



## **Metro Cities Annual Meeting – Mark Your Calendar!**

Please join us! Metro Cities' Annual Meeting is on Wednesday, April 15<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm at the Roseville Oval Skating Center Banquet Room. The meeting will feature a social hour starting at 5:00 pm. Our guest speaker is *Trisha Kirk, Managing Director of the Guthrie Theater*. A brief business meeting to elect Metro Cities Board officers and members will follow. This is a fun event and great opportunity to socialize with your peer colleagues across the metropolitan region. More information to follow! RSVP to Jennifer Dorn at [jennifer@metrocitiesmn.org](mailto:jennifer@metrocitiesmn.org).

## **Zoning Preemption Legislation Hearing on Monday**

The House Elections Finance and Government Operations Committee will hear HF 3895 – Igo on Monday at 1:00 pm. This bill contains local preemption relating to land use, zoning, and housing. View the bill language [HERE](#).

The bill is especially problematic for metropolitan area cities in that it directly interferes with existing intersecting regional and local processes for local comprehensive plans, housing planning and densities. Key provisions also include establishing an administrative review process subject to time constraints in MS 15.99 for approving requests related to multifamily residential developments in areas zoned for those uses or in commercial areas that permit multifamily residential developments. A city would be required to allow duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, and townhomes on at least 33% of the area in a city zoned for single family housing. The bill would also prohibit a city from imposing a minimum lot size on a greenfield larger than 1/8 of an acre. Cities would be required to allow multifamily residential on at least 33% of areas zoned for commercial uses. The bill also contains a list of criteria-based preemption requirements for cities of the first, second and third class. The bill requires ADUs as allowed uses, removes residential design standards and removes the ability of a city to condition approval of a residential building permit on the creation of a HOA or the inclusion of any service, feature or common property element necessitating an HOA.

Metro Cities is working with other city associations in opposing the language. We are anticipating a likely hearing for the companion bill, SF 4123- Port in the Senate State and Local Government Committee next week as well. We will continue to monitor and provide updates on these bills.

Contact Patricia Nauman at [patricia@metrocitiesmn.org](mailto:patricia@metrocitiesmn.org) or Ania McDonnell at [Ania@metrocitiesmn.org](mailto:Ania@metrocitiesmn.org) with any questions.

## **Autonomous Vehicle Bills Heard in Senate**

The Senate Transportation Committee heard four bills regarding autonomous vehicles at their hearing on Wednesday. Two of the bills offer differing frameworks for state regulations over AV use in Minnesota, including rules and regulations for on-demand vehicle networks (such as Waymo). A third bill provides for a study of potential impacts before authorizing AVs and a fourth bill seeks to ban autonomous commercial vehicles statewide. See below for details on each bill.

SF 4010 (Johnson Stewart) is the Senate companion to HF 3513 (Koznick), which is the only AV bill that has been heard so far this year in the House. These bills are considered the preferred language by AV companies like Waymo and they testified to that at Wednesday's hearing. The bill defines necessary terms and sets minimum insurance coverage requirements. Section 17 of the bill prohibits cities from imposing any local regulations regarding the operation of autonomous vehicles, automated driving systems, and on-demand vehicle networks. Metro Cities submitted testimony opposing this preemption and encouraging more engagement with local governments as the bill continues to be worked on. Click [HERE](#) for a summary of the bill.

[SF 4618](#) (Dibble) offers a competing framework to the one offered by SF 4010. Many of the definitions are similar, if not the same, but there are key differences in the permitting and regulation of on-demand vehicle networks. The bill requires that a traffic study be conducted before vehicle networks operate and local governments can review those and comment on them before networks are in operation. SF 4618 requires on-demand autonomous vehicle networks to pay for infrastructure costs if a political subdivision or the commissioner determines that additional infrastructure is necessary to accommodate it. Section 17, Subdivision 12 in the bill affirms the authority of cities to regulate the operation of these vehicle networks by requiring permits or imposing requirements and fees. Click [HERE](#) for a summary of the bill.

[SF 4381](#) (Maye Quade) establishes an advisory board to study the impacts of commercial vehicle operations. The advisory board, which includes two municipal members (one being a member of a city of the first class in the metropolitan area), is charged with evaluating commercial autonomous vehicles operations permit applications and must provide recommendations to the commissioner of Transportation by February 1, 2027. If passed, no commercial autonomous vehicles would be permitted to operate in the state until the study is complete, and the department has developed its process. Click [HERE](#) for a summary of the bill (the second municipal advisory board member was added as part of an amendment adopted in committee). There is a house companion for this bill, HF 4216 (Sencer-Mura) scheduled to be heard next week.

