



## **Metro Cities Board of Directors Openings**

The Metro Cities Board of Directors will have openings for terms beginning July 1. The 19-member Board is comprised of elected and appointed officials and must be balanced by city size and population. The Board oversees Metro Cities' operational budget, strategic goals, and legislative policies and appoints municipal officials to the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). A nominating committee will meet in March to recommend officers and members for election at the April annual meeting. Interested applicants must submit a resume, cover letter and completed [application](#). For more information contact Patricia Nauman at [patricia@metrocitiesmn.org](mailto:patricia@metrocitiesmn.org). The deadline for applications is March 6, 2026.

## **Save The Dates! Regional and Local Planning Foundations Webinar Series**

Metro Cities will host a three-part webinar series for cities, with Metropolitan Council staff, to give an overview of local comprehensive planning and its context within a regional planning framework. The series will cover the Metropolitan Council's role in regional planning and infrastructure, intersections of regional planning with local visioning and land use planning, and resources available to communities in preparing comprehensive plans. This three-part series is open to all city elected officials and staff and will cover a range of topics and information. Please plan to join us!

- Foundations of Regional Planning: March 12, 12:00-1:00 pm.**
- Comprehensive Planning in A Regional Context: April 9, 12:00-1:00 pm**
- Technical Assistance for Comprehensive Planning: May 7, 12:00-1:00 pm**

To register, email Jennifer Dorn at [jennifer@metrocitiesmn.org](mailto:jennifer@metrocitiesmn.org). Meeting access and other information will be sent in advance of the series. Questions? Contact Patricia Nauman at 651-215-4002 or [patricia@metrocitiesmn.org](mailto:patricia@metrocitiesmn.org).

## **February Budget Forecast Being Released Friday**

The state's February Budget and Economic Forecast was released Friday morning. According to the Office of Management and Budget (MMB), which prepares the budget forecasts, the FY 2026-27 projected budgetary balance is now projected at \$3.7 billion, \$1.3 billion higher than November budget forecast projections. MMB projects a general fund balance for the FY 2028-29 at \$377 million, with a structural budget imbalance of over \$2 billion for FY 2028-29. Metro Cities is reviewing the forecast documents, which will serve to inform any supplemental budget or other spending and revenue related legislative decision-making this session. View the forecast documents [HERE](#).

## **Homeowners Association Local Preemption Bill Heard in House Commerce**

On Tuesday, the House Commerce committee heard SF 1750 (Bahner), a bill to modify laws related to Homeowners Associations (HOA) and Common Interest Communities (CIC). This bill includes language that would preempt local governments from conditioning the approval of a residential building permit or conditional use permit, residential subdivision development, or

residential planned unit development on the creation of a homeowners association, or the inclusion of any service, feature, or common property that would necessitate the creation of a homeowners association. The bill does include an exception that allows a local government to require the maintenance or insurance of common elements, and that the applicant provide an easement to access public infrastructure. The local government preemption language has an effective date of January 1, 2027. Other portions of the bill that amend Homeowners Association and Common Interest Community statutes had a variety of both support and opposition from testifiers and committee members.

During the 2025 legislative session, a version of this bill was heard and modified in the Senate. The House then took up the Senate file this legislative session and amended the bill, SF 1750, on Tuesday in the House Commerce committee. View the most recent version of the bill language [HERE](#) as modified by the House. The bill was laid over in the House Commerce committee, where the committee intends to continue to work on the bill. Please contact Ania McDonnell at [ania@metrocitiesmn.org](mailto:ania@metrocitiesmn.org) with any questions.

### **State Licensure of Massage Therapy Considered**

[HF 362](#) (Pinto), a bill to establish a statewide licensure system for massage therapy, was heard in the House Health Finance and Policy committee on Monday. The bill was introduced last year and largely aligns with Metro Cities' policy on the topic. It would create a state license for practitioners as well as a five-member advisory council to help the commissioner of health establish standards of practice and a code of ethics for the profession. The bill would preempt all local massage therapy ordinances, but cities would still be able to require a massage therapy establishment to obtain a business license or permit to conduct business. Proponents of this bill argue that a lack of statewide regulation of this industry creates opportunities for bad actors and human trafficking. Practicing massage therapists who testified on the bill were split in their support or opposition to this bill. The bill was initially passed, as amended, by the committee, but later in the hearing the vote was reconsidered and the bill failed. The path forward for this bill remains unclear.

