

Policy Adoption Meeting is November 20 - Mark Your Calendar!

Metro Cities' policy adoption meeting will be on Thursday, November 20th at 4:00 pm. This is a virtual meeting to give final adoption to the association's legislative policies for the coming year. The Minnesota Historical Society will join us as our guest speaker. This is generally an hour-long meeting, and a quorum is required. More information to come soon. Please plan to attend! RSVP to Jennifer at jennifer@metrocitiesmn.org.

Metropolitan Council Approves Eligibility Criteria for Comprehensive Planning Assistance Programs

On Wednesday, the full Metropolitan Council approved eligibility criteria for two programs as a part of the 2050 comprehensive planning process. These programs will provide assistance to communities for local comprehensive planning. Every ten years, the Council evaluates criteria for assistance and identifies eligible communities based on need and capacity. The Land Use Advisory Committee, as well as the Community Development Committee, have spent the past year reviewing in-depth analysis and discussing a variety of options to come up with a set of eligibility criteria for small communities.

There will be two programs. First, there will be a new small communities planning program, which will provide direct professional planning and engineering services to support up to twenty-nine small communities. Second, there will be a 2050 planning assistance grant program, which will provide direct, non-competitive grants for comprehensive planning to sixty-four local governments, two counties, and one group of about seventeen participating communities in Dakota county.

The eligibility criteria for the programs are based upon population, Adjusted Net Tax Capacity (ANTC) per capita of a community relative to the regional average, and a consortium approach. There is a map and a list of the eligible communities included on pages 8-11 of the document linked [HERE](#). In late November and early December, the Council will work to determine the final budget and grant award amounts for individual communities.

The final adopted eligibility criteria for each of the programs are listed below. You can also find the criteria [HERE](#).

1. To be eligible for the new **2050 Small Communities Planning Program**, a community must meet one of the following three criteria:

- a. Current population (2024) is under 500 AND adjusted net tax capacity per capita (2024) is less than or equal to 175% of metro median net tax capacity per capita OR
- b. Current population (2024) is between 500 to 999 AND adjusted net tax capacity per capita (2024) is less than or equal to 150% of metro median net tax capacity per capita OR
- c. Current population (2024) is between 1,000 and 2,500 AND adjusted net tax capacity per capita (2024) is less than or equal to 125% of metro median net tax capacity per capita.

2. To be eligible for the **2050 Planning Assistance Grant Program**, a community must meet one of the following three criteria:

- a. Current population (2024) is between 2,500 to 14,999 AND adjusted net tax capacity per capita (2024) is less than or equal to 125% of metro median net tax capacity per capita OR
- b. Current population (2024) is between 15,000 to 35,000 AND adjusted net tax capacity (2024) per capita is less than or equal to 100% of metro median net tax capacity per capita OR
- c. County with land use planning authority for townships within their jurisdiction OR a consortium of 5 or more Dakota County communities in the Rural Service Area working collaboratively on their comprehensive plan updates.

LAHA Technical Assistance Webinars for Annual Report Requirements

The Local Affordable Housing Aid (LAHA) program provides funding for housing purposes to cities in the metropolitan area over 10,000 in population through a 0.25% sales tax. The Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) will be posting reporting forms and instructions for the LAHA program on their website likely within the next week. Following the release of these reporting forms and instructions, Minnesota Housing plans to host two informational webinars to answer questions about the forms. You can register for one of the webinars with the links below.

Webinar 1: [Tuesday, October 28th, 10:00-11:30 am](#)

Webinar 2: [Tuesday, November 4th, 12:00-1:30 pm](#)

Contact Ania McDonnell at ania@metrocitiesmn.org with any questions.

Metropolitan Council Releases Unified Budget and 2050 Outcomes Measurement Program for Public Comment

At their meeting on October 22, the Metropolitan Council voted to release the draft 2026 Unified Budget for public comment. The Unified Budget includes information on the budgeting process, the 2026 operating budget, and the 2026-2031 capital program. The [public comment draft](#) is consistent with the [preliminary budget adopted on August 27, 2025](#). Changes to the operating budget, capital program, and/or reductions to levies may occur prior to final adoption on December 3, 2025. Comments on the draft budget will be accepted until 5:00 PM on December 3, 2025 and a public meeting will be held on the 3rd at 6:00 PM. Click [HERE](#) to view the draft 2026 Unified Budget.

The Council also voted to release the [draft amendment](#) to Imagine 2050 on the Outcomes Measurement Program for public comment. This public comment period will run from October 23 to December 22. A public hearing on this item will be held on Wednesday, December 10 at 4:00 PM. Click [HERE](#) to view the staff presentation on the Outcomes Measurement Program and [HERE](#) to view the proposed measures and their connection to regional goals and policy areas found in Imagine 2050.

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