

Metro Cities Annual Meeting – Mark Your Calendar!

Metro Cities will hold its Annual Meeting on Wednesday, April 23rd at the Roseville Oval Skating Center Banquet Room. The meeting will feature a social hour starting at 5:00 pm, followed by *Star Tribune* Publisher Steve Grove as our guest speaker, and a brief business meeting to elect Metro Cities Board officers and members. RSVP to Jennifer Dorn at jennifer@metrocitiesmn.org. We hope to see you there!

Zoning Preemption Bills Advance

Several housing bills containing local zoning preemption were heard in the housing committees of the Senate and House this week, with bills passing committee. In the Senate, bills were sent to the State and Local Government Committee and in the House, to Elections and Government Operations. Bills are likely to be merged as they advance. Below is a summary of the bills and information on Metro Cities' responses.

Overall, bills broadly preempt city zoning and land use decision-making as well as contain other restrictive measures for municipalities.

Metro Cities, along with other city organizations, submitted a joint letter to the Senate and House Housing Committees outlining specific concerns. View these letters [HERE](#) and [HERE](#). Metro Cities would like to thank the metropolitan city officials who provided testimony this week on bills, and contacted your local legislators to express local concerns and perspectives on bills.

Metro Cities has updated its [Housing Paper](#). This paper provides information on local efforts to address housing needs, tools cities need, and information on metropolitan municipalities' community characteristics and metropolitan density requirements.

Below is a high-level overview of key provisions in bills:

1. “Starter Homes” bill:

[SF 2229](#), Port (DFL- Burnsville) / [HF 1987](#), Igo (R-Wabana Township)

- Bill requires duplexes and ADUs in zoning districts that permit a residential use and townhouses in newly platted and vacant lots as a permitted use.
- Sets strict standards related to setback limits, minimum lot sizes, and maximum lot coverage requirements.
- Strict guidelines related to aesthetic mandates, minimum parking requirements, and an administrative approvals process, among others.
- A minor [amendment](#) was adopted to the bill in the House and Senate.

2. Multifamily Housing in Commercial Districts bill:

[SF 2286](#), Clark (DFL - Minneapolis) / [HF 2018](#), Kozlowski (DFL-Duluth)

- Requires that residential developments be permitted in any zoning district allowing commercial uses other than heavy industrial and precludes stakeholder engagement.
- Requires cities allow for buildings up to 75 feet, with additional height allowed for affordable housing developments.
- Contains strict guidelines related to aesthetic mandates, minimum parking requirements, and an administrative approvals process, among others.
- A minor [amendment](#) was adopted to the bill in the House and Senate.

3. **Mixed-Use Housing Zones bill:**

[SF 2231](#), Boldon (DFL – Rochester) / [HF 2140](#), Kraft (DFL – St. Louis Park)

- The bill was [amended](#) with significant new language. The bill, as amended, requires cities to create mixed housing districts that allow for up to triplexes on every lot. Cities must create commercial corridor districts that encompass every lot in the municipality that has frontage on a municipal state-aid street and sets strict density requirements.
- Creates new terms for “urban” and “nonurban”. Urban cities are classified as a city other than a city of the first class that is adjacent to or has a border within one mile of the border of, a city with a population greater than 150,000. Nonurban cities are classified as having population greater than 10,000 that is not an urban municipality or a city of the first class.
- Urban cities must allow for at least 75 percent of the area within the city that is zoned residential to allow up to triplexes, and a nonurban city must allow for up to 50 percent of the area that is zoned residential to allow for up to triplexes in these “mixed use housing districts.”
- Contains strict guidelines related to aesthetic mandates, minimum parking requirements, and an administrative approvals process, among others.

4. **Eliminating Minimum Parking Requirements Statewide**

[SF 1268](#), Fateh (DFL- Minneapolis)

- Eliminates the ability for cities to set minimum parking requirements statewide for residential, commercial, or industrial properties, but allows for requirements for disability parking spaces.
- Various concerns were voiced by committee members on this bill.

