

Board of Directors Openings and Annual Meeting

The Metro Cities Board of Directors has openings on the Board for terms beginning July 1. The Board is comprised of 19 elected and appointed officials and must be balanced by population and geography. The Board is responsible for overseeing Metro Cities' operational budget, strategic goals, and legislative priorities. The Board has statutory authority for appointing municipal officials to the regional Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) and TAC. A nominating committee will meet in March to recommend candidates for election by Metro Cities' membership at the annual meeting in April. Interested applicants should submit a (1) resume, (2) cover letter and completed (3) [application form](#). For more information, contact Patricia Nauman, Executive Director at patricia@metrocitiesmn.org. Applications should be sent to Jennifer Dorn at Jennifer@metrocitiesmn.org by March 10th.

This year, the annual meeting will be held as a virtual meeting on Thursday, April 21, 2022 at 4:00 pm. The meeting will begin with guest speaker Distinguished Professor David Schultz who will discuss political trends and upcoming legislative elections. The meeting agenda will include elections to the Metro Cities Board and remarks by President Matt Stemwedel. Please mark your calendars! A quorum of members is required. Log-in/Call-in instructions will be provided in advance of the meeting. Please RSVP to Metro Cities' Office Manager Jennifer Dorn at jennifer@metrocitiesmn.org. We hope you can attend!

February State Budget Forecast

Earlier this week, the Office of MN Management and Budget (MMB) released its February Budget Forecast, which shows that the state budget surplus anticipates a historically large \$9.253 surplus for FY 2022-23. The November forecast previously predicted a \$7.7 billion surplus for the biennium. The new forecast now predicts a \$1.5 billion larger surplus. The forecast also shows a positive structural balance for FY 2024-25.

MMB cautioned that inflation (which is not included in the forecast), geopolitical conflict, supply chain issues and the pandemic add uncertainty to the forecast. The February forecast will define the fiscal parameters for the Legislature and Governor this session. To view the budget documents: <https://mn.gov/mmb/forecast/forecast/>

Zoning Preemption Bill Update

The House Local Government Division reconvened this week to continue the hearing on [HF 3256](#) – Elkins, a local zoning preemption bill. In testimony on Wednesday, city officials and city associations including Metro Cities raised numerous concerns on the bill, and highlighted the importance of local planning, land use and zoning authorities. City testifiers additionally raised several logistical concerns with the proposal, including infrastructure and engineering limits and mandates in the bill.

Metro Cities provided verbal and [written testimony](#) on portions of the bill that are specific to cities in the metropolitan region, including minimum density requirements, land use inconsistencies, and the bill's effectual shift to planning privatization that removes public accountability for planning and regional growth.

Thank you to metropolitan city officials from Minnetonka, Hugo, Plymouth, and Prior Lake who testified on Wednesday, and to the many cities that have adopted local control resolutions and contacted legislators in advance of the hearing.

The House bill did not receive a vote and was laid over. The Senate companion, [SF 3259](#) – Draheim, has not yet been scheduled for a hearing. Contact Charlie Vander Aarde at 651-215-4001 or charlie@metrocitiesmn.org with any questions.

Senate Property Tax Division Reviews 4d Low Income Rental Classification Report

The Department of Revenue presented its [4d Low Income Rental Classification report](#) to the Senate Subcommittee on Property Taxes this week. Metro Cities supported the department's study and report which were authorized during the 2021 special session. The 2021 legislature also reset the first tier back to \$100,000 for the next two years. The impacts of that reset were not included in the study and report.

The report provides legislators with city-specific property tax information on the current 4d classification as well as related impacts (TIF, property tax refunds). Cities with higher amounts of 4d units would see larger property tax shifts. Metro Cities opposes a proposed expansion of the 4d classification due to the property tax shifts and lack of public purpose guardrails in the proposal. Contact Charlie Vander Aarde at 651-215-4001 or charlie@metrocitiesmn.org with any questions.

Audit of Southwest Light Rail Passes House

[HF 3035 – Hornstein](#) passed the House on Thursday. The bill directs the Office of the Legislative Auditor (OLA) to conduct a special review of the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) project following recent announcements that the Metro Green Line Extension project's opening date has been pushed back to 2027 and the total project cost has increased to \$2.75 billion.