[SF 4014](#) (McEwen) would require a natural person to be present when a commercial vehicle is operated by an autonomous driving system. This bill was passed and referred to Judiciary.

SF 4010, SF 4618, and SF 4381 were laid over in the committee. The Chair indicated that next week the committee will mark up a Senate AV package potentially using pieces of all three bills.

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

## **Group Home Legislation Heard in House and Senate**

[HF 4144](#) (Nadeau) was heard in the House Human Services Policy Committee on Tuesday. The bill would establish non-concentration standards (650ft distancing requirements) for newly licensed residential programs or assisted living facilities with six or fewer residents. The bill requires notification to impacted municipalities when new licenses are issued by either DHS or MDH and it allows those agencies to delegate building inspection responsibilities to cities who request it. Finally, the bill changes how MAARC submittals are handled by requiring an explanation to a reporter of maltreatment of why a report is not accepted for investigation. Several city representatives testified in favor of the bill, which was ultimately laid over, [as amended](#). Click [HERE](#) for a summary of the bill (note that this summary is for the as introduced version of the bill).

The senate companion, [SF 4279](#) (Hoffman), was heard on Wednesday in the Senate Human Services Committee. Members of the committee indicated that more work needed to be done on the bill, with a primary concern being proposed distancing requirements. The bill was sent to the Judiciary Committee. Metro Cities submitted testimony which can be read [HERE](#).

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

## **LAHA Extension Proposed**

This week, the Senate Housing and Homelessness Prevention Committee heard [SF 4394](#) – Port. The bill provides various technical and policy changes to the Local Affordable Housing Aid program, which was established in 2023 and created a 0.25% sales tax for housing aid to cities over 10,000 in population in the metropolitan area.

Metro Cities [submitted a letter](#) in support of the [A-3 amendment](#), which extends the Local Affordable Housing Aid (LAHA) spending timeline by two years, which would require a city to commit funds to a project within five years of receiving the aid, and spending the funds within six years. The amendment also expands qualifying projects for LAHA funds to include both emergency shelter facility construction and operations as well as the provision of services in those facilities. The A-3 amendment was passed and added to the bill.

The bill was passed out of the committee and sent to the Senate Taxes committee next.

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

## **House Commerce Hears Omnibus HOA Bill**

On Wednesday, the House Commerce Committee took back up [SF 1750](#) – Bahner, an omnibus Homeowner's Association/Common Interest Community bill. This bill was heard in the committee a few weeks ago and was taken up again this week to continue to be discussed. You can view the updated bill language [HERE](#). This bill contains local government preemption language that prohibits a local government from conditioning the approval of a residential building permit on the creation of a homeowner's association or the inclusion of any service or feature that necessitates a homeowner's association. The bill passed the committee and was sent to the House Judiciary Committee. We will continue to monitor this legislation and provide updates.

## **Governor Releases Supplemental Budget**

On Tuesday Governor Walz released his supplemental budget recommendations. In it, he calls for an expansion of the Dependent Care Tax Credit, cutting the statewide sales tax by .075% (6.5% to 6.425%), implementing a social media tax on big tech companies and using the revenue to fund future disruptions caused by AI. Governor Walz is also recommending \$33 million in housing assistance and \$10 million for small business loans in the wake of recent federal immigration enforcement activity. He also reiterated his pledge to implement gun violence measures as well as fraud prevention measures. More information on the full supplemental budget can be found [HERE](#).

## **Livable Communities Grant Application Round Now Open**

The Metropolitan Council's Livable Communities Act (LCA) grant program round 1 application is now open, and applications are due on April 15<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 pm. You can find more information and

how to apply [HERE](#). This is the first round of funding since the program was updated to provide a simpler application process and to be aligned with Imagine 2050 goals.

More than \$12.4 million is available for 2026 Livable Communities grants in the following areas:

- Policy and Affordable Housing Program Development \$539,000
- Small Area Planning Projects \$200,000
- Development Projects \$11.7M

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

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

Metro Cities is hosting a three-part webinar series with Metropolitan Council staff, to give an overview of local comprehensive planning and its context within a regional framework and held the first of the three webinars on March 12. These are open to elected officials and staff. The series is covering the intersections of regional and local planning, and resources for communities in preparing comprehensive plans. All webinars are one hour and will be held over the noon hour. Details for the next two webinars are below:

- ***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).

