

2026 Metropolitan Agencies Policy Committee Roster

Name	Title	Organization
Josh Berg	Councilmember	Elko New Market
Jenn Brewington	Community and Economic Development Director	Victoria
Deb Calvert	Councilmember	Minnetonka
Macheal Collins	City Clerk	Burnsville
Marc Culver	Public Works Director	Brooklyn Park
Inderia Falana	Government Relations Representative	Minneapolis
Clancy Ferris	Legislative and Grants Analyst	St. Louis Park
Tom Fletcher	Mayor	Greenwood
Mike Funk	City Manager	Minnetonka
*Gary Hansen	Councilmember	Eagan
Steven Huser	Senior Government Relations Representative	Minneapolis
Cheryl Jacobson	City Administrator	Mendota Heights
**Beth Johnston	Intergovernmental Relations Representative	League of MN Cities
Elizabeth Kautz	Mayor	Burnsville
**Daniel Lightfoot	IGR Representative	League of MN Cities
Gregg Lindberg	City Manager	Burnsville
Amada Marquez Simula	Mayor	Columbia Heights
Jennifer Monson	Planning and Economic Development Manager	St. Louis Park
Laurie Ann Moore	Councilmember	Brooklyn Center
Jennifer O'Rourke	IGR Director	St. Paul
Loren Olson	Senior Government Relations Representative	Minneapolis
**Hannah Pallmeyer	Government Affairs Liaison	Metropolitan Council
Christian Pederson	Councilmember	Victoria
Michael Sable	City Manager	Maplewood
Clark Schroeder	Special Projects	Lake Elmo
Jason Steffenhagen	Councilmember	New Brighton
Jay Stroebel	City Manager	Brooklyn Park
Katie Topinka	Deputy City Operations Officer	Minneapolis
**Owen Wirth	Intergovernmental Relations Representative	League of MN Cities
Nyle Zikmund	City Administrator	Mounds View

*Committee Chair

**Guest/Non-City Official

September 23, 2026

TO: Metropolitan Agencies Policy Committee Members
FROM: Gary Hansen, Councilmember, City of Eagan
SUBJECT: Meeting Notice and Agenda

Wednesday, September 30, 2026

9:00 am – 10:00 am

Virtual Meeting Zoom:

Join Zoom Meeting:

♦ Thank you for agreeing to be a policy committee member!

Attached are the materials for the third Metropolitan Agencies Policy Committee meeting. Please take the time to read through the policies before the meeting and come with your ideas and suggestions.

AGENDA

1. Call to order. (Gary Hansen, Chair)
2. Approval of minutes for the August 26, 2026 meeting.
3. Policy Committee Protocols and Processes.
4. Presentation: ***Todd Graham, Principal Forecaster, Metropolitan Council, regarding the Council's processes for establishing forecasts and related policies.***
5. Policy Committee Memo Review. (Patricia Nauman, Executive Director)
6. Discussion of policy and suggested modifications.
 - a. Policy with suggested changes from staff or committee members.
7. Discuss additional suggestions for policies, and issues for future consideration.
8. Other business.
9. Adjourn. (10:00 am.)

Metropolitan Agencies

Minutes for Meeting of August 26th, 2026

Present: Gary Hansen, Patricia Nauman, Mike Lund, Ania McDonnell, Jennifer Dorn, Kris Amundson, Hannah Pallmeyer, Tom Fletcher, Emma Dvorak, Clark Schroeder, Jennifer O'Rourke.

Online: Deb Calvert, Christian Pederson, Clancy Ferris, Steve Huser, Cheryl Jacobson, Jason Steffenhagen, Nyle Zikmund, Marc Culver, Loren Olson.

Chair Hansen called the meeting to order at 9:03 am. Motion by Schroeder, seconded by Fletcher to approve the minutes for the July meeting. Motion adopted.

Ms. Nauman introduced Emma Dvorak, Planning Analyst for the Metropolitan Council. Ms. Dvorak presented an overview of the assistance provided by the Council to cities for comprehensive planning. Discussion and questions. Mr. Fletcher asked about population growth projection for 2050. Ms. Dvorak stated that those matters are handled by other departments.

Ms. Nauman reviewed the memo and noted requests to pull policies MA-15 and MA-11. Chair Hansen moved to the policies with no recommended changes. MA-1, MA-2, MA-3, MA-4, MA-5, MA-6, MA-8, MA-9, MA-10, MA-12, MA-13, MA-14, MA-16, MA-18. Motion by Fletcher, seconded by Calvert to adopt the policies. Motion adopted.

Chair Hansen moved to policies with suggested modifications: MA-7 Review of Local Comprehensive Plans, with changes suggested by staff. Motion by Fletcher, seconded by O'Rourke to approve the policy with staff changes. Motion adopted.