5. **Limitation on City Requirements for Construction Materials and Methods**

[HF 2013](#), Nash (R-Waconia)

- Bill was [amended](#) with language that narrows the scope of the bill.
- The bill, as amended, would limit city requirements for construction materials and methods to residential developments with four or less units and allows for a city to require an egress point on the street-facing side of the structure. However, we remain concerned with broad language included in the bill which limits cities from imposing requirements related to “architectural elements” and “light access requirements.”

Please contact Ania McDonnell at ania@metrocitiesmn.org with questions.

HOA Bill Containing Local Preemption Heard in Senate Housing Committee

This week, the Senate Housing and Homelessness Prevention Committee heard SF [1750](#) – Lucero (R-Saint Michael), a broad policy bill related to common interest communities (CICs) and homeowners associations (HOAs) in Minnesota.

Article 3 of the bill contains broad preemption language. The bill would prohibit cities from requiring an HOA in a new development that contains private common property or elements that would necessitate an HOA. This could result in a lack of access to this type of housing that is often sought by seniors and those with disabilities. The bill was [amended](#) during committee which included a minor change to the preemption language but the change does not address Metro Cities' concerns. The bill passed and was referred to the Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee. Last week, the companion bill in the House advanced to the House Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Committee. The bill has not had a hearing yet in that committee.

Please contact Ania McDonnell at ania@metrocitiesmn.org with questions.

GHG Impact Mitigation Assessment Requirements Considered

[HF 748](#) (Koznick) was heard by the House Transportation Committee on Wednesday. The bill amends greenhouse gas mitigation legislation that was originally passed in 2023. Before discussing the bill, staff from the department of Transportation (MnDOT) provided the committee background information on the 2023 legislation, the work of the Impact Assessment Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), the scope of the law, who is responsible for assessing GHG emissions, and what activities are eligible as mitigating activities. Click [HERE](#) to view MnDOT's slides. Committee members asked MnDOT about the statutorily set net zero goals for the state, how much the department estimates the GHG law will increase project costs, and how vehicle miles traveled is measured.

If passed into law, HF 748 would shrink the number of impacted projects by raising the project cost threshold from \$15 million to \$30 million. The bill shifts away from vehicle miles traveled reduction goals and focuses on emissions and it delays implementation of the assessment and mitigation requirements. The bill makes other changes to prioritize safety projects. Click [HERE](#) for a summary of the bill. Testifiers from local governments including county commissioners from Scott and Anoka spoke about the impacts of the 2023 law. County and city engineers also testified. HF 748 was passed, as amended, and moved to the general register. The Senate companion, [SF 72](#) (Jasinski) has not been heard yet.

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

Senate Committee Hears Bill Regarding State-Aid Design Standards

[SF 2162 \(Dibble\)](#) was heard in the Senate Transportation Committee on Wednesday. The bill authorizes cities and counties to use a road design standard that is different than adopted state-aid engineering rules. The bill articulates which alternative design standards cities are allowed to adopt. The bill also makes changes to the variance request process for cities that continue to use the state-aid standards. Specific considerations must be given to variance requests for safety purposes or increased access for nonmotorized transportation to and from schools. One point of

frustration expressed by the chair was that MnDOT's standards for trunk highways are seemingly more flexible than state-aid standards for local streets.

Metro Cities provided written testimony articulating the association's general support for giving cities greater flexibility within state design guidelines for local streets so as to safely accommodate all modes of travel, lower traveling speeds on local streets, address infrastructure needs and ensure livability within a context appropriate for the city's needs. Metro Cities will continue to work with the author to help provide feedback offered by city engineers and other subject matter experts as the bill moves on in the legislative process. SF 2162 was passed, as amended, and referred to the State and Local Government Committee. There is no House companion bill for SF 2162 as of this week.

