



EVENT: Join Us Next Friday! Workshop with MN Housing

Join Metro Cities and the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) on **Friday, February 21** for a workshop for cities on accessing funding for state housing programs. City staff and elected officials are welcome! Learn more about:

- Funding programs and cycles;
- Submitting a competitive application;
- MHFA funding priorities; and
- Single family and multi-family development and rehabilitation.

Friday, February 21, 2020

9:00 - 11:00 am

St. Anthony Village City Hall, 3301 Silver Lake Rd, St. Anthony, 55418

RSVP: Please email Kimberly@MetroCitiesMN.org.

2020 Legislative Session Begins

The 2020 legislative session began on Tuesday, February 11th with noon sessions in both chambers and several committees held meetings this week. See specific legislative updates below and introduced bills of note below.

State agencies are closed on Monday, February 17th for Presidents' Day, but legislative offices are open that day, and floor sessions and hearings are scheduled. On Monday, February 17th, the House Property and Local Tax Division will hear four local option sales tax bills, for the cities of Oakdale, Grand Rapids, and Cross Lake, as well as a bill for Carlton County. The Division has a new Chair, Representative Andrew Carlson-Bloomington, following the passing of former Chair Diane Loeffler last fall.

Several hundred bills were introduced this week and the committee schedule is anticipated to be robust ahead of the first committee deadline of March 13. See the 'bills of note' section in this newsletter that contains introduced bills of potential interest to metropolitan city governments.

House Transportation Committee Hears Transit Bill and Safety Update

The House Transportation Committee heard HF 3085-Tabke, this week. The bill establishes a transit ambassador program, authorizes administrative citations for failure to pay fares, and reduces the judicial penalty for non-fare payment from \$175 to between \$35-\$10. The bill also reduces the charge from misdemeanor to petty misdemeanor. The cost of the legislation is estimated at \$6.3 million over the next biennium and would have local county costs of \$921,000 in FY2022 and \$1.5 million in FY 2023 in counties with light rail and bus rapid transit lines. The Minneapolis and Saint Paul Chambers of Commerce and East Metro Strong provided testimony in support of the bill. The bill was laid over and will likely be heard again next week.

The committee also received a transit safety update from Metropolitan Council Chair Charlie Zelle, the Metro Transit General Manager and the Metro Transit Chief of Police. Chair Zelle discussed

increases in police presence on transit systems, including by plain clothes police officers who focus on criminal behavior. Metro Transit has also expanded its Text for Safety program, which Chair Zelle noted has led to faster response times by Metro Transit Police. The Council has also added live video surveillance. Chair Zelle informed the committee that the Council has allocated \$1 million to help address homelessness and an additional \$850,000 in one-time spending for additional police officers at specific transit sites.

House Subcommittee on Elections Hears Presidential Primary Data Privacy Bill

The House Subcommittee on Elections heard a bill introduced by the subcommittee Chair, Rep. Dehn, relating to the security of voter data in the upcoming primary election. MN Secretary of State Steve Simon testified and gave background on the state's move to a presidential primary. Under current law, this data is sent to all four major parties and there are no limitations on what the parties can do with that information.

HF 3068 requires the data to be given to a single representative from each political party only for the purpose of ensuring compliance with the closed primary rules (to ensure there is no crossover voting). The bill designates the data as private under the Data Practices Act and requires the party representative receiving the list to sign and acknowledge that the state Data Practices law applies, by contract. The final piece of this bill allows an opt-out function where voters can have their name taken off the list. Voters can opt-out either on paper or online. The legislature has until 10 weeks after March 3rd to implement these changes (when the data from the counties is due to the national parties).

Individuals representing the League of Women Voters Minnesota and the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits spoke to the concerns they have heard from local officials, business owners, and members of the nonprofit community about participating in the primary election given the collection and delivery of the party preference data. Both organizations testified in support of HF 3068. After questions from members HF 3068 was moved on to the Government Operations committee.

House Energy and Climate Division Hears Climate Overview

The House Energy and Climate Finance and Policy Division met this week and heard testimony related to the effects of climate change on state waters. Testifiers included officials from the University of Minnesota and the MN Cities Stormwater Coalition.

