



2023 Policy Committees Next Week

Metro Cities 2023 policy committee meetings will begin next Monday July 24th. If you have not yet signed up and would like to participate, information and schedules are on Metro Cities' [website](#). It is not too late! Participation is open to member city officials and staff. Please be sure to [sign up](#) for the committee(s) in which you would like to participate. We look forward to seeing you!

TAB Discusses Plans for Regional Sales Tax Revenue

The Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) met for its monthly meeting on Wednesday, July 19th and discussed how the TAB might spend its allocation of the recently passed transportation sales tax in the metropolitan area. As a reminder, this year's omnibus transportation bill established a 0.75% sales tax for transportation funding within the seven-county metropolitan area. 83% of the revenue is directed to the Metropolitan Council. 5% of that amount is set aside for active transportation uses which will be spent by the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB). The remainder of the Metropolitan Council's portion will be spent on transit operations, maintenance, and capital expenses. The 17% of the sales tax revenue not directed to the Metropolitan Council goes to the seven metropolitan-area counties in the region via the Transportation Advancement Account.

As part of the law establishing the tax, the TAB is directed to hold a solicitation for active transportation projects with seven specific requirements. Several of these are already met by the existing regional solicitation. Two new application requirements include the project's inclusion in a municipal or regional nonmotorized transportation system plan and the extent to which policies or practices of the political subdivision encourage and promote complete streets planning, design, and construction. A new selection requirement is the need for geographic equity in project benefits, with an emphasis on communities that are historically and currently unrepresented in local or regional planning.

Council staff provided TAB with potential options for how to incorporate these funds into the existing regional solicitation process. The major difference between the two options is whether the money is brought into this year's (2024) solicitation or if the funds should be held for the 2026 solicitation. Some TAB members were curious about the definition of active transportation, nonmotorized, and how these facilities may be used by electric scooters and e-bikes. Some on the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and the TAB questioned rushing these funds into the next solicitation, which itself has had its normal timeline accelerated. The sales tax revenue does not come with the same requirements as the federal funds coming to the region via the regional solicitation and some at Wednesday's meeting suggested a separate process should be developed for the use of the regional sales tax revenue.

No action was taken by the TAB, as this was only an informational item. There was consensus from TAB members to have Metropolitan Council staff go back to the drawing board and begin work with the TAC on developing a new process for the use of these funds. Click [HERE](#) to view this information item and [HERE](#) to view the associated slides.

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

Metropolitan Council Scenario Planning: Water Findings

Metropolitan Council staff presented information on ongoing water planning and research for the Land Use Advisory Council (LUAC) at their meeting on Thursday, July 20. The presentation began with an overview of water systems in the region and Metropolitan Council services and/or planning. Staff also discussed ongoing work related to the Water Resource Policy Plan (WRPP) development as the 2050 Regional Development Guide is carefully pieced together.

Some key themes outlined by staff as a part of the WRPP work include:

- Collaboration: Integrating water planning with land use planning.
- Infrastructure: The expansion of the water system will require more maintenance.
- Climate: Developing with resilience in mind.
- Equity: Learning from previous land use and water decisions that have negatively impacted certain communities.

Staff in surface water, water supply, and wastewater provided specific findings in each of these areas as they relate to scenario planning for the future development of the region. For surface water, the research shows that no one scenario is better for surface water runoff, and it depends on which pollutant you are concerned with. Furthermore, the Council's research shows that changes in climate will drive larger differences in surface water runoff than different land use scenarios.

In the area of water supply, staff told LUAC members that in all growth scenarios, water demand increases, but the type of growth will shape where that demand is felt geographically and that dispersed scenarios rely more on groundwater than surface water (compared to compact scenarios).

For wastewater, the Council's scenario planning research shows that high-dispersed growth could trigger the need for infrastructure expansion, that the type of growth will put pressure on different parts of the system (urban vs rural), and that the high-dispersed scenario could mean more demand for facilities further out in the region that are smaller and would need additional investments as a result. Click [HERE](#) to view the presentation slides which include more detail on these scenario planning findings.

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

MPCA Cumulative Impacts Schedule Announced

The recently passed environment, natural resources, climate, and energy omnibus bill requires the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to develop a process and set of criteria for cumulative impact analyses for facilities seeking air permits in or near environmental justice areas in the seven-county metropolitan area, Duluth, and Rochester. The law defines an environmental justice area as a census tract that is more than 40% nonwhite, more than 35% of households below 200% of the poverty level, and more than 40% over the age of five with limited English proficiency or located within Indian Country. Click [HERE](#) to view a map produced by the MPCA showing environmental justice areas in the metropolitan region.

