

Metro Cities Board of Directors Updates

Metro Cities' welcomes Myron Bailey, Mayor, City of Cottage Grove, as its President and Lisa Laliberte, Councilmember, City of Roseville, as its Vice President, effective July 1st. Metro Cities would also like to welcome Jeffrey Dahl, City Manager for the City of Wayzata, as a new member to the Board of Directors.

Thank you to Mary Gaasch, Mayor for the city of Lauderdale, as she completes her term on the Metro Cities Board of Directors. Mayor Gaasch served as President of the Board of Directors from 2018-19. Thank you, Mary, for your service and commitment to Metro Cities!

LMC Hosts CARES Act Webinar

The League of Minnesota Cities hosted a webinar for city officials on Wednesday, following the announcement from Governor Walz that [\\$841.4 million in Federal CARES Act funds will be distributed to local governments](#). Click [HERE](#) for a recording of the webinar and a link to the presentation slides.

After opening remarks from LMC's Intergovernmental Relations Director Gary Carlson, Amy Jorgenson from the Office of Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) presented information on the agency's processes for distributing funds. More specifically, Jorgenson's presentation covered the following:

- The creation of a temporary MMB COVID-19 Response Accountability Office. The website is in the process of being built --check [HERE](#) for updates on it.
- An overview of the CARES Act and the \$150 billion Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF), where the money provided to Minnesota's cities (via the state) originates.
- Criteria for qualifying costs. Expenditures must be COVID-19-related, unaccounted for in the most recently approved budget (as of March 27) and incurred between March 1, 2020 and November 15, 2020. See the slides for a more detailed breakdown of eligible uses.
- Ineligible uses of CRF (includes lost revenues).
- Considerations for using CRF for local matches required for FEMA assistance, workers' compensation costs, and in supporting community health boards.

Ms. Jorgenson walked through the distribution methodology and explained how cities can certify expenses for the funds. Reporting and documentation are key considerations for local governments. Expenses should be documented. Jorgenson also highlighted the [Federal Guidance](#) and [FAQs](#) published by the U.S. Dept. of the Treasury. These documents are updated periodically. The most recent versions are always linked to the [Metro Cities COVID-19 Resources Page](#). See the webinar [recording](#) for the Q&A, many of which point back to the Federal Guidance and stress the importance of thinking through and documenting the rationale for spending decisions.

The Department of Revenue (DOR) is encouraging city officials to direct questions on eligible expenses or processes through your local government organizations, including Metro Cities. Please direct any questions to Patricia Nauman at 651-215-4002 or <mailto:patricia@metrocitiesmn.org>. Metro Cities will also continue provide city officials with updated information as it is available.

MnDOT Accepting Highway Freight Program Applications

MnDOT has recently announced that it is accepting applications for the MN Highway Freight Program. The Minnesota Highway Freight Program is a grant program designed to improve safety, mobility, and meet the needs of the state's freight transportation system on a local level. Eligible entities include cities, counties, ports, waterways, railroads and airports can apply for funding for highway transportation and intermodal projects that benefit freight movement throughout the state. These funds come from the federal National Highway Freight Program to provide states the support to make freight movement improvements.

Applications are being accepted for fiscal years 2023-25. An informational session is scheduled for July 30th. Applications will be accepted through September 28th, and projects will be selected October 10th. For more information and to apply, click [here](#).

Senate Committees Hold Joint Hearing on Recent Unrest

The Senate Transportation and Judiciary and Public Safety Committees held a joint informational hearing on the recent unrest in Minneapolis, Saint Paul and other cities following the killing of George Floyd. Senate Transportation Committee Chair Scott Newman stated that the goal of the hearings is to examine the events and decisions made during the unrest. The committees will examine events from May 26th to June 10th and seek to find facts. The topic of the first meeting was specific to the damage and destruction of businesses. The committees heard testimony from business owners who experienced damage to or destruction of their businesses. Chair Newman said that five or six meetings are anticipated. He also stated that it is important examine the facts before the Legislature considers bills to fund rebuilding parts of Minneapolis and St. Paul. The hearings will include videos, testimony and submitted written testimony. DFL members of the committee expressed concern that Senators whose districts were most impacted by the unrest are not members of these committees. The next meeting has not yet been scheduled.

House Public Safety Committee Police Accountability Hearing

The House Public Safety and Criminal Justice Reform Finance and Policy Division convened for an informational hearing Wednesday afternoon related to a portion of the broader police accountability package proposed during last month's special session. House Research staff gave a walkthrough of provisions; click [HERE](#) to view a comparison document. The committee heard testimony from four testifiers. POST Board Chair Kelly McCarthy spoke to the licensing reform provisions and urged members to make the necessary changes that would restore Minnesotans' faith in law enforcement. Mary Moriarty, Hennepin County's Chief Public Defender offered testimony in support of reforming the state's language on use of force. St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter spoke to the committee on the need to develop a new framework for public safety. He spoke about funding needs for schools, housing, mental health, and violence prevention and more as part of a framework. The final testifier was University of Minnesota Professor Joe Soss, who presented research to contextualize the civil unrest following the killing of George Floyd. A townhall on police accountability was also held in Maple Grove Wednesday. Members of the committee received feedback from community members and explained how the House proposals on public safety reform could begin to address concerns related to law enforcement accountability.