According to U of M Professor Emeritus Mark Seeley, the pace of changes in the climate have quickened and the state has just concluded what is likely to be the wettest decade in the state's history. Other speakers spoke to changes on rain amounts and effects on water levels, runoff, groundwater recharge and water quality and discussed the effects on infrastructure. Officials also noted that inflow and infiltration problems increase with higher water volumes.

Randy Neprash from the MN Cities Stormwater Coalition discussed challenges cities are facing related to changes and their effects on stormwater infrastructure. Cities have been putting more investment to address issues of water quality and quantity. He also recommended that the state rebalance state funding to address these issues and discussed that engineering design standards may need to be revised with more frequency to better address new hydrologic realities.

House Capital Investment Division Meetings

The Capital Investment Division in the House convened twice this week to hear presentations from state agencies regarding the Governor's bonding recommendations. These included presentations by the Department of Natural Resources, Department of Public Safety, and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

A few proposals of note from the Department of Natural Resources include flood hazard mitigation grants (\$20 million), community tree planting grants (\$2 million), and local and regional grant programs for parks and trails (\$4 million).

Officials from the Department of Public Safety presented a proposal for a new State Emergency Operations Center to be built in Blaine (\$29.5 million). The MPCA presented proposals for increased electronic vehicle infrastructure. Specifically, cities would bid for grants to build charging stations and would be asked to match 20 percent of the cost. Drivers would pay for a portion of their charge and the municipality would be responsible for the maintenance of the stations.

Other proposals include grants for MN communities to help improve storm water systems (\$15 million) and a Capital Assistance Program to help local governments afford recycling and composting infrastructure (\$49.2 million).

House Hears High-Rise Fire Sprinkler Bill

Older high-rise buildings would have twelve years to add automatic fire sprinklers under a bill heard by the House Public Safety committee on February 13. [HF3003 – Noor](#) (Minneapolis) would require existing buildings, in which at least one story used for human occupancy is 75 feet or more above the lowest level of fire department vehicle access, to have an automatic sprinkler system.

Advocates for the bill testified this legislation would retrofit older buildings to newer safety standards. Newly constructed buildings are built with this requirement due to the building code adding sprinkler requirements in the 1970s. Rep. Noor, the bill's chief author, explained how a November 2019 high-rise residential apartment building fire in his Minneapolis legislative district spurred this proposal.

The bill passed the committee and was referred to the House Housing committee. A Senate companion bill has not been introduced. Contact Charlie Vander Aarde at 651-215-4001 or charlie@metrocitiesmn.org with any questions.

House Committee Passes Bill to Extend Pay/Workforce Protections to Bond-Funded Projects

A bill, HF3056 – Lee (Minneapolis), heard in the House Government Operations on February 13, would extend the state Department of Human Rights' current Workforce Goals and Equal Pay protections to general obligation (GO) bond-funded projects. The [bill as amended](#) was passed out of committee and referred to the House Capital Investment committee.

The department testified in favor of the bill and explained how it works with contractors on issuing workforce and equal pay certificates as well as what funding levels trigger the certificates.

- Workforce Certificate (Minn. Stat. 363A.36): Apply to projects over \$100,000 and with 40+ employees. A workforce certificate says a contractor will make their best faith effort to hiring people of color, people with disabilities, and women. MDHR currently administers roughly 3,900 Workforce Certificates.

- Equal Pay Certificate (Minn. Stat. 363A.44): Apply to projects over \$500,000 and with 40+ employees. An Equal Pay Certificate ensures women receive equal pay for equal work and comparable compensation. MDHR currently administers roughly 1,350 Equal Pay Certificates.

While state contracts currently use the goals, GO bond-funded local projects are not. Under the bill, city, county, state agency, or political subdivision would confirm the Workforce Certificate and/or Equal Pay Certificate are included in a contractor's final bid materials. Once a city, county, state agency, or political subdivision selects a contractor, the governmental unit would send a copy of the award/start date notice to the Department of Human Rights, so the Department would be aware of which contractor will be working on the respective project.