### **Save the Date: Training on Upcoming Transportation Funding Opportunities**

Metropolitan Council staff are hosting a training on the changes made to the [2026 Regional Solicitation](#) and [2026 Active Transportation](#) solicitation before the call for projects occurs later this Spring.

As part of this training Metropolitan Council staff will:

- Discuss changes made for this round of the Regional Solicitation.
- Walk through application requirements for Active Transportation dollars (made available via the regional sales tax revenue directed to the TAB).
- Answer questions from attendees so that cities are prepared to take advantage of both funding opportunities.

This is an **in-person** event in Saint Paul at Metro Cities' office (the League of Minnesota Cities building) on **Friday, April 3 at 10AM until 11:30AM**. Any interested city officials or staff are welcome to attend. Stay tuned for more information on how to register in future newsletters and via email.

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

### **Minnesota Housing 2026 Multifamily Consolidated RFP/2027 HTC Round 1 Kickoff**

Minnesota Housing is hosting a virtual kickoff event for the 2026 Multifamily Consolidated RFP/2027 HTC Round1 on Tuesday, April 21<sup>st</sup> from 9:30 am – 11:00 am. They encourage all potential applicants to attend.

You can register to attend the kickoff event [HERE](#).

Here are some important dates for the upcoming 2026 Multifamily Consolidated RFP:

- **Wednesday, March 18:** 2026 Multifamily Consolidated RFP/2027 HTC Round 1 early release application materials published and pre-applications for the HUD Section 811 PRA Program and Innovative Construction Techniques Selection Criterion available.
- **Wednesday, April 8:** All 2026 Multifamily Consolidated RFP/2027 HTC Round 1 and Minnesota Housing's funding partner application materials published and pre-applications, Intent to Apply, and full applications available to submit.
- **Thursday, May 7 at noon:** Deadline to submit Intent to Apply; required for all 2026 Multifamily Consolidated RFP/2027 HTC Round 1 applications.
- **Thursday, May 28 at noon:** Deadline to submit pre-applications for the HUD Section 811 PRA Program and Innovative Construction Techniques Selection Criterion.
- **Thursday, July 9 at noon:** Deadline to submit 2026 Multifamily Consolidated RFP/2027 HTC Round 1 applications.

You can find more information for applications [HERE](#).

### **Bills of Note**

[HF 4301](#), Gordon/[SF 4457](#), Johnson: Bill appropriates money to local governments for planning and assistance to support drinking water regionalization.

[HF 4330](#), Mekeland/[SF 4488](#), Rarick: Bill modifies who can supervise electrical work.

[HF 4342](#), Frazier/[SF 4527](#), Pha: Bill establishes a relief program for small businesses negatively impacted by federal enforcement activity and appropriates funding.

[HF 4346](#), Hussein: Bill appropriates funding for the first-time homebuyer, fee-based home purchase financing program.

[HF 4378](#), Kozlowski: Bill establishes a onetime emergency rental assistance aid for counties and Tribal governments.

[HF 4434](#), Jones/[SF 4598](#), Dibble: Bill modifies requirements relating to MSAS design standards and variances.

[HF 4449](#), Jones: Bill modifies requirements governing transit planning, project development, performance, and related transit-oriented development.

[HF 4477](#), Xiong/[SF 4535](#), Champion: Bill establishes a Minnesota business recovery loan program and appropriates funding.

[SF 4459](#), Housley/[HF 4141](#), Johnson: Bill provides for a criminal penalty for assaulting housing and redevelopment authority employees.

[SF 4514](#), Marty: Bill establishes a onetime emergency rental assistance aid for counties and Tribal governments.

[SF 4519](#), Dibble/[HF 4202](#), Hanson, J.: Bill modifies provisions related to local government regulation of cannabis businesses.

[SF 4538](#), Kreun/[HF 4507](#), Heintzeman: Bill appropriates \$15 million for the Local Road Wetland Replacement Program.

[SF 4548](#), Hauschild: Bill bans local elected officials from entering certain NDAs.

[SF 4559](#), Dibble: Bill contains several provisions related to “mobile voting technology.”

[SF 4584](#), Boldon/[HF 4444](#), Feist: Bill appropriates money for youth intervention program supplemental grants.

[SF 4608](#), Abeler: Bill establishes levy limits for counties and cities.

[SF 4618](#), Dibble: Bill establishes a regulatory framework for connected and automated vehicles.

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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.

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!

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