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

Election Administration Bill Heard in Senate

[SF 2384](#) (Westlin) was passed, as amended, by the Senate Elections Committee and referred to the Judiciary Committee. This bill is the Secretary of State's Election Administration Bill and it includes several provisions of note for cities. The bill puts the burden on residential facility employees to provide proof that they are employed by and working in the residential facility before vouching for residents who are voting. The bill provides flexibility to municipalities by allowing them to be designated as an absentee voting location or only an early voting location, providing a choice between operating for 46 days or just 18 days before election day. The bill makes some changes to canvassing dates and a slate of other updates to election processes and procedures. Click [HERE](#) for a summary of the bill (as amended). The House companion, [HF 2073](#) (Freiberg), has not had a hearing yet.

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

Adult-Use Cannabis Updates

Application Window Closing

The application window for cannabis business licenses closes at 11:59PM on Friday, March 14. Cities interested in operating a municipal cannabis store should apply for a retailer license during this application window. As a reminder, municipal retailer licenses are not subject to a lottery. Applications for lower-potency hemp edible manufacturer licenses and lower-potency hemp edible retailer licenses will be accepted in Fall 2025.

Local Role in Cannabis Regulation

The Office of Cannabis Management continues to provide information to local governments on how to prepare for cannabis in their communities. Cities are encouraged to fill out the [Delegation and Contact Form](#), which will help you prepare for two key roles a local government has in the licensing process:

1. Zoning compliance certification
2. Local retail registration for businesses conducting retail sales.

Cannabis retailers are required to have both a license and a local retail registration. The delegation and contact form captures contact information regarding zoning authority and should be used to inform OCM of decisions to delegate local retail registration authority. Click [HERE](#) for more information on local government zoning authority, zoning compliance authority certification, and more.

Rulemaking Update

The adult-use rules are anticipated to be adopted near the end of this quarter. The office intends to send final rules to the office of administrative hearings in the coming weeks. Once final rules are adopted, qualified applicants in uncapped license categories will be eligible to receive preliminary approval and begin the site registration process.

Bill Hearings Next Week

Several cannabis bills are scheduled to be heard next week including [HF 1634](#) (Stephenson) in the House Commerce Committee on Tuesday morning. The bill authorizes municipalities with their own adult-use cannabis store to also hold a lower-potency hemp edible retailer license. Holding both licenses is prohibited under current law.

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

Bills of Note

[HF 1950](#), Bakeberg/[SF 737](#), Housley: Bill requires mandatory fines for violations of the school bus stop arm law

[HF 1967](#), Baker: Bill modifies the Paid Leave Law to exclude individuals covered by a collective bargaining agreement and excludes relationships with persons not related to the applicant.

[HF 1977](#), Quam/[SF 2243](#), Nelson: Bill requires local approval before the DOT can acquire easements for road construction.

[HF 1987](#), Igo/[SF 2229](#), Port: Bill establishes the “Minnesota Starter Home Act” that preempts city control of housing to allow all types of housing to be built in any zone that permits residential units and restricts municipalities from imposing requirements related to housing building.

[HF 2003](#), Sencer-Mura: Bill allows counties and municipalities to lower the voting age to 16 years of age for local elections.

[HF 2006](#), Joy/[SF 2337](#), Weber: Bill allows municipalities to amend a written spending plan to extend the date by which transferred increment may be used through December 31, 2025.

[HF 2013](#), Nash: Bill limits aesthetic and square footage regulations on residential developments unless the development is by the municipality itself.

[HF 2018](#), Kozlowski/[SF 2286](#), Clark: Bill limits the zoning authority of municipalities related to certain multifamily and mixed-use developments in commercial districts.

[HF 2019](#), Howard: Bill provides additional funding for statewide affordable housing aids.

[HF 2029](#), Hanson, J./[SF 2196](#), Johnson Stewart: Bill authorizes municipalities to charge a street impact fee.

[HF 2059](#), Carroll/[SF 1741](#), Port: Bill requires local governments to establish residential instant solar permitting platforms.

[HF 2073](#), Freiberg/[SF 2384](#): The Secretary of State's policy bill.

