

Regional Solicitation Approved by Metropolitan Council

The Metropolitan Council concurred with the Transportation Advisory Board's (TAB) recommendation to fund 77 projects through the 2022 Regional Solicitation process. The slate of projects approved on Wednesday spends \$160 million on roadway projects, \$81 million on transit and TDM projects, and \$66 million on bicycle and pedestrian projects. Click [HERE](#) for more details. The Metropolitan Council also awarded federal Carbon Reduction funds to 14 bicycle/pedestrian projects. Click [HERE](#) for more details. Finally, the Council concurred with the TAB in their decision to fund 38 projects through the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP). The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding has nearly doubled the available funding for this program. Click [HERE](#) for more details. The Regional Solicitation, Carbon Reduction, and Highway Safety Improvement Program projects will now be included in the draft 2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

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

2023 House Committee Assignments

Committee assignments for the MN House of Representatives were released this week, and can be viewed [HERE](#). The MN Senate has not yet released its committee assignments. Metro Cities will provide this information once it is available.

Climate Action Work Plan Adopted by Metropolitan Council

The Metropolitan Council officially adopted their [Climate Action Work Plan](#) while also directing staff to provide annual reports back to the Council on the implementation of the plan.

The plan makes five overarching commitments to:

- Incorporate environmental justice principles in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of climate action work.
- Accelerate emissions reductions from Metropolitan Council operations with the end goal of achieving carbon neutrality.
- Accelerate regional emissions reductions through existing and new partnerships.
- Reduce risks and impacts of climate change hazards to Metropolitan Council facilities and services.
- Support and collaborate with partners to advance regional climate adaptation efforts.

The plan includes strategies and rationales for each of these five commitments. It also contains performance metrics by which the Metropolitan Council will evaluate success in these areas. The plan prioritizes actions that are easier to accomplish that also have a high impact. Click [HERE](#) to view the presentation materials for this business item, and [HERE](#) for information on the State of Minnesota's Climate Action Framework.

Metropolitan Council 2023 Unified Budget Adopted

On Wednesday evening the Metropolitan Council adopted their 2023 Unified Budget and the 2022, Payable 2023 Tax Levies. A preliminary budget was adopted on August 24, 2022. The Unified Budget was adopted for public comment in October. The final adopted budget is consistent with what was released for public comment except for several changes to the operating budget portion. Specifically, the adopted budget reflects decreases in certain state transportation revenues following the latest [Transportation Funds Forecast](#) as well as increases in federal revenues (Metro Transit and Metro Mobility).

The 2023 budget for operation, pass-through programs, and debt service is \$1.309 billion. 39% of this budget is funded via State Revenues, 30% comes from charges for services (wastewater charges and fares), and 18% comes from federal sources. Click [HERE](#) to view the adopted 2023 Unified Budget and [HERE](#) to view the business item from Wednesday's meeting.

IIJA Update: Transportation

A state-wide Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) call was held on Thursday. Representatives from the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), MN Department of Transportation (MnDOT), Carver County, and the City of Duluth spoke about the most recent round of competitive grant opportunities. Speakers shared best practices as local governments prepare for future funding rounds. USDOT said that after a full year of programming, the department is looking at ways they can better engage with and educate state and local partners. Click [HERE](#) for a list of USDOT funding opportunities and [HERE](#) for more DOT resources on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. [RAISE Grant](#) Round 2 was just announced. Applications for RAISE grants are due February 28th, 2023.

MnDOT presented on how their [Office of State Aid](#) partners with local governments as they plan, construct, and maintain the transportation system. State Aid also provides oversight of federal aid projects that are administered by local governments. Finally, State Aid helps local agencies through the federal aid process. MnDOT highlighted the importance of understanding timelines, matching requirements, eligibility, and reporting requirements when pursuing federal discretionary grants.

Carver County spoke about their experience securing INFRA funding for US Highway 212. Public Works Director Lyndon Robjent described the county's process and what they see as key components to a successful application. These key components include defining the project scope, organizing resources, dedicating staff time, hiring a consultant, applying data to strengthen your application, communicating with USDOT and MnDOT, ensuring readability of your application, preparing a detailed project schedule and funding plan, and cultivating support from stakeholders and legislators.

Robjent also talked about what to do if your application is not successful. He urged applicants to be persistent and to ask for debriefs with the USDOT to get feedback on how to improve your application.

The City of Duluth spoke about their experience securing RAISE grant funding for their West Superior Street Active Transportation Corridor project. Staff from Duluth echoed much of what was said by the other presenters and emphasized the usefulness of debriefing with USDOT after an unsuccessful application. Daniel Lightfoot (League of Minnesota Cities) followed the Duluth

presentation by discussing their “[Grant Navigator](#)” pilot project to help cities with \$5,000 grants to bridge the gap in affording the up-front costs associated with these federal grant opportunities.

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