An [OLA memo](#) last October explained that because of resource constraints they were not able to conduct a full special review. The memo does include a summary of the dispute between the Metropolitan Council and AECOM Technical Services (ATS), one of the contractors working on the project. HF 3035 would provide the resources and direction for the OLA to carry out an investigation of the SWLRT project's management and in testimony Auditor Randall said their office has begun preliminary work.

Several amendments were offered but not adopted that would require the Metropolitan Council to terminate the Southwest light rail project. Two amendments were added, and as amended the bill requires the Metropolitan Council to immediately update the legislature if costs increase by 5 percent and/or its date of completion is delayed by 6 months or more. The Metropolitan Council is also required to provide the legislature with status updates on the project's progress twice a year. HF 3035 passed with a vote of 129-1. The Senate companion ([SF 2676 – Dibble](#)) was heard and passed by the Finance committee and awaits action on the Senate floor.

Contact Mike Lund at michael@metrocitiesmn.org or 651-215-4003 with any questions.

Senate Hears Rent Control Testimony

The Senate Housing Finance and Policy Committee heard testimony this week on rent control and rent stabilization ballot initiatives authorized by voters in Saint Paul and Minneapolis in November 2021. Saint Paul Mayor Melvin Carter told the committee how his city is proceeding with its mandate, including convening a city-led stakeholder group to make recommendations on the

policy. Staff from the City of Minneapolis highlighted the differences in its city's directive, which did not establish a rent stabilization ordinance, rather authorized the city to explore a policy. Other testifiers were split on the benefits and disadvantages of rent control and stabilization policies. Metro Cities is tracking legislation that would preempt cities from holding elections similar to what were held in Minneapolis and Saint Paul in 2021. Contact Charlie Vander Aarde at 651-215-4001 or charlie@metrocitiesmn.org with any questions.

Metropolitan Council Police Work Group Update

Metropolitan Councilmember Chamblis, Chair of the Police Work Group, presented the work group's recommendations to the Metropolitan Council Committee of the Whole this week. The recommendations can be found in [this report](#). The group has met for six months and was charged with digesting the findings from a Citizens League report on transit safety, developing recommendations to increase safety and security on the transit system, and working to prioritize the discussion of safety at future Council meetings. Click [HERE](#) to view initial findings from the Citizens League's report.

The group's final report includes several recommendations.

- Provide a safe, consistent, quality experience for all on buses, trains, and facilities.
- Communicate and engage with other jurisdictions, including law enforcement agencies, to work together towards timely solutions.
- Continue efforts to pass administrative citations legislation.
- Develop effective communication structure between MTPD and Metropolitan Council so Met Council members are aware of and can act on issues affecting transit safety, security and policing in a timely manner.
- Evaluate policies, practices, and procedures to ensure positive outcomes and reduce negative impacts on communities and stakeholders
- Seek out and address employee transit safety security needs and concerns in a meaningful and timely manner.

One of the next steps for the Metropolitan Council as they look to carry out the identified recommendations includes an inventory of current and planned work to identify gaps and develop action steps. The Council plans to survey existing peer research and establish a methodology for measuring and tracking their progress in implementing an action plan. Throughout the Spring, the Council will organize opportunities for Council Members to engage with police and other employees and by May of this year Metro Transit and the MTPD will bring their draft plan to the Committee of the Whole for discussion. The goal is to begin implementation of that action plan by July 2022.

Contact Mike Lund at michael@metrocitiesmn.org or 651-215-4003 with any questions.

Contamination Cleanup and Investigation and RAP Development Call for Applications

DEED's Brownfields and Redevelopment Unit is accepting applications for grant funding for contaminated site projects through the Contamination Cleanup and Investigation and RAP Development grant program. Approximately \$4 million is available for distribution for the Contamination Cleanup and Investigation grant program.

The Contamination Cleanup and Investigation grant program assists local communities with the cleanup of soil and groundwater contamination at previously developed sites, which are more complex and costly to redevelop than undeveloped parcels. The Contamination Cleanup and Investigation grant program strategically awards grants based on statewide, statutory criteria that make the program an accountable financing tool for redevelopment projects. The program helps

foster state/local collaboration that results in projects that achieve local revitalization goals and are consistent with state economic development strategies.