[HF 2075](#), Fogelman/[SF 295](#), Coleman: Bill appropriates \$15 million in trunk highway bonds for the transportation economic development program.

[HF 2076](#), Fogelman/[SF 289](#), Abeler: Bill appropriates \$250 million in bond proceeds for the local road improvement program and \$150 million for the local bridge program.

[HF 2082](#), Murphy/[SF 678](#), Coleman: Bill bonds for \$200 million for state roads.

[HF 2083](#), Zeleznikar/[SF 564](#), Hauschild: Bill raises the revenue threshold requiring cities to perform annual audits.

[HF 2088](#), Frazier: Bill requires annual reporting on school resource officer contracts.

[HF 2095](#), Virnig/[SF 2024](#), Carlson: Bill allows counties and cities to require appointed registered voters to serve as election judges.

[HF 2098](#), Freiberg: Bill modifies procedures and review periods for certain Metropolitan Council programs.

[HF 2116](#), West/[SF 177](#), Coleman: Bill appropriates \$200 million for the corridors of commerce program.

[HF 2119](#), Dotseth: Bill makes several changes to elections administration law.

[HF 2140](#), Kraft/[SF 2231](#), Boldon: Bill requires municipalities to create mixed-use housing zones, increase density around Municipal State Aid Streets, among others.

[HF 2148](#), Agbaje/[SF 1913](#), Boldon: Bill establishes a locally controlled housing fund, and appropriates funding.

[HF 2154](#), Roach: Bill prohibits the use of cameras for traffic enforcement.

[HF 2158](#), Kresha/[SF 1491](#), Howe: Bill allows volunteer service providers to purchase tires with a municipal refund.

[HF 2168](#), Schwartz: Bill increases the penalty for theft of a motor vehicle.

[HF 2177](#), Harder/[SF 1586](#), Gruenhagen: Bill prohibits charges for any documentation necessary to register to vote.

[HF 2179](#), Novotny/[SF 176](#), Jasinski: Bill appropriates funds for state patrol to purchase additional aircraft.

[HF 2180](#), Virnig: Bill modifies open meeting law to allow for flexibility in online participation.

[HF 2185](#), Witte/[SF 2061](#), Duckworth: Bill renders any regulations prohibiting the display of any flag of any branch of the armed forces, the POW/MIA flag, or a blue or gold service star flag void and unenforceable.

[HF 2186](#), Witte/[SF 1214](#), Duckworth: Bill prohibits the Metropolitan Council from spending any funds on any light rail projects.

[HF 2189](#), Norris/[SF 387](#), Gustafson: Bill recalculates county and local unit public safety aid.

[HF 2199](#), Robbins/[SF 252](#), Jasinski: Bill requires a cost-benefit analysis for proposed guideways.

[HF 2204](#), Rehm: Bill modifies financial reporting for the Metropolitan Council.

[HF 2218](#), Falconer/[SF 2107](#), Kunesh: Bill appropriates \$1.5 million in FY26 to the Metropolitan Council to fight aquatic invasive species in regional parks.

[HF 2228](#), Elkins/[SF 2205](#), Port: Bill establishes a task force on homeowners and commercial property insurance and appropriates funding.

[HF 2231](#), Harder: Bill allows for online publishing by cities to satisfy statutory requirements when no qualified newspaper is available.

[HF 2234](#), Anderson: Bill limits county fund expenditures for multimodal purposes.

[HF 2261](#), Kozlowski/[SF 1565](#), Pha: Bill clarifying effective dates for landlord and tenant laws, modifies landlord covenants, provides additional remedies, and makes technical changes.

[HF 2276](#), Kozlowski/[SF 2214](#), Hoffman: Bill appropriates money for the Minnesota homeless study.

[HF 2279](#), Vang: Bill renames the Office of Broadband Development to the Office of Broadband Development and Digital Equity, modifies the duties and reporting requirements of the office, expands the state's broadband goals, establishes a multifamily dwelling grant program, amends definitions for the purposes of broadband development.

[HF 2284](#), Coulter/[SF 2562](#), Westlin: Bill modifies the definition of a metropolitan governmental unit.

