

2025 Transportation & General Government Committee Members

Name	Title	Organization
Kristin Asher	Public Works Director	Richfield
Josh Berg	Councilmember	Elko New Market
Kissy Coakley	Councilmember	Minnetonka
Marc Culver	City Engineer	Brooklyn Park
Emily Dunsworth	Councilmember	New Brighton
Inderia Falana	Government Relations Representative	Minneapolis
Clancy Ferris	Legislative and Grants Analyst	St. Louis Park
**Anne Finn	IGR Director	League of MN Cities
Tom Fischer	Mayor	Little Canada
Tom Fletcher	Mayor	Greenwood
Gary Hansen	Councilmember	Eagan
Sean Hayford O'leary	Councilmember	Richfield
Debra Heiser	Engineering Director	St. Louis Park
Clint Hooppaw	Mayor	Apple Valley
Taylor Hubbard	Mayor	Chaska
Steven Huser	Government Relations Representative	Minneapolis
**Craig Johnson	IGR Representative	League of MN Cities
**Beth Johnston	IGR Representative	League of MN Cities
Dan Kealey	Councilmember	Burnsville
**Tori Kee	IGR Representative/Attorney	League of MN Cities
Brad Larson	City Administrator	Savage
Brady Lee	Public Works Director	Victoria
**Daniel Lightfoot	IGR Representative	League of MN Cities
Brent Mareck	City Manager	Carver
Amáda Márquez Simula	Mayor	Columbia Heights
Justin Miller	City Administrator	Lakeville
*Heidi Nelson	City Administrator	Maple Grove
Loren Olson	Senior Government Relations Representative	Minneapolis
**Hannah Pallmeyer	Government Affairs Liaison	Metropolitan Council
Christian Pederson	Councilmember	Victoria
Eric Petersen	IGR Associate	St. Paul
Chelsea Petersen	Assistant City Administrator	Shakopee
Nick Peterson	City Engineer	St. Paul
Mark Ray	Public Works Director	Burnsville
Tim Sandvik	City Manager	Robbinsdale
Jay Stroebel	City Manager	Brooklyn Park
Michael Thompson	Public Works Director	Plymouth

Kate Thunstrom	City Administrator	St. Francis
Katie Topinka	IGR Director	Minneapolis
Patrick Trudgeon	City Manager	Roseville
**Owen Wirth	IGR Representative	League of MN Cities
Jeff Weisensel	Mayor	Rosemount
Wally Wysopal	City Manager	Fridley
Nyle Zikmund	City Administrator	Mounds View

*Committee Chair

**Guest/Non-City Official

July 21, 2025

TO: Transportation & General Government Policy Committee Members
FROM: Heidi Nelson, City Administrator, City of Maple Grove
SUBJECT: Meeting Notice and Agenda

Monday, July 28, 2025
9:00 am – 11:30 am
Virtual Meeting: Zoom
Join Zoom Meeting:

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

Attached are the materials for the first Transportation & General Government Policy Committee meeting. Please take the time to review the policies and come with your ideas and suggestions.

AGENDA

1. Call to order.
2. Introduction of Committee Chair and Members.
3. Policy Committee Process and Protocols (Patricia Nauman, Executive Director)
4. Policy Committee Memo Review (Michael Lund, Government Relations Specialist)
5. 2025 Legislative Session Review (Michael Lund, Government Relations Specialist)
6. Discussion of policies, suggestions, and ideas for new policies.
7. Discuss ideas for speakers and new issues for consideration.
8. Other business.
9. Adjourn. (11:30 a.m.)

Future Committee Meetings:

Monday, August 25, 2025

Monday, September 22, 2025

To: Metro Cities Policy Committees
From: Patricia Nauman, Executive Director
Re: Protocols and Guidelines for Policy Development Process

General

Welcome to Metro Cities' policy development process. Metro Cities is a non-partisan local government association representing the common interests of metropolitan cities at the state and regional levels of government. The association has 95 members.

Each year, four standing legislative policy committees identify common objectives, and recommend the association's legislative policies by consensus. Policies are transmitted to the Metro Cities Board of Directors for adoption and to Metro Cities' membership for final adoption. Policies guide Metro Cities' work at the state and regional levels of government.

Guiding Principles

Core principles that inform policies are the need for sufficient local flexibility to address needs for local services, opposition to state mandates that would erode local decision making, and the importance of a strong state and local partnership. The policy development process is non-partisan with an emphasis on the need for local autonomy, and resource adequacy. The committee process is not intended for the purpose of promoting the interests of external organizations or personal interests unrelated to the overall work of the committee.

Committee Participation and Voting

Members. Elected or appointed officials of any member city may serve on a committee. Members are encouraged to contribute ideas, feedback, and questions. All comments should be addressed through the committee chair. Each city has one vote on policies. Votes are made by acclamation unless a roll call is requested.

Guests. Guests are welcome to observe meetings and provide general observations but may not vote on policies or raise specific issues for consideration.

Committee Etiquette

Discussion, feedback, and questions should be addressed through the committee chair. Members are encouraged to offer comments and questions verbally. Members will be asked to use the hand raise function to raise questions, including those provided via the chat. When speaking, members will be asked to identify themselves and their city. Members are asked to turn cameras on when speaking.

Speakers

Committees often host speakers to provide information on topics of pertinence to the work of the committee and may be suggested. Speakers must be approved by Metro Cities' Executive Director.

July 21, 2025

To: Metro Cities Transportation and General Government Policy Committee
From: Mike Lund, Government Relations Specialist
Re: July 28th Policy Committee Memo

Thank you in advance for your participation on the Transportation and General Government Policy Committee. Interest has been expressed in several topics for this year, including transportation funding, transit planning, congregate care facilities, and changes to the open meeting law.

