

Policy Adoption Meeting is November 20 – Please Plan to Attend!

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. This is generally an hour-long meeting, and a quorum is required. The MN Historical Society will join us as our guest speaker. Your attendance is important. RSVP to Jennifer at jennifer@metrocitiesmn.org.

High-Volume Water Users Discussed at Metropolitan Council

At this week's committee of the whole meeting, the Metropolitan Council heard a presentation on potential impacts of high-volume water users, including agricultural producers, power generation, data centers, municipal water suppliers, and more. While not specifically focused on data centers, Environmental Services staff discussed the nationwide growth in data center construction and use. They also detailed the factors that make the seven-county metropolitan area an ideal location for data centers.

Community Development staff presented information on how the region plans for large water users as they come to the region. This process includes interaction with municipalities, site design, environmental review, comprehensive plan amendments, and opportunities for concerns to be raised by the public. Staff went into detail on each of these in the presentation for the Council including how staff evaluates the potential impacts on the regional wastewater system.

Staff described several areas of concern related to high-volume water users and members of the Council engaged in a discussion where they shared their own concerns and perspectives on the topic.

Some areas of concern include:

- Environmental impacts on nearby water bodies.
- Risks of municipal permits being used for industrial needs.
- Industrial use vs. long-term population needs.
- Cumulative impacts on wastewater and local water supplies.
- Regional wastewater impacts.
- Wastewater discharge permitting.
- Plan amendment decisions prior to DNR permitting timing.
- Regional growth management and capital investment impacts.

Click [HERE](#) to view a recording of this meeting and [HERE](#) to view a copy of the slides used by staff.

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

TAC Votes on Regional Solicitation Changes

At their November meeting, the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) discussed a series of business items related to the 2026 Regional Solicitation for federal transportation funds and took up additional items related to the solicitation for the 5 percent of regional sales tax revenue earmarked for active transportation.

The first motion approved the thirteen categories entities will submit Regional Solicitation applications in. The categories passed by the TAC are: Proactive Safety, Reactive Safety, Regional Bike Facilities, Transit Expansion, Transit Customer Experience, Arterial Bus Rapid Transit, Roadway Modernization, Congestion Management Strategies, New Interchanges, Bridge Connections, EV Charging Infrastructure, Travel Demand Management (TDM), and Regional Modeling/Travel Behavior Inventory. Of these categories, Arterial Bus Rapid Transit and Regional Modeling/Travel Behavior Inventory are non-competitive. In the case of A-BRT, Metro Transit presents and submits the new line they would like to see funded with that category's funding and the Travel Behavior Inventory is work the Council conducts using this funding source. The TDM category has both a non-competitive base funding amount and a portion of competitive funding available to applicants.

The next major decision point for the TAC concerned the recommended minimum and maximum awards for each project category. Most of these categories will see a slight increase in their maximum award amount when compared to the 2024 solicitation, largely in response to increased construction costs. This will result in fewer (federally) funded projects, but the active transportation projects may help to keep the total number of projects about the same as in the past.

A great deal of time was spent debating whether the Arterial Bus Rapid Transit (ABRT) category should have a maximum award. In the last few solicitations there have not been enough projects in the other transit sub-categories and there has been some discussion around allowing TAB to use leftover funding from those categories to add to the amount spent on ABRT. Ultimately, the TAC opted to amend the [table presented](#) with all the minimum and maximum amounts to pull ABRT to the bottom with a footnote about how this shifting of transit funds would work. Essentially, the TAC set a maximum of \$30 million for ABRT with the caveat that more funds could be awarded if all other transit projects are funded and other modal categories have been funded. There will likely be more conversation on this topic when these business items reach the Transportation Advisory Board later this month.

The TAC then approved the proposed modal funding targets. The 2026 solicitation is anticipated to move away from three modal categories (Bike/Ped, Transit, Road) and instead will attempt to more clearly align with goals contained in Imagine 2050 and the 2050 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP). The recommended funding targets are 12% for Safety, 14% for Bike/Ped, 24% for Transit, 44% for Roadway, and 6% for Environment.

The 2026 Active Transportation Solicitation, which will run concurrently with the Regional Solicitation, but will not have the same federal requirements given that the funding is generated here in the seven-county metropolitan area, is anticipated to include three application categories: Local Bike Facilities, Local Pedestrian Facilities, and Active Transportation Planning. The proposed minimum and maximum amounts for these three categories were approved by the TAC. The Active Transportation Working Group recommended to TAC that the planning category have a funding target of \$2 million and that no targets be set for either facility category. Staff estimates approximately \$50 million will be available to spend during the 2026 Active Transportation Solicitation.

Click [HERE](#) to view a slide show containing information on each of the business items discussed at TAC related to the 2026 Regional Solicitation and the 2026 Active Transportation Solicitation.

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

2026 Livable Communities Grant Program Webinar

The Metropolitan Council will be hosting an information session to provide more detailed information on the updated scoring structure and criteria for the 2026 Livable Communities Grant program. The Council has been working to get feedback over the past few years to simplify the program, respond to feedback from cities, and to align the program with the new Imagine 2050 regional goals. The completed notice of funding availability will be available in February 2026. Below are more details on the two information sessions, and there will be two more hosted in January 2026.

- Webinar: November 18th, 3:30-4:30 pm. Register [HERE](#).
- In-person: December 11th, 2:00-3:00pm Hosted at North Regional Library, Room 208, 1315 Lowry Ave N, Minneapolis, MN 55411.

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