Once a project starts, the Department is responsible for compliance monitoring and explained that when needed, it would work with the contractor to provide information, resources, and tools to create a more equitable and inclusive workforce. A Senate companion bill has not been introduced. Contact Charlie Vander Aarde at 651-215-4001 or charlie@metrocitiesmn.org with any questions.

State Revenues Dip in January

The monthly state revenues report issued by the Office of MN Management and Budget showed that net general fund revenues for January were 9%, or \$228 million, less than forecast. Net receipts from individual income, corporate, and other taxes were below what was forecast, while net sales tax receipts were higher than forecasted. For FY 2020, receipts are \$76 million, or 0.6%, less than forecast. MMB notes that results are preliminary. The next complete budget and revenues forecast will be released on February 28.

Save the Date for the Metro Cities Annual Meeting!

Mark your calendars and save the date for the Metro Cities Annual Meeting! This year's event will be held on **Thursday, April 16** and will again be held at the Como Park Zoo and Conservatory in the Bullard Rainforest Auditorium. The evening will start with a social hour, followed by guest speaker Rick King, Chair of the Metropolitan Airports Commission. The evening will wrap up with a brief business meeting to elect members and officers to the Board of Directors.

All member city staff and elected officials are welcome and encouraged to attend! More information and details will follow.

Questions or wish to RSVP? Contact Kimberly at 651-215-4000 or kimberly@metrocitiesmn.org.

WEBINAR: Local Brownfield Funding Resources

The Metropolitan Council is hosting a webinar next Tuesday to share information on local public grants that help pay the cost of cleaning up contaminated sites often known as brownfields. Brownfield properties often are close to a high-quality workforce, good transportation, and transit. In the Twin Cities metro area, there are multiple sources of funding to remediate contaminated sites. Hear from panelists representing:

- Hennepin County
- Ramsey County
- Metropolitan Council
- Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)

Learn about how to apply for funding to clean up:

- Petroleum contamination
- Soil contamination
- Soil vapor contamination
- Groundwater contamination
- Asbestos and hazardous materials

Eligibility for Funding

Cities, counties, EDAs, HRAs, and port authorities are eligible. (Private organizations redeveloping real estate sites held back by the costs of dealing with contamination are encouraged to work with applicants to apply.)

Webinar Details

Pre-registration is not required.

Tuesday, February 18, 2020

10:00 – 11:30 am

Audio connection: 619-377-3319 or 888-742-5095

Meeting number/room ID: 596 326 553

Meeting password: Brownfield

Conference code: 176 233 5404

Contact Marcus Martin, marcus.martin@metc.state.mn.us or 651-602-1054 with questions. Click [here](#) for more information.

Metro Cities Board of Directors Openings

Due to term completions, there will be an opening on the Metro Cities Board for a term starting on July 1, 2020, and the organization is seeking interested candidates.

The Metro Cities Board of Directors is comprised of 19 city officials, elected and appointed, from throughout the region. The Board is responsible for overseeing Metro Cities' budget, strategic plan and legislative priorities. It also makes appointments to the Metropolitan Council Transportation Advisory Board (TAB), Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to the TAB, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Board. The Board generally meets the third Thursday of each month, with October meetings held on the second Thursday. Members are elected at the Metro Cities Annual Meeting and serve two, two-year terms. Metro Cities' bylaws require that the slate of Board members be balanced regarding geography and city population.

Candidates are asked to provide a (1) cover letter, (2) résumé and (3) [completed application form](#). Candidates may also provide letters of reference. A Nominating Committee will meet in March to make recommendations on candidates for election by the membership in April.

Applications can be submitted to Kimberly Ciarrocchi at kimberly@metrocitysmn.org. The deadline for application is **Thursday, February 27**. If you would like additional information, please contact Patricia Nauman at 651-215-4002 or patricia@metrocitysmn.org.

EVENT: Local Governments Roundtable on 2020 Census

The next Local Governments Roundtable on 2020 Census is **Friday, March 6**, at the MMCD / Metro Counties Building. The meeting includes local government professionals and officials who are promoting participation in the 2020 Census and Complete Count activities. You are welcome to share this invitation within your office or city hall.

