



Metro Cities Policy Adoption Meeting: Mark Your Calendar!

Metro Cities' legislative policies will receive final adoption at Metro Cities' Policy Adoption Meeting that will be held on Thursday, November 21st at 4:00 p.m. The meeting will be conducted virtually, and will feature Distinguished Professor David Schultz of Hamline University, as our guest speaker. More information and registration details to follow soon!

Safe Routes to School Solicitation

MnDOT State Aid for Local Transportation (SALT) kicked off the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Infrastructure Solicitations on September 23, 2024. There is \$8.5 million available statewide for funding eligible bicycle and pedestrian improvements. Successful projects will mitigate safety hazards related to interacting with vehicular traffic, create safe and comfortable environments for walking and biking, connect communities and key destinations and boost public health. Improvements funded by these grants will require a useful life of at least 10 years and must be ready for construction in 2025 or 2026.

The first month of the solicitation schedule will be a period of submittals for Letters of Intent. Applicants can, but are not required, to submit potential projects to allow State Aid staff to provide feedback on application strength and project readiness. The full application submittal period will begin on Monday, November 4, 2024 and close on **Friday, January 17, 2025**. Project selections will be announced on or before April 30, 2025. The 2024 SRTS Infrastructure solicitation will have a project selection request range from \$50,000 to \$1 million. Click [HERE](#) for more information!

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

Active Transportation Planning Assistance

MnDOT recently opened its Active Transportation Planning Assistance for community applications. This funding opportunity will help communities create an active transportation plan with the help of a hired consultant. Plans will analyze existing conditions, engage the community, identify ways to improve infrastructure, and identify policies and programs to encourage active transportation. Communities of all sizes are eligible to apply. A change to the program means that this year all selected applicants will receive a supplemental technical assistance project in their community. There will be six options to choose from including demonstration infrastructure projects. MnDOT is hosting the second of two informational webinars on October 15. Applications are due at **5PM on Friday, November 22, 2024**. Click [HERE](#) to learn more!

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

Metropolitan Council Discusses Potential LCA Program Changes

On Monday, the Metropolitan Council's Community Development Committee (CDC) had an update from external consults helping to conduct a review of Livable Communities Act (LCA) programs, following discussion earlier this year on concerns in how programs are structured, scored and distributed.

During the meeting, consultants suggested phased changes to the programs based on feedback, targeted outreach, and discussion with Council members. Below are lists of ideas and potential proposed changes discussed on Monday, or see [HERE](#). Council members had varying opinions on suggested changes. Recommendations will receive further discussion at the November 18th CDC meeting. Metro Cities will continue to monitor this work and provide updates.

Suggested changes for the **2025 fund distribution plan** (FDP) include:

- A unified application for LCDA-Development and Transit Oriented Development programs to make it easier for communities to prepare applications.
- Adjust weighting of points to projects strong on one or two of the five possible goals instead of requiring projects to be competitive on all five goals.
- Emphasize in the application process that housing projects are scored based on their contribution to a community's Affordable Housing Need calculation to enable smaller projects in small communities to compete.
- Targeted engagement to cities with projected growth who have not applied the past 5 years or have applied and not been awarded.

Possible changes for the **2026 fund distribution plan** (FDP) include:

- Create a suite of programs tailored to project types and a pool of funds focused on specific issues to simplify the application process.
- Combine LCDA & LCDA-TOD programs, where projects in TOD areas are required to meet TOD standards; projects not in TOD area scored on connections to existing transportation options, job centers, and amenities, to allow cities outside of the urban core to compete more effectively.
- Clarify equity criteria to consider unique geographic and cultural environment.
- Adopt two-year fund distribution plan to create a more stable application process.
- Analyze the impact of limiting projects to applying to one program per year to allow for more funding for other projects, particularly smaller projects.
- Develop key performance indicators and establish regular evaluation process to provide more clarity to cities for how to be competitive in their applications.
- Provide regular LCA outreach/engagement activities across the region.

The Community Development Committee on Monday authorized Council staff to submit a second application to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the [Pathways to Removing Obstacles to Housing](#) (PRO Housing) program. The Council was awarded \$4 million in funding this June and is beginning to roll out the program at the Council. The Council plans to use the funding to boost capacity to address planning and policy needs for local governments, as well as to provide technical assistance and support for localities updating local regulations, policies, and processes. The Council authorized staff to submit a second application for an additional \$5 million to more fully fund this program and to add more years of effort to this work. The full Council authorized this application to be submitted on Thursday of this week.

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

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