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

### **House Committee Discusses Traffic Safety Cameras**

The House Transportation committee heard [HF 3431](#) (Sencer-Mura) on Monday. The bill makes the traffic safety camera pilot program authorized in the last biennium permanent and opens the ability to use these cameras to all cities. The current pilot is only taking place in the cities of Minneapolis and Mendota Heights. Staff from the city of Minneapolis shared data that shows the effectiveness of the cameras that have been deployed as part of the pilot program. Metro Cities' policy supports authorizing local governments to use traffic safety camera systems for the enforcement of traffic laws. Like the pilot, this bill would authorize interested cities to hire and train traffic enforcement agents to issue citations in lieu of peace officers. The law lays out requirements for those agents and their work. The bill was ultimately not passed out of committee.

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

### **Senate Committee Hears from Cities on Federal Impacts to Local Economies**

On Wednesday, the Senate Jobs and Economic Development committee heard testimony from metropolitan region mayors as well as local small business representatives on the impacts from the increase in the federal immigration enforcement presence in Minnesota since early December. Testimony was provided from the metropolitan cities of Minneapolis, Saint Paul, Richfield and Golden Valley. City officials discussed local impacts and responses. The city of Minneapolis has

produced a report that outlines impacts for the city and local businesses. You can view that preliminary impact report [HERE](#).

Explore Minnesota, the state's tourism agency, presented on various challenges faced by the local hospitality and tourism sector. You can view their PowerPoint presentation [HERE](#). The agency has some general economic reporting but do not have specific figures at this time. Committee members expressed interest in a statewide analysis of the economic impacts of the federal immigration enforcement presence. Metro Cities will continue to monitor legislative activity related to the economic impacts to cities and the state.

## **House and Senate Capital Investment Committees**

This week, the House and Senate Capital Investment Committees heard presentations on the Governor's capital investment recommendations, with agency-specific presentations by state agency and Metropolitan Council officials. The recommendations for the Metropolitan Council include \$5 million for Inflow and Infiltration (I/I) grants for eligible metropolitan cities, with grant funding traditionally covering 50% of I/I project costs. The recommendation includes \$1 million for Regional Parks and Trails. Click [HERE](#) for more information about both bonding requests from the Metropolitan Council.

The Minnesota Housing Finance Agency presented the Governor's recommendation of \$50 million for Housing Infrastructure Bonds (HIB), which funds rental housing preservation, permanent supportive housing construction and preservation, affordable housing for seniors, manufactured home community acquisition and infrastructure, single-family homes development, and more deeply affordable rental housing. Additionally, the Governor recommends \$10 million towards Publicly Owned Housing Program (POHP). The POHP funds renovations to rehabilitate and preserve public housing units throughout the state as accessibility improvements, health and safety needs arise, and removal of mold and asbestos require upkeep.

## **Energy Code Support Grants Bill Heard**

On Wednesday, the House Workforce, Labor, and Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee heard [HF 3663](#) (Jones) that creates a grant program to support code enforcement officials with support, education, training, and tools related to compliance and technology compatibility for the State Energy Code, particularly for performance-based energy code standards. The bill as written would provide \$1 million in fiscal year 2027 for the grants to the Department of Labor and Industry to create a competitive grant program for cities over 50,000 in population. There was committee discussion about lowering the population threshold for eligible cities to allow for more cities to have access to this grant program. The bill was laid over for the possible inclusion in an omnibus Workforce, Labor, and Economic Development bill.