The 2025 Regular Legislative Session concluded on Monday, May 19th with only some of the major budget bills passed into law. The remaining budget bills and a bonding bill were passed all in one day during a special session that began on June 9th and went into the early morning hours of June 10th.

Throughout the 2025 session, Metro Cities responded to legislation preempting local control and decision-making authority. Cities were largely successful in defeating these bills, in no small part due to advocacy from city officials and staff.

A projected budget structural imbalance and shifting majorities in the House and Senate meant that most committees spent their time focused on meeting their budget targets, leaving controversial policy debates for a future session. Some notable budget cuts relevant to this policy committee included the elimination of the Local Cannabis Aid account, cuts to the state's general fund spending on metropolitan area transit operations, and only partially funding the Philando Castille Memorial Training Fund. A \$700 million bonding bill was passed during the special session with a focus on funding existing programs and investing in state-owned assets (as opposed to earmarking bonding funds for local projects).

In the area of Transportation several funding and policy items were debated throughout the session including MnDOT's local cost participation policy, the allocation of the regional transportation sales tax revenue, taxing electric vehicles to account for a lack of gas tax revenue, changes to municipal state-aid design standards, and the greenhouse gas assessment mitigation law passed in 2023.

Tree planting grant programs, election administration law, and the open meeting law were all amended this legislative session. Other issues of note at the legislature included data centers, social districts, and the continued efforts by the Office of Cannabis Management and other stakeholders to stand up Minnesota's adult-use cannabis industry.

Specific legislative updates will be provided next week at the committee's first meeting.

TRANSPORTATION POLICIES AND FUNDING INTRODUCTION

Metro Cities supports a comprehensive transportation system as a vital component in planning for and meeting the physical, social, and economic needs of the state and metropolitan region.

A comprehensive transportation system includes streets and bridges, transit, and multi-modal solutions that work cohesively to best meet state, regional and local transportation needs.

Adequate and stable sources of funding are necessary to ensure the development and maintenance of a high quality, efficient and safe transportation system that meets these needs and that will position the state and region to be economically competitive in the years ahead. Failure to maintain a functional transportation system will have adverse effects on the state's ability to attract and retain businesses and create jobs.

Transportation funding and planning must be a high priority for state, regional and local policymakers so that the transportation system can meet the needs of the state's residents and businesses as well as projected population growth. Funding and planning for regional and statewide systems must be coordinated at the federal, state, regional and local levels to optimally achieve long-term needs and goals.

Legislative Update:

Chapter 8 (Special Session), the omnibus transportation budget and policy bill, contains several provisions of note for cities. The general fund target set by leadership for transportation was a \$115 million reduction in FY 2026-2027 and a \$133 million reduction for FY 2028-2029. Most of the cuts in Chapter 8 did not impact road and bridge funding. These negative budget targets were primarily achieved through cuts to transit, active transportation, and Department of Public Safety budget items.

One policy item receiving considerable attention this year was a push from transportation stakeholders to delay or modify the greenhouse gas assessment and mitigation legislation passed in the previous biennium. Ultimately, this law was left intact and without a delay in implementation. Chapter 8 does expand the list of allowable mitigation activities to include ecosystem restoration, afforestation, wetland conservation, and restorative agriculture practices. Additionally, acquiring land for outdoor recreation has been added to the list of mitigation/offsetting activities.

Two other items that were debated but not passed into law not otherwise addressed in a specific policy update are the creation of a project portal to track trunk highway project activities and a program to mitigate the impacts to local businesses from construction projects.

TP-1 ROAD AND BRIDGE FUNDING

Under current financing structures that rely primarily on local property taxes and fees as well as cities' share of the Highway User Tax Distribution (HUTD) Fund, road and bridge needs in the metropolitan region continue to be underfunded. Metro Cities supports stable, sufficient, and sustainable statewide transportation funding and expanded local tools to meet the transportation system needs of the region and local municipal systems. Consideration should be given to using new, expanded, and existing resources to meet these needs. Metro Cities supports the use of dedicated taxes and fees to fund transportation infrastructure.

In addition, cities lack adequate tools and resources for the maintenance and improvement of municipal street systems, with resources restricted to property taxes and special assessments. It is imperative that alternative revenue generating authority be granted to municipalities and that state resources be made available for this purpose to aid local communities and relieve the burden on the property tax system.

Metro Cities supports Municipal State Aid Street (MSAS) funding. MSAS provides an important but limited revenue source that assists eligible cities with street infrastructure needs and is limited to twenty percent of a city's street system.

Metro Cities supports state funding to assist cities over-burdened by cost participation responsibilities from improvement projects on state or county highways.

Metro Cities supports flexibility in cost participation policies, especially for those cities with a disproportionate number of state or county highways in and around their local boundaries. The state and counties should have responsibility for the installation, replacement, and ongoing maintenance for infrastructure within their right-of-way including Complete Streets facilities such as trails and sidewalks.

Metro Cities supports state funding for state highway projects, including congestion, bottleneck and safety improvements. Metro Cities supports requiring the Minnesota Advisory Council on Infrastructure (MACI) to include in its annual reporting all road and bridge funding provided by MnDOT and counties. This information should include the jurisdiction(s) projects are located in, the source of funding, and any local match required for each investment. Metro Cities also supports state financial assistance, as well as innovations in design and construction, to offset the impacts of regional transportation construction projects on businesses.

Metro Cities opposes statutory changes restricting the use of local funds for transportation projects. Metro Cities opposes restrictions on aesthetic related components of transportation projects, as these components often provide important safety and other benefits to projects.

Metro Cities supports further research into the policy implications for electric and automated vehicles on roadways, transit, and other components of transportation systems. Metro Cities encourages the state to study the impact of electric and automated vehicles on transportation related funding and policies.

