

Legislative Constitutional Adjournment Date Nears Without Budget Agreement

With three days remaining until the Legislature's required constitutional adjournment, meetings and activity are fluid. The work of conference committees has continued, with the consideration of many conference committee provisions increasingly more dependent upon a negotiated budget agreement that will determine specific committee 'targets'. Governor Walz and legislative leaders have met several times this week as they work to negotiate revenue and spending parameters for a state budget and met again this morning after negotiations stalled late Wednesday. On Thursday evening, the Senate Finance Committee met and passed a bill to continue state appropriations at the funding levels provided for in the February budget forecast beyond July 1 should a budget not be enacted by the Legislature. That bill is expected to be taken up on the Senate floor today. The Legislature today set a date for the 2020 legislative session as February 11, 2020.

Metro Cities is monitoring the work of several conference committees. Many committees have focused on side-by-side bill walk-throughs, policy and on-spending items this week. Brief updates are below; Metro Cities will provide a detailed update next week. You can follow updates over the weekend on our Twitter account, [@MetroCitiesMN](https://twitter.com/MetroCitiesMN).

Taxes Conference Committee

The Taxes Conference Committee this week addressed several items with no state costs, including local option sales taxes and tax increment financing provisions in the bills. The committee adopted local option sales tax provisions for specific communities, including the cities of West Saint Paul, Excelsior and Rogers. The committee also adopted general law modifications for local sales taxes. Metro Cities has written about proposals to modify the requirements, the details of which can be found in the [May 3rd Metro Cities News](#) newsletter. The committee also adopted several laws for exceptions to TIF statutes for several communities including the metropolitan cities of Hopkins, Edina, Anoka, Champlin, Minneapolis and Roseville. The committee is scheduled to meet again this afternoon.

State Government Conference Committee

The State Government Conference Committee did not meet this week; chairs indicated they are waiting to receive budget targets. Of interest to and supported by Metro Cities is the local government compensation cap removal at the end of the House version of the bill in [Article 2](#). Metro Cities is also tracking the elections provisions in the House version of the bill, [Article 4](#).

Environment Conference Committee

The Environment Conference Committee held one meeting Tuesday and adopted noncontroversial policy provisions. The committee has said it will consider additional language once they receive budget targets. Metro Cities supports funding for grants to cities to mitigate the effects of emerald ash borer infestation in the House version of the bill.

Transportation Conference Committee

The conference committee for HF1555, the Transportation Omnibus Bill, met three times this week. The committee has limited its discussion to policy provisions and adopted several provisions. These include a provision to allow Anoka County to use certain funds for the operation of the North Star Commuter Rail line, provisions that allow the Department of Human Resources and the Metropolitan Council to share data related to Metro Mobility, and provisions that would allow cities to determine speed limits on city streets. One provision will allow cities to reduce speeds on all streets in a zoned residential area to 25 while the other will allow a city to set speed limits on other city streets so long as they do so in a consistent manner, develop procedures based on safety, engineering, traffic analysis and post appropriate signage. The committee chairs plan to meet this afternoon to continue discussions on policy provisions.

MNLARS and VTRS

This week, the House and Senate Transportation Committees held a joint informational hearing to discuss [SF 2882](#)–Newman, that establishes a new Vehicle Title Registration System (VTRS) to replace the existing MN Licensing and Registration System (MNLARS). The legislation proposes \$52 million to be appropriated for the purchase of the new system, as well as new fees on vehicle registration, licensing and license plates to pay for operating costs. The bill would freeze development of MNLARS after a scheduled June update.

The committee heard testimony from Rick King, who chaired the review panel that the Legislature asked to develop recommendations to replace MNLARS with a system purchased from an external vendor. The review was part of a funding bill ([HF 861](#)- Hansen) to continue improvements for MNLARS, that was passed by the Legislature passed in early March. To review the report, click [here](#). It is estimated that the new system will cost an additional \$20 million than it would to continue MLARS, over the biennium.

A bill that contains funding to reimburse deputy registrars passed the Senate in March. The bill, [SF 621](#)-Jasinski, appropriates funding for costs incurred by deputy registrars due to MNLARS system problems. The legislation allocates \$13 million from the general fund and splits funding so that 10% of funds would be divided equally among all registrars, 45% allocated proportionally based on transactions made between August 1, 2017 and December 31, 2019, and 45% based on transaction comparison looking back to a timeframe of July 1, 2014 to June 30th, 2017. The bill also includes a provision that would indemnify deputy registrars from any lawsuit resulting from the MNLARS rollout. These funds would be available to deputy registrars until July 15, 2019. Metro Cities supports this legislation.

[HF 2082](#)-Hansen which is included in the House omnibus transportation bill and has passed as a stand-alone bill, would appropriate \$10 million for deputy registrar reimbursements and stipulates that a registrar must remain open for 12 months after accepting a reimbursement. The legislation does not include a provision that would indemnify deputy registrars from any lawsuit resulting from the MNLARS rollout. At this point, there is disagreement between the House and Senate on whether to include reimbursement funding in a standalone bill, or in the omnibus bill.

Hands-Free Distracted Driving Bill Signed Into Law

Addressing distracted driving gained early bi-partisan support at the Capitol and resulted in a “hands-free” bill signed into law in late April. Once the law goes into effect on August 1, drivers will be able to only send text messages or make phone calls if they are in hands-free or voice-activated mode. The bill makes an exception for devices physically integrated into a car. The new law also applies to GPS and requires drivers to have the address punched in before the vehicle starts moving. The Department of Public Safety and law enforcement organizations are launching

a public education campaign ahead of August 1. After August 1 law enforcement officers will be able to stop anyone they see holding a phone while driving and the penalty will carry a \$50 fine for the first violation and a \$275 fine for subsequent violations.