Chair Hansen moved to MA-15 Funding Regional Parks & Open Space (changes suggested by city of St. Paul). Ms. O'Rourke reviewed her proposed changes. Discussion. Mr. Huser stated that Minneapolis would be in favor of the proposed change. Motion by Schroeder, seconded by Fletcher to approve the proposed policy changes by the city of Saint Paul. Motion adopted.

Chair Hansen moved to MA-11 Regional Growth (changes suggested by city of Greenwood). Mr. Fletcher stated that growth in the region is declining and presented his policy changes to reflect these changes. Mr. Huser noted that the policy addresses aspects of growth aside from growth levels. Discussion. Mr. Schroeder would support tabling this and said he is hesitant on the proposed language. Ms. O'Rourke stated the sentence in the second paragraph is an action statement and gives her pause. Ms. Nauman said that staff can potentially arrange for Council staff to provide more information. Motion by Fletcher, seconded by Schroeder to table MA-11 to a third meeting. Motion adopted. Chair Hansen suggested the third meeting, with a limited agenda, could be remote.

Chair Hansen moved to MA-17 Density (changes suggested by staff and the city of Greenwood). Ms. Nauman reviewed the staff change and stated the language would be more explicit. Mr. Fletcher reviewed his suggested changes. Mr. Schroeder asked whether this change helps respond to preemptive housing laws with density. Discussion. Motion by Fletcher, seconded by Schroeder, to add "To support its density goals, the Metropolitan Council should provide data on

its operating and capital costs for wastewater collection and treatment based on density.” Motion adopted with one no vote.

Chair Hansen moved to additional suggestions for policies, and issues for future consideration.

Chair Hansen adjourned the meeting at 10:24 am.

Metro Cities' Policy Protocols and Processes

Metro Cities is a member association representing the shared interests of cities in the seven-county metropolitan area at the state and regional levels of government. The association's membership encompasses over 90 municipalities from across the metropolitan region.

Metro Cities' work is guided by the core principle that cities be self-determining, that they have sufficient authority and flexibility in providing services, and that state and regional policies, funding and regulations account for local needs, circumstances and capacities.

Metro Cities legislative policies follow this core principle and generally emphasize the need for sufficient and flexible state and regional resources and policymaking that allows cities to address local service needs. Metro Cities' legislative policies broadly and consistently emphasize the importance of resource adequacy and local autonomy and flexibility and oppose state or regional directives that would erode local authority, or create financial risks for cities and taxpayers.

Each year, four policy committees meet to review, discuss and recommend the association's legislative policies. Votes are made by consensus, with each city having one vote. Once recommended, policies are forwarded to the Metro Cities Board of Directors. Following Board approval, policies are transmitted to the general membership for final adoption. Policies guide the association's work at the state and regional levels of government.

Policy committee members must act in their capacity as an elected or appointed city official. The committee process and association policies are not for promoting personal or external interests, or policy objectives that are outside the scope of, or contrary to, Metro Cities' core principles.

Committee Decorum

Appropriate decorum is expected. Members are encouraged to attend all meetings, and when at all possible, to attend in person. Comments should be addressed through the chair.

Members attending remotely will be asked to use the hand raise function, or to speak to questions put into the chat. When speaking, members will be asked to identify themselves and their city. Members are asked to turn cameras on when speaking.

Members may offer amendments for committee consideration. Committee packets are sent a week in advance, and any amendments must be received by 5:00 pm on the day prior to the distribution of the committee packet. Amendments that are corrective or technical in nature may be offered orally at the discretion of the chair. Members are expected to present their own amendments.

Each city has one vote, and votes are made by acclamation unless a roll call is requested and seconded. Guests are welcome to observe meetings but may not vote or raise issues for consideration.

September 23, 2026

To: Metropolitan Agencies Policy Committee
From: Patricia Nauman, Executive Director
Re: September Policy Committee Meeting Memo

The final meeting of the Metropolitan Agencies Committee is next **Wednesday, September 30, 2026, from 9:00 – 10:00 am. The meeting is virtual.** All policies with the exception of MA-11, have been adopted.

The committee will begin with a brief presentation by ***Todd Graham, Principal Forecaster, Metropolitan Council*** regarding the Council's processes for establishing forecasts and related policies.

Adopted policies:

MA-1	Goals and Principles for Regional Governance
MA-2	Regional Governance
MA-3	Comprehensive Analysis and Oversight of Metropolitan Council
MA-4	Funding Regional Services
MA-5	Regional Systems
MA-6	Regional Water Supply Planning
MA-7	Review of Local Comprehensive Plans (<i>as amended</i>)
MA-8	Comprehensive Planning Process
MA-9	Comprehensive Planning Schedule
MA-10	Local Zoning Authority
MA-12	Natural Resource Protection
MA-13	Inflow and Infiltration (I/I)
MA-14	Sewer Availability Charge (SAC)
MA-15	Funding Regional Parks and Open Space (<i>as amended</i>)
MA-16	Livable Communities
MA-17	Density (<i>as amended</i>)
MA-18	Comprehensive Plans and Environmental Review

Policies with suggested modifications:

MA-11	Regional Growth (<i>changes suggested by the city of Greenwood</i>)
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We look forward to seeing you next week. Again, please note that this is a virtual meeting.