Legislative Update:

Chapter 8 delays the dedication of auto parts sales tax revenue to the Highway User Tax Distribution Fund, which has an impact on the Municipal State-Aid Streets fund. The reduction in auto parts revenue (\$94.7 million) is somewhat offset by increases to fees on electric vehicles and the establishment of a hybrid-electric vehicle fee (\$76.5 million). Taken together, these two provisions result in a \$18.2 million net reduction for the HUTDF over four years. The net impact on MSAS is a \$1 million increase above base in FY 2026-2027 and a \$2.2 million reduction below the base amount in the following biennium. The full MSAS appropriation for FY 2026-2027 is around \$70 million larger than the current biennium (\$571.1 million total).

Chapter 8 makes only a small change to the recently enacted retail delivery fee by exempting liquified fuel products and road construction materials (See TP-10 below). The 2023/2024 gains in transportation funding were otherwise largely left untouched.

Regarding cost participation, legislation heard in both the House and Senate would have prohibited MnDOT from requiring a local government to pay for project costs within trunk highway right-of-way, including utility relocation costs regardless of facility ownership. This prohibition would apply even if the relevant costs were not eligible for trunk highway funding or the project has non-trunk highway system benefits. Chapter 8 includes language requiring the department to continue its ongoing cost participation policy update, with the input of local units of government, and to submit a report to the legislature by February 1, 2026. The report must also propose legislation that would enable MnDOT to cover the cost of relocating utilities owned by local governments with remaining service life when they are impacted by a trunk highway project.

Chapter 8 includes a \$3 million general fund appropriation to the Board of Water and Soil Resources for the Local Road Wetland Replacement Program and \$4 million to the University of Minnesota for the Empowering Small Communities Program.

Chapter 8 sets the base funding amount for the Corridors of Commerce program at \$25 million each year (from the Trunk Highway account), with temporarily lower amounts in FY 2028 and FY 2029 (\$20 million each year).

Chapter 8 includes appropriations from the Trunk Highway Fund to MnDOT for state road construction including necessary spending authority for MnDOT to make use of \$454 million in federal funds in FY 2026-2027.

Chapter 8 appropriates \$3 million for the biennium for the Safe Routes to School program.

In addition to the increases on EV fees, Chapter 8 imposes a tax on the electricity used to charge EVs at public charging stations. The tax begins July 1, 2027 and is set at a rate of 5 cents per kilowatt hour of electricity. A working group is established to analyze electricity as a vehicle fuel source and to provide policy and funding recommendations. This working group's report is due to the legislature by February 13, 2026.

Article 2, Section 58 of Chapter 8 directs MnDOT to submit an annual report combining and summarizing reporting from metropolitan area counties, railroad authorities, or any other political subdivision receiving funds via the regional transportation sales tax or a local county sales tax.

Chapter 15 (Special Session), the state general obligation bill for capital investment includes:

- *\$5 million to the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) for the Local Road Wetland Replacement Program.*
- *\$47 million for the Local Road Improvement Program (\$5 million of this is for town roads).*
- *\$20 million for the Local Bridge Replacement Program.*
- *\$11 million for major local bridges.*
- *\$1 million for highway rail grade crossing.*
- *\$1.5 million for the Transportation Economic Development Infrastructure Program.*

Chapter 39 (Regular Session), the omnibus state and local government and elections bill, repeals the Minnesota Advisory Council on Infrastructure.

TP-2 REGIONAL TRANSIT SYSTEM

The Twin Cities Metropolitan Area needs a multi-modal regional transit system as part of a comprehensive transportation strategy that serves all users, including commuters and the transit dependent. The transit system should be composed of a mix of high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes, a network of bike and pedestrian trails, bus rapid transit, express and regular route bus service, exclusive transitways, light rail transit, streetcars,

and commuter rail corridors designed to connect residential, employment, retail, and entertainment centers. The system should be regularly monitored and adjusted to ensure that routes of service correspond to current and forecasted changes in the region's transit service needs and priorities. Metro Cities supports strategic expansion of the regional transit system.

Current congestion levels and forecasted population growth require a stable, reliable, and growing source of revenue for transit construction and operations so that our metropolitan region can meet its transportation needs to remain economically competitive. Metro Cities supports an effective, efficient, and comprehensive regional transit system as an invaluable component in meeting the multimodal transportation needs of the metropolitan region and to the region's economic vibrancy and quality of life. Metro Cities recognizes that transit service connects residents to jobs, schools, health care, and activity centers.

Transit access and service frequency levels should recognize the role of public transit in addressing equity, including but not limited to racial and economic disparities, people with disabilities and the elderly. Metro Cities supports efforts to transition the fleets of transit providers in the metropolitan region to low or zero emission buses and supports using equity and environmental criteria identified in transit providers' zero emission bus transition plans to prioritize the deployment of zero or low-emission buses.

Metro Cities opposes statutory changes restricting the use of local funds for planning or construction of transit projects. Restricting local planning and funding limits the ability of cities to participate in transit corridor planning and development. State and regional policymakers must coordinate with local units of government as decisions are made at the state level on transit projects that also involve municipal planning, funding, and policy decisions.

In the interest of including all potential options in the pursuit of a regionally balanced transit system, Metro Cities opposes the imposition of legislative moratoriums on the study, planning, design, or construction of specific transit projects.

Metro Cities supports a regional governance structure that ensures a measurably reliable and efficient system, recognizes the diverse transit needs of our region and addresses funding needs for all components of the system. These structures must work with and be responsive to the needs of the communities they serve.

Metro Cities supports an open and collaborative regional transportation planning process that fully engages all public transit providers as partners in ongoing policy development to achieve desired outcomes, including establishment of transit project criteria that promote fair and equitable selection of projects throughout the region and transparent regional distribution of available funding.

Metro Cities recognizes the need for flexibility in transit systems for cities that border the edges of the seven-county metropolitan area to ensure users can get to destinations outside of the seven-county area. Metro Cities encourages the Metropolitan Council to coordinate with collar counties so that riders can get to and from destinations beyond the boundaries of the region.

