



## **Legislative Session Begins on Tuesday**

The 2020 legislative session begins at noon on Tuesday, February 11. Metro Cities will provide a legislative preview in a separate newsletter on Monday, February 10.

## **Senate Committee on Home Ownership Affordability and Availability**

The Senate Select Committee on Home Ownership and Affordability met this week to review several single-family housing topics and to hear about barriers to homeownership. Metro Cities and League of MN Cities (LMC) staff provided testimony at the hearing.

Metro Cities staff provided information on city roles in infrastructure, land use, planning, packaging of financial incentives and permitting and inspections. Staff explained the nexus of city roles to the health, safety and welfare of residents, and how cities work to address specific local needs and to manage costs. If development costs are not covered, existing taxpayers must cover costs, or development does not occur. Metro Cities' testimony also noted that fees do not always cover city-related expenses.

LMC staff discussed zoning considerations, and the numerous ways cities support the range of residential housing (workforce, senior, affordable, market rate), including programs and funds that serve both development and residents. The League's testimony also pointed out that local tools and initiatives, rather than one-size-fits-all policies, are what give cities the ability to make progress addressing housing needs.

The builders' association released its 2020 session priorities at the hearing. They include opposition to street impact fees, opposition to city stretch codes beyond state building code, support for zoning restrictions, permitting efficiency through technology, job-costed permitting, and housing cost audits. Their testimony also discussed industry trends.

The committee also heard from Habitat for Humanity and the Wings Financial Credit Union whose representatives discussed financial barriers to housing, as well as the Department of Labor and Industry, with testimony regarding potential tweaks to the state's model building code.

Metro Cities will continue to work with the League and other city associations to educate legislators on local roles, advocate for street infrastructure clarity in statute and support local decision-making authority.

The committee will likely next meet toward the end of February.

Questions? Please contact Charlie Vander Aarde, Metro Cities Government Relations Specialist at 651-215-4001 or [Charlie@MetroCitiesMN.org](mailto:Charlie@MetroCitiesMN.org).

## **EVENT: Join Us! Metro Cities Workshop with MN Housing**

Join Metro Cities and the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) on **Friday, February 21** for a workshop with information for cities on accessing funding for housing programs administered by

MN Housing. Attendees will have an opportunity to discuss funding priorities and application scoring criteria with MN Housing officials and to learn about:

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

City staff and elected officials are welcome.

**DATE:** Friday, February 21, 2020

**TIME:** 9:00 - 11:00 am

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

**RSVP:** Please respond by February 14 to [Kimberly@MetroCitiesMN.org](mailto:Kimberly@MetroCitiesMN.org)

In addition, Minnesota Housing is hosting housing resources engagement meetings this month to share information about Minnesota Housing's rental resources and policy priorities at community meetings.

Minnesota Housing is seeking input to help shape priorities for distributing its multifamily rental dollars. The information learned will inform scoring and priorities for the 2022 Qualified Allocation Plan which guides these resources.

**Wednesday, February 12, 1:30 - 2:30 pm**

St. Timothy's Church - Parish Center Meeting Room  
707 89th Avenue NE, Blaine

**Wednesday, February 19, 2:30 - 4:00 pm**

Shakopee Community Center - Shakopee Ice Arena Meeting Room  
1225 Fuller Street South, Shakopee

A community meeting in St. Paul will focus on Minnesota Housing's rental resources and priorities.

**Thursday, February 20, 5:30 - 7:30 pm**

Mino Oski Ain Dah Yung - Community Room  
769 University Avenue West, St. Paul

No registration is needed for the three community meetings. Click [here](#) for more information.

### **MPCA Seeking Public Comment on Water Quality Fee Increases**

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) last week released a set of proposed amendments for public comment relating to rules that govern water quality fees. According to the release, the agency is requesting comments on proposed amendments to rules in Chapters 7002 and 7083 that govern water quality fees. This includes fees for municipal and industrial wastewater permits, municipal wastewater variances, municipal stormwater permits, feedlot permits, and subsurface sewage treatment systems. A concept document with information about the plan to adjust fees is available [here](#).

The MPCA will hold several stakeholder meetings to share information about fee revisions and the intent of this rulemaking. One meeting is scheduled to be held in the metropolitan area on **Monday, February 10, 2020 from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm at the MPCA St. Paul office Lower Level Conference Rooms, 520 Lafayette Road. St. Paul, MN 55102.**

The MPCA stated that their goal in the proposed amendments with respect to increases in each fee area, is to cover 30% of agency costs for administering each program. This includes proposing to increase both municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4) permit fees and municipal wastewater permit fees. MS4 permit fees are currently \$400 every five years. Under the MPCA proposal, MS4 fees will be changed to an annual fee and be based on city population.

The chart below is the proposed fee structure by city population:

City Population	Proposed Annual Fee
1,000 or Less	\$500
1,000 - 3,000	\$1,000
3,001 - 10,000	\$2,000
10,001 - 30,000	\$4,000
30,001 - 50,000	\$6,000
50,001 - 75,000	\$9,000
75,001 - 100,000	\$12,000
Over 100,000	\$18,000

The notice is available at the MPCA [public notice webpage](#). Additional information about this rulemaking, stakeholder meetings and how to submit comments is available on the [Water Quality Fee Rule webpage](#).

The public comment period for this notice closes at 4:30 on Friday, March 13, 2020.

Please contact Steven Huser at 651-215-4003 or email at [steven@metrocitiesmn.org](mailto:steven@metrocitiesmn.org) with any questions.

### **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](mailto:kimberly@metrocitiesmn.org).

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**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.

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