

Metropolitan Council Nominating Committee

A nominating committee for the Metropolitan Council has been named, and interviews with applicants will be conducted starting in late January. The nominating committee consists of 12 members, five of whom are ex-officio. State laws specify a seven-member committee. Metro Cities has supported legislation for an expanded nominating committee with a majority of local officials.

Interviews with selected applicants will take place starting later this month. Dates and locations of the interviews are included below. Governor Walz has also asked that the committee make its finalists public on the Metropolitan Council's website. The nominating committee consists of the following individuals, four of whom are city officials:

- Janet Williams, Mayor of Savage, Chair of the Nominating Committee
- Dave Bartholomay, Mayor of Circle Pines,
- Randy Maluchnik, Carver County Commissioner
- George Tourville, Mayor of Inver Grove Heights
- Andrea Jenkins, Minneapolis City Council Vice President
- John Choi, County Attorney, Ramsey County
- Lisa Weik, Washington County Commissioner
- Nora Slawik, incoming Metropolitan Council Chair, ex officio member
- Nikki Villavicencio, Disability Rights Advocate, ex officio member
- Pahoua Hoffman, Executive Director of the Citizens League, ex officio member
- Joe Hobot, President and CEO of American Indian OIC, ex officio member
- Ruby Azurdia-Lee, President of Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio (CLUES), ex officio member

Applicants selected to be interviewed will testify at one of four public meetings.

Date	Council District	Location	Time
Jan. 29	1, 2, 9, 10	Blaine City Hall	6:00 pm
Jan. 30	11, 12, 13, 14	Oakdale City Hall	6:00 pm
Feb. 12	3, 4, 15, 16	Savage City Hall	6:00 pm
Feb. 13	5, 6, 7, 8	Minneapolis (TBD)	6:00 pm

2019 Legislative Session Begins

On Monday, new Governor Tim Walz and Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan were sworn into office, and on Tuesday at noon the 2019 legislative session began. Governor Walz has appointed all cabinet heads except for the State MNIT office:

- Department of Administration, Alice Roberts-Davis
- Department of Agriculture, Thom Petersen
- Department of Commerce, Steve Kelley
- Department of Corrections, Paul Schnell
- Department of Education, Mary Cathryn Ricker

- Department of Employment and Economic Development, Steve Grove
- Department of Health, Jan Malcolm
- Office of Higher Education, Dennis Olson
- Housing Finance Agency, Jennifer Leimaile Ho
- Department of Human Rights, Rebecca Lucero
- Department of Human Services, Tony Lourey
- Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation, Mark Phillips
- Department of Labor and Industry, Nancy Leppink
- Minnesota Management and Budget, Myron Frans
- Bureau of Mediation Services, Janet Johnson
- Metropolitan Council, Nora Slawik
- Department of Natural Resources, Sarah Strommen
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Laura Bishop
- Department of Public Safety, John Harrington
- Department of Revenue, Cynthia Bauerly
- Department of Transportation, Margaret Anderson Kelliher
- Department of Veterans Affairs, Larry Herke

Governor Walz has also hired key staff positions, linked [here](#).

In the House, the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party (DFL) holds a 75-59 majority after winning 18 seats in November. The House has 39 new members. The Senate was not up for election, and Republicans continue to control the majority in the Senate by one vote. Senator Jeremy Miller was elected as Senate President on Tuesday. Representative Melissa Hortman was elected as Speaker of the House and Representative Kurt Daudt was elected as the House's Minority Leader.

Senator Tony Lourey was recently appointed by Governor Walz to head the Department of Health and Human Services and thus will resign his Senate seat. A special election will be held on February 5th to fill that vacancy.

Please see [last week's newsletter](#) for information on legislative chairs and committees as well as the makeup of the Governor's administration.

The Metro Cities Board of Directors, at its December meeting, adopted a slate of legislative priorities for the 2019 session that include support for transportation and transit funding, inflow and infiltration mitigation assistance for metropolitan cities, support for local control, support for modifications to the Metropolitan Council's governance structure, support for affordable housing funding and resources for economic development, redevelopment and community preservation, and support for streamlining the construction sales tax exemption.

