

Housing Task Force Report & Recommendations Released

Governor Dayton's Housing Task Force released its final report and recommendations in late August. The [69-page report](#) and [30 recommendations](#) were authored by the 28-member task force.

Task force co-chair Jeanne Crain and Minnesota Housing Assistant Commissioner Ryan Baumtrog presented the recommendations to the Metro Cities Housing and Economic Development policy committee.

Several recommendations have a municipal nexus, including specific actions for cities as well as recommendations for city participation in further discussions on housing goals and how to measure housing activity and progress toward meeting the task force's goals. Metro Cities and the League of Minnesota Cities responded to the task force discussions during the process, replying to topics impacting cities and providing information on local roles in housing.

The task force, authorized by a December 2017 executive order, held several dozen meetings to discuss a full range of housing issues and hear from community members across the state, including the metro region.

The recommendations are organized under 6 goals: Commit to homes as a priority; Preserve the homes we have; Build more homes; Increase home stability; Link homes and services; and Support and strengthen home ownership.

Specific goals that may impact cities include: create a permanent, dedicated funding source for affordable homes; launch a public-private partnership to forecast demand, set goals and measure progress; expand home and rental rehabilitation programs; utilize targeted support from local governments to keep rental units affordable (such as the 4d property tax program); share best practices across communities; expand the range of housing types; enhance and expand rental assistance programs; examine predatory rental practices; incentivize acceptance of rental assistance vouchers.

One recommendation would create a statewide review panel to evaluate regulations related to building standards, land use, and environmental stewardship for impact in housing affordability. This would look at implementation of state and local regulations at the local level. The recommendation is different than a previously discussed (but not recommended) local zoning appeals board that would have usurped local land use decision making authority. Metro Cities opposed this draft recommendation during the task force.

At the report's release press conference, Minnesota Housing Commissioner Mary Tingerthal explained the task force report is a tool that will build a framework for additional housing conversations with policy makers at the state and local levels. Co-chair Crain, a private sector representative on the task force, explained she will continue to advocate for the task force recommendations in the new administration.

Housing advocacy organizations are taking the recommendations and beginning to draft action plans for the 2019 legislative session. One effort, spurred by the dedicated, permanent funding recommendation, is working with housing stakeholders to determine how to raise revenue and

what to fund with any new resources. Metro Cities is responding to these conversations in a manner consistent with its policies.

Metro Cities is also working with the League of Minnesota Cities to respond to the recommendations, including examples of how cities are currently addressing a range of housing needs across the metro area and statewide. Several city-specific examples were cited in the report and the response will include other examples and policies cities are using to meet their residents' housing needs.

Contact Charlie Vander Aarde at 651-215-4001 or charlie@metrocitiesmn.org with any questions.

MnDOT Accepting Final Feedback on Highway Project Selection Process

MnDOT is currently accepting comments on draft changes to its highway project selection process. These changes are the result of a 2016 Office of Legislative Auditor (OLA) report on selection processes and subsequent statutory changes. The audit found that MnDOT's methods for determining projects was sound, but there is insufficient information about the selection process provided to stakeholders or the public. The 2017 law (MN Session Law Chapter 3, Sec. 124) calls on MnDOT to develop, adopt and implement a policy for project evaluation and selection by November of this year. When completed, this process will be applied to the 2020-2023 State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP).

The draft policy and companion technical guide to MnDOT highway construction project selection are available [here](#).

Comments will be accepted through **October 5, 2018** and can be submitted to Philip Schaffner, Project Selection Process Manager, at philip.schaffner@state.mn.us. Metro Cities would also ask that you submit a copy of submitted comments to Metro Cities at steven@metrocitiesmn.org.

Policy Committees Update

Metro Cities' Transportation and General Government Policy Committee and Housing and Economic Development Policy Committee will hold third and final committee meetings next week – on Monday (9:00 am) and Wednesday (1:00 pm) respectively. Members of the Municipal Revenues and Metropolitan Agencies Committees will each be asked for feedback on one outstanding policy for each committee. The Transportation and General Government Committee will hear from Judd Schetnan on the Metropolitan Council's transit budget deficit.

Once policies are finalized through the committee process, they will be forwarded as recommended to the Metro Cities Board of Directors. The Board will consider and adopt the policies at their October 11th meeting.

Metro Cities would like to thank the chairs and members of all four policy committees for their hard work, time and engagement with other metro city officials in the development of Metro Cities' legislative policies.

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