MA-1 GOALS AND PRINCIPLES FOR REGIONAL GOVERNANCE ADOPTED

The Twin Cities metropolitan region is home to a majority of the state's population and is poised for significant growth in the next two decades. The region faces significant challenges and opportunities, the responses to which will determine the future success of the region and its competitiveness in the state, national and world economies.

The Metropolitan Council manages the growth of the metropolitan region, and cities are responsible for adhering to regional plans as they plan for local growth and service delivery.

The region's cities are the Metropolitan Council's primary constituency, as regional and local growth are primarily managed through city comprehensive planning implementation and the delivery of public services. To function successfully, the Metropolitan Council must be accountable to and work collaboratively with city governments.

The role of the Metropolitan Council is to set broad regional goals and provide cities with technical assistance and incentives to achieve the goals. City governments are responsible for and best suited to provide local zoning, land use planning, development, and service delivery. Any additional roles or responsibilities for the Metropolitan Council should be limited to specific statutory assignments or authorization and should not usurp or conflict with local roles or processes unless such changes have the consent of the region's cities.

Metro Cities supports an economically strong and vibrant region, and the effective, efficient, and equitable provision of regional infrastructure, services, and planning throughout the metropolitan area.

Metro Cities supports the provision of approved regional systems and planning that are provided more effectively, efficiently, or equitably on a regional level than by individual local units of government.

The Metropolitan Council must involve cities in the delivery of regional services and planning, be responsive to local perspectives on regional issues and be required to provide opportunities for city participation on Council advisory committees and task forces.

The Metropolitan Council must involve cities at all steps of planning, review and implementation of the regional development guide, policy plans, systems statements, and local comprehensive plan requirements to ensure transparency, balance and Council adherence to its core mission and functions. These processes should allow for stakeholder input before policies and plans are released for comment and finalized. Any additional functions for the Metropolitan Council should not be undertaken unless authorized specifically by state law.

MA-2 REGIONAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

ADOPTED

Metro Cities supports the appointment of Metropolitan Council members by the Governor with four-year, staggered terms for members to stabilize ideological shifts and provide for continuity of knowledge on the Council, which is appropriate for a long-range planning body. The appointment of the Metropolitan Council Chair should coincide with the term of the Governor. Metro Cities supports a nominating committee process that maximizes participation and input by local officials. Metro Cities supports expanding the nominating committee from seven to 13 members, with a majority of a 13-member committee being local elected officials. Of the local officials appointed to a nominating committee, two thirds should be elected city officials, appointed by Metro Cities.

Consideration should be given to the creation of four separate nominating committees, with committee representation from each quadrant of the region. Metro Cities supports having the names of recommended nominees or other individuals under consideration for appointment to the Council by the Governor to be made public at least 21 days prior to final selection by the Governor, and a formal public comment period before members are appointed to the Council.

Metro Cities supports the appointment of Metropolitan Council members who have demonstrated the ability to work with cities in a collaborative manner, commit to meet with local government officials regularly and who are responsive to the circumstances and concerns of cities in the district that they represent on the Council. Council members should understand the diversity and the commonalities of the region, and the long-term implications of regional decision-making. A detailed position description outlining the required skills, time commitment and understanding of regional and local issues and concerns should be clearly articulated and posted in advance of the call for nominees.

Metro Cities supports opportunities for local officials to provide input during the decennial legislative redistricting process for the Metropolitan Council and supports transparency in the redistricting process.

MA-3 COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS AND OVERSIGHT OF METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

ADOPTED

A comprehensive analysis of the Metropolitan Council's functions and structure was conducted by a Governor's Blue-Ribbon Committee in 2020. Metro Cities supports specific findings by this committee that recommended four-year staggered terms for Metropolitan Council members with members appointed by the governor, an expanded nominating committee with a majority of local officials on the committee, and the publication of nominees prior to their appointment. These findings are consistent with Metro Cities' legislative policy on regional governance. The metropolitan region will continue to expand while simultaneously facing significant challenges for the effective, efficient, and equitable provision of resources and infrastructure.

Metro Cities supports an objective study of the Metropolitan Council's activities and services as well as its geographical jurisdiction to ensure that its services are positioned to be effective and adequate in addressing the future needs of the region.

Such work must include the participation of local officials. The Metropolitan Council should also examine its scope of services to determine their benefit and efficiency and be open to alternative methods of delivery to assure that services are provided at high levels of effectiveness for the region.

Metro Cities supports appropriate legislative oversight of the Metropolitan Council to regularly review the Council's activities, and to provide transparency and accountability of its functions and operations.