Metro Cities is opposed to legislative or Metropolitan Council directives that constrain the ability of metropolitan transit providers to provide a full range of transit services, including reverse commute routes, suburb-to-suburb routes, transit hub feeder services or new, experimental services that may show a low rate of operating cost recovery from the fare box.

Metro Cities supports the autonomy of suburban transit providers to conduct operations to meet demonstrated and unique needs in their designated service areas independent from the operations of other regional transit providers. Metro Cities supports the ability of a new window to be established for cities to opt out of Metro Transit to either partner with or join an existing suburban transit provider or to establish their own transit service.

Suburban transit providers are concerned that funding challenges may be used to attempt to justify a repeal of their authorizing legislation and to consolidate transit services into a single regional entity. This would result in reverting to conditions existing nearly 40 years ago when inadequate service caused twelve suburbs to elect not to be part of the traditional transit system.

In the interest of safety and traffic management, Metro Cities supports further study of rail safety issues relating to water quality protections, public safety concerns relating to derailments, traffic implications from longer and more frequent trains and the sensitive balance between rail commerce and the quality-of-life impacts on the communities through which they pass.

Legislative Update:

Chapter 8 makes fares on regular bus service free for Metro Mobility riders (following the Metropolitan Council's pilot authorized as part of the 2023 legislative session). The Council had changes made to its statutory reporting requirements for transportation finance and cleaning and repair standards.

Chapter 8 requires the Metropolitan Council to conduct several studies including an alternate mode analysis for the METRO Blue Line Extension corridor and an analysis of high-subsidy regular transit routes. This law also requires MnDOT to analyze the Metropolitan Council's forecasting practices for Metro Mobility.

TP-3 TRANSIT FINANCING

Shifting demographics in the metropolitan region will mean increased demand for various modes of transit in areas with and without current transit service. MVST revenue projections are unpredictable, and the Legislature has repeatedly reduced general fund support for Metro Transit, which contributes to persistent operating deficits for regional transit providers.

Operating subsidies necessary to support a regional system should come from regional and statewide funding sources and not local taxpayers. Until recently, state and regional resources for transit had diminished, with costs shifting to local taxpayers in the metropolitan area. A system of transit provides significant economic benefits to the state and metropolitan region and must be supported with state and regional revenue sources. In addition, capital costs for the expansion of the regional transit system should be supported through state and regional sources, and not the sole responsibility of local units of government. In 2023, a 0.75% regional sales and use tax in the sevencounty metropolitan region was established to provide funding for transit operations, maintenance, and capital projects.

Metro Cities supports stable and predictable state and regional revenue sources to fund operating and capital expenses for all regional transit providers and Metro Mobility at a level sufficient to meet the growing operational and capital transit needs of the region and to expand the system to areas that lack sufficient transit service options.

Metro Cities continues to support an advisory role for municipal officials in decisions associated with local transit projects. Metro Cities supports the early engagement of local governments in transit project planning and development including project scoping, cost estimating, funding requests and coordination with overlapping initiatives to achieve successful corridor-based projects.

To promote stable and predictable distribution of Regional Transportation Sales and Use Tax receipts, Metro Cities supports a collaborative process by which the Metropolitan Council includes stakeholders in the creation of policy guiding the distribution of funds.

Metro Cities supports the creation of a city allocation from the Regional Transportation Sales Tax to aid cities with local transportation infrastructure.

Legislative Update:

Chapter 8 included a \$61.4 million (biennial) cut to the state's general fund contribution toward metropolitan area transit operations leaving just a \$3.5 million appropriation. This chapter provides base funding for Metro Mobility and Metro Move services (\$112.5 million in FY 2026 and \$118.34 million in FY 2027). The Metropolitan Council received Regional Transit Capital

Bond authorization to issue up to \$54.6 million after July 1, 2025, and up to \$56.2 million after July 1, 2026. These bond proceeds are used for replacement buses and capital improvements on the regional transit system and provide the 20% local match required for federal funding the Council receives for fleet replacement.

Chapter 8 allocates \$1.4 million in FY 2026 from the Metropolitan Council's portion of the regional sales tax revenue to four transportation management organizations in the metropolitan area. \$2 million of the active transportation portion of the Council's regional sales tax revenue are redirected for suicide prevention barriers on the Washington Avenue bridge (Hennepin County is required to use an additional \$6 million from their own local sales tax for this purpose).

Chapter 8 authorizes the Metropolitan Council to loan MnDOT up to \$250 million (from regional sales tax revenue) to help the two agencies better coordinate major highway and transitway construction in key trunk highway and BRT corridors (F-line on Central Ave and University Ave).

A proposal to shift all 17% of the regional transportation sales tax revenue currently going to the seven counties to the Metropolitan Council was considered but did not become law.

TP-4 STREET IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

Funding sources for local transportation projects are limited to the use of Municipal State Aid Street Program (MSAS), Transportation Advancement Account (TAA) distributions, property taxes and special assessments. With increasing pressures on city budgets and limited tools and resources, cities are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain aging streets.

Street improvement districts allow cities in developed and developing areas to fund new construction as well as reconstruction and maintenance efforts.

The street improvement district is designed to allow cities, through a fair and objective fee structure, to create a district or districts within the city in which fees are raised on properties in the district and spent within the boundaries of the district.

Metro Cities supports the authority of local units of government to establish street improvement districts. Metro Cities also supports changes to special assessment laws to make assessing state-owned property a more predictable process with uniformity in the payment of assessments across the state.

Legislative Update:

No applicable legislative updates.

TP-5 HIGHWAY AND BRIDGE TURNBACKS & FUNDING

Cities do not have the financial capacity and in many cities the technical expertise other than through significant property tax increases, to absorb additional roadway or bridge infrastructure responsibilities without new funding sources. The existing municipal turnback fund is not adequate based on contemplated turn backs.