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

## **Senate Taxes Hears Environmental Remediation Fund Bill**

On Thursday, the Senate Taxes committee heard [SF 3589](#) (Rest). This bill would extend the sunset for Ramsey and Hennepin counties to impose a mortgage registry and deed tax to 2036. The proceeds from this tax go to the Environmental Remediation Fund, which funds remediation grants to local governments. Metro Cities [submitted a letter](#) in support of the bill, citing the importance of this funding to support redevelopment activities for cleanup and tax base revitalization. The bill has no general fund impact and was passed out of the Senate Taxes committee and sent to the Senate floor.

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

## New Minnesota CIC/HOA Ombudsperson Office

During the House Commerce hearing this week, members heard from the new Minnesota Common Interest Community/Homeowner's Association Ombudsperson Office, located in the Department of Commerce. This office was created in 2025 and serves as a neutral education and problem-solving resource to HOA/CIC unit owners, tenants, and associations to understand their rights and to facilitate disputes. The office intends to offer free informal mediation services soon. The office does not provide legal advice and does not have enforcement authority. So far, the office has received 61 complaints and 659 calls. The most common issues they hear about are maintenance, accessing board documents, fees, fines, and other issues. Currently the office has the budget for one full time staff member to run the office.

View the presentation from the office [HERE](#), and access their website [HERE](#).

*You can contact the CIC/HOA Ombudsperson office at:*

Email: [CIC.HOA.Ombudsperson.COMM@state.mn.us](mailto:CIC.HOA.Ombudsperson.COMM@state.mn.us)

Phone: (651) 539-4045

[Request Portal](#)

## SMC Quarterly Convening: Spring 2026

The Minnesota Shared Mobility Collaborative is holding its quarterly convening on **Tuesday, March 17**. The event will be held virtually via Zoom from 9:00AM to 10:00AM. This convening is entitled [E-Bike Research Highlights](#). The convening will highlight two recently completed research studies on e-bike use.

**Youth E-Bike Safety Study:** E-bikes represent a growing opportunity for mobility and reduction in vehicle miles traveled. But they also present new safety challenges. Caroline Ketcham, active transportation planner for MnDOT, will discuss findings from a youth e-bike safety study and strategies to make e-bikes a safe option for all road users.

**Rebate Incentives Powering Mode Shift:** Kaitlyn Denten, infrastructure policy researcher at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs, will discuss research examining data collected during the rebate application process in the 2024 e-bike rebate program year. Denten will draw on survey data to explore the use of e-bikes and provide important information for planners, engineers, and policymakers regarding this emerging mode.

The webinar is free to attend, but [registration is required](#). Once you have registered, you will receive an email confirmation with a Zoom link. The link should not be shared with others; it is unique to you.

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## MnDOT Webinar on New Cost Participation Policy

MnDOT has finished their update of the agency's Cost Participation Policy. The department is hosting a webinar on **Monday, March 23 at 10AM** for local agencies and consultants to learn more. This webinar will discuss the update to MnDOT's cost participation policy and highlight key changes. Learn about the new ability to pay provision as well as updates to other topics like lighting, roundabouts, signals, aesthetics and more. This will be an overview and not a detailed training. MnDOT is currently developing a longer, more detailed training and this training should

be available later in 2026. State Aid will release information when available. Click [HERE](#) to register for the webinar on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

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## **Bills of Note**

[HF 3587](#), Gordon: Bill requires election judges assisting voters outside of a polling place to handle only one voted ballot at a time.

[HF 3594](#), Johnson, W.: Bill requires certification from a private entity prior to receiving funding from the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency.

[HF 3695](#), Johnson, P.: Bill establishes a task force on standardized identification for emergency responders.

[HF 3598](#), Mekeland: Bill requires cities of the first, second and third class to modernize certain building project documentation procedures.

[HF 3600](#), Perryman: Bill modifies the competitive selection processes for certain development programs through MHFA for cities with community land trusts.

[HF 3605](#), Olson: Bill exempts the application of certain environmental policies to the adoption and amendment of municipal comprehensive plans.

