



## **House/Senate Updates**

The Supreme Court last Friday ruled in favor of a challenge by MN House Democrats that the House requires a quorum of 68 members. There is currently a split of 67 GOP and 66 DFL members with an open seat to be decided by a special election, the date of which has not yet been called by the Governor. Republican members of the House have attended floor sessions convened by Secretary of State Steve Simon, while DFL members have not attended any floor sessions. Following the ruling last week, all House committees this week were cancelled. This week, House Republicans filed a lawsuit to argue that Secretary of State Steve Simon is interfering in legislative activities. The Supreme Court will take up this case next week.

Doran Clark was elected to the Senate this week, in Senate District 60, for the seat previously held by Senator Kari Dziedzic. He is expected to be sworn in next week. Several Senate committees have been meeting, including taxes, transportation, elections, and others. Please see below for specific updates of interest to Metro Cities.

## **Highlights from Transportation Budget Proposals**

During their last three hearings, the Senate Transportation Committee heard presentations from the Department of Transportation (MnDOT), the Department of Public Safety (DPS), and the Metropolitan Council regarding their portions of the Governor's proposed budget.

MnDOT's portion of the Governor's budget includes an operating adjustment and \$700 million from the Trunk Highway Fund for state road construction. These funds will allow MnDOT to spend additional federal funds and construct projects contained within the Minnesota State Highway Investment Plan (MnSHIP). The proposal also includes an extension for the appropriation for Metropolitan Planning Organization Greenhouse Gas modeling and a change to how frequently the department solicits for transportation grants. Click [HERE](#) for the MnDOT slides.

Portions of DPS that are under the jurisdiction of the Transportation Committee include the State Patrol, Office of Traffic Safety, Driver and Vehicle Services (DVS), and the Office of State Safety Oversight. In addition to an operating adjustment, the State Patrol is seeking funds for a new Metro Headquarters Building (\$48.5 million), funding for recruitment and hiring initiatives (approx. \$11 million), and a modification to the penalty for traveling more than 35mph over the speed limit. The proposal for DVS includes a provision that would provide deputy registrars, Driver's License Agents, and Full-Service Providers some compensation for transactions where they complete work and receive no fee. Click [HERE](#) for the DPS slides.

Metropolitan Council's budget proposal includes a request to advance up to \$250 million to MnDOT as a loan to facilitate a single roadway/transitway construction project. The rationale is to minimize community and traveling disruption and eliminate duplicating construction work for the transit and roadway components of the project. The Council is also seeking to make fares free for Metro Mobility riders on regular route transit. This request comes after a legislatively directed pilot project from 2023. The last major component of the Governor's proposal regarding the Metropolitan Council under the jurisdiction of the transportation committee is a \$32.454 million reduction in general fund appropriations for transit operations (a 100% reduction). The Council

contends that this reduction would not alter operations, at least in the short term. Click [HERE](#) for the Metropolitan Council slides.

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

## **Elections Committee Hears Bills Impacting Cities**

On Thursday, the Senate Elections Committee heard two bills that, if passed, would impact local elections administration. [SF 600 \(Koran\)](#), as amended, would require a municipal clerk to post the location of a temporary polling place no later than 5 business days after it has been designated.

[SF 634 \(Bahr\)](#) would require that all cities (except those of the first class), and school districts hold elections in even-numbered years. The change would apply to elections conducted on or after January 1, 2026. By that date, a city, town, or school district with odd-year elections must adopt a plan for an orderly transition to even-numbered year elections. The bill includes language regarding lengthening or shortening the terms of elected officials as part of a jurisdiction's transition plan. Proponents of the bill argue that even year elections have higher voter turnout rates than those taking place in odd years. Opponents contend that this decision should remain at the local level and that cities weigh several factors when determining when their local elections take place. Both SF 600 and SF 634 were laid over by the committee.

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

## **Building Permit Fees Bill Heard in Senate**

On Thursday, the Senate Labor Committee heard [SF 560](#) – Lucero, a bill to require the Commissioner of the Department of Labor and Industry to establish a cost-per-square-foot valuation for residential buildings to inform how cities set building permit fees. The committee considered an [amendment](#) which would create an entirely new way to calculate residential building permit fees, by setting hourly rates for plan review and setting a flat fee based on cost-per-trip for inspections and re-inspections. Metro Cities [submitted a letter](#) in opposition to the amendment, citing the significant burden this would place on cities, and that it would reduce flexibility for cities to carry out an essential function. The amendment was not added, and the committee indicated it would continue the discussion of updating how building permit fees are calculated. The committee passed the bill without recommendation and sent it to the Senate Housing and Homelessness Prevention committee. Metro Cities will continue to monitor the bill and provide updates.

Contact Ania McDonnell at [ania@metrocitiesmn.org](mailto:ania@metrocitiesmn.org) with any questions.

## **Upcoming Livable Communities Act Grant Program Webinars**

The Metropolitan Council will host webinars on some Livable Communities Act (LCA) grant programs to provide information on the programs and how to apply.

- Local Brownfield Funding webinar on Redevelopment programs in Minnesota - February 18, 2025 from noon to 1:00 pm, Register [HERE](#).
- Policy Development Program – March 4, 2025 from 10:00-11:00 am. Register [HERE](#). This program helps cities develop policies that advance Imagine 2050 goals.
- Pre-Development Program – March 6, 2025 from 10:00-10:45 am. Register [HERE](#). This grant program supports cities in the early planning stages of a project.

## **Bills of Note**

[SF 597](#), Howe: Bill clarifies that there is no duty to retreat before making a threat to use force in self-defense in certain circumstances.