MA-4 FUNDING REGIONAL SERVICES

ADOPTED

The Metropolitan Council should continue to fund regional services and activities through a combination of user fees, property taxes, and state and federal grants and should set user fees through an open process that includes public notices and hearings. User fees should be uniform and set at a level that supports effective and efficient public services based on commonly accepted industry standards and allows for sufficient reserves to ensure long-term service and fee stability. Fee proceeds

should be used to fund regional services or programs for which they are collected. Metro Cities supports the use of property taxes and user fees to fund regional projects so long as the benefit conferred on the region is proportional to the fee or tax, and the fee or tax is comparable to the benefit cities receive in return.

MA-5 REGIONAL SYSTEMS

ADOPTED

Regional systems are statutorily defined as transportation, aviation, wastewater treatment and recreational open space. The purpose of the regional systems and the Metropolitan Council's authority over the systems is outlined in state law. The Metropolitan Council must seek a statutory change to alter the focus or expand the reach of any of these systems.

Systems plans prepared by the Metropolitan Council should be specific in terms of size, location, and timing of regional investments to allow for consideration in local comprehensive planning. Systems plans should also clearly state the criteria by which local plans will be judged for consistency with regional systems.

Additional regional systems should be established only if there is a compelling metropolitan problem or concern best addressed through the designation. Common characteristics of the existing regional systems include public ownership of the system and its components and established regional or state funding sources. These characteristics should be present in any new regional system that might be established. Water supply and housing do not meet necessary established criteria for regional systems. Any proposed additional system must have an established regional or state funding source.

MA-6 REGIONAL WATER SUPPLY PLANNING

ADOPTED

The Metropolitan Council is statutorily authorized to carry out planning activities to address water supply needs of the metropolitan area. A Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee (MAWSAC) that includes state agency representatives and local officials was established to assist the Council in developing a master water supply plan that includes recommendations for clarifying the roles of local, regional, and state governments, streamlining, and consolidating approval processes and recommending future planning and capital investments. The Master Water Supply Plan serves as a framework to assist communities in water supply planning, without usurping local decision-making. Many cities also conduct their own analyses for use in

water supply planning.

As the Metropolitan Council continues to assess the region's water supply and water sustainability, it must work cooperatively with local policymakers and local professional staff to ensure an on-going base of information that is sound, credible, and verifiable, and considers local information, data, cost-benefit analyses, and projections before any policy recommendations are issued. Metro Cities encourages the Metropolitan Council to consider the inter-relationships of wastewater treatment, storm water management and water supply. Any state and regional regulations and processes should be clearly stated in the Master Water Supply Plan. Further, regional monitoring and data collection benefits should be shared expenses between the regional and local units of government.

Metro Cities supports Metropolitan Council planning activities to address regional water supply needs and water planning activities as prescribed in statute. Metro Cities opposes the insertion of the Metropolitan Council as another regulator in the water supply arena.

Further, while Metro Cities supports regionally coordinated efforts to address water supply issues in the metropolitan area, Metro Cities opposes the elevation of water supply to "Regional System" status, or the assumption of Metropolitan Council control and management of municipal water supply infrastructure.

Metro Cities supports the technical advisory committee to the MAWSAC that maximizes participation by municipal officials and helps to ensure sound scientific analyses and models are developed with local expertise and input before legislative solutions are considered.

Metro Cities supports efforts to identify capital funding sources to assist with municipal water supply projects. Any fees or taxes for regional water supply planning activities must be consistent with activities prescribed in Minn. Stat. § 473. 1565, and support activities specifically within the metropolitan region.

MA-7 REVIEW OF LOCAL COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

ADOPTED AS AMENDED

Local officials identified concerns with the submission and review processes for 2018 local plans including requests for information beyond what should be necessary for the Metropolitan Council to review local plans for consistency with regional systems,

191 regional requirements that evolved as local plans were prepared and finalized and
192 finding plans to be incomplete or requiring detailed information on items of a local
193 rather than regional nature, among others.

194
195 As the new regional development guide Imagine 2050 is implemented, the
196 Metropolitan Council must work with Metro Cities and local officials to address any
197 necessary improvements to the comprehensive planning review processes in advance
198 of the next comprehensive planning cycle. This work should be conducted with
199 ongoing opportunities for input and consultation with local officials as any
200 modifications to comprehensive planning review processes are considered. This work
201 shall include reviewing processes for comprehensive plan amendments and
202 identifying areas for improvement. These include ensuring that requirements are
203 communicated adequately and consistently, and in a timely manner, that review letters are
204 coordinated at the Council level prior to dissemination to avoid duplicative requests, and
205 that review letters and information requests are clarified as to whether the request is
206 needed to meet a plan requirement. (suggested by staff)

207
208 In reviewing local comprehensive plans and plan amendments, the Metropolitan
209 Council should:

