



Metro Cities Seeks Candidates for Board Seats

Metro Cities has vacancies on its Board of Directors that will need to be filled by the Board. Members serve two, two-year terms. The board is made up of 19 city officials, comprised of elected and appointed officials. The board is responsible for overseeing Metro Cities' budget, strategic and legislative priorities. The Board also makes appointments to the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB), Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), Grant Evaluation and Ranking System (GEARS), and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Boards. The board meets the third Thursday of each month.

Metro Cities' by-laws require that the board be balanced with regard to geography and population. Interested candidates are asked to provide a cover letter, resume and completed application form by Friday, January 27, 2017. Candidates may also provide letters of reference.

Applications should be submitted to Kim Ciarrocchi at kciarrocchi@metrocitiesmn.org. If you would like additional information, please call us at 651-215-4000.

Metro Cities Seeks Interested Candidates for a Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) Seat

Metro Cities is seeking interested candidates for an opening on the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB). Metro Cities has statutory appointing authority for making municipal appointments to the TAB. The TAB qualifies the region for federal transportation planning, operating and construction funds. The TAB is also an official participant in the region's 3C transportation planning process on issues that affect transportation planning and funding in the Twin Cities region.

Municipal appointees for the TAB must be elected officials. Metro Cities' guidelines place a priority on making the TAB balanced with respect to city size and geography. The Metro Cities Board also gives preference to those who agree to serve on Metro Cities Transportation Policy Committee, and preference to persons from a city not represented on the Metro Cities Board. The board seeks candidates who will be committed to strong attendance at meetings.

Interested candidates for the TAB should fill out the questionnaire, submit a letter of interest and resume to Kim Ciarrocchi at kciarrocchi@metrocitiesmn.org or by mail to Metro Cities at 145 University Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55103. The deadline for applications is Friday, January 27, 2017. If you have any questions please contact Steve Huser at 651-215-4003, or by email at steven@metrocitiesmn.org

Legislative Update

The Legislature completes its second week of the 2017 session today. A key focus has been passing health care premium relief. The Senate passed a bill to this effect on Thursday and the House is expected to pass its bill next week. The bills differ from the Governor's proposal on premium relief. The Legislature has also passed federal tax conformity bills. The Legislature will resume next Tuesday. Metro Cities, along with other local government organizations, has been asked to provide an overview of the organization's work in front of the Senate Local Government Committee on Tuesday. Specific issue updates are below.

DEED Presents Key Economic Development Programs to House, Senate Committees

DEED Commissioner Shawntera Hardy presented the agency's economic development and workforce development initiatives to the House and Senate jobs committees this week. Hardy highlighted the Minnesota Investment Fund and Job Creation Fund, two key local economic development programs that are supported by Metro Cities.

As Metro Cities has reported, the funds were significantly cut by the 2016 Legislature, reducing state support for business expansions, relocations and business growth opportunities. Metro Cities has shared the importance of the program with legislators, highlighting local benefits, the modest economic development funding investment level relative to other states, and the value of the programs with respect to leveraging private investment dollars.

Metro Cities will report on proposed funding levels in Governor Dayton's budget bill that will be released later this month. Contact Charlie Vander Aarde at 651-215-4001 or charlie@metrocitiesmn.org with any questions.

Legislative Audit Findings on Legacy Amendment

The House Legacy Funding Committee this week discussed a 2011 report by the Legislative Auditor (OLA) on the Legacy Amendment and funds. The Legacy Amendment was enacted in 2008 to increase the state sales tax by 3/8th of one percent, with the monies allocated to four funds: outdoor heritage (33%), clean water (33%), parks and trails (14.25%), and arts and cultural heritage (19.75%). The projected sales tax revenue for Legacy funds through FY18-19 is \$651 million. In 2011, [a report](#) was issued by the OLA which details the Legacy Amendment further.

The Auditor determines compliance with state laws on legacy funding through a yearly audit. According to the Auditor's analysis, there are four ongoing concerns with the money allocated through the Legacy Amendment: conflicts of interest, achieving desired outcomes, language stating the money is a "supplement not substitute, and whether or not administrative expenses follow the guideline that states funds must be "directly related to and necessary for." Legislative Auditor Jim Nobles suggested that the Legislature could provide clarity on identified items of concern in the report.

Minnesota Housing Explains Proposed 4% Housing Tax Credit Changes

The Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (Minnesota Housing) met with city officials from across the region Thursday to explain their proposed changes to the 2018 Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) for Low Income Housing Tax Credits (4% credits). Minnesota Housing has proposed several changes to the criteria for allocating credits, based on the projected scarcity of state bonding authority in 2018. (Changes to the 2017 allocation of the 4% tax credits were proposed and then dropped by the agency in late 2016.)

Proposed changes include cost containment, meeting one of seven strategic priorities identified by Minnesota Housing, extending the length of affordability beyond the current 15-year minimum, and requiring an increased minimum scoring threshold for applications. The [Minnesota Housing website](#) contains information on the proposed changes as well as a recent webinar and slideshow with additional details.