Regional Economic Framework Priorities and Timeline Released

The Metropolitan Council continues to develop its draft Regional Economic Framework (REF) that will be used to accompany local applications for \$1.5 billion in economic recovery funds authorized through the federal CARES Act to help communities recover from the COVID-19 economic crisis.

The Metropolitan Council added an additional partner in its efforts to draft the framework. The Center for Economic Inclusion, along with Greater MSP, will serve as the Council's partners in working the U.S. Economic Development Association (EDA) in the U.S. Department of Commerce. The updates were presented at the July 1 [committee of the whole meeting](#).

A focus on inclusive economic growth was a key part of the presentation by all three partners. While not a focus of the EDA, the regional partners are making racial inclusion, economic justice, and racial equity a core part of the region's nine strategic priorities. The EDA's funding priorities are recovery and resilience, critical infrastructure, workforce development and manufacturing, exports and foreign direct investment, and opportunity zones.

Those strategic priorities include job growth, startups and innovation, talent migration, racial inclusion, skills and workforce, regional brand and image, housing affordability, transportation and mobility, and new climate economy. The last three priorities have a nexus with existing Council authorities and activities, Council staff explained.

The EDA requires an assessment of regional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). Each strategic priority includes a description of how it addresses specific issues identified in the SWOT, a set of actions that will be undertaken over the next five years, key implementation partners plus examples of work already in progress, and a set of implementation measures. The strategic direction and action plan are [outlined in this document](#).

Timeline

July 9: The draft REF will be distributed for public review.

July 15: The Metropolitan Council will review and discuss the draft document.

August 12: The Metropolitan Council will adopt the REF.

City Eligibility

Cities are eligible applicants for the funds. Applications must explicitly reference how a proposed project seeking federal EDA funding supports actions and strategies identified in the Framework. For CARES Act funding, applicants must also indicate how the proposed project directly responds to recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

For more information about the Regional Economic Framework, or if your city is considering applying to the EDA for funding, contact Amanda Taylor at GREATER MSP (amanda.taylor@greatermmsp.org) or Michael Larson at the Metropolitan Council (Michael.Larson@metc.state.mn.us), or Andrea Ferstan at the Center for Economic Inclusion (aferstan@centerforeconomicinclusion.org).

Metro Cities' Policy Committees

Metro Cities is preparing for its 2020 policy development process that will begin in just a few weeks. If you haven't yet signed up for a committee, and are interested in participating, see below for information. Your participation is encouraged! All meetings will be conducted remotely. Four policy committees will meet in July, August and September; schedules for

each are below. **To sign up, click [here](#).** (Please note: Due to site maintenance the registration form will be unavailable from 8am – 8pm on July 3rd.)

If you have specific topics of interest to suggest, please feel free to email:
jennifer@metrocitiesmn.org

Remember:

- Committees will meet either Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday from 9:00-11:30 am or from 1:00-3:30. Committees and dates are listed below and on our [website](#). Additional information, including remote meeting processes and access, will be posted on these pages.
- Please be sure to sign up for the committee(s) you wish to attend. This will help us keep our rosters current and accurate.
- Again, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, meetings will be conducted virtually.

We look forward to seeing you this summer! More information to follow.

[Transportation & General Government](#)

Mondays: July 20, August 17, September 21 / 9-11:30a.m.

*Chair: **Jason Gadd**, Mayor, Hopkins*

[Municipal Revenues](#)

Tuesdays: July 21, August 18, September 22 / 9-11:30a.m.

*Chair: **Patrick Trudgeon**, City Manager, Roseville*

[Metropolitan Agencies](#)

Wednesdays: July 22, August 19, September 23 / 9-11:30a.m.

*Chair: **Gary Hansen**, Councilmember, Eagan*

[Housing & Economic Development](#)

Wednesdays: July 22, August 19, September 23 / 1-3:30p.m.

*Chair: **Bryan Hartman**, HRA Program Manager, Bloomington*

State COVID-19 Testing Capacity Goal Met

During a briefing Monday, Governor Walz announced that the state has reached its goal for increasing testing capacity. In April, state officials realized that a lag in federal resources in testing meant the state would need to invest in an independent testing apparatus to measure the spread of COVID-19. The goal was to increase capacity so that 10,000 people could be tested on any given day. The U of M, the Mayo Clinic, and other health systems joined the state in this effort. During his remarks on Monday, Governor Walz announced that over 600,000 Minnesotans have been tested in total and the state can now test 20,000 individuals per day.

The Governor talked about how testing fits into the broader strategy to combat the virus. With higher testing capabilities the state can more thoroughly test long-term care facilities. More testing also aids public health officials in doing contact tracing. Both the Governor and MN Department of Health Commissioner Jan Malcolm reiterated guidance on maintaining social distancing and wearing masks.

See the state's [COVID-19 web page](#) for the latest specific health data.

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