



Metro Cities Annual Meeting is April 15th – Mark Your Calendar!

Please plan to join us for Metro Cities' Annual Meeting, which is just around the corner. The meeting will be held Wednesday, April 15th 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 great opportunity to socialize with your peer colleagues across the metropolitan region. More information to follow! RSVP to Jennifer Dorn at jennifer@metrocitiesmn.org.

Save The Dates! Regional and Local Planning Foundations Webinars

Metro Cities is hosting a webinar series with Metropolitan Council staff on local comprehensive planning and its context within a regional framework. They are open to all elected officials and staff and geared toward a broad audience. 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.

Save the Date: Training on 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 training session will be offered in a hybrid format, in-person at Metro Cities' office (the League of Minnesota Cities building) and via Zoom on **Friday, April 3 from 10AM until 11:30AM**. Any interested city officials or staff are welcome to attend. To register, email Jennifer Dorn at jennifer@metrocitiesmn.org.

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

Second and Third Committee Deadlines Today, Then Legislative Recess

Today marks the second and third legislative committee deadlines for policy related bills, and after today's hearings, the Legislature will begin its Easter, Eid and Passover recess, returning Tuesday, April 7. The third deadline, for appropriations and finance bills, is April 17th. Taxes and Capital investment bills are not subject to the committee deadlines. Following the recess, the Legislature will turn its attention to supplemental budget bills and other appropriations bills as well as any tax and capital investment related bills.

Zoning Preemption Bill Defeated in House Committee

On Monday, the House Elections and Government Operations Committee heard [HF 3895](#) - Igo, also known as the "Starter Homes Act." View the most up to date bill language [HERE](#).

The bill contains numerous provisions that would preempt local decision making. Key provisions include establishing an administrative review process subject to time constraints for approving requests related to certain multifamily residential developments. Cities 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 also be required to allow multifamily residential on at least 33% of areas zoned for commercial uses. 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, along with the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities and the Municipal Legislative Commission, [provided a letter](#) to the committee in opposition to the bill. Many city officials also provided testimony, citing concerns with the preemption of local authority over zoning and land use, and concerns that the bill would not ensure any additional affordable housing would be built. The bill failed to pass, with 7 no votes and 5 yes votes. Thank you to Eric Searles, Community Development Director, City of Woodbury, and Steve Wilson, Councilmember, City of Farmington, and the many other city officials who provided testimony.

Metro Cities continues to monitor for these bills and will provide any updates as the session continues. Contact Patricia Nauman at patricia@metrocitiesmn.org or Ania McDonnell at ania@metrocitiesmn.org with any questions.

Group Homes Language Removed from Human Services Bill

On Friday morning, [SF 476](#) (Hoffman), the Senate Human Services policy bill, was passed, as amended, and referred to the floor. The nearly 150-page bill came into committee with several provisions regarding congregate care facilities and their interaction with local governments (from Chair Hoffman's SF 4729). These pieces were removed later in the hearing. They would have required the following for both residential programs and assisted living facilities licensed by the Dept. of Human Services (DHS) and Dept. of Health (MDH) respectively with licensed capacities of six or fewer residents:

- Establish proximity limits (650ft) for new licensed facilities.
- Require notification to impacted municipality of new licenses.

- Allow DHS and/or MDH to delegate inspection authority to local governments to ensure compliance with relevant building and inspection codes.
- Requires communication back to entities who report to the MN Adult Abuse Reporting Center (MAARC) on whether an investigation will be pursued.

During the hearing these provisions were removed, via amendment, because new language was agreed to by interested stakeholders and it was determined that the provisions would have a fiscal impact. The compromise reached between cities, providers, and advocates is represented in the [A21 amendment](#) which is slated to be amended into the committee's budget bill later this session. The A21 wasn't formally moved, just discussed as a preview for the budget bill whenever the committee takes that up. Contact Mike Lund at michael@metrocitysmn.org or 651-215-4003 with any questions.