- 210
211 • Recognize that its role is to review and comment, unless it is found that the local
212 plan is more likely than not to have a substantial impact on or contain a substantial
213 departure from one of the four system plans;
- 214
215 • Be aware of statutory time constraints imposed by the Legislature on plan
216 amendments and development applications;
- 217
218 • Provide for immediate effectuation of plan amendments that have no potential for
219 substantial impact on systems plans;
- 220
221 • Require the information needed for the Metropolitan Council to complete its review,
222 but not prescribe additional content or format beyond that which is required by the
223 Metropolitan Land Use Planning Act (LUPA);
- 224
225 • Work in a cooperative and timely manner toward the resolution of outstanding
226 issues. When a city's local comprehensive plan is deemed incompatible with the
227 Metropolitan Council's systems plans, Metro Cities supports a formal appeal
228 process that includes a peer review. Metro Cities opposes the imposition of

sanctions or monetary penalties when a city's local comprehensive plan is deemed incompatible with the Metropolitan Council's systems plans or the plan fails to meet a statutory deadline when the city has made legitimate, good faith efforts to meet Metropolitan Council requirements;

- Work with affected cities and other organizations such as the Pollution Control Agency, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Health, and other stakeholders to identify common ground and resolve conflicts between respective goals for flexible residential development and achieving consistency with the Council's system plans and policies; and

- Require entities, such as private businesses, nonprofits, or local units of government, among others, whose actions could adversely affect a comprehensive plan, to be subject to the same qualifications and/or regulations as the city.

Metro Cities opposes legislation that would obstruct or compromise existing statutes as well as regional policies and requirements that are closely established with local input, and that ensure a coordinated and productive framework to manage the orderly and economic growth of the region. (change suggested by staff)

MA-8 COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROCESS

ADOPTED

Metro Cities supports examining the comprehensive planning process to make sure that the process is streamlined and avoids excessive cost burdens or duplicative or unnecessary planning requirements by municipalities in the planning process. Metro Cities supports resources to assist cities in meeting regional goals as part of the comprehensive planning process, including planning grants and technical assistance.

Metro Cities supports funding and other resources from the Metropolitan Council for the preparation of comprehensive plan updates, including grant funding. Grants and other resources should be provided to all eligible communities through a formula that is equitable and recognizes varying city needs and capacities.

MA-9 COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING SCHEDULE

ADOPTED

Cities are required to submit comprehensive plan updates to the Metropolitan Council every 10 years. A city's comprehensive plan represents a community's

vision of how the city should grow and develop or redevelop, ensure adequate housing, provide essential public infrastructure and services, protect natural areas, and meet other community objectives.

Metro Cities recognizes the merit of aligning comprehensive plan timelines with the release of census data. However, the comprehensive plan process is expensive, time consuming and labor intensive for cities, and the timing for the submission of comprehensive plans should not be altered solely to better align with census data. If sufficient valid reasons exist for the schedule for the next round of comprehensive plans to be changed or expedited, cities should be provided with financial resources to assist them in preparing the next round of plans.

Metro Cities opposes cities being forced into a state of perpetual planning because of regional and legislative actions. Should changes be made to the comprehensive planning schedule, Metro Cities supports financial and other resources to assist cities in preparing and incorporating policy changes in local planning efforts. Metro Cities supports a 10- year time frame for comprehensive plan update submissions.

Metro Cities supports the Metropolitan Council's consideration to reduce requirements for 10-year Comprehensive Plan updates for cities under 2,500 residents.

MA-10 LOCAL ZONING AUTHORITY

ADOPTED

Local governments are responsible for zoning and local officials should have full authority to approve variances to remain flexible in response to the unique land use needs of their own community. Local zoning decisions, and the implementation of cities' comprehensive plans, should not be conditioned upon the approval of the Metropolitan Council or any other governmental agency.

Metro Cities supports local authority over land use and zoning decisions and opposes the creation of non-local appeals boards with the authority to supersede city zoning decisions, and statutory modifications that would diminish the ability of cities to set and implement local zoning ordinances and policies.

MA-11 REGIONAL GROWTH

The most recent regional population forecast prepared by the Metropolitan Council

projects a population of 3,555,000 people by 2040 and 3,820,000 by 2050, as compared to 3,163,000 in 2020 for growth of 657,000 people, or 21%. This projected growth includes natural growth of 344,000 people, immigration of 311,000 people, and domestic migration of 3,000 people. The 3,820,000 estimate for 2050 is a reduction from the Metropolitan Council's prior estimate of 4,001,000 people for 2050. *(changes suggested by city of Greenwood)*

The Minnesota State Demographer projects much lower growth of 208,172 or seven percent from 2024 to 2075, in the metropolitan area. The metropolitan area is projected to account for the majority of the state's 330,000 population growth from 2024 to 2075. The State Demographer projects no natural growth, little domestic migration growth, and much smaller immigration growth. Based on the State Demographer's data, it is very possible that the metropolitan region should plan for lower growth than projected by the Metropolitan Council, with a greater focus on the maintenance and improvement of the region's existing assets. *(changes suggested by city of Greenwood)*