Metro Cities supports jurisdictional reassignment or turnback of roads (Minn. Stat. § 161.16, subd. 4) on a phased basis using functional classifications and other appropriate criteria subject to a corresponding mechanism for adequate funding of roadway improvements and continued maintenance.

Metro Cities does not support a wholesale turnback of county or state roads or bridges without the consent of the municipality and the total cost, agreed to by the municipality, being reimbursed to the city in a timely manner. The process for establishing state policies to assign a shared cost participation for newly constructed or rebuilt bridges over trunk highways to local officials, must include input by the local municipalities affected, and any assigned shared costs and responsibilities must be agreed to by the municipalities.

Legislative Update:

Article 1, Section 2 of Chapter 8 includes a \$22.2 million transfer to the municipal turnback account in the municipal state-aid street fund.

TP-6 “3C” TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS: ELECTED OFFICIALS’ ROLE

The Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) was developed to meet federal requirements, designating the Metropolitan Council as the organization that is responsible for a continuous, comprehensive, and cooperative (3C) transportation planning process to allocate federal funds among metropolitan area projects. Input by local officials into the planning and prioritization of transportation investments in the region is a vital component of these processes.

Metro Cities supports continuation of the TAB with a majority of locally elected municipal officials as members participating in the process.

Legislative Update:

No applicable legislative updates.

TP-7 ELECTRONIC IMAGING FOR ENFORCEMENT OF TRAFFIC

Enforcement of traffic laws with cameras and other motion imaging technology has been demonstrated to improve driver compliance and safety. Metro Cities supports cities having the authority to use such technology, including photos and videos, to enforce traffic laws.

Legislative Update:

No applicable legislative updates.

TP-8 TRANSPORTATION NETWORK COMPANIES AND ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION MODES

The introduction of transportation network companies (TNC) such as Lyft and Uber, vehicle sharing and other wheeled transportation modes such as bicycles and scooters, require the need for local officials to determine licensing and inspection requirements for these modes, and to address issues concerning management over public rights-of-way. Cities have the authority to license rideshare companies, inspect vehicles, license drivers, and regulate access to sidewalks and streets. The use of autonomous delivery robots and aerial drones in public rights-of-way is also becoming more prevalent and cities must maintain and enhance the authority necessary to regulate the use of these vehicles to ensure safe use of the public right of way.

Metro Cities supports the authority of local officials to regulate and establish fees on these transportation modes. Emerging and future transportation technologies have potentially significant implications for local public safety and local public service levels, the needs and impacts of which vary by community.

Legislative Update:

Article 2, Sec. 119 of Chapter 8 requires MnDOT to conduct a study on the supply and demand of wheelchair accessible vehicles and wheelchair accessible transportation services. The scope of the study includes both public and private transportation networks. The report for this study is due to the legislature by February 15, 2026.

TP-9 AIRPORT NOISE MITIGATION

Communities closest to MSP and reliever airports are significantly impacted by noise, traffic, and other numerous expansion-related issues. Metro Cities supports the broad goal of providing MSP-impacted communities greater representation on the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC). Metro Cities encourages continued communication between MAC commissioners and the cities they represent.

Balancing the needs of the MAC, the business community, and the airport host cities and their residents requires open communication, planning and coordination. Cities must be viewed as

partners with the MAC in resolving differences that arise out of airport projects and the development of adjacent parcels. Regular contact between the MAC and cities throughout a project proposal process will enhance communication and problem solving. The MAC should provide full funding for noise mitigation for all structures in communities impacted by flights in and out of MSP.

Metro Cities supports noise abatement programs and expenditures and the work of the Noise Oversight Committee to minimize the impacts of MAC operated facilities on neighboring communities. The MAC should determine the design and geographic reach of these programs only after a thorough public input process that considers the priorities and concerns of impacted cities and their residents. The MAC should provide full funding for noise mitigation for all structures in communities impacted by flights in and out of MSP.

Legislative Update:

No applicable legislative updates.

TP-10 FUNDING FOR NON-MUNICIPAL STATE AID (MSAS) CITY STREETS

Cities under 5,000 in population are not eligible for Municipal State Aid. Cities over 5,000 residents have limited eligibility for dedicated Highway User Tax Distribution Fund dollars, which are capped by the state constitution as being available for up to twenty percent of streets.

Current County State Aid Highway (CSAH) distributions to metropolitan counties are inadequate to provide for the needs of smaller cities in the metropolitan area.

Cities need long-term, stable, funding for street improvements and maintenance. In 2023, the Legislature established the Transportation Advancement Account which distributes revenue from the retail delivery fee and the auto parts sales tax to counties, cities, townships, and a food delivery support account. Specifically, this account will distribute 27 percent of the revenue collected to cities under 5,000 in population and 15 percent to cities over 5,000 in population.

Metro Cities supports the distribution of revenue deposited into the Transportation Advancement Account to cities, providing sustainable funding for non-MSAS city streets. Metro Cities supports additional resources and flexible policies to meet local infrastructure needs and increased demands on city streets.

Legislative Update:

Chapter 8 made a change to the retail delivery fee by exempting certain liquified fuel products and road construction materials. This change is expected to result in slightly less than forecasted amounts for the small cities assistance account and the larger cities assistance account.

TP-11 COUNTY STATE AID HIGHWAY (CSAH) DISTRIBUTION FORMULA

Significant resource needs remain in the metropolitan area CSAH system. Revenues provided by the Legislature for the CSAH system have resulted in a higher number of projects being completed. However, greater pressure is being placed on municipalities to participate in cost sharing activities, encumbering an already over-burdened local funding system. When the alternative is not building or maintaining roads, cities bear not only the costs of their local systems but also as much as fifty percent of county road projects.