The MPCA is required to begin its rulemaking process with a published request for comments by July 24, 2023. Between July and October, the agency will be seeking comments on the scope of the cumulative impacts rulemaking. Click [HERE](#) to access the Office of Administrative Hearing's online commenting portal. Content related to community benefit agreements, petition processes, cumulative impact analyses, and other deliverables found in the law will be compiled and put out for comment during the development phase, beginning in October 2023.

In September 2023, the MPCA will hold two in-person informational open houses in the metropolitan area and one virtual open house. These will provide attendees an opportunity to learn about the new cumulative impacts law and the MPCA's efforts to develop rules to implement the law. Click [HERE](#) to view the MPCA's web page on the cumulative impacts law and to see updates on when and where the informational open houses will occur.

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Committee on TNC Drivers Begins Next Week

The Governor's Committee on the Compensation, Wellbeing, and Fair Treatment of Transportation Network Company (TNC) Drivers will have its first meeting on July 25, 2023 at 1PM. The Committee, created by [Executive Order 23-07](#) is tasked with analyzing the working conditions of TNC drivers and is required to provide recommendations for state policy and legislative changes related to driver compensation and fair treatment of drivers. These recommendations are due by January 1, 2024. The committee has 15 members, one of which represents the interests of cities. The committee plans to meet at least once each month. Click [HERE](#) to view the webpage for this committee and [HERE](#) to view the proposed agenda for Tuesday's kickoff meeting.

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

Density Analysis by Community Designation Discussed by LUAC

The Metropolitan Council's Land Use Advisory Committee (LUAC) met on Thursday and heard a [presentation](#) about density analysis by community designation. Council staff shared the proposed 2050 community designations that were shared earlier this year. Council staff is beginning to review the community densities from 2030 and 2040 to help inform 2050 density requirements, particularly for communities in the MUSA. Committee members discussed challenges communities face in meeting the minimum density requirements, some local ideas regarding minimum density requirements and expectations, and trends they observed in the presented information. For more information and to view the proposed 2050 community designations and the density analysis, you can view the informational memo [HERE](#).

If you have any questions, please reach out to Ania McDonnell at ania@metrocitiesmn.org.

MN Housing Draft 2024-2027 Strategic Plan Open for Comment

Minnesota Housing has released their draft 2024-2027 Strategic Plan. This plan is intended to guide how they deploy future resources and how they use strategies and actions to create an inclusive, equitable, and just housing system. This plan is open for public comment through Wednesday, August 9th. You can email your comments on the draft plan to mn.housing@state.mn.us with "Comments on Draft Strategic Plan" as the subject. Click [HERE](#) for a link to the draft 2024-2027 Strategic Plan.

If you have any questions, please contact Ania McDonnell at ania@metrocitiesmn.org.

Applications Open for Variety of Metropolitan Council Housing Programs

Applications are open for the LHIA Affordable Homeownership program, LCA, TOD Development, Pre-Development, and the Policy Development programs at the Metropolitan Council. LCDA,

LCDA-TOD, Pre-Development, and Policy Development applications are submitted through [WebGrants](#), an online grants portal.

The LHIA Affordable Homeownership program provides grants to support affordable homeownership development, including acquisition and rehabilitation, for projects that best meet racial equity and geographic choice priorities. The applications for this program are due on August 9th. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

The LCA grant applications are due on August 14th. These grants are available to local governments that participate in the Local Housing Incentives Account (LHIA) program, as well as counties and development authorities in the metro area. The TOD Development program provides funding for moderate-to higher-density projects located within easy walking distance of a major transit stop which typically includes a mix of uses. Click [HERE](#) for information on the LCA program, and [HERE](#) for information on the TOD program.

Finally, the Pre-Development and Policy Development program applications are due today, July 21st. In the new Policy Development program, cities are eligible to receive up to \$50,000 to develop local policies such as updating your zoning code, introducing an inclusionary zoning policy, or implementing sustainable development requirements. Click [HERE](#) for more information on the Policy Development program.

If you have any questions, please contact Ania McDonnell at ania@metrocitiesmn.org.

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