

## **Governor Proposes \$1.5 Billion in Bonding for 2018 Legislative Session**

On Tuesday, Governor Dayton introduced a \$1.5 billion capital investment proposal. Officials from the Governor's administration highlighted the proposal's focus on investment in higher education and state infrastructure. The proposal dedicates \$998 million to improving state buildings, constructing affordable housing, and upgrading sewer and water systems.

Included in the Governor's proposal is \$5 million to assist metropolitan cities with inflow-infiltration mitigation, an initiative of Metro Cities. The proposal also includes \$100 million for housing infrastructure bonds which can be used to build and renovate privately owned housing units in the metro, as well as statewide. An additional \$15 million in general obligation bonds would be used to preserve and rehabilitate publicly owned housing units. Metro Cities will advocate for these housing funds this session, recognizing the need for preservation and new construction to meet metro needs.

The proposal also recommends \$5 million for Local Government Roads Wetland Replacement. To see a full list of included projects, click [here](#).

Local-specific projects were not included in the proposal, although the Governor noted the merits of local requests. The Governor has stated he welcomes the opportunity to work with the Legislature to include local projects in a bonding bill for the 2018 session. In response to the Governor's proposal, the House Capitol Investment Committee Chair (Dean Urdahl, R – Grove City) expressed concern with the absence of local infrastructure projects that are critical to a successful bonding bill.

## **Metropolitan Council Reviews Wastewater Reuse Task Force Findings**

The Metropolitan Council met as a Committee of the Whole and reviewed a Wastewater Reuse Task Force report. The report may result in potential amendments to the Water Resources Policy Plan (WRPP). The purpose of the Task Force was to review the Council's regional wastewater reuse policies and make any recommendations to address potential opportunities and regional/local partnerships for wastewater reuse. The Task Force was comprised of 12 members including city public works, wastewater utility and finance officials, as well as Metro Cities staff. To view a previous Metro Cities' newsletter article on the Task Force, click [here](#).

The Committee of the Whole was convened after the Environment Committee tabled action to initiate a public hearing last month regarding potential amendments to the WRPP, for further discussion. The Council discussed three proposed amendment options that will be considered by the Environment Committee. These include (1) setting reclaimed water cost on a case by case, cost of service model, (2) having the Metropolitan Council cooperate and partner with local communities, and (3) pursuing non-Council funding for re-use opportunities. The first option would not include any proposal for cost-sharing, or the use of regional fees, for this purpose.

The second amendment option includes most of the first option and applies a regional cost share based on defined environmental and economic development regional benefits. The third option would apply a regional cost share based on identified benefits to the wastewater system. Members supported options (2) and (3). The Environment Committee will consider the

amendments and set any required public hearing to make changes to the Water Resource Policy Plan if necessary. For more information on the proposed amendments, click [here](#).

Questions? Please contact Steve Huser at [steven@metrocitiesmn.org](mailto:steven@metrocitiesmn.org) or 651-215-4003.

### **TAB Approves Release of Regional Solicitation**

The Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) has accepted public comments to the 2018 Regional Solicitation and approved its 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.

As part of its recommendation to release the solicitation, TAB approved the removal of right-of-way costs as an eligible cost reimbursement for bicycle and pedestrian projects. To view the Regional Solicitation, click [here](#).

These recommendations will be considered for concurrence by the Metropolitan Council Transportation Committee at their next meeting. If the solicitation is approved, it will be forwarded to the Metropolitan Council for concurrence.

Questions? Please contact Steve Huser at 651-215-4003, or [steven@metrocitiesmn.org](mailto:steven@metrocitiesmn.org).

### **Reminder! Metropolitan Council 50-Year Event is Next Week**

The Metropolitan Council is hosting an event to mark its 50-year anniversary, "Celebrating a Prosperous Region", on Thursday January 25<sup>th</sup> from 2-6 pm at the U of M McNamara Alumni Center. The event will feature remarks from Governor Mark Dayton and Metropolitan Council Chair Alene Tchourumoff, and panels with several former Metropolitan Council chairs who will discuss future issues for the metropolitan region using history as a guide. The event concludes with a reception. Seating is limited. Click here to RSVP: <https://metrocouncil.org/50invite.aspx>

### **Metro Cities Welcomes Government Relations Assistant for 2018 Session**

Metro Cities has hired Casey Casella as a Government Relations Assistant for the 2018 legislative session. Casey is a recent graduate of the U of M Humphrey School and holds a Master's Degree in Public Policy. Ms. Casella recently completed an administration internship and legislative practicum with the League of MN Cities, and previously interned with the MN State Senate. Ms. Casella comes highly recommended and with excellent credentials, and we are very pleased to have her on board to assist us with our legislative session work as well as special projects. Casey can be reached at [casey@metrocitiesmn.org](mailto:casey@metrocitiesmn.org). Please be sure to stop by and welcome Casey if you are in the building.

### **Transportation Economic Development Grants Announced**

MNDoT and the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) recently awarded \$18.2 million in Transportation Economic Development (TED) grants. Funds were awarded to seven state highway projects, three of which are located in the metropolitan area. Metro area projects were awarded a total of \$16.5 million and include a safety and mobility improvement project in the City of Anoka, a highway improvement project in the City of Brooklyn Park and a Carver County intersection reconstruction project in Chaska.

MNDoT received requests for funding totaling \$67.6 million. The TED program targets projects that will produce measurable economic benefit. Any governmental entity, including municipalities,

are eligible to apply. To view MNDOT's press release related to these awards, click here (<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/newsrels/18/01/2ted-grants.html>)

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