Transportation

Transportation is expected to receive significant debate at the Capitol this session. Rep. Frank Hornstein-Minneapolis, is the new chair of the House Transportation Finance and Policy Committee and Senator Scott Newman-Hutchinson, will continue as Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee. Chair Hornstein has expressed support for a multi-modal approach in a comprehensive transportation bill. Governor Walz has articulated support for new funding for roads and transit and is open to an increase in the gas tax. Leaders in the Senate have voiced opposition to an increase in the gas tax. Leaders in the House and Senate, and Governor Walz, have expressed the need for funding to address the transportation needs of the state.

Metro Cities supports multi-modal, comprehensive transportation funding and increased funding to the Municipal State Aid (MSA) Street account. Metro Cities supports addressing funding for the regional transit system, both for operating and capital costs.

Metro Cities will be advocating for ongoing funding for the Small Cities Assistance account for city streets and will also support the creation of a Large Cities Assistance account for cities over 5,000 in population.

Economic Development

Metro Cities will continue to support locally initiated economic development tools and programs. The Minnesota Investment Fund and Job Creation Fund are two key job creation and job retention programs that require a strong local-state partnership. The funds received \$25 million and \$17 million appropriations respectively in the 2018-19 biennium. The Redevelopment Grant Program and Demolition Loan Program were not funded by the Legislature the last budget cycle. Smaller grant rounds were made available via internal DEED transfers; however, Metro Cities will seek a state appropriation this session to help meet the growing number of redevelopment opportunities in the metro region. (See the current call for redevelopment applications elsewhere in this newsletter.)

Housing

Resources to support a range of housing options will be a focus of the Legislature this session. The state and metro region's focus on housing has sharpened in recent years, with Governor Dayton's Housing Task Force and subsequent report, local comprehensive plan updates that include a housing element for addressing land use and local efforts to address affordable housing needs, and regional efforts to address housing preservation and community reinvestment.

The Senate will continue to address housing policy and budget decisions through two committees while the House has a stand-alone Housing Finance & Policy Division committee.

Metro Cities has identified several priority issues, including community reinvestment in rental and owner-occupied housing, attracting private investment in housing developments, a state match for local housing trust funds, and flexible funding for Minnesota Housing's programs to support a range of single family and multifamily housing options for Minnesotans. Metro Cities also recognizes cities establish fee structures for residential development to cover the costs of growth and corresponding needs for public infrastructure.

Inflow-Infiltration Assistance to Cities

Metro Cities will continue to advocate for capital funding to assist cities with inflow-infiltration mitigation on local public systems, and state sources to support local efforts to mitigate inflow and infiltration from private sources that affects public system capacity.

Metropolitan Council Governance

The topic of governance is expected to be debated in the 2019 session, and several governance bills were introduced this week (see Bills of Note in this newsletter). Legislation initiated by Metro Cities in 2018 has been introduced this year as Senate File 36, authored by Senator Charles Wiger-North Saint Paul. Metro Cities' policies support staggered terms, an expanded nominating committee with a majority of local officials, a comment period for nominees, and gubernatorial accountability to a nominating committee on nominees not recommended for appointment. Metro Cities opposes local officials serving on the Metropolitan Council.

TAB to Select Regional Solicitation Projects Next Week

The Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) is scheduled to approve Regional Solicitation projects at their meeting on Wednesday. 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. Approximately \$200 million is available to the region. The TAB is expected to evaluate two funding scenarios. To review the two funding scenarios, click [here](#). For more information on the Regional Solicitation, click [here](#).

Apply for Redevelopment Grants, Demolition Loans by February 1

Cities seeking redevelopment and demolition loan funds will have a new opportunity to apply for state dollars this winter. Even though the Legislature did not appropriate funds to the program in 2017 or 2018, DEED used its statutory authority to transfer funds to the Redevelopment and Demolition Loan Program to fund approximately \$2 million in the February grant round. The deadline for the submission of applications is 4:00 pm on Friday, February 1, 2018. More information on the application process can be [found here](#).

The Redevelopment Grant funds assist with the cost of demolition and abatement, as well as other project-related improvements such as soil stabilization and site preparation-related infrastructure necessary for redeveloping blighted property. Demolition Loan funds help public entities demolish and abate blighted structures to eliminate a public safety threat and prepare sites for potential future development. Applications must be submitted by cities, counties, port authorities, housing and redevelopment authorities (HRAs) or economic development authorities (EDAs). A local match of 50 percent is required for each project site receiving a Redevelopment grant. There is no match required for Demolition Loans.