Metro Cities supports special or additional funding for cities that have burdens of additional cost participation in projects involving county roads.

The CSAH formula passed by the Legislature in 2008 helped to better account for needs in the metropolitan region but additional resources for the region are needed. Metro Cities supports a new CSAH formula more equitably designed to fund the needs of our metropolitan region.

Legislative Update:

No applicable legislative updates.

TP-12 MUNICIPAL INPUT/CONSENT FOR TRUNK HIGHWAYS AND COUNTY ROADS

State statutes direct the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) to submit detailed plans, with city cost estimates, at a point one-and-a-half to two years prior to bid letting, at which time public hearings are held for community input. If MnDOT does not concur with requested changes, it may appeal. Currently, that process would take a maximum of three and a half months and the results of the appeals board are binding on both the city and MnDOT.

Metro Cities supports the municipal consent process and opposes changes to weaken municipal consent or adding another level of government to the consent process. Metro Cities opposes changes to current statutes that would allow MnDOT to disregard the appeals board ruling for state trunk highways. Such a change would significantly minimize MnDOT's need to negotiate in good faith with cities for appropriate project access and alignment and would render the public hearing and appeals process meaningless. Metro Cities also opposes the elimination of the county road municipal consent and appeal process for these reasons.

Legislative Update:

No applicable legislative updates.

TP-13 PLAT AUTHORITY

Current law grants counties review and comment authority for access and drainage issues for city plats abutting county roads. Metro Cities opposes any statutory change that would grant counties veto power or that would shorten the 120-day review and permit process time.

Legislative Update:

No applicable legislative updates.

TP-14 MNDOT MAINTENANCE BUDGET

MnDOT has been inconsistent in meeting its responsibility for maintaining major roads throughout the state and has required, through omission, that cities bear the burden of maintaining major state roads.

MnDOT should be required to meet standards adopted by cities through local ordinances, or reimburse cities for labor, equipment and material used on the state's behalf to improve public safety or meet local standards. Furthermore, if a city performs maintenance, the city should be fully reimbursed.

Metro Cities supports MnDOT taking full responsibility for maintaining state-owned infrastructure and property, including, but not limited to, sound walls and right of way within city limits. Metro Cities supports cooperative agreements between cities and MnDOT, which have proven to be effective in other parts of the state. Metro Cities supports adequate state funding for the maintenance of state rights-of-way.

Legislative Update:

No applicable legislative updates.

TP-15 TRANSIT TAXING DISTRICT

The transit taxing district, which funds the capital cost of transit service in the Metropolitan Area through the property tax system, is inequitable. Because the boundaries of the transit taxing district do not correspond with any rational service line nor is being within the boundaries a guarantee to receive service, cities within and outside of the taxing district are contributing unequally to the transit service in the metropolitan area. This inequity should be corrected.

Metro Cities supports a stable revenue source to fund both the capital and operating costs for transit at the Metropolitan Council. However, Metro Cities does not support the expansion of the transit taxing district without a corresponding increase in service and an overall increase in

operational funds. To do so would create additional property taxes without a corresponding benefit.

Legislative Update:

No applicable legislative updates.

TP-16 COMPLETE STREETS

A complete street may include sidewalks, bike lanes (or wide paved shoulders), special bus lanes, comfortable and accessible public transportation stops, frequent and safe crossing opportunities, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, narrower travel lanes and more.

A complete street in a rural area will differ from a complete street in a highly urban area, but both are designed to balance safety and convenience for everyone using the road.

Metro Cities supports options in state design guidelines for complete streets that would give cities greater flexibility to:

- Safely accommodate all modes of travel.
- Lower traveling speeds on local streets.
- Address city infrastructure needs.
- Ensure livability in the appropriate context for each city.

Metro Cities opposes state-imposed mandates that would increase street infrastructure improvement costs in locations and instances where providing access for alternative modes including cycling and walking are deemed unnecessary or inappropriate as determined by local jurisdictions.

Legislative Update:

Chapter 8 appropriates \$500,000 each year of the biennium for grants to cities of the first class for traffic calming infrastructure improvements.

Legislation was considered in both bodies that would have authorized cities to use a road design standard that is different than the adopted state-aid engineering rules for their municipal state-aid streets. The bills included several alternative design standards a city could adopt in place of the state-aid standards including the latest edition of MnDOT's Facility Design Guide. Finally, these bills would have amended the variance request process for those cities continuing to use the state-aid standards. These provisions were not included in the eventual transportation bill and did not become law.

GG-1 MANDATES, ZONING & LOCAL AUTHORITY

To serve their local residents and communities, city officials must have sufficient local control and decision-making authority. Metro Cities supports local decision-making authority and opposes statutory changes that erode local authority and decision making.

Minn. Stat. § 462.357, subd. 1, provide cities authority to regulate and set local ordinances for zoning. Metro Cities supports existing state laws that provide for this authority.

Metro Cities supports statutory changes that give local officials greater authority to approve or deny variances to allow flexibility in responding to the needs of the community. Metro Cities also supports the removal of statutory barriers to uniform zoning ordinance amendment processes for all cities, regardless of city size classification.

Metro Cities opposes the imposition of legislative mandates that increase local costs without a corresponding state appropriation or funding mechanism. Unfunded mandates potentially increase property taxes and impede cities' ability to fund traditional service needs.

To allow for greater collaboration and flexibility in providing local services, Metro Cities encourages the removal of barriers to coordination between cities and other units of government or entities.

Legislative Update:

Several bills this legislation would have pre-empted city zoning and land use authority. These bills did not pass. Bills set statewide zoning requirements and residential density requirements, required administrative approval processes, required cities to allow for multifamily housing in commercial/industrial districts, prohibited minimum parking requirements, and set limitations on cities' ability to set aesthetic mandates and minimum square footage requirements. Other proposed legislation would have prohibited a city from conditioning the approval of residential building permits, conditional use permits, or planned unit developments on the creation of a Homeowners Association (HOA), or on the inclusion of any services, features, or common property necessitating an HOA. These proposals did not become law.