Meeting details are at <http://localgov2020census.eventbrite.com>.

The meeting organizers are managers and analysts from Minneapolis, St Paul, Metropolitan Council, Hennepin and Ramsey Counties. Todd Graham, metro demographer (todd.graham@metc.state.mn.us) will chair the March 6 meeting; contact him with any questions concerning agenda.

Bills of Note

[HF 1372](#), Long/[SF 1410](#), Kent: Bill allows voters to join permanent absentee voter list, and absentee ballots required to automatically be sent by municipal clerks to permanent absentee voter list at least 45 days before election.

[HF 2931](#), Layman: Bill authorizes a local sales tax in Grand Rapids to finance the reconstruction and remodeling of the Grand Rapids IRA Civic Center.

[HF 2955](#), O'Neill/[SF 2968](#), Anderson, B.: Bill makes materials purchased for the construction of a fire station in the city of Buffalo exempt from sales tax.

[HF 2956](#), Lueck/[SF 2992](#), Ruud: Bill authorizes a local sales tax in Crosslake to finance the bonding costs for modifications to a bio-solids treatment facility and the expansion of sewer service in the area.

[HF 3019](#), Draskowski/[SF 2981](#), Goggin: Bill proposes an amendment to the Minnesota Constitution, article XIV, to eliminate a population eligibility requirement for allocating municipal state-aid street funds.

[HF 3021](#), Bahr: Bill prohibits government, including cities, from providing inducements to respond to surveys.

[HF 3033](#), Mekeland: Bill would prohibit a political subdivision from banning the use of natural gas in newly constructed buildings.

[HF 3060](#), Lee/[SF 2973](#), Champion: Bill would prohibit local governments from contracting with the federal government for the detention of individuals violating federal immigration law.

[HF 3068](#), Dehn/[SF 2986](#), Rest: Bill allows voters to request that their data be removed from any list provided to a political party following the presidential nomination primary.

[HF 3091](#), Koegel/[SF 3140](#), Newton: Bill establishes requirements for a Metropolitan Council transit service evaluation of regular bus services that connect suburbs to one another.

[HF 3102](#), Moran: Bill allows homestead valuation increases where owners are aged 65 or older and have applied to the county assessor for their valuation freeze.

[HF 3110](#), Torkelson: Bill requires a light rail transit safety assessment for the Metro Transit LRT system.

[HF 3114](#), Quam: Bill establishes a senior citizens' property tax credit with local taxing jurisdictions (apart from school districts) being reimbursed in two equal installments.

[HF 3116](#), Quam: Bill establishes an emergency infrastructure repair and replacement account for loans and grants to local governments for infrastructure damaged in disasters.

[HF 3118](#), Quam: Bill allows cities to create business retention zones where the estimated market value of qualified businesses is reduced, exempting a portion of that property value from the city levy.

[HF 3134](#), Xiong, T./[SF 2955](#), Wiger: Bill authorizes a local sales tax in Oakdale to finance the construction of a new public works facility and an expansion of the police department facility.

[HF 3181](#), Clafin: Bill provides for labeling of certain nonwoven disposable wipes.

[HF 3278](#), Carlson, L./[SF 2987](#), Rest: Bill makes materials purchased for the construction of a police station in the city of Crystal exempt from sales tax.

[SF 2935](#), Rarick: Bill requires road authority to notify owner of a private road prior to conducting work on that road.

[SF 2958](#), Rest: Bill expands the list of reimbursable local expenses for the presidential nomination primary.

[SF 2998](#), Osmeck: Bill requires the Metropolitan Council to post agendas and record meetings to be posted on their website.

Metro Cities News is emailed periodically to Metro Cities member mayors, councilmembers, city managers/administrators, and city staff to keep officials and staff abreast of important metro city issues.

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 (Association of Metropolitan Municipalities)
145 University Ave W, St. Paul, MN 55103-2044
Phone 651-215-4000 · Fax 651-281-1299 · www.MetroCitiesMN.org