[HF 2343](#), Quam: Bill moves the state primary from August to May.

[HF 2357](#), Nadeau: Bill modifies allocation requirements under the corridors of commerce program.

[SF 2298](#), Port: Bill establishes a budget for the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency and appropriates funding.

[SF 2304](#), Rasmussen: Bill makes several changes to election law.

[SF 2305](#), Rasmussen: Bill prohibits charges from state or local government for documentation needed to register for voting.

[SF 2308](#), Howe/[HF 1814](#), Backer: Bill appropriates \$4 million for grants to local governments participating in the ARMER public safety radio communication system.

[SF 2317](#), Eichorn: Bill increases the penalties for damage to critical infrastructure.

[SF 2320](#), Pappas/[HF 1601](#), Hussein: Bill authorizes local governments to prohibit or restrict the possession of dangerous weapons, ammunition, or explosives in local government-owned or leased buildings and land.

[SF 2321](#), Pappas: Bill requires local governments to establish replacement accounts to maintain and replace capital projects that receive state funding.

[SF 2324](#), Pha/[HF 1931](#), Bahner: Bill provides authority to the attorney general to enforce laws related to common interest communities.

[SF 2332](#), Johnson Stewart/[HF 1335](#), Tabke: Bill allows for issuance of electronic driver's licenses.

[SF 2337](#), Weber/[HF 2006](#), Joy: Bill allows for use of interest earned on transferred TIF funds.

[SF 2339](#), Pratt/[HF 1329](#) Koznick: Bill replaces Metropolitan Council with a Council of Governments model.

[SF 2344](#), Lieske/[HF 1786](#), Roach: Bill allows cities to issue liquor licenses to cosmetology salons.

[SF 2366](#), Johnson Stewart: Bill allows municipalities to establish municipal street improvement districts.

[SF 2384](#), Westlin/[HF 2073](#), Frieberg: Bill requires additional monitoring and logging of absentee ballots.

[SF 2395](#), McEwen/[HF 1843](#), Rehm: Bill appropriates \$1.5 million for the lawns to legumes program.

[SF 2399](#), Koran/[HF 915](#), Quam: Bill exempts small local government employers from the Minnesota Paid Leave Law.

[SF 2405](#), Mohamed/[HF 1863](#), Johnson, P.: Bill modifies housing and redevelopment authority levy limits.

[SF 2423](#), Champion: Bill establishes the African American workforce and affordable homeownership development program and appropriates funding.

[SF 2434](#), Draheim: Bill modifies certain expenditure provisions of the housing development fund.

[SF 2466](#), Pratt/[HF 1976](#), Baker: Bill allows small employers (less than 50 employees) to pay only 50% of full time pay for Paid Family Leave.

[SF 2489](#), Koran/[HF 1617](#), Altendorf: Bill makes changes to process for testing voting systems.

[SF 2491](#), Koran/[HF 1664](#), Quam: Bill requires ballot board activity to be livestreamed.

[SF 2493](#), Koran/[HF 1253](#), Davis: Bill shortens the absentee ballot period from 46 days to 28 days.

[SF 2514](#), McEwen/[HF 2340](#), Jordan: Bill appropriates \$240 million to the PFA for lead service line replacement.

[SF 2529](#), Rarick/[HF 11](#), Baker: Bill delays the Paid Family Leave Law by one year.

[SF 2534](#), Kreun/[HF 1731](#), Engen: Bill allows local government units to opt-out of regulatory jurisdiction by the Metropolitan Council.

[SF 2549](#), Pappas/[HF 2003](#), Sencer-Mura: Bill allows political subdivisions to lower the voting age to 16 for local elections.

[SF 2552](#), Port/[HF 2309](#), Rehrauer: Housing provisions modifications omnibus bill.

[SF 2558](#), Putnam: Bill restrict cities from imposing certain aesthetic mandates on residential development.

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 and provide the following: Name, Title, Employer and Email address. Thank you!

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