Metro Cities recognizes cities' responsibility to plan for ~~sustainable growth patterns~~ and the integration of transportation, housing, parks, open space, and economic development that will result in a region better equipped to ~~manage population growth~~, provide a high quality of life for an ~~growing and~~ increasingly diverse metropolitan area population, and improved environmental health. *(changes suggested by city of Greenwood)*

In developing local comprehensive plans to fit within a regional framework, adequate state and regional financial resources and incentives and maximum flexibility for local planning decisions are imperative. The regional framework should assist cities ~~in managing growth while being~~ to be responsive to the individual qualities, characteristics and needs of metropolitan cities, and should encourage sub-regional cooperation and coordination. *(changes suggested by city of Greenwood)*

In order to ~~accommodate growth in a manner that~~ preserves the region's high quality of life: *(change suggested by city of Greenwood)*

- Natural resource protection will have to be balanced with growth, development, and reinvestment;
- ~~Significant new~~ resources will have to be provided for transportation and transit; *(changes suggested by city of Greenwood)*

- 343
- 344 • New households will have to be incorporated into the core cities, first and second
- 345 ring suburbs, and developing cities through both development and redevelopment. In order
- 346 for regional and local planning to result in the successful implementation of regional
- 347 policies; (*changes suggested by city of Greenwood*)
- 348
- 349 • The State of Minnesota must contribute additional financial resources, particularly
- 350 in the areas of transportation and transit, community reinvestment, affordable housing
- 351 development, and the preservation of parks and open space. If funding
- 352 for regional infrastructure is not adequate, cities should not be responsible for
- 353 meeting the growth forecast set forth by the Metropolitan Council;
- 354
- 355 • The Metropolitan Council and Legislature must work to pursue levels of state and
- 356 federal transportation funding that are adequate to meet identified transportation
- 357 and transit needs in the metropolitan area;
- 358
- 359 • The Metropolitan Council must recognize the limitations of its authority and
- 360 continue to work with cities in a collaborative, incentives-based manner;
- 361
- 362 • The Metropolitan Council must recognize the various needs and capacities of its
- 363 many partners, including but not limited to cities, counties, economic
- 364 development authorities and nonprofit organizations, and its policies must be
- 365 balanced and flexible in their approach;
- 366
- 367 • Metropolitan counties, adjacent counties and school districts must be brought
- 368 more thoroughly into the discussion due to the critical importance of facilities and
- 369 services such as county roads and public schools in accommodating forecasted
- 370 growth; and
- 371
- 372 • Greater recognition must be given to the fact that the “true” metropolitan region
- 373 extends beyond the traditional seven-county area and the need to work
- 374 collaboratively with adjacent counties in Minnesota and Wisconsin, and the cities
- 375 within those counties. The region faces environmental, transportation, and land
- 376 use issues that cannot be solved by the seven-county metro area alone. Metro
- 377 Cities supports an analysis to determine the impacts of Metropolitan Council’s
- 378 growth management policies and infrastructure investments on the growth and
- 379 development of the collar counties, and the impacts of growth in the collar
- 380 counties on the metropolitan area. Metro Cities opposes statutory or other

regulatory changes that interfere with established regional and local processes to manage growth in the metropolitan region, including regional systems plans, systems statements, and local comprehensive plans. Such changes erode local planning authority as well as the efficient provision of regional infrastructure, disregard established public processes and create different guidelines for communities that may result in financial, environmental, and other impacts on surrounding communities.

MA-12 NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION

ADOPTED

Metro Cities recognizes the Metropolitan Council's efforts to compile and maintain an inventory and assessment of regionally significant natural resources for providing local communities with additional information and technical assistance. The state and region play significant roles in the protection of natural resources. Any steps taken by the state or Metropolitan Council regarding the protection of natural resources must recognize that:

- The protection of natural resources is significant to a multi-county area that is home to more than 50 percent of the state's population and a travel destination for many more. Given the limited availability of resources and the artificial nature of the metropolitan area's borders, and the numerous entities that are involved in protecting the natural resources of the region and state, neither the region nor individual metropolitan communities would be well served by assuming primary responsibility for financing and protecting these resources;
- The completion of local Natural Resource Inventories and Assessments (NRI/A) is not a regional system nor is it a required component of local comprehensive plans under the Metropolitan Land Use Planning Act;
- The protection of natural resources should be balanced with the need to accommodate growth and development, reinvest in established communities, encourage more affordable housing and provide transportation and transit connections; and
- Decisions about the zoning or land use designations, either within or outside a public park, nature preserve, or other protected area are, and should remain, the responsibility of local units of government. The Metropolitan Council's role with respect to climate change should be focused on the stewardship of its internal

operations (wastewater, transit) and working collaboratively with local governments to provide information, best practices, technical assistance and incentives around responses to climate change.

Metro Cities urges the Legislature and the Metropolitan Council to provide financial assistance for the preservation of regionally significant natural resources.