Constitutional Amendment for Housing Heard in Senate

On Tuesday, the Senate State and Local Government Committee heard [SF 2621](#) - Mohamed, which proposes seeking an amendment to the Minnesota Constitution to increase the state sales and use tax rate by three-eighths of one percent for funding various housing programs.

Metro Cities' policies oppose tax and expenditure limits in the Constitution as well as new Constitutional amendments, as these limit the Legislature and local governments to respond to unanticipated needs or fluctuating economic conditions, and [submitted a letter](#) in opposition to the bill.

The bill passed the Senate State and Local Government Committee and was referred to the Senate Taxes Committee. Contact Ania McDonnell at ania@metrocitysmn.org with any questions.

Bill Establishes Task Force to Study Housing Taxes and Fees

This week, the Senate Housing and Homelessness Prevention Committee heard [SF 4749](#) – Weber that creates a Task Force on Housing Taxes and Fees to study and analyze the impact of state, county and local taxes, fees, and exactions on the cost of housing development and preservation. The bill creates a 16-member task force, including one member representing cities. The task force would meet in 2026 and provide a report to the legislature by February 15, 2027. The bill was passed and sent to the Senate State and Local Government Committee, where it is scheduled for a hearing today, March 27th.

Contact Ania McDonnell at ania@metrocitysmn.org with any questions.

HOA Bills Advance in House Committees

This week, the House Housing Finance and Policy Committee heard [HF 2614](#) – Mekeland, a bill which prohibits a city from conditioning the approval of a residential building permit or residential subdivision development on the creation of a homeowners association, or the inclusion of any service, feature, or common property necessitating a homeowners association, unless requested by the developer. The bill contains exceptions for a local government to be able to require the maintenance or insurance of common elements. The bill was passed out of committee and sent to the House floor.

Metro Cities continues to have concerns with this bill, as it is preemptive and could result in a city being forced to manage property in an HOA development that should be private property, particularly the management of stormwater.

Also this week, the House Judiciary Committee heard SF 1750 – Bahner, that includes policy changes pertaining to Homeowners Associations and Common Interest Community regulations. This bill also contains the preemption language included in HF 2614- Mekeland as described above. View the bill language [HERE](#), with the local government preemption language on page 51. The bill passed out of the committee and was sent to the House floor. Contact Ania McDonnell at ania@metrocitiesmn.org with any questions.

Senate Jobs Committee Hears Federal Immigration Enforcement Business Recovery Bills

On Monday, the Senate Jobs and Economic Development Committee heard two bills to support businesses impacted by federal immigration enforcement activity. [SF 4527](#)-Pha and [SF 4535](#) – Champion.

SF 4527-Pha would provide for \$100 million in small business relief grants through the commissioner of employment and economic development.

[SF 4535](#) - Champion would provide for \$100 million in small business emergency loans through the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), funded through the Minnesota Forward Fund account. This would be distributed as \$18 million for Greater Minnesota and \$82 million for grants to nonprofit corporations in the seven-county metropolitan area for businesses adversely affected by immigration enforcement activities. The funding would be through a one-time appropriation available until June 30, 2028. The main eligibility requirement is for a business showing more than a 30% revenue loss compared to the prior year period between December 1, 2025, and February 28, 2026. This bill would have provided 0% forgivable loans to businesses impacted by ICE after payments are made on time for two years, then the remaining 60% of the five-year loan would be forgiven. There was a vote for the bill to be laid on the table, which passed. The bill did not advance to the Senate Finance Committee.

Chair Champion said there will not be another Senate Jobs Committee meeting for the rest of the session. For further information, please refer to the Senate research bill [Summary](#).

Council Formed to Examine Impacts of Immigration Enforcement

On Wednesday, Governor Walz issued Executive Order 26-05 to document the impacts of Operation Metro Surge and Operation PARRIS. The Council will consist of no more than 15 members that will create a report with preliminary findings and recommend future preventative measures by October 31st, 2026. The final report will be published no later than December 1st, 2026.