[HF 3606](#), Nash: Bill requires proof of citizenship or lawful immigration status as a prerequisite to receipt of rental assistance or down payment assistance.

[HF 3625](#), Jones: Bill repeals the alternative approval process for certain zoning procedures for first class cities.

[HF 3639](#), Hussein: Bill prohibits landlords from listing the name of a minor child of a tenant in a lease or eviction complaint.

[HF 3640](#), Hussein/[SF 3565](#), Clark: Bill establishes a right of a prospective tenant to view the rental unit.

[HF 3663](#), Jones: Bill appropriates funding for competitive grants to assist municipalities with streamlining State Energy Code compliance.

[HF 3723](#), Quam: Bill requires voter verification before mail delivery of absentee ballot.

[HF 3724](#), Davis: Bill prohibits political subdivisions from establishing or enforcing ranked-choice voting.

[HF 3728](#), Koegel: Bill establishes requirements on trunk highway system maintenance and expansion, limits trunk highway capacity expansion projects in certain circumstances, and requires asset management plans.

[HF 3731](#), Greenman/[SF 3719](#), McEwen: Bill eliminates the Class A installer license from the electrical code.

[HF 3740](#), Koegel: Bill modifies certain requirements for trunk highway project development, scoping, and alternative analysis.

[HF 3748](#), Jordan: Bill appropriates \$250 million from the general fund for lead service line replacement.

[HF 3783](#), Coulter/[SF 3823](#), Boldon: Bill requires all local officials to file statements of economic interests.

[HF 3785](#), Dippel: Bill modifies law regarding e-bikes.

[HF 3806](#), Howard/[SF 3839](#), Port: Bill authorizes the issuance of housing infrastructure bonds and appropriates funding.

[HF 3808](#), Myers: Bill limits late fee charges for common interest communities and requires associations to adopt policies on fines and collection.

[HF 3809](#), Dotseth: Bill modifies the requirements in an expedited eviction process.

[SF 3721](#), Gruenhagen: Bill requires the verification of eligibility for first-generation homebuyers down payment assistance.

[SF 3740](#), Nelson/[HF 3559](#), Davids: Bill allows local governments to prohibit cannabis business operation within 500 feet of congregate housing for children, congregate housing for transplant recipients, and hospitals.

[SF 3745](#), Coleman/[HF 3441](#), Koznick: Bill requires the Met Council to pay all ongoing capital maintenance costs from county sources (after federal funds and operating revenue).

[SF 3746](#), Coleman/[HF 3507](#), Koznick: Bill cancels and reallocates funding for the Blue Line extension project to switch modes to arterial bus rapid transit.

[SF 3809](#), Lieske/[HF 3377](#), Roach: Bill requires referendums for certain capital improvement projects by economic development authorities.

[SF 3823](#), Boldon: Bill requires all local officials to file statements of economic interest.

[SF 3824](#), Dibble/[HF 3749](#), Olson: Bill proposes several of the Department of Transportation's 2026 policy initiatives.

[SF 3842](#), Oumou Verbeten/[HF 3413](#), Hollins: Bill prohibits local governments from entering into certain immigration enforcement agreements.

[SF 3851](#), Boldon: Bill permits a court to stay certain writs of recovery for up to 15 days.

[SF 3853](#), Johnson Stewart/[HF 3430](#), Kraft: Bill modifies the surcharges for EVs and plug-in hybrid vehicles. The bill additionally establishes a vehicle weight surcharge.

[SF 3879](#), Dibble/[HF 3352](#), Hansen, R.: Bill provides for public debt to be incurred for public information technology systems, licenses, and infrastructure.

[SF 3884](#), Housley: Bill appropriates money to MPCA for PFAS biomonitoring.

[SF 3902](#), Seeberger: Bill requires ambulance services to report certain prehospital care data.

[SF 3919](#), Coleman/[HF 3518](#), Myers: Bill appropriates \$1 million from the general fund for safe road zones.

[SF 3968](#), McEwen/[HF 2928](#), Acomb: Bill establishes new regulations regarding data centers.

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**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.

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