MA-13 INFLOW AND INFILTRATION (I/I)

ADOPTED

The Metropolitan Council has identified a majority of sewerred communities in the metropolitan region to be contributing excessive inflow and infiltration (I/I) into the regional wastewater system or to be on the threshold of contributing excessive inflow and infiltration. Inflow and infiltration are terms for the ways that clear water (ground and storm) makes its way into sanitary sewer pipes and gets treated, unnecessarily, at regional wastewater plants. The number of identified communities is subject to change, depending on rain events, and any city in the metropolitan area can be affected.

The Metropolitan Council establishes a surcharge on cities determined to be contributing unacceptable amounts of I/I into the wastewater system. The charge is waived when cities meet certain parameters through local mitigation efforts.

Metro Cities recognizes the importance of controlling I/I because of its potential environmental and public health impacts, because it affects the size, and therefore the cost, of wastewater treatment systems and because excessive I/I in one city can affect development capacity of another. However, there is the potential for cities to incur increasingly exorbitant costs in their ongoing efforts to mitigate excessive I/I. Therefore, managing I/I at a regional as well as local level, is critical to effective mitigation and cost management.

Metro Cities continues to monitor the surcharge program and supports continued reviews of the methodology used to measure excess I/I to ensure that the methodology appropriately normalizes for precipitation variability and the Council's work with cities on community specific issues around I/I.

Metro Cities supports state financial assistance for metro area I/I mitigation through future Clean Water Legacy Act appropriations or similar legislation and encourages the Metropolitan Council to partner in support of such appropriations. Metro Cities also

supports resources, including identified best practices, information on model ordinances, public education and outreach, and other tools, to local governments to address inflow/ infiltration mitigation for private properties.

A 2023 task force recommended parameters for a private property inflow-infiltration program that will be funded through a portion of the regional wastewater charge. As a program gets underway, Metro Cities will monitor program criteria for transparency and accessibility for eligible cities.

Metro Cities supports continued state capital assistance to provide grants to metropolitan cities for mitigating inflow and infiltration problems into municipal wastewater collection systems. Grant funding should continue to be structured so that all eligible cities have access to this funding assistance.

MA-14 SEWER AVAILABILITY CHARGE (SAC)

ADOPTED

Metro Cities supports a SAC program that emphasizes equity, transparency, simplification, and lower rates.

Metro Cities supports principles for SAC that include program transparency and simplicity, equity for all served communities and between current and future users, support for cities' sewer fee capacities, administrative reasonableness, and weighing any program uses for specific goals against impacts to program equity, transparency, and simplicity. As such, Metro Cities opposes the use of the SAC mechanism to subsidize or incent specific Metropolitan Council goals and objectives. Input from local officials should be sought if the SAC reserve is proposed to be used for any purpose other than debt service, including pay-as-you-go (PAYGO). Metro Cities opposes increases to the SAC rate while the reserve is projected to exceed the Metropolitan Council's minimum reserve balance, without the express engagement of city officials in the metropolitan area.

Metro Cities supports current SAC program criteria that use gross square feet in making SAC determinations, and do not require a new SAC determination for business remodels that do not change the use of the property. These changes were the result of a 2018 task force that made recommendations to simplify the SAC program for users, and to reduce incidents of "surprise" SAC charges.

Metro Cities supports current SAC policy that enhances flexibility in the SAC credit

structure for redevelopment purposes and supports continued evaluation of SAC fees to determine if they hinder redevelopment.

Metro Cities supports the Metropolitan Council providing details on how any proposed changes to the SAC rate are determined. Metro Cities supports a periodic review of MCES' customer service policies, to ensure that its processes are responsive and transparent to cities, businesses, and residents. Metro Cities supports continued outreach by MCES to users of the SAC program to promote knowledge and understanding of SAC charges and policies. Any modifications to the SAC program or structure should be considered only with the participation and input of local officials in the metropolitan region.

Metro Cities supports a "growth pays for growth" approach to SAC. If state statutes are modified to establish a "growth pays for growth" method for SAC, the Metropolitan Council should convene a group of local officials to identify any technical changes necessary for implementing the new structure.

Metro Cities supports allowing the Council to utilize a SAC 'transfer' mechanism when the SAC reserve fund is inadequate to meet debt service obligations. Any use of the transfer mechanism must be done so within parameters prescribed by state law and with appropriate notification and processes to allow local official input and should include a timely 'shift back' of any funds that were transferred from the wastewater fund to the SAC reserve fund. Efforts should be made to avoid increasing the municipal wastewater charge in use of the transfer mechanism.

MA-15 FUNDING REGIONAL PARKS & OPEN SPACE ADOPTED AS AMENDED

In the seven-county metropolitan area, regional parks essentially serve as state parks, and the state should continue to provide capital funding for the acquisition, development, and improvement of these parks in a manner that is equitable with funding for state parks. Since 1985, only nine percent of annual operation and maintenance costs have been covered by state appropriations. State funding apart from Legacy funds should equal 40 percent of the operation and maintenance budget for regional parks. *(changes suggested by city of Saint Paul)*. Legacy funds for parks and trails should be balanced between the metropolitan region and greater Minnesota. Metro Cities supports state funding for regional parks and trails that is fair, creates a balance of investment across the state and meets the needs of the region.