There will be a minimum of four public meetings on the selected topics. Subjects may include but are not limited to: Human and civil rights violations, Impact on immigrants, Use of chemical munitions, Actions taken against US citizens, Peaceful protests, Digital documentation of federal action, Economic harms, Impacts on children, and Activism to support schools, childcare, and local businesses.

Elections Bill Passed by Committee

[SF 4223](#) (Westlin), the omnibus elections policy bill, was passed, [as amended](#), by the Senate Elections committee and referred to the floor. The bill includes a working group on local candidate campaign finance reporting and an extension of the timeline for canvassing returns so that local canvassing boards can avoid calling special meetings to certify elections. The bill contains language that allows cities to decide if they want to conduct absentee balloting for 46 days or 18 days before election day. For the 2026 election, the bill requires a city and county to “come to an agreement” by June 12, 2026 as to whether the city will administer absentee voting for 46 or 18 days. The bill now heads to the Senate floor for a vote by the full body. The House companion, [HF 4243](#) (Freiberg) was passed out of the House Elections committee last week, but that bill was not amended by the committee to build a House elections omnibus bill.

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

Autonomous Vehicle Bill Passed by Senate Committee

[SF 4618](#) (Dibble), was passed, as amended, by the Senate Transportation committee and referred to the Judiciary and Public Safety committee on Wednesday of this week. The A5 DE amendment adopted in committee is a combination of three autonomous vehicle bills heard in committee on [Wednesday, 3/18](#). Key provisions found in Sen. Dibble’s original SF 4618 remain in place after this week’s markup of the bill. One such provision is a requirement that a traffic study be conducted before on-demand autonomous vehicle networks operate. The bill allows local governments to review those studies and provide comments on them before networks are in operation. SF 4618 requires on-demand autonomous vehicle networks to pay for infrastructure costs if a political subdivision and the commissioner determine that infrastructure modifications or improvements are necessary to accommodate the network’s operation. Finally, Sec. 5, Subd. 14 in the bill affirms the authority of cities to regulate the operation of these vehicle networks by requiring permits or imposing requirements and fees. An amendment seeking to roll back this local control provision was offered and ultimately withdrawn during this week’s hearing.

SF 4618 also incorporates Sen. Maye Quade’s advisory task force idea, which includes two municipal appointees (at least one from a city of the first class in the metropolitan area). The task force is charged with studying several potential impacts related to the deployment of commercial autonomous vehicles. If passed, autonomous vehicle operations would be prohibited until the task force completes its work and the department of public safety establishes its permitting process, Feb 1, 2028, at the earliest.

The path forward for an autonomous vehicle bill this session remains unclear. The companion to SF 4618 has not received a hearing in the House and [HF 3513](#) (Koznick), the primary AV bill in the House, has not had the votes to move out of the Transportation committee.

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

Bills of Note

[HF 4512](#), Smith/[SF 4296](#), Maye Quade: Bill requires public hearings and certain disclosures prior to approval of data center development.

[HF 4521](#), Sencer-Mura/[SF 4618](#), Dibble: Bill establishes a regulatory framework for connected and automated vehicles.

[HF 4531](#), Jones/[SF 4657](#), Dibble: Bill modifies MnDOT's evaluation and planning process for certain transportation projects.

[HF 4535](#), Tabke/[SF 4285](#), Seeberger: Bill authorizes peace officers to use oral fluid screening of drivers to determine presence of drugs.

[HF 4545](#), Jones: Bill requires rulemaking to allow single-exit stairway apartment buildings as part of the State Building Code.

[HF 4554](#), Pinto/[SF 4885](#), Seeberger: Bill modifies roster of arbitrators for peace officer grievances.

[HF 4598](#), Baker/[SF 3720](#), McEwen: Bill modifies building code administration.

