: Bill restricts parking in a designated electric vehicle charging space to electric vehicle, or the vehicle has permission from the property owner.

[H. F. 2802](#), Lueck: Bill provides regulatory certainty to municipalities that construct publicly owned treatment works to comply with new or modified effluent limitations.

[H. F. 2830](#), Hanson: Bill appropriates \$10 million for deputy registrar reimbursement grants for expenses associated with the implementation of MNLARS.

[H. F. 2835](#), Baker: Bill appropriates \$6 million for deputy registrar reimbursement grants for expenses associated with the implementation of MNLARS.

[H. F. 2862](#), A bill for an act relating to local government; prohibiting waivers to political subdivision salary limits in certain circumstances; amending Minnesota Statutes 2016, section 43A.17, subdivision 9.

Metro Cities News is emailed periodically to all Metro Cities member mayors, councilmembers, city managers and administrators to keep officials abreast of important metro city issues. This information is also intended to be shared with city staff.

If you'd like to sign up to receive Metro Cities News, please email newsletter@metrocitysmn.org and provide the following: Name, Title, Employer and Email address. Thank you.

Metro Cities 145 University Ave W., St. Paul, MN 55103-2044 Phone 651-215-4000 Fax 651-281-1299
www.MetroCitiesMN.org *...click for full article*