

CANCELLED - Metro Cities 2020 Annual Meeting

Because of COVID-19 and abiding by the guidance of the MN Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, **we have made the difficult but prudent decision to cancel Metro Cities' 2020 Annual Meeting scheduled for April 16** at the Como Park Zoo and Conservatory. This decision is made in the interest of the health and safety of our members and the general public. **Please stay tuned for information on how 2020 Metro Cities Board elections will be conducted.**

Metro Cities has created a page on our website with information and resources on COVID-19. Please visit www.MetroCitiesMN.org/covid-19-resources-for-city-officials and do not hesitate to reach out with questions. This website will be continually updated with new information as it is available, so check the page frequently, as well as Metro Cities Twitter page, [@MetroCitiesMN](https://twitter.com/MetroCitiesMN).

The LMC building is temporarily closed until April 6 (this is subject to change). All Metro Cities staff are fully available and reachable by email and telephone. In the coming days and weeks, staff will be working to gather information from local officials, will be working with the executive, legislative and regional branches of government to convey local government needs and relevant information and will be working with LMC and other local government organizations on these issues. Please continue to communicate with Metro Cities on your local situation and circumstances. Feel free to email me at patricia@metrocitiesmn.org or reach me by telephone at 651-215-4002.

COVID-19 / Housing Stability Legislation

Draft [bill language](#) to deal with current and expanding housing concerns as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic has been drafted. The legislation would place a statewide moratorium on evictions and provide emergency housing assistance. Metro Cities is seeking feedback from local officials on the language and its potential effects on cities. (Metro Cities' staff contact information is below).

The proposal, authored by Rep. Mike Howard, includes:

- Extending the date of the cold-weather rule an extra 30 days, from the current Oct 15-April 15 dates, to Oct 1-April 30.
- Late fees paid by a tenant to a landlord cannot be charged for 60 days after the declaration of a public health emergency.
- No eviction action may be taken for 30 days after the declaration of a public health emergency. The governor may extend it for an additional 60 days. Applies to declarations from the president, governor or local government official.
- Establishes an emergency housing assistance program to prevent homelessness and maintain homeownership. MHFA commissioner may contract with others, including local governments to provide funding, advocacy and support services to process applications for funding.
- Appropriations are left blank, and will be determined as the bill progresses, for the new emergency housing assistance program, the family homeless prevention and assistance program (already in statute), and county emergency assistance grants (already in statute).

Please send comments to Charlie Vander Aarde at charlie@metrocitiesmn.org.

TAB Approves Extension of Regional Solicitation Deadline

The regional Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) has extended the deadline for applications for the 2020 Regional Solicitation from April 16, 2020 4:00 pm to Friday, May 15, 2020. This will move the final project selection decision from November to December of this year. Approximately \$180 million in federal transportation funds will be available for allocation in 2024 and 2025 for this solicitation.

Eligible metro-area applicants include the seven counties, cities and townships, state agencies, American Indian tribal governments, transit providers, and non-profit organizations (TDM applications only).

To learn more about the Regional Solicitation and to apply online, please visit the Regional Solicitation website [here](#).

Projects will be selected from 11 application categories:

1. Strategic Capacity (Roadway Expansion)
2. Roadway Reconstruction/Modernization
3. Roadway Spot Mobility & Safety
4. Traffic Management Technologies (Roadway System Management)
5. Bridge Rehabilitation/Replacement
6. Multiuse Trails and Bicycle Facilities
7. Pedestrian Facilities
8. Safe Routes to School
9. Transit Expansion
10. Transit System Modernization
11. Travel Demand Management (TDM) (2022 and 2023 funds)

Questions about the Regional Solicitation can be directed to Elaine Koutsoukos at 651-602-1717 or elaine.koutsoukos@metc.state.mn.us.

Competitive Grant Opportunity for Public Water Systems

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) has a Competitive Grant opportunity that will be available on **April 1, 2020** to all community and non-transient noncommunity public water systems. This includes municipal water systems. These grants are supported by the Clean Water Fund.

The purpose of this funding is to support activities that address a potential contamination source that presents a high risk to a source of drinking water as determined by MDH. An equal cost share is required for receiving this grant. The minimum amount for any grant is \$500 and the maximum amount is \$10,000.

Deadline for applications is 4:30 pm **April 30, 2020**. To download an application form and to review more detailed information about this grant program, click [here](#).

4d Expansion Study Bill Introduced

A bill to study potential local property tax impacts if the state expanded its 4d low-income rental housing program was introduced on March 16. The bill, [HF 4497 – Her](#), was initiated by Metro Cities and the League of Minnesota Cities.

Under current law, the class rate for 4d property is 0.75 percent on the first-tier value and 0.25 percent of the value exceeding the first-tier amount for each unit. The first-tier limit is adjusted annually by the average statewide change in estimated market value of property classified as class 4a apartments and 4d low-income rental housing properties. The newly calculated first-tier amount as determined by DOR in November 2019 for assessment year 2020 is \$162,000. It was \$100,000 in assessment year 2014.

Metro Cities supports the current 4d program. Before expanding the program, Metro Cities policies support an evaluation of the program to determine how program changes could affect renters, landlords and property taxpayers.

Proposed legislation, [SF 2571 - Senjem](#) / [HF 2424 - Howard](#), would eliminate the 0.75 percent first-tier tax rate and set the class rate for all low-income rental properties qualifying as Class 4d properties at 0.25 percent. This expansion would occur on the state program and not require or allow any local approval.

The study in HF 4497 builds off language in HF 2348-Loeffler from 2019. It requires the Department of Revenue and Minnesota Housing to produce a report on the 4d property tax classification, to determine the impact on local property taxpayers and local governments.

There are several goals of the study. First, it would determine baselines for properties classified as 4d (number of 4d units, number of units not classified as 4d, the property tax paid in 2020, the 2020 property tax reduction due to 4d, the total 4d units in each of the last 10 years).

Second, it would determine impact on local property taxes if the proposed expansion were to go into effect (percent change in local net tax capacity, number of 4d units in a TIF district and impact on increment generation, property tax shift to lower income single family 1a homeowners, the total number of units whose value would qualify in the 0.25% tier since 2018, and the impact on property tax refunds).

Metro Cities and the League convened a group of local officials to identify possible impacts and areas of concern, which helped with bill language. Thank you to all city officials who contributed feedback to guide the response. Please contact Charlie Vander Aarde at 651-366-7564 or charlie@metrocitiesmn.org with any questions.

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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