Metro Cities is interested in hearing about your city's redevelopment opportunities to highlight the need at the legislature for state funding for this important program. Please contact Charlie Vander Aarde to share your city's plans: 651-215-4001 or charlie@metrocitiesmn.org.

For answers to questions regarding the application process, please contact Brownfields and Redevelopment Unit staff at 651-259-7451.

MnDOT Accepting Local Road Improvement Program Applications

MnDOT has announced a new solicitation for the Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP). MnDot has stated the goal of this solicitation is to generate a list of eligible projects for future grant funding. The last solicitation was conducted in 2017, and awards from a \$35 million bonding allocation in 2018 were based on that solicitation.

For more information and to access the application form, click [here](#). The completed application form must be submitted electronically to: saltirhelp.dot@state.mn.us by **March 1**. Cities that applied in 2017 do not need to resubmit, unless there have been project changes.

Metro Cities policy supports state funding for the LRIP and encourages all members with eligible projects to apply.

EVENT: Affordable Homeownership Models for Suburban Cities

Registration is open for a February event that will present models for cities to support affordable homeownership opportunities. Cities will be able to connect with similar communities and learn how to support or expand affordable homeownership opportunities. Community land trusts, manufactured home park preservation and cooperative models will be covered. The event is sponsored by Grounded Solutions Network and the Metropolitan Council. [Registration information.](#)

Thursday, February 28, 2019

8:00 am – 1:00 pm

New Brighton Community Center

Clean Water Council Opening

The Secretary of State has posted a city representative opening on the Clean Water Council (CWC). The CWC is responsible for advising on the administration and implementation of the Clean Water Legacy Act. The Clean Water Fund may only be spent to protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams and to protect groundwater from degradation. At least five percent of the Clean Water Fund must be spent only to protect drinking water sources. Interested city officials are eligible to apply. To apply, click [here](#).

Bills of Note

Throughout the session, Metro Cities will list in this section recently introduced bills that have interest and significance for metropolitan cities.

[SF 10](#), Newman: a bill for an act providing that state general sales tax revenue related to motor vehicle repair and replacement parts exclusively to fund roads. Appropriates \$135 million for state road construction and \$135 million to the Corridors of Commerce program from Trunk Highway bonds. The bill was referred to the Committee on Transportation Finance and Policy.

[SF 34](#), Wiger: Enacts Agreement Among the States to Elect the President by National Popular Vote. Bill was referred to the Committee on State Government Finance and Policy and Elections.

[SF 36](#), Wiger: Bill relating to Metropolitan Council; providing for staggered terms; expanding the membership of the nomination committee; requiring additional information to be made publicly available as part of the selection process; clarifying council member qualifications.

[SF 41](#), Osmek: authorizing the city of Excelsior to impose a local sales and use tax.

[SF 42](#), Osmek: A bill for an act relating to transportation; establishing a construction prohibition related to colocation of light rail transit and freight rail.

[SF 47](#), Osmek: A bill for an act relating to the Metropolitan Council; requiring local approval of gubernatorial appointees to the Metropolitan Council; providing a method for local governments to remove a member of the Metropolitan Council.

[SF 56](#), Dibble: A bill for an act relating to the Metropolitan Council; providing for staggered terms; expanding the membership of the nomination committee; requiring additional information to be made publicly available as part of the selection process; clarifying council member qualifications; requiring new advisory committee; establishing sewer availability charges stakeholder group.

[SF 57](#), Dibble: providing for the election of Metropolitan Council members.

[SF 65](#), Osmek: Bill extends the Metro Mobility service area.

[SF 70](#), Little: Bill requires the Metropolitan Council to conduct a feasibility study on expanding the Kenrick Avenue park-and-ride facility in Lakeville.

[SF 71](#), Little: A bill for an act relating to transportation; requiring the Metropolitan Council to provide transportation service in Lakeville; appropriating money.

[SF 80](#), Utke: A bill for an act relating to local government aid; aid reductions for sanctuary cities.

[HF 7](#), Ecklund: A bill for an act relating to telecommunications; appropriating money to the broadband grant program.

[HF 14](#), Nelson: A bill for an act relating to elections; transferring and appropriating money for purposes of the Help America Vote Act.

[HF 17](#), O'Driscoll: A bill for an act relating to state government; appropriating money from the Help America Vote Act account for certain authorized purposes.

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@metrocitiesmn.org and provide the following: Name, Title, Employer and Email address. Thank you.

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