

### **Governor's Blue Ribbon Committee Holds Fourth Meeting**

The Governor's Blue Ribbon Committee on the Metropolitan Council held its fourth meeting this week. The committee heard information from the Council's Deputy General Counsel Dave Theisen on the Council's compliance with federal law relating to the Council's status as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Mr. Theisen shared that the Council is in compliance due to a statutory grandfather clause. The Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) and USDOT have concurred that the Council is the legal MPO. The committee discussed that any change to state laws that would stagger the terms of the Council would have no change on its compliance with federal law.

The committee also heard from Nick Thompson, Director of Metropolitan Transportation Services, who presented information on para-transit operations in rural MN compared to services provided in the metropolitan area. The committee also discussed members' current positions on the questions the Governor has tasked them with considering. The majority of members expressed that they had not found any compelling argument that the Council is not in compliance with federal MPO law. Many also expressed initial support for recommending that members serve staggered terms as well as changes to the nominating committee process. Many also expressed concern with changing the Council to an elected model, either directly or by appointment of local officials. This was an initial discussion and no official position by the committee was approved.

### **November 19 Policy Adoption Meeting is Next Week!**

Metro Cities' policy adoption meeting will be held remotely on **Thursday, November 19th at 4:00 p.m.** at which time 2021 legislative policies will be adopted by the membership. Draft policies are available for review [here](#). Protocols for policy adoption were emailed to city managers and administrators and additional details will be provided in advance of the meeting. Cities are asked to select delegates for voting purposes and attendance is open to all member city officials and staff. Your presence is important and appreciated.

Metro Cities has invited Briana Bierschbach from the Star Tribune and Brian Bakst from Minnesota Public Radio (MPR) on the 19th to share their insights on the elections and upcoming legislative session. Please RSVP to [jennifer@metrocitiesmn.org](mailto:jennifer@metrocitiesmn.org) or 651-215-4000. We look forward to seeing you!

### **Metropolitan Council Transportation Committee Adopts Update to the TPP**

The Metropolitan Council Transportation Committee adopted an update to the Transportation Policy Plan (TPP). The TPP plays a central role in the regional transportation planning process and is updated every four years. The TPP is being updated to better conform with federal planning deadlines. The draft includes updates to incorporate the results of planning and corridor studies, changes to major projects, updated data and the inclusion of studies to measure the impacts of COVID-19 on the transportation system. The full council will now consider final adoption of the TPP.

To view the business item, click [here](#). To view the staff presentation, click [here](#).

## **Governor's Powers Remain After November 12 Special Session**

The Senate adjourned the sixth special session of 2020 without debate or voting on a resolution to end the Governor's emergency order. The Senate did vote in a new President of the Senate on Thursday. By a 63-4 vote, Senator David Tomassoni-Chisholm was elected the new President of the Senate and will preside over the chamber until the 2021 Legislative Session is convened.

The House voted quickly on a motion to end the Governor's emergency order; that vote failed as it has in previous special sessions this year. Most of the floor debate was on [SSHF19](#) which was authored by Rep. Barb Haley from Red Wing. This bill would have allowed the governor the authority to continue to issue executive orders under M.S. 12.31, but give the Legislature the option to end or modify them after 30 days. The bill did not pass.

## **Executive Order Tightens Social Settings**

Governor Tim Walz issued new restrictions on social settings via a November 10 order. Walz explained his action is in response to exponential growth of positive testing results, both in raw number of COVID cases and in positive testing percentages.

[Executive Order 20-96](#) restricts social gatherings, celebrations, and the hours and operations of bars, restaurants, and venues. DEED produced a webinar on November 12 that detailed the data that went into Walz's decision. Agency officials explained younger adults have a disproportionate share of new cases. Additionally, 71 percent of new cases came from social settings (June to November). These include private social gatherings; weddings, funerals, private parties, and other group settings; and late nights at bars and restaurants.

The new restrictions include a 10-person limit for indoor and outdoor gatherings with a three-household limit, including the host. For receptions and similar events, a 50-person limit will be in effect November 27 and reduced to a 25-person limit on December 11. There is no change to the ceremony guidance (weddings, funerals), rather this update is to the connected gathering.

Bars and restaurants will have either a 50 percent capacity limit, or 150 people total, whichever is lower, effective November 13 at 10 pm. Customers must have exited the restaurant by 10 pm, though takeout service is allowed after 10 pm.

Walz is seeking to use \$10 million in federal funds to assist impacted small businesses. Businesses which applied for a share of the \$60 million small business grant program lottery earlier this fall and are on the waitlist are eligible. More information will be forthcoming on this funding, if it is approved by the Minnesota Legislative Advisory Commission. It is expected to assist 1,000 businesses.

Contact Charlie Vander Aarde at 651-215-4001 or [charlie@metrocitiesmn.org](mailto:charlie@metrocitiesmn.org) with any questions.

## **Governor Rescinds Local Government Reporting Requirements Suspension**

Governor Tim Walz rescinded Executive Order 20-22 which authorized the State Auditor to temporarily suspend reporting requirements during the COVID-19 Peacetime Emergency. The action was taken under [EO 20-98](#) on November 12. The original order provided cities flexibility in the timing of required reporting deadlines and mandates in various state statutes.

## Share Your City's Housing Stories and Successes

Does your city have a success story to share with the region and state lawmakers? The Prosperity's Front Door group, created to track impacts and trends after the conclusion of Governor Dayton's Housing Task Force in 2018, is compiling city stories in advance of the release of its 2021 housing scorecard.

Cities are encouraged to share impactful stories on housing development, preservation, rehabilitation and supportive services that assist their residents.

City staff may submit their examples [to this form](#). You may include your own headline, written content, photos, video, a city logo and project website. Prosperity's Front Door is also interested in connecting city stories with the task force's six goals: commit to homes as a priority, preserve existing homes, build more homes, increase home stability, link homes and services, and support and strengthen homeownership.

Submission will be [included on this page](#), which already include several stories from the metro region. Submissions should be made by mid-December at the latest to ensure they are added to the 2021 Housing Scorecard. Contact Charlie Vander Aarde at 651-215-4001 or [charlie@metrocitiesmn.org](mailto: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.

If you'd like to sign up to receive Metro Cities News, please email [newsletter@metrocitiesmn.org](mailto: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](http://www.MetroCitiesMN.org)