[HF 4607](#), Koznick: Bill limits city rental housing licensing authority.

[HF 4622](#), Huot/[SF 3902](#), Seeberger: Bill requires ambulance services to report certain prehospital care data.

[HF 4645](#), Rehrauer: Bill clarifies manufactured home park residents' right of first refusal for certain proposed purchase agreements, removes notice requirements for certain offers to purchase a park.

[HF 4656](#), Lee, F./[SF 4914](#), Pappas: Bill appropriates \$5 million in bonding for community tree-planting grants in the metropolitan area.

[HF 4659](#), Roach/[SF 4824](#), Lieske: Bill prohibits municipalities from entering into nondisclosure agreements.

[HF 4669](#), Roach/[SF 4827](#), Lieske: Bill allows for local government noncompliance with unfunded mandates.

[HF 4700](#), Stier/[SF 4899](#), Seeberger: Bill increases funding for peace officer training reimbursement.

[HF 4704](#), Scott/[SF 4649](#), Bahr: Bill proposes an amendment to the Minnesota Constitution, article XI, by adding a section exempting local governments and school districts from state mandates unless funding is provided to comply with the mandate.

[HF 4717](#), Murphy/[SF 4169](#), Johnson Stewart: Bill modifies the tax on electricity sold as vehicle fuel.

[HF 4722](#), Kraft/[SF 4865](#), Weber: Bill modifies municipal enforcement of the State Building Code.

[HF 4744](#), Freiberg/[SF 4846](#), Westlin: Bill appropriates \$1 million from the general fund to the VOTER account.

[HF 4758](#), Murphy: Bill makes several changes to transportation related taxes and fees.

[HF 4759](#), Hudson: Bill proposes an amendment to the Minnesota Constitution, article XII, by adding sections which prohibit unfunded mandates by the state to local governments.

[HF 4764](#), Nadeau/[SF 4911](#), Hoffman: Bill modifies wetland replacement requirements.

[HF 4765](#), Roach/[SF 4823](#), Lieske: Bill makes several changes to state law regarding annexation.

[HF 4780](#), Igo/[SF 4749](#), Weber: Bill establishes a Task Force on Housing Taxes and Fees and requires a report.

[SF 4623](#), Lucero/[HF 3606](#), Nash: Bill requires proof of citizenship or lawful immigration status as a prerequisite to receipt of rental assistance or down payment assistance.

[SF 4658](#), Dibble/[HF 4449](#), Jones: Bill modifies certain requirements governing transit planning, project development, performance, and related transit-oriented development, including by establishing performance measures, requiring a transit system investment framework, limiting certain highway projects, and establishing zoning requirements.

[SF 4685](#), Hemmingsen-Jaeger/[HF 4171](#), Rehrauer: Bill prohibits the imposition of certain fees for residential improvements necessary to accommodate the disability of a veteran.

[SF 4756](#), Kreun: Bill establishes levy limits for local governments.

[SF 4772](#), Seeberger/[HF 4190](#), Huot: Bill appropriates money for ARMER grants.

[SF 4784](#), Latz: Bill increases the appropriation for the bring it home rental assistance program.

[SF 4824](#), Lieske/[HF 4659](#), Roach: Bill prohibits the state and municipalities from entering into nondisclosure agreements.

[SF 4867](#), Port: Bill deletes Local Affordable Housing Aid (LAHA) tax distribution to metropolitan area cities and provides the funding to metropolitan area counties.

[SF 4884](#), Draheim/[HF 3598](#), Mekeland: Bill requires certain cities to modernize certain building project documentation procedures.

[SF 4887](#), Johnson Stewart/[HF 4208](#), Jones: Bill establishes certain requirements related to motor vehicle impacts.

[SF 4915](#), Pha: Bill is titled Yes in God's Back Yard (YIGBY) Housing Act, which would restrict local government regulations of certain residential developments by religious organizations and provides civil remedies.

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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