

## **EVENT: Water Efficiency Grant Program Informational Meeting**

Metro Cities will host an informational meeting on the Metropolitan Council's Water Efficiency Grant Program **on Wednesday, August 28<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 am at the LMC building, 145 University Avenue West, St Paul.** Metropolitan Council staff will provide an overview of the grant program and be available to answer applicant questions. Those interested in attending should email Brian Davis at [brian.davis@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:brian.davis@metc.state.mn.us).

Grants are for up to \$50,000 to municipal water suppliers to help increase water efficiency, with the funding to be used for rebates to residents who replace inefficient water-using devices with approved devices that use substantially less water, or for irrigation system audits. \$750,000 is available for spending through June 2022. The 2019 Legislature designated these monies from the Clean Water Fund.

Grants will range from \$2,000 to \$50,000 to municipalities and are intended to lower the costs for residents to purchase and install products that reduce water use, such as toilets, washing machines, irrigation sprinklers, and irrigation controllers. Products must be labelled by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Water Sense program or, in the case of washing machines, by the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Star program. Funds may be used only for appliance replacement, not for first-time purchases for new developments.

Grant funds will cover 75% of program costs, with a required 25% local match. Residents must pay a portion of the cost of any appliance or water use audit.

Applications will be accepted through September 30, 2019. Required application information includes:

- Rebate or grant program design and work plan
- Proposed examples of communications to property owners
- Requested total grant amount
- Estimated annual amount of water saved by the applying municipality

[Details about the program and the grant application.](#)

The Metropolitan Council administered a water efficiency grant program from 2015-17 using \$500,000 from the Clean Water Fund. Data from that program showed an estimated total savings of 52 million gallons of water per year. Metro Cities encourages interested cities to attend the meeting. Questions? Contact Steven Huser at [steven@metrocitiesmn.org](mailto:steven@metrocitiesmn.org), or 651-215-4003.

## **Metropolitan Council Transportation Committee Begins Budget Work**

The Metropolitan Council's Transportation Committee has begun discussions on an annual transportation budget setting process with a preliminary budget overview. The Council will receive a Motor Vehicle Sales Tax (MVST) receipts estimate in November; those updated numbers will be incorporated into the draft budget. Due to the volatile nature of MVST receipts, the Council budgets 95% of estimated receipts. All bus operations in the budget are funded with MVST receipts. Staff explained that in the current biennium, all state general fund allocations will be

dedicated to Metro Mobility, LRT and commuter rail in and by 2022, and all state appropriations from the general fund will be used to cover Metro Mobility expenses.

The Council's transportation budget is projecting a fiscal deficit in 2022 when current one-time state appropriations expire, the point at which the Council anticipates it will need to begin using MVST revenues for LRT and commuter rail operations. Staff noted that Metro Mobility is the fastest growing segment of the transportation budget.

Operating base revenues for 2020 are \$576 million and \$598 million for 2021 while operating expenses are \$619 million for 2020 and \$647 million for 2021. This is a structural deficit of \$43 million for 2020 and \$49 million for 2021. The proposed budget will balance the operating budget in 2020 with \$23 million in one-time state funding and \$20 million in Council budget reserves. However, in 2021, only \$13 million in one-time state funding and \$35 million in Council budget reserves are available, which creates an approximate shortfall of \$1 million.

Council staff have also stated that under the current state budget, a \$112 million operating budget shortfall for FY 2022 and 2023 is expected, with Metro Mobility accounting for \$77 million, bus operating at \$30 million and rail operations at \$5 of the total shortfall.

The Council will continue preliminary budget overviews through August 14<sup>th</sup> and conduct overall capital budget reviews in September and October. The Council is scheduled to adopt draft operating and capital budgets for public comment on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. Final adoption of the Council budget is planned for December 11<sup>th</sup>. To view the presentation presented to the committee, click [here](#).

## **Secretary of State Office Seeks Comment on Presidential Primary Reimbursements**

The Office of the Secretary of State is requesting comments from local municipalities on possible rules governing the categories of expenses eligible for local reimbursement for the [Presidential Nomination Primary](#). The Request for Comments will be published in the August 5, 2019 State Register. Please see the [Request for Comments](#) [PDF] for details about the rulemaking and rulemaking process.

Submissions will be accepted on or before October 4, 2019 at 4:30 pm. While not part of the official rulemaking record, comments and suggestions will be considered by the Office as the Office decides what to include in any proposed rules or amendments to the rules.

Written comments, questions, and requests for more information on these possible rules should be directed to: Samm Bonawitz, Government Relations Director at the Office of the Secretary of State, 180 State Office Building, 100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Saint Paul, MN 55155; Phone 651-201-1334; Fax 651-296-3073; Email [samm.bonawitz@state.mn.us](mailto:samm.bonawitz@state.mn.us)

TTY users may call the Office of Secretary of State at 711. Additional information about rulemaking and the current rulemaking docket can be found on the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State's [rulemaking webpage](#).

## **Second Round of Policy Committees Will Meet the Week of August 12th**

The second meetings of Metro Cities' four policy committees will meet the week of August 12<sup>th</sup>. Please click [here](#) for a schedule of the meetings. If you are not registered but would like to participate, please join us! Contact Kim Ciarrocchi at [kimberly@metrocitiesmn.org](mailto:kimberly@metrocitiesmn.org) to register. First

meetings were well attended and members provided many ideas and feedback on policies. Speakers will be hosted at second policy committee meetings as follows:

- **Transportation and General Government:** Judd Schetnan, Government Affairs Director and Mary Bogie, Chief Financial Officer, Metropolitan Council - regional transit
- **Municipal Revenues:** Pat Dalton, Analyst, House Research - local sales taxes
- **Metropolitan Agencies:** Ned Smith, Finance Director and Jeannine Clancy, Assistant General Manager - SAC and Inflow-Infiltration
- **Housing and Economic Development:** Jennifer Ho, Commissioner, Minnesota Housing Finance Agency - priorities for housing

## **EVENT: Lawn Water Conservation Workshops**

University of Minnesota [Turfgrass Science](#) in partnership with the [Metropolitan Council](#) is inviting city and other officials from the 7-county metro area to attend two Lawn Water Conservation workshops this summer.

### **FIRST WORKSHOP - ST. PAUL CAMPUS**

**10am - noon, Friday, August 16, 2019**

Topics covered include: impacts of mowing height and irrigation scheduling on lawn quality and our environment; how turfgrasses are evaluated by turfgrass scientists; and low-input turfgrasses for Minnesota lawns. Practice rating different turfgrass cultivars on our research plots.

**RSVP by August 12, 2019** at the [Eventbrite St. Paul invitation link](#).

### **SECOND WORKSHOP - MINNESOTA LANDSCAPE ARBORETUM**

**10am - noon, Friday, September 20, 2019**

Topics covered include: smart irrigation controllers, soil moisture sensors and why they are an improvement over rain sensors; and water-savings benefits of these technologies and which is best depending on property. Participate in an irrigation audit and learn how to improve the performance of sprinkler systems.

**RSVP by September 16, 2019** at the [Eventbrite Arboretum invitation link](#).

The workshops are free with advance registration. You are welcome to attend either workshop or both. Please contact Kristine Moncada at [monc0003@umn.edu](mailto:monc0003@umn.edu) with any questions.

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