

## **Metro Cities' 2026 Legislative Policies Adopted**

Metro Cities' 2026 legislative policies were adopted by the association's membership at the Policy Adoption Meeting on Thursday, following recommendations by four legislative policy committees this summer and adoption by the Board in October. Thank you to all who attended the policy adoption meeting and/or participated in the policy process this year. Your participation is important and appreciated.

A special thank you to policy committee chairs Transportation & General Government: Heidi Nelson, City Administrator, Maple Grove, Municipal Revenues: Steven Stahmer, City Administrator, Rogers, Metropolitan Agencies: Gary Hansen, Councilmember, Eagan, Housing & Economic Development: Julie Wischnack, Community Development Director, Minnetonka for your work in chairing the committees, and to Tracy Shimek - Housing & Economic Development Coordinator, White Bear Lake, for presenting policies at the policy adoption meeting on Thursday.

A special thanks to our guest speakers, MN Historical Director and CEO Kent Whitworth, and David Kelliher, Public Policy Director, for their informative and engaging presentation on the Minnesota Historical Society.

## **TAB Approves Regional Solicitation Changes**

At their [November meeting](#), the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) acted on several business items related to the 2026 Regional Solicitation for federal transportation funds. The TAB took up additional items related to the upcoming solicitation for active transportation funding from the portion of regional sales tax revenue earmarked for that purpose.

The first motion approved the thirteen categories entities will submit Regional Solicitation applications in. The categories approved by the TAB 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 ABRT, 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.

Another major decision point for the TAB 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 regional active transportation funding may help to keep the total number of funded projects about the same as in the past.

As was the case during the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting, the maximum award for the Arterial Bus Rapid Transit (ABRT) category received special attention. Based on the feedback provided by TAC, the TAB approved the proposed minimum and maximum awards with a footnote

for the ABRT category stating that the minimum award is \$30 million, but TAB can award additional funding to the category only within the transit funding target. In other words, if the target for transit is \$60 million and there aren't enough projects to fund in the other transit sub-categories, remaining transit dollars can be added to the ABRT category above and beyond the minimum \$30 million. Additional context included in the approved motion deals with base funding amounts for travel demand management (TDM).

During the conversation for this business item, an amendment was proposed to increase the maximum award for TDM in the hopes that larger award amounts could benefit car and bike share services in the region. This move sparked a larger conversation about whether car share and/or bike sharing have a place in any of the regional solicitation or active transportation solicitation categories. This amendment was not approved by the TAB.

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 TAB approved the following modal funding targets: 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 have 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 TAB. The Active Transportation Working Group recommended 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. Future solicitations for active transportation projects will likely not have that high of a total amount of funding. It is expected that after 2026, Active Transportation solicitations will occur in the off years outside of the Regional Solicitation process.

Click [HERE](#) to view a slide show containing information on each of the business items discussed at TAB related to the 2026 Regional Solicitation and the 2026 Active Transportation Solicitation. Click [HERE](#) to view additional slides which includes a timeline for solicitation work and details on score weighting.

Contact Mike Lund at [michael@metrocitiesmn.org](mailto:michael@metrocitiesmn.org) or 651-215-4003 with any questions.

## **State Housing Tax Credit Program Project Registration**

For those seeking designated contributions through the new State Housing Tax Credit (SHTC) Program Contribution Fund, Minnesota Housing has opened the Project Registration submission form. Find the project registration form [HERE](#). Although this is not required, the project registration informs Minnesota Housing of an applicant's intent to solicit Designated Contributions through the State Housing Tax Credit Contribution program for a specific Qualified Project. Registering the project doesn't guarantee that the project is a qualified project, or that the designee is an eligible recipient. For 2026 projects, there will be \$9.9 million in State Housing Tax Credits available. You can learn more about the registration and the State Housing Tax Credit Program [HERE](#).

## **Metropolitan Council Committee Recommends Affordable Homeownership Grants**

On Monday, the Metropolitan Council's Community Development Committee was presented with six recommended projects for funding under the Livable Communities Affordable Homeownership Grants Program. The Affordable Homeownership Grant Program supports projects that create affordable homeownership opportunities, through new construction or rehabilitation. Homes must be sold to households earning 80% of the area median income or less, or \$104,200 annually for a family of four in 2025. The homes must remain affordable upon resale for a minimum of 15 years.

The six projects recommended for funding are in the cities of Maplewood, Minneapolis, Minnetonka, and Saint Paul for a total of \$3 million in awards. You can find more information about the six projects [HERE](#). The funding recommendation will go to the full Council for approval on December 3<sup>rd</sup>.

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