



Metro Cities Annual Meeting and Board Elections

Thanks to all who attended Metro Cities Annual Meeting on Wednesday evening! Your presence is greatly appreciated and made for a successful meeting and event. Metro Cities would like to thank our guest speaker, *Trisha Kirk, Managing Director of the Guthrie Theater*, for joining us.

Metro Cities' President Jeffrey Dahl presided over the elections of Board officers and new Board members. Congratulations to Laurie Hokkanen, City Manager-Chanhassen and current Vice President of Metro Cities on her election as President, and to Bryan Bear, City Administrator-Hugo on his election as Vice President. Metro Cities also welcomes new Board members Kari Niedfeldt-Thomas, Mayor-New Brighton, Logan Martin, City Administrator-Rosemount, Tim Sandvik, City Manager-Robbinsdale, Tim Sanders, Mayor- Blaine, and Aurin Chowdhury, Councilmember-Minneapolis to the Board. Terms for officers and new members begin on July 1.

Transportation Funding Training Next Friday - Please Join Us!

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. Metropolitan Council staff will discuss changes for this round of the Regional Solicitation, discuss application requirements for Active Transportation dollars, and answer questions on funding opportunities.

The training session will be offered in a hybrid format, in-person at Metro Cities' office (the League of Minnesota Cities building) and via Zoom next **Friday, April 24 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.

Transit Planning and Funding Bill Heard in House

[HF 4449](#) (Jones) was heard and laid over in the House Transportation Committee on Monday the 13th. The bill would incorporate new performance measures for ongoing transit planning, analysis, and evaluation. It also establishes a transit system investment framework to guide future projects by the Metropolitan Council. These provisions would have wide-ranging impacts on the regional transit system and cities across the metropolitan region. Metro Cities submitted written testimony articulating that changes like these must be considered in close collaboration with the region's cities, transit providers, riders, and other stakeholders in the metropolitan area.

Metro Cities also raised specific concerns on potential impacts for local decision making and transportation funding needs for cities across the metropolitan area. Section 5, Subd. 4 prohibits cities from beginning a road project if the project is inconsistent with the transit system investment framework. Section 5, Subd. 5 reallocates a portion of a city's local transportation funding (from either the small cities assistance account or larger cities assistance account) to the transportation impact assessment and mitigation account if a project is determined to be inconsistent with the Metropolitan Council's transit system investment framework. Section 8, Subd. 1 prohibits cities

from expending funds for transit capital projects located outside of TMA I or TMA II unless the area near the station or stop is zoned for transit-oriented development. Metro Cities opposes statutory changes that restrict the use of local funds for the construction of transit projects.

The Senate companion for this bill has not been heard yet this session. The topic of coordination between local government and Metropolitan Council projects will likely be revisited in the interim ahead of the 2027 legislative session.

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

Energy Efficiency Mandates Considered

[HF 3179](#) (Jones) was heard and laid over by the House Energy Committee on Tuesday the 14th. The bill establishes statewide building energy performance standards for public and private buildings of a certain size with a goal of a 90 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. Cities across our region are currently taking meaningful steps toward improving the efficiency of their publicly owned buildings and Metro Cities' policy recognizes that advanced energy standards reduce energy burdens and costs for building occupants and lower greenhouse gas emissions. Metro Cities submitted written testimony to this effect.

Metro Cities' comments on the bill also pointed out that without adequate state support, HF 3179 places an unfunded mandate on local governments during a time when there is increasing pressure on local budgets and a growing list of capital projects needed at the local level. The bill also imposes financial penalties to noncompliant building owners if benchmarks are not reached. For these reasons Metro Cities opposes this bill. The Senate companion for this bill has not advanced in that body.

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

Omnibus Transportation Bill Passes Senate Committee

[SF 3988](#) (Dibble), the omnibus transportation bill, was passed, [as amended](#), by the Senate Transportation Committee on Wednesday the 15th. As a supplemental budget and policy bill, it is considerably smaller than last year's bill, but SF 3988 contains several provisions of note for cities.

Some of these provisions include:

- Allowing trunk highway funds to be used to relocate utilities, which was recommended by MnDOT's cost participation work group to help ease the burden on local agencies.
- Establishing a program at MnDOT to support improvements to commercial truck parking.
- Extending a previous trunk highway fund appropriation of \$4.8 million for truck parking safety projects.
- Several regulations regarding e-bikes and e-motos.
- Modifying the definition of killed in the line of duty for the purposes of the public safety officer and survivor benefit to include death resulting from exposure to certain diseases sustained in the line of duty. This change applies retroactively from February 1, 2020.