Chapter 39 (Regular Session), the omnibus state and local government and elections bill, includes language regarding the newspaper publication requirement in state law. Article 6, Section 5 states that when a newspaper is discontinued, a public body can satisfy the publication requirement by posting notices on both their own website and on the website for the Minnesota Newspaper Association until an alternative qualified newspaper is available.

Legislation was introduced that would have prohibited cities from adopting local regulations restricting the use of natural gas and/or propane. These bills did not become law.

GG-2 CITY ENTERPRISE ACTIVITIES

Creation of an enterprise operation allows a city to provide a desired service while maintaining financial and management control. The state should refrain from infringing on this ability to provide and manage services for the benefit of a local community and residents.

Metro Cities supports cities having authority to establish city enterprise operations in response to community needs, local preferences, or state mandates, or that help ensure residents' quality of life.

Legislative Update:

Chapter 39 (Regular Session), the omnibus state and local government and elections bill, increased the annual audit sales threshold for municipal liquor stores to \$750,000 in 2025 and clarified that the audit must conform with generally accepted accounting principles.

See GG-26 Adult-Use Cannabis for an update regarding municipal cannabis operations.

GG-3 WEAPONS ON CITY PROPERTY

Cities should be allowed to prohibit handguns and other weapons in city-owned buildings, facilities, and parks and to determine whether to allow permit-holders to bring guns into municipal buildings, liquor stores, city council chambers and city sponsored youth activities. It is not Metro Cities' intention for cities to have the authority to prohibit legal weapons in parking lots, on city streets, city sidewalks or on locally approved hunting land.

Metro Cities supports local control to prohibit or restrict the possession of dangerous weapons, ammunition, or explosives on local government-owned or leased buildings and land.

Legislative Update:

Legislation was introduced that would have authorized local governmental units to prohibit or restrict the possession of dangerous weapons, ammunition, or explosives in local government-owned or leased buildings and land. These bills did not become law.

GG-4 911 TELEPHONE TAX

Public safety answering points (PSAPs) must be able to continue to rely on state 911 revenues to pay for upgrades and modifications to local 911 systems, maintenance and operational support, and dispatcher training.

Metro Cities supports state funding for technology and training necessary to provide the number and location of wireless and voice over internet protocol (VoIP) calls to 911 on computer screens and transmit that data to police, fire and first responders.

Legislative Update:

Chapter 35 (Regular Session), the judiciary, public safety, and corrections bill, includes a \$28.011 million distribution in each year of the biennium to public safety answer points (from the special revenue fund for 911 emergency telecommunications services).

GG-5 800 MHZ RADIO SYSTEM

Metro Cities urges the Legislature to provide cities with the financial means to obtain required infrastructure and subscriber equipment (portable and mobile radios) as well as funding for operating costs, since the prime purpose of this system is to allow public safety agencies and other units of government the ability to communicate effectively.

Metro Cities supports the work of the Metropolitan Emergency Services Board (previously the Metropolitan Radio Board) in implementing and maintaining the 800 MHz radio system so long as cities are not forced to modify their current systems or become a part of the 800 MHz Radio System unless they so choose.

Legislative Update:

Chapter 35 (Regular Session), the judiciary, public safety, and corrections bill, includes a \$10.4 million appropriation in each year of the biennium to the Dept. of Transportation for the cost of maintaining and operating the statewide radio system backbone. This chapter also includes a one-time appropriation of \$14 million to MnDOT in 2026 for costs associated with maintaining and operating the statewide system.

Chapter 35 also includes \$1 million each year for the Statewide Emergency Communications Board (SECB) for a variety of eligible uses including operating costs, competitive grants to local governments, technology improvements, activities that enhance communication capabilities between 911 entry points and first responders, and other uses that advance the strategic goals of the SECB's Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan.

GG-6 BUILDING CODES

Thousands of new housing units as well as commercial and industrial buildings are constructed annually in the metropolitan area. The State Building Code (SBC) sets statewide standards for the construction, reconstruction, alteration, and repair of buildings and other structures governed by the code. A building code provides many benefits, including uniformity of

construction standards in the building industry, consistency in code interpretation and enforcement, and life-safety guidance.

Metro Cities supports an equitable distribution of fees from the Construction Code Fund, with proportional distribution based on the area of enforcement where fees were received. Metro Cities further supports efforts by the state, cities, and builders to collectively identify appropriate uses for the fund, including education, analysis of new materials and construction techniques, building code updating, building inspector training, and development of performance standards and identification of construction “best practices.”

Metro Cities also supports adopting the international energy conservation code to the state building code without amendments. Metro Cities does not support legislative solutions that fail to recognize the interrelationships among builders, state building codes and cities.

Metro Cities supports efforts to increase awareness of the potential impacts and benefits of requiring sprinklers in new homes and townhouses. Metro Cities supports discussion and the dissemination of information on these impacts via the code adoption process through the Department of Labor and Industry. Metro Cities supports adopting and amending the State Building Code through the rulemaking process and opposes legislative changes to building codes absent unusual or extraordinary circumstances.

As energy costs continue to rise, more attention must be paid to the poor energy efficiency of much of the existing housing stock as well as commercial and industrial buildings. Homes and other buildings that are energy inefficient are more costly to maintain and create added cost to ownership and occupancy. Making homes and buildings more energy efficient will make them more affordable to operate and will help the state achieve energy demand goals and will reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This includes supporting legislation to increase the efficiency of buildings on a pathway toward net zero energy.

Metro Cities supports state funding and technical support for programs that provide support for property owners for weatherization and energy efficiency improvements, including programs available for local governments.

