

## **Metro Cities' Legislative Session Preview—Please Join Us!**

Metro Cities will host a virtual 2021 legislative session preview on January 7, 2021 at 4:00 pm with Metro Cities' government affairs consultants and government relations team. Topics covered will include highlights from the recent elections, key anticipated issues for the 2021 legislative session, Metro Cities' legislative priorities, and tips for effective communication and advocacy at the Capitol. Please plan to join us! RSVP to Jennifer Dorn at [Jennifer@metrocitiesmn.org](mailto:Jennifer@metrocitiesmn.org)

## **Blue Ribbon Committee on Metropolitan Council Releases Findings**

A Blue Ribbon Committee created by Governor Walz in August 2020 and that met throughout the fall, has issued a report of its findings and recommendations. The report can be viewed [HERE](#). The Committee was tasked with studying the structure and governance of the Council, specifically its governance, MPO function, and the delivery of transit service.

Metro Cities staff closely monitored the work of the committee and provided testimony to the committee on its applicable legislative policies in October. Metro Cities staff is reviewing the report and will provide additional information and details as they become available. The report's recommendations include:

- Four-year staggered terms for Metropolitan Council members, appointment of members by the governor, an expanded nominating committee and public notice on the appointees recommended for appointment. The report states that members should not be elected, and local officials should not serve on the Council. These recommendations are consistent with Metro Cities' legislative policies on regional governance. A minority report of the committee recommends local officials serving on the Council.
- That the Council and Transportation Advisory Board require a super majority 3/5ths vote (60 percent) on federally required actions, including the Regional Solicitation project selection, Transportation Policy Plan, Transportation Improvement Program, public participation plan, and Unified Planning Work Program. The report also recommends consideration of eliminating the term "Advisory" in the name of the TAB.
- Continued financial support for the regional transit system, shifting the Metro Mobility budget from a base appropriation to a forecasted budget based on demand, and work among the Council, its partners and transit providers to cooperatively seek long term funding solutions. The report also supports an evaluation of transit governance options that support efficiencies and allow for strong local input on transit investments and operations. The report recommends partners develop and adopt agreed-upon transit service outcomes that consider demand, efficiency and subsidy. Metro Cities policies support adequate funding for all transit providers in the metropolitan area and support the ability of providers to meet diverse service needs. Metro Cities' policies oppose policy or funding decisions that constrain transit providers in delivering transit services.
- An efficiency and geographic equity study every five years of the regional transit system.

## Metropolitan Council Committee Recommends Tax Base Revitalization Awards

The Metropolitan Council's Community Development Committee, at its Monday meeting, recommended 14 funding awards from its Livable Communities Tax Base Revitalization Account. The recommended projects go to the full Metropolitan Council on December 23 for review and final approval.

The recommended projects are in Bloomington, Falcon Heights, Hopkins, Minneapolis, Saint Louis Park, and Saint Paul. The awards fully utilize the \$3 million appropriated for the TBRA awards in this cycle of the 2020 Fund Distribution Plan. Staff explained this year's funds were oversubscribed, with more funds requested (23 applications for \$5.9 million) than the Council had available.

The TBRA program provides grants to clean up and redevelop contaminated land and buildings through three separate accounts. The investigation account helps applicants determine cleanup needs while the contamination cleanup account funds remediation expenses. The Seeding Equitable Environmental Development (SEED) account encourages development on strategic sites within and near areas of concentrated poverty that do not have a specific redevelopment project but show potential for job or housing creation.

The list of projects can be [found here](#) and a map of awards and statutory guidance on the funding limits can be [found here](#).

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