One [amendment](#) offered, but not adopted would have included language authorizing the deployment of autonomous vehicles in Minnesota. The amendment was the same language heard in both the House and Senate which establishes a regulatory framework for autonomous vehicles

and autonomous vehicle networks (like Waymo). That language explicitly preempts cities from requiring fees or permits for on-demand autonomous vehicle network companies.

SF 3988 was referred to the Senate Finance Committee. The House Transportation Committee did not pass an omnibus bill, but the companion bill ([HF 3926](#)), which contains several MnDOT policy recommendations was passed by the committee in March.

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

Various Property Tax Bills Heard

Several property tax bills have been introduced this session, including bills that would set levy limits, provide one time property tax refunds, add income exclusions for homestead credit refunds, lower the threshold for the targeted property tax relief program and increase the refund amount. Legislation to create a property tax task force has also been introduced and heard in the Senate and House Taxes Committees. Discussions on property taxes have again surfaced following increases in certified levies for local governments for 2026.

The property tax task force would examine the system of property taxes and make recommendations. These bills were heard in both the Senate and House Taxes Committees and laid over for consideration in taxes omnibus bills. Metro Cities will continue to monitor these bills as omnibus tax bills are considered in the coming weeks.

Contact Patricia Nauman at patricia@metrocitiesmn.org with any questions.

House Public Safety Advances Omnibus Bill

On Wednesday April 15th, the House Public Safety Committee passed [HF 1082](#) – Moller, as amended, which was the committee's omnibus finance bill. One appropriation of note for cities was an increase in funding for the Philando Castille Memorial Training Fund and upholding the funding for Peace Officer Training Reimbursements. The Philando Castille Memorial Training Fund is managed by the POST Board and supports mandatory training for officers in de-escalation, implicit bias, and crisis management to improve community-police relations.

The Senate omnibus bill is anticipated to be put together by the Judiciary and Public Safety Committee during their hearing on Friday the 17th.

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

Housing Infrastructure Bonds Bill Heard in House Capital Investment Committee

This week, the House Capital Investment committee had an information hearing on [HF 3806](#) - Howard, a bill which would provide for \$200 million in Housing Infrastructure Bonds (HIBs). Metro Cities [submitted a letter](#) in support of providing additional funding for HIBs. Funding for Housing Infrastructure Bonds is also included in both the House and Senate Housing omnibus bills, where funding for this program is typically held. We will continue to monitor for this funding for housing as the budget conversations continue.

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

Senate Housing Committee Advances Omnibus Bill

The Senate Housing and Homelessness Prevention Committee heard SF 203 – Port this week, the omnibus Housing finance and policy bill. Metro Cities [submitted a letter](#) in support of the inclusion of \$50 million in housing infrastructure bonds included in the bill. The committee voted on a few amendments to the bill, including the [A8 amendment](#) which includes policy language requiring Minnesota Housing Finance to report on operating costs in order to better understand agency costs driven by state appropriations, and to require that any fund interest earnings are spent on the same programs that state funding is provided for. Another [amendment](#) was considered by the committee which would prohibit private equity ownership of over 100 single-family homes, with a variety of exceptions. The amendment language was adopted by the committee with 9 yes votes and 1 abstain vote. The bill was passed as amendment and sent to the Senate Finance committee.

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

Senate Jobs Committee Passes Business Recovery and Budget Bills

This week, the Senate Jobs and Economic Development Committee heard SF 4535- Champion, which creates a business recovery loan program and a study to address economic impacts of federal immigration enforcement in Minnesota. The bill is funded by using \$100 million from the Minnesota Forward Fund, and the bill provides for loans to businesses statewide through the Minnesota Initiative Foundations. View the bill language [HERE](#). The bill was passed and sent to the Senate Finance Committee.

Earlier this week, the House Ways and Means Committee also heard testimony on the local effects of federal immigration enforcement. Metro Cities provided brief testimony at the committee on ongoing discussions with metropolitan cities as local impacts of this enforcement are better understood and to reflect support for state assistance to assist cities with unexpected public service costs including public safety, emergency management, and other needs.

The Senate also heard SF 3664 – Champion, which is the [supplemental budget and policy bill](#) for the committee. The bill contains a few technical policy changes and some funding for a few entities. The bill was passed and sent to the Senate Finance Committee.

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House Housing Committee Passes Supplemental Budget and Policy Bill

The House Housing Finance and Policy Committee heard HF 1141 – Howard this week, the omnibus housing finance and policy bill. You can view the bill language [HERE](#). The bill includes \$100 million in funding for housing infrastructure bonds, as well as an additional \$150,000 in funding for the Homeownership Education Counseling and Training (HECAT) program, and Metro Cities [submitted a letter](#) in support of these provisions. The bill uses investment earnings from the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) to support spending in the bill and requires more reporting and specificity from the agency on how they use housing funds. The MHFA testified before the committee with concerns about some of the policy changes.