[SF 599](#), Howe: Bill makes information of a Peace Officers records confidential unless otherwise released by the officer and clarifies that agencies cannot fire a Peace Officer if it is determined that the officer's information is needed in a case.

[SF 600](#), Koran: Bill requires publication of temporary polling locations (within five business days of designating the polling place).

[SF 601](#), Lieske: Bill abolishes vehicle registration taxes.

[SF 608](#), Lieske: Bill prohibits data centers in certain districts.

[SF 610](#), Utke: Bill specifies that new rules cannot be enacted until approved into law.

[SF 617](#), Drazkowski: Bill awards fees and expenses to a prevailing party if the municipality's position was not substantially justified.

[SF 625](#), Howe: Bill authorizes law enforcement use of drones to find missing persons, persons fleeing arrest, and incarcerated persons.

[SF 634](#), Bahr: Bill requires local elections be held in even-numbered years.

[SF 638](#), Duckworth: Bill prohibits being in a stolen motor vehicle.

[SF 639](#), Koran: Bill prohibits political subdivisions from establishing or enforcing ranked-choice voting.

[SF 640](#), Koran: Bill classifies election judge party affiliation as public data.

[SF 641](#), Koran: Bill prohibits local governments from accepting certain contributions for election expenses.

[SF 643](#), Koran: Bill prohibits immigration law enforcement noncooperation ordinances and policies.

[SF 648](#), Koran: Bill to appropriate \$2million for the FATHER program to support single fathers in Minneapolis and St. Paul.

[SF 650](#), Koran: Bill modifies orderly annexation election proceedings and detachment provisions.

[SF 651](#), Howe: Bill changes the date of the state primary to the same date as the presidential primary nomination.

[SF 661](#), Gustafson: Bill creates an economic development pilot program for provision of information technology assistance for small businesses.

[SF 671](#), Mohamed: Bill raising the minimum wage to \$15/hr.

[SF 672](#), Mohamed: Bill appropriates funding for a statewide tenant education and hotline service.

[SF 675](#), Coleman: Bill designates a metropolitan county as the entity responsible for planning, designing, acquiring, constructing, and equipping LRT facilities if the proposed line is located entirely within that county.

[SF 677](#), Coleman: Bill requires the Metropolitan Council to publish monthly ridership numbers and quarterly crime statistics.

[SF 678](#), Coleman: Bill bonds for \$200 million for state roads.

[SF 692](#), Rasmusson: Bill establishes a reimbursement program for use of force training.

[SF 712](#), Lucero: Bill provides for the right to carry a firearm without a permit.

[SF 726](#), Draheim: Bill prohibits cities from having rent control rules established.

[SF 740](#), Westrom: Bill modifies the grant award requirements for the border-to-border broadband development grant program by repealing certain labor standards for broadband industry installers.

[SF 746](#), Lucero: Bill requires that peace officers be U.S. citizens.

[SF 752](#), Coleman: Bill requires municipal approval of guideway plans and allows municipalities to revoke that approval. Bill also prohibits the requesting of federal funds until approval is received.

[SF 754](#), Bahr: Bill enhances the penalty for assaulting a peace officer.

[SF 758](#), Eichorn: Bill modifies the crime of fleeing a peace officer in a motor vehicle.

[SF 759](#), Koran: Bill prohibits local units of government from disarming peace officers who are in good standing.

[SF 765](#), Draheim: Bill modifies the definition of Metropolitan area for the application of both the metropolitan regional sales and use tax for housing and for transportation by defining the metropolitan area over which the Metropolitan Council has jurisdiction, including only the counties of Anoka; Carver; Dakota excluding the cities of Northfield and Cannon Falls; Hennepin excluding the cities of Hanover and Rockford; Ramsey; Scott excluding the city of New Prague; and Washington.

[SF 768](#), Mohamed: Bill creates a refundable credit for conversion of underutilized buildings and allows grants in lieu of the credit.

[SF 769](#), Hauschild: Bill modifies the tax exemption for certain data centers.

[SF 787](#), Mann: Bill allows unlimited remote participation under the open meeting law for local governments.

[SF 795](#), Limmer: Bill prohibits the vaporizing or smoking of medical cannabis in multifamily housing.

[SF 799](#), Gustafson: Bill appropriates funding for displaced homemaker programs.

[SF 803](#), Howe: Bill allows local units of government to conduct criminal background checks under certain circumstances.

[SF 808](#), Wesenberg: Bill authorizes a property owner to restrict access to an easement held by a local, state, or other government entity.

[SF 809](#), Wesenberg: Bill requires local units of government to notify private property owners if they will be using an easement located on the persons property.

[SF 810](#), Coleman: bill appropriates \$40 million for the safe routes to school program and sets an ongoing base amount of \$20 million per year.

[SF 816](#), Fateh: Bill authorizing amortization of certain property uses in a city of the first class.

[SF 817](#), Fateh: Bill modifies requirements related to highway project development including cumulative impacts analysis.

[SF 829](#): Bill prohibits municipalities from enforcing or enacting an ordinance prohibiting emergency housing facilities except in areas zoned as residential or agricultural.

---

**Metro Cities News** is emailed periodically to Metro Cities member mayors, councilmembers, city managers/administrators, and city staff to keep officials and staff abreast of important metro city issues.

If you'd like to sign up to receive Metro Cities News, please email [newsletter@metrocitiesmn.org](mailto:newsletter@metrocitiesmn.org) and provide the following: Name, Title, Employer and Email address. Thank you!

**Metro Cities (Association of Metropolitan Municipalities)**  
145 University Ave W, St. Paul, MN 55103-2044  
Phone 651-215-4000 · Fax 651-281-1299 · [www.MetroCitiesMN.org](http://www.MetroCitiesMN.org)