



CRF Report Reminder

The next Local Government Expenditure Report on the use of Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) is due to MMB today, October 9th. Any questions should be directed to CRAOffice.mmb@state.mn.us

Please note that reports are cumulative and new expenses should be added to previously submitted reports, with the name of the file updated. Descriptions should be included under each category for which expenses are submitted. SWIFT ID and DUNS numbers also need to be included. The report form can be found at: <https://mn.gov/mmb/covid-19-response-accountability-office/local-governments/>

MMB is planning to issue a report of local government CRF spending in late October and has asked local government organizations to remind cities of the need to submit reports. The reports will be made public, and MMB will note those local government entities that did not submit a report. MMB also plans to issue direct reminders to local governments on the need to submit reports of expenses.

Metro Cities also continues to help field questions from city officials on expenses. Any questions should be directed to Patricia Nauman at 651-215-4002 or patricia@metrocitiesmn.org

Special Session Scheduled for October 12

Governor Walz has called a special session, the fifth this year, for next Monday, October 12th. The Governor must call the Legislature into session if an emergency order is extended.

Discussions have been underway recently on a possible capital investment bill, but it is not clear whether there is or will be agreement by the caucuses. Metro Cities has continued to advocate support for capital funding for inflow and infiltration assistance to metropolitan cities, and funding for local transportation related programs, as well as funding to mitigate emerald ash borer.

Additional session updates will be provided next week through our electronic newsletter and twitter @MetroCitiesMN

Metro Cities Board of Directors Approves 2021 Legislative Policies

The Metro Cities Board of Directors approved the association's 2021 legislative policies at its meeting on Thursday evening. Policies, which are organized under four sections – Transportation and General Government, Municipal Revenues, Metropolitan Agencies, and Housing and Economic Development – were recommended by four policy committees over the summer and fall. The draft policies will be posted online next week for review and adopted by the full membership at the policy adoption meeting on Thursday, November 19, 2020. Stay tuned for additional information soon!

Livable Communities Program Reviewed; Four Metro Projects Recommended to Receive LCDA-TOD Awards

Metro Cities has recently reconvened its Livable Communities work group to review ideas from Metropolitan Council LCA staff on the programs. The group is reviewing ideas spurred by a recent internal Met Council review of the Livable Communities program. Metro Cities' LCA work group last met in 2018 and issued general recommendations, including ensuring participating cities have access to the LCA awards and that program criteria recognize the full scope of the program's statutory authority. The work group is reviewing how the Council scores applications using innovation and demonstration metrics, as well as what parts of a project can be funded. The group held its first meeting this past week and will reconvene later this month.

Four projects will receive Livable Communities grants to support transit-oriented development projects, based on [recommendations](#) made by the Metropolitan Council's Community Development Committee on October 5.

The Minneapolis American Indian Center, the Agra building in Minneapolis, Union Park Flats in St. Louis Park, and a new apartment building in St. Paul are recommended to share \$4.5 million in LCDA-TOD funds. Eight applications were considered by the Council and the Livable Communities Advisory Committee. The available funds were oversubscribed by \$5.85 million.

The Metropolitan Council's LCDA-TOD grants promote moderate to high density development projects located within walking distance of a major transit stop that typically include a mix of uses such as housing, jobs, restaurants, shops, and entertainment. The full Metropolitan Council is scheduled to vote on the awards October 14.

State Increases Restaurant Table Size to 10 Diners

The Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) announced a change to restaurant guidance that will allow more people to dine together. DEED announced the change on October 8, after working with hospitality officials. The change allows up to ten people to sit together at a restaurant. Previously the capacity was four people, or six in a family. The change also eliminated the family/non-family distinction. Seating limits in a bar area remains at four people. On a call this week, DEED Commissioner Steve Grove explained people will continue to be required to be seated in the bar area.

Please see Metro Cities' COVID-19 resources page for additional information and resources.

Housing Assistance Funds Remain Available

Minnesotans who are experiencing trouble paying their housing bills due to the COVID-19 pandemic are encouraged to access the state's housing assistance funds, authorized earlier this summer. Rent and mortgage assistance are available, as well as lot rent, homeowner association dues and other eligible uses.

The first step to access the funds is for residents to apply.

- CALL 211 or toll free at 1.800.543.7709 or 651.291.0211 (from cell phones)
- ONLINE at www.211unitedway.org

- TEXT “MNRENT” or “MNHOME” to 898-211

If someone is eligible for State Funds, their application will be directed to the local agency they will be working with. Contact Charlie Vander Aarde with any questions, at charlie@metrocitiesmn.org.

TAC Begins Regional Solicitation Scoring Discussion

The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) to the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) received an update from Metropolitan Council staff on the completed Regional Solicitation project scoring. The committee was also presented with possible funding scenarios to distribute the funds. The five scenarios include using a historical process based on the midpoint of modal funding ranges, a focus on funding bigger projects for each modal funding category, a focus on funding a larger number of lower cost projects, a focus on funding less roadway expansion projects, and a focus on more bicycle and pedestrian projects by moving roughly \$10 million from roadways to bicycle and pedestrian projects. Members asked staff questions about the funding scenarios, discussed the impacts of the funding scenarios on project selection outcomes and made recommendations for additional funding scenarios. Members expressed support for looking at a roadway expansion-heavy funding scenario in addition to the five presented to the committee. The current Regional Solicitation assumes the availability of \$198 million in federal funds, with \$5 million of these funds to be set aside for a future unique project funding category, which will be selected in the next Regional Solicitation. The remaining \$193 million is assumed to be available for the current solicitation. There are 132 project applicants requesting \$462 million. There are 57 roadway projects requesting \$300 million, 32 transit and traffic demand management projects requesting \$65 million and 52 bicycle pedestrian projects requesting \$92 million. To view the slide presentation presented to the TAC, click [here](#). To view the business item, which includes funding scenarios and project scoring breakdowns, click [here](#).

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