The committee considered [an amendment](#) which would take away Local Affordable Housing Aid (LAHA) and Statewide Affordable Housing Aid (SAHA) from any city that imposes a moratorium on new residential developments. The amendment was withdrawn and not voted on because the amendment would likely require the bill to go to the Taxes Committee.

The bill was passed by the committee and sent to the committee on Ways and Means.

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House Workforce, Labor and Economic Development Passes Omnibus Bill

This week, the House Workforce, Labor and Economic development committee heard [HF 3732](#) - Pinto, the omnibus finance and policy bill. View the bill language [HERE](#). The bill includes policy language to modify the Innovative Business Development Public Infrastructure (IBDPI) grant program so that if the eligible project the public infrastructure was intended to serve has not been developed within ten years of being awarded a grant, the public infrastructure can instead serve a different project.

The bill also creates and funds an Office of Community Investment within the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), with the intent for this office to oversee all grant processes at DEED, including coordinating across the agency to provide strategic direction for grant-making, orienting program design around achieving specific goals with documentable outcomes, streamlining operations, increasing the accessibility and transparency of grantmaking, and tracking grant outcomes.

An [amendment](#) was offered to create a business relief program to support businesses impacted by federal immigration enforcement activity between December 2025 and February of 2026, which would be funded at \$100 million through the Minnesota Forward Fund. This amendment did not pass. The bill was passed by the committee and sent to the House Ways and Means Committee where it will be heard next.

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

Capital Project Requirement in Use of State Funds

On Tuesday, the Senate State and Local Government Committee heard [SF 2321](#) – Johnson Stewart, which adds a requirement for local governments that receive capital project fund appropriations to include a maintenance and preservation plan including safety and security, maintenance and utility costs, availability of repair parts and materials, sustainability, and any other criteria deemed relevant by the city completing the project. On Thursday, the bill was heard in the Senate Capital Investment Committee and was sent to the Senate Rules and Administration Committee.

NDA Legislation Heard

On Wednesday April 15th, the Senate Judiciary Committee heard [SF 4548](#) - Hauschild, which would restrict local elected officials or any employee of a city, county, or town from entering into nondisclosure agreements (NDAs). The main argument was that by establishing a balance between economic opportunity with transparency, city officials will feel less pressure to consider data centers while fostering trust with local residents.

Some members of the committee sounded the alarm on creating tailored policy for specific industries but expressed a desire to create guidelines. The bill was laid over.

Regional and Local Planning Foundations Webinar Series and Additional Webinar

Metro Cities is hosting four webinars 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. The next webinar is Thursday, May 7th from 12:00 – 1:00 pm. An additional webinar has been added for June, with more information to follow. If you have not yet registered and would like to attend, please email Jennifer Dorn at jennifer@metrocitiesmn.org. Details for the next two webinars are below:

-Technical Assistance for Comprehensive Planning: May 7, 12:00-1:00 pm
-Understanding Land Use Review at the Council: June 11, 12:00-1:00 pm

Sign Up! 2026 Metro Cities Policy Committees

Metro Cities 2026 policy committee process will begin in July and your participation is encouraged. Committees will recommend the association's legislative policies for 2027. Participation is open to member city elected officials and staff, and committee descriptions and dates are on the [website](#). Please be sure to [sign up](#) for the committee(s) you wish to attend. This will help us keep rosters accurate. We look forward to seeing you this summer!

Bills of Note

[HF 4943](#), Davids: Bill limits the implementation of the traffic safety camera system pilot program.

[HF 4958](#), Greene/[SF 5085](#), Dibble: Bill requires all pedestrian crossings in the state to be compliant with the ADA.

[HF 4960](#), Kozlowski: Bill increases the duration for landlord's duty to furnish heat.

[SF 5112](#), Jasinski/[HF 4933](#), Koznick: Bill requires notice to the legislature regarding certain light rail transit project changes.

[SF 5113](#), Jasinski/[HF 4907](#), Anderson, P.E.: Bill modifies motor vehicle registration tax.

[SF 5151](#), Clark/[HF 4895](#), Sencer-Mura: Bill modifies the appropriation for assistance to homeless families, those at risk of homelessness, or highly mobile families.

[SF 5153](#), Port/[HF 4545](#), Jones: A bill for an act relating to the State Building Code; requiring rulemaking to allow single-exit stairway apartment buildings as part of the State Building Code.

[SF 5161](#), Draheim: Bill terminates prior appropriations to the PROMISE grant program.

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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