The Minnesota Housing Board will approve a 2018 QAP proposal at its January 26, 2017 board meeting. A new public comment period will then open for approximately two weeks and close February 10. (This is in addition to the public comment period that ended in November 2016.) The board will take final action in approving changes to the 2018 QAP at its February board meeting.

Metro Cities continues to monitor the changes and will respond to the latest Minnesota Housing proposal. The association's concerns include reducing flexibility to a program that is well subscribed and has resulted in building affordable units across the metro that meet that meet community needs, a shift in the program toward state goals rather than local needs, and changes that may require additional local funds to meet the scoring point minimum.

Metro Cities will provide additional information once it becomes available. Contact Charlie Vander Aarde at 651-215-4001 or charlie@metrocitiesmn.org with any questions.

Broadband Grant Awards Announced, Include Grant in Metro Region

DEED announced statewide broadband grant awards this week. Grants totaling \$34 million were awarded to 42 projects across Minnesota. These awards, the third round of grant funding since 2014, were funded with an appropriation in the 2016 legislative session.

Metro Cities has advocated for metro eligibility in the broadband grant program criteria, highlighting areas of the region that don't have qualifying broadband access. Notably, this round of awards included a project within the seven-county metro region. A project in Medina was awarded \$171,000 to serve 76 unserved households and 35 underserved households in rural western Hennepin County. According to DEED, the "improvements will support business development, health care and educational opportunities in the area, including enabling telecommuting to jobs and businesses outside the project area."

Click [here for a project map](#) of the awards across the state. Contact Charlie Vander Aarde at 651-215-4001 or charlie@metrocitiesmn.org with any questions.

Bills of Note

The following bills were introduced in the Legislature this week. Bills pre-empting local control, staggered terms for the Metropolitan Council, inflow-infiltration mitigation assistance, and Sunday liquor sales are among bills introduced this week.

[HF 93](#) – Prohibits landlords from charging a prospective tenant more than the actual cost of a tenant screening service.

[S.F. 30](#), Appropriation of \$10 million from the bond proceeds fund for metropolitan cities inflow and infiltration grants. Authorizes the sale and issuance of state bonds.

[S.F. 33](#), Authorizes municipalities to allow off-sales on Sundays. Referred to Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection Finance and Policy.

[S.F. 38](#), Provides staggered terms for Metropolitan Council members.

[S.F. 40](#), Requires the local approval of gubernatorial appointees to the Metropolitan Council. Bill provides method for local governments to remove a member from the Metro Council, no longer being a duty of the Governor. to Committee on Local Government.

[S.F. 41](#), Bill modifies off-sale intoxicating liquor sales. Referred to committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection Finance and Policy.

[S.F. 45](#), Bill relates to financing of state and local government. Includes changes to local government aids and credits. Amends county levy authority. Referred to Committee on taxes.

[S.F. 51](#), Modifies the state general levy base, provides market value exclusions. Referred to the Committee on Taxes.

[H.F. 89](#), Modifies the small business investment credit. Modifies the allocation of credits, makes the credit permanent. Referred to the Committee on Job Growth and Energy Affordability Policy and Finance.

[H.F. 112](#), Reverses the referendum approval of issuance of debt provided. Referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Elections Policy.

[H.F. 124](#), Prohibits road authorities from requiring mowing on certain areas, encourages low maintenance to preserve wildlife and maintain public safety.

[H.F. 128](#), Authorizes off-sale intoxicating liquor sales by municipalities.

[H.F. 129](#), Modifies off-sale intoxicating liquor sales.

[H.F. 166](#), Limits fiscal disparities contributions by municipalities. Referred to Taxes.

[S.F. 95](#), Bill relates to ambulances, would modify an intergovernmental transfer of services.

[S.F. 117](#), Bill limits fiscal disparities contributions for specific municipalities.

[S.F. 121](#), Bill provides a tax credit for certain employers.

[H.F. 180](#), Bill requires a statewide uniform minimum wage, would prohibit local variation.

[H.F. 198](#), Appropriates money for inflow and infiltration reduction programs. Referred to the Committee on Legacy Funding Finance.

[H.F. 201](#), Would require approval before the Met Council's implementation of the Thrive MSP 2040 metropolitan development guide, and requires revision after local government input. Provides for legislative approval of housing-related plans and goals. Allows local governments to reject population and demographic assumptions.

[H.F. 203](#), Bill modifies drainage system repair procedures.

[H.F. 204](#), Requires highway construction costs study and report. Referred to the Committee on Transportation and Regional Governance Policy.

[H.F. 231](#), Appropriates money for the corridors of commerce program.

[H.F. 233](#), Bill increases the budget reserve to recommended level by the commission of management and budget.

[H. F. 112](#), Bill requires reverse referendum approval by voters for leases of public buildings and lands owned by municipalities. Bill does not apply to cities of the first class and is only applicable to leases of 3 years or more.

[H. F. 124](#), Bill prohibits road authorities, including cities, from establishing certain requirements and permits that govern mowing.

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*