Your Feedback is Needed: Metro Cities' License & Permit Fee Survey

Metro Cities has provided a License and Permit Fee Survey biennially for several years, and we're approaching the time when we would normally begin to open the survey for updates. The vendor Metro Cities contracts with has notified us that the survey software needs significant upgrades before it can be used again. Metro Cities will hold on updating the survey to address the necessary upgrades.

This presents a timely opportunity for Metro Cities to examine the survey product and determine member satisfaction levels and future needs. **Metro Cities will form a focus group of city staff** to determine how the survey is utilized, its benefits and challenges, whether the survey should continue, and what a survey should look like going forward. We want to determine whether the survey meets your needs, what could be changed, and how to move forward to ensure that this is a useful product.

We would like to know - as soon as possible - whether you have an interest in serving on the focus group. The time commitment is expected to be three to four meetings over the summer and fall. **Your input is invaluable as we examine the survey product.** Regardless of whether or not you serve on the focus group, we invite and encourage you to share any feedback from your experience using the License and Permit Fee Survey or options for the survey that you wish would be available. Please email kimberly@metrocitysmn.org.

Please note! The coordinator side of the survey where you upload data is currently closed, but existing survey data can be accessed until **Friday, May 31st** through the member side. **After that date, the site will be closed.** You can access the link to the login page on our website here: www.metrocitysmn.org/external-links. Select the login link for the Municipal License and Permit Fee Survey. (Your login information should be the same. Please contact Kimberly if you don't have your login information or are having trouble logging in.) You can download the information as an Excel file to maintain access to the survey data after the site closes. You can also contact Kimberly after Friday, May 31st if you wish to access the information.

Questions or comments? Please contact Kimberly at 651-215-4000 or kimberly@metrocitysmn.org.

2019 Metro Cities Policy Committees

It's time to start thinking about Metro Cities' Policy Committees! Policy Committees meet in July, August, and September and cover four different policy areas: Transportation and General Government, Municipal Revenues, Metropolitan Agencies, Housing and Economic Development. Policy Committees recommend legislative policies for the next legislative session, and those policies serve as a foundation for our work at Metro Cities. Being part of a Policy Committee is a great opportunity for your city to have a voice in the processes for the policies as well as at the legislature.

Policy committees are open to city staff and elected officials and the form to sign-up can be found on our website on the [Policy Committees page](#). Whether you are new or have participated in the past, we welcome your participation on one or more committees in 2019.

Remember:

- Committees meet either Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday in the morning from 9:00-11:30 am or the afternoon from 1:00-3:30. The committees and dates are listed on our website here, and updates and additional information will be posted on these pages as it becomes available.
- Please actively sign up for the committee(s) you wish to attend, even if you have been on the committee in the past. This will help us keep our rosters current and correct!
- All meetings take place at the Metro Cities/League of MN Cities building at 145 University Avenue West, St. Paul.

We look forward to seeing you this summer! Questions? Contact Kimberly at 651-215-4000 or kimberly@metrocitiesmn.org.

Metro Cities Breakfast at the June LMC Annual Conference

If you're attending the 2019 League of MN Cities' Annual Conference in June in Duluth at the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center (DECC), plan to join your metro colleagues for breakfast on **Thursday, June 27th at 7:30 am**. This is a great chance to mingle with other Metro Cities members and to hear a brief update from Metro Cities staff.

If you're able to join us, please let Kimberly know at 651-215-4000 or kimberly@metrocitiesmn.org as soon as possible. We hope to see you there!

EVENT: Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES) Open House & Budget Workshops

The Metropolitan Council invites MCES customers to participate in one of two Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES) Open House and Budget Workshops. Topics covered will include proposed 2020 MCES Budget and Municipal Wastewater Charge, MCES Capital Improvement Program, and MCES Customer Survey Results and Customer Portal. Workshop dates, times, and locations are listed below.

Thursday, May 23

9:00-10:30 am

Minnetonka Community Center

Banquet Room

14600 Minnetonka Blvd

Minnetonka, MN

Thursday, June 6

1:30-3:00 pm

League of MN Cities

St. Croix Room

145 University Ave W

St. Paul, MN

Please RSVP by contacting Sara Running at 651-602-1531 or sara.running@metc.state.mn.us by Friday, May 17.

EVENT: Metropolitan Council Metro Local Governments Roundtable on 2020 Census

The Metropolitan Council invites you to this quarterly meeting of local governments working together to promote participation in the 2020 Census. This meeting invites and includes local government professionals and officials who are organizing and supporting Complete Count activities. This meeting is not itself a Complete Count Committee.

You are welcome to share this invitation within your office or city hall. The Met Council is especially interested to involve community engagement specialists, communications specialists, human rights commissions, and interested elected officials.

Friday, June 7

1:15-2:45 pm

Ramsey County Library – Roseville

Community Meeting Room

2180 Hamline Ave N

Roseville, MN

Click [here](#) for additional information and the link to register.

Bills of Note

[HF 2881](#), Hornstein/ [SF 2882](#), Newman: Bill requires the purchase and implementation of a vehicle title and registration system to replace the Minnesota Licensing and Registration System (MNLARS); modifying license plate fees; establishing committees and task forces, and appropriating money.

[HF 2885](#), Fischer/ [SF 1897](#) Marty: Bill establishes the Municipal Water Consumer Protection Act.

[SF 2867](#), Clausen: Bill limits the length of local government employment suspension for employment misconduct to 90 days. After 90s days, the political subdivision must either end the employment suspension or terminate the employment of the management employee.

[SF 2875](#), Clausen: Bill provides an alternative system to issue state and local debt obligations, enacting the “Minnesota All-Government Bond Act.”

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.

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