MA-16 LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

ADOPTED

The Livable Communities Act (LCA) under Minn. Stat. 473.25 is administered by the Metropolitan Council and provides a voluntary, incentive-based approach to affordable housing development, tax base revitalization, job growth and preservation, brownfield clean up, mixed-use, transit-friendly development, and redevelopment. Metro Cities supports this approach that is widely accepted and utilized by cities. Since its inception in 1995 the LCA program has generated billions of dollars of private and public investment, created thousands of jobs and added thousands of affordable housing units in the region.

Metro Cities monitors the LCA programs on an ongoing basis and supports any necessary program modifications to ensure that the LCA program criteria are flexible and promote the participation of all participating communities, and to ensure all metropolitan area cities are eligible to participate in the Livable Communities Demonstration Account (LCDA).

Metro Cities supports statutory goals and criteria established for the Livable Communities Act and opposes any changes to LCA programs that constrain flexibility provided for in statutory goals, program requirements and criteria. Metro Cities monitors any potential modifications to the LCA program to ensure that program criteria are responsive to local needs within the context of overall LCA objectives.

Metro Cities supports increased funding and flexible eligibility requirements in the LCDA to assist cities with development that may not be exclusively market driven or market proven in the location, in order to support important local development and redevelopment goals. Metro Cities supports ongoing outreach by the Council on the LCA programs and continued efforts to ensure that LCA criteria are sufficiently flexible to meet the range of identified program objectives.

Metro Cities opposes reductions in funding for Livable Communities Act programs and the transfer or use of LCA funds for purposes outside of the LCA program.

Metro Cities supports statutory modifications in the LCDA to reflect linkages among goals, municipal objectives, and Metropolitan Council system objectives.

Metro Cities supports the use of LCA funds for projects in transit improvement areas, as defined in statute, if funding levels for general LCA programs are adequate to meet

571 program goals and the program remains accessible to participating communities.

572
573 Any proposed program modifications should be considered with input by local officials
574 before changes to are enacted or implemented. Use of interest earnings from LCA
575 funds should be limited to administrative program costs. Remaining interest earnings
576 should be considered to be part of LCA funds and used to fund grants from
577 established LCA accounts using funding criteria.

578
579 **MA-17 DENSITY**

ADOPTED AS AMENDED

580
581 Metro Cities recognizes the need for a regional density policy, including minimum density
582 requirements, that allows the Metropolitan Council to effectively plan for and deliver cost
583 efficient regional infrastructure and services. Regional density requirements must
584 recognize that local needs and priorities vary, and requirements must be sufficiently
585 flexible to accommodate local circumstances as well as the effect of market trends on
586 local development and redevelopment activity.

587
588 The Metropolitan Council asks cities to plan for achieving minimum average net densities
589 across all areas identified for new growth, development, or redevelopment. Because
590 each community is different, how and where density is guided is determined by the local
591 unit of government, regional density requirements should use minimum average net
592 densities and provide flexibility to accommodate individual city circumstances.
593 Metro Cities opposes parcel-specific density requirements as such requirements are
594 contrary to the need for local flexibility in a regional policy. To support its density goals, the
595 Metropolitan Council should provide data on its operating and capital costs for wastewater
596 collection and treatment, based on density. *(change suggested by Greenwood, adopted)*

597
598 Any regional density policy must use local data and local development patterns and must
599 accommodate local physical and land use constraints such as, but not limited to,
600 wetlands, public open space, trees, water bodies and rights-of-way, and any corresponding
601 federal and state regulations imposed on local governments when computing net
602 densities. The Metropolitan Council must coordinate with local governments in
603 establishing or revising regional density requirements and should ensure that regional
604 density and plat monitoring reports comprehensively reflect local densities and land uses.

605
606 Metro Cities opposes setting density requirements at the state level. Doing so would
607 negate the ability of metropolitan cities and the Metropolitan Council to address density

608 needs in the region needed for the effective management of regional and local
609 infrastructure needs and costs. *(change suggested by staff, adopted)*

610

611 **MA-18 COMPREHENSIVE PLANS AND ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW** **ADOPTED**

612

613 Comprehensive plans are essential guiding documents for cities and lay out a range of
614 future land use scenarios, which are intended to allow for the orderly and economic
615 development of the metropolitan region. To allow for local flexibility and functionality, as
616 well as to best align local goals with regional requirements, it is essential that local
617 comprehensive plans remain as high-level visioning documents that guide future
618 development as well as other city policies.

619

620 Metro Cities supports any further statutory changes, if necessary, to clarify that cities'
621 comprehensive plans are exempt from review under the Minnesota Environmental
622 Rights Act (MERA).