Additional information, including the application, can be [found here](#). The deadline for the submission of applications is 4:00 p.m. on May 2, 2022.

Bills of Note

[HF 3785](#), Pinto: Bill establishes standards for peace officer physical strength and agility examinations.

[HF 3794](#), Lislegard/[SF 3576](#), Bakk: Bill increases the annual appropriation for local government aid to \$654,398,012.

[HF 3804](#), Petersburg: Bill amends permitted sources of funds for light rail transit lines that are in operation prior to July 1, 2022.

[HF 3821](#), Lillie/[SF 3331](#), Pappas: Bill appropriates \$30 million in bond proceeds for metropolitan regional parks and trails.

[HF 3838](#), Howard/[SF 3302](#), Jasinski: Bill makes various policy and technical changes to the fire state aid and police state aid programs.

[HF 3849](#), Frazier: Bill provides \$2.5 million in grants for body worn cameras and outlines a required policy for their use.

[HF 3858](#), Boldon/[SF 3545](#), Lang: Bill makes changes to the water infrastructure program, provides for technical planning grants, appropriates \$299 million from bond proceeds for clean water, and appropriates \$999,000 in point source implementation grants and \$5 million for innovative technical planning grants from the general fund.

[HF 3880](#), Lillie/[SF 3055](#), Housley: Bill responds to the White Bear Lake court decision and allows the DNR to issue new water appropriations and amendments to existing permits to the cities impacted by the decision. The bill also requires a study and report on the groundwater levels in and around White Bear Lake.

[HF 3922](#), Torkelson: Bill establishes funding requirements for counties where transit guideways are located.

[HF 3931](#), Huot/[SF 3081](#), Newman: Bill allocates revenues from the tax on vehicle repair and replacement parts exclusively to fund roads.

[HF 3983](#), Bernardy: Bill describes best practices for mowing vegetation on the public right-of-way.

[SF 3494](#), Kiffmeyer/[HF 3757](#), Koznick: Bill requires the MnDOT commissioner and Metropolitan Council to request approval to discontinue the Northstar passenger rail line.

[SF 3495](#), Howe/[HF 3150](#), Swedzinski: Bill changes the monthly deposit amount for motor vehicle repair and replacement parts tax revenue from the general fund to the highway user tax distribution fund.

[SF 3515](#), Benson/[HF 3467](#), Koznick: Bill requires the Metropolitan Council to terminate the Northstar commuter rail service.

[SF 3516](#), Benson/[HF 3469](#), Koznick: Bill establishes performance requirements and conditional termination of the Northstar commuter rail line.

[SF 3522](#), Pappas: Bill provides reimbursement grants to local governments for public safety personnel on authorized leave.

[SF 3537](#), Jasinski: Bill establishes a provisional balloting system.

[SF 3591](#), Nelson: Bill allocates the revenue collected via the tax on motor vehicle repair parts to the HUTD fund (76%), the small cities assistance account (12%), and the town road account (12%).

[SF 3614](#), Pratt: Bill modifies the financial assistance amount provided to replacement transit service providers.

[SF 3616](#), Jasinski: Bill increases filing fees for new driver's license applications.

[SF 3633](#), McEwen/[HF 3888](#), Morrison: Bill appropriates \$650,000 to BWSR to develop a plan to ensure that Minnesota has an abundant supply of clean water for the next 50 years.

[SF 3634](#), McEwen/[HF 3160](#), Hausman: Bill appropriates \$26 million in bond proceeds for intercity rail projects.

[SF 3663](#), Koran/[HF 3689](#), Heinrich: Bill requires ID for voting and voter registration.

[SF 3668](#), Eichorn: Bill allocates the revenue collected via the tax on motor vehicle repair parts to the HUTD fund (76%), the small cities assistance account (12%), and the town road account (12%).

[SF 3669](#), Cwodzinski/[HF 3571](#), Kotyza-Witthuhn: Bill prohibits PFAS in juvenile products.

[SF 3686](#), Johnson: Bill allocates the revenue collected via the tax on motor vehicle repair parts to the HUTD fund (76%), the small cities assistance account (12%), and the town road account (12%).

[SF 3723](#), Bigham: Bill creates a central statewide repository for portable recording data used by law enforcement agencies.

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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