While a single set of coordinated codes helps provide consistency in code administration and enforcement, implementation of sustainable building design, construction, and operation does not readily integrate with the existing state building and energy code system. As a result, many cities are interested in adopting stronger local standards for sustainable development and conservation.

Metro Cities supports authorizing cities to employ stronger local standards for sustainable development and conservation that will help inform the state code development process.

The state should include an optional sustainable appendix to the State Building Code to allow cities to utilize appropriate parts of guidelines in their communities. Metro Cities also supports the state adopting an advanced energy building standard for buildings within the State Building Code and allowing cities to adopt their own enhanced standards.

Legislative Update:

SF 560 (Lucero) would have required the Dept. of Labor and Industry to establish a cost-per-square-foot valuation to calculate building permit fees, to be adopted by municipalities for residential buildings. This bill did not advance and did not become law.

Legislation was considered to prohibit cities from imposing construction material or method requirements (beyond what is required in the State Building Code) for residential developments with four or fewer units. The bill, as introduced, included energy efficiency requirements among other things cities would be prohibited from requiring. This bill did not become law.

GG-7 ADMINISTRATIVE FINES

Administrative fines can be used to moderate local costs associated with traditional methods of citation, enforcement, and prosecution. Metro Cities supports the administrative fine authority that allows cities to issue administrative fines for defined local traffic offenses and supports further modifications to enhance functionality of this authority. Metro Cities continues to support cities' authority to use administrative fines for regulatory ordinances such as building codes, zoning codes, health codes, and public safety and nuisance ordinances.

Metro Cities supports the use of city administrative fines, at a minimum, for regulatory matters that are not duplicative of misdemeanor or higher-level state traffic and criminal offenses. Metro Cities also endorses a fair hearing process before a disinterested third party.

Legislative Update:

No applicable legislative updates.

GG-8 RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS

Sufficient funding and oversight is needed to ensure that residents living in residential programs have appropriate care and supervision and that neighborhoods are not disproportionately impacted by high concentrations of residential programs. Historically, federal and state laws have discouraged the concentration of residential group homes so as not to promote areas that reinforce institutional quality settings.

Under current law, operators of certain residential programs are not required to notify cities when they intend to purchase single-family housing for this purpose. Cities do not have the

authority to regulate the locations of residential programs. Cities have reasonable concerns about high concentrations of these facilities in residential neighborhoods, and additional traffic and service deliveries surrounding these facilities when they are grouped closely together. Municipalities recognize and support the services residential programs provide. However, cities also have an interest in preserving balance between residential programs and other uses in residential neighborhoods.

Providers applying to operate residential programs should be required to notify the city when applying for licensure to be informed of local ordinance requirements as a part of the application process. Licensing agencies should be required to notify the city of properties receiving licensure to be operated as residential programs.

Metro Cities supports changes to Minn. Stat. § 245A.11, subd. 4, to allow for appropriate non-concentration standards for all types of cities to prevent clustering. Metro Cities supports statutory modifications to require licensed agencies and licensed providers that operate residential programs to notify the city of properties being operated as residential programs. Metro Cities also supports the establishment of appropriate non-concentration standards for residential programs, to prevent clustering, and supports enforcement of these rules by the appropriate county agencies.

Metro Cities opposes legislation enacted in 2024 that exempts group homes and assisted living facilities with licensed capacities of six or fewer individuals from local rental licensing regulations. Local communities are best positioned to determine whether residential group homes should be included in a rental housing inspection program. Residents in group homes can be especially vulnerable to experiencing unsafe living conditions. Local inspections ensure that housing meets minimum standards and requirements for safety and livability. In addition to any state oversight, local inspections also ensure that any housing conditions needing attention can be addressed promptly. Metro Cities will continue to monitor the new law and urges the Legislature to consider its repeal.

Legislative Update:

Legislation was introduced to repeal the 2024 change in law preempting local governments from applying local rental ordinances to facilities licensed by the Dept. of Health or Dept. of Human Services with capacities of six or fewer residents. This bill did not become law.

HF 1477 (Nadeau) was heard in the House Human Services committee but did not advance further in the legislative process. The bill repealed the rental ordinance exemption language passed in 2024. An amendment adopted in committee expanded the ability to limit the concentration of congregate care facilities currently allowed in cities of the first class to cities of

all sizes. HF 1477, as amended, also established an expedited complaint/review process for local governments raising concerns with MDH or DHS. This legislation did not become law.

GG-9 ANNEXATION

Attempts have been made in recent years to address tensions between cities and townships in annexations. Metro Cities supports continued efforts to develop recommendations regarding best practices and annexation training for city and township officials to better communicate and plan for potential annexations. Further, Metro Cities supports substantive changes to the state's annexation laws that will lead to better land use planning, energy conservation, greater environmental protection, fairer tax bases, clarification of fee reimbursement and fewer conflicts between townships and cities. Metro Cities also supports technical annexation changes that are agreed to by cities and townships.

Legislative Update:

No applicable legislative updates.

GG-10 STATEWIDE FUNDING SOURCES FOR LOCAL ISSUES WITH REGIONAL IMPACT

Many issues including, but not limited to, a metropolitan area groundwater monitoring network, emerald ash borer management, perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS/PFOS), and the cleanup of storm-water retention ponds, come with significant local costs, and have effects that reach beyond municipal boundaries.

Metro Cities supports the availability of statewide funding sources to address local issues that have regional or statewide significance or are caused by state or regional actions. Metro Cities opposes any requirement to enact ordinances more restrictive than state law in exchange for access to these funds.

Legislative Update:

Chapter 36 (Regular Session), the Legacy finance and policy bill, includes a \$303.9 million appropriation in FY 2026-FY 2027 from the Clean Water Fund for a variety of initiatives including groundwater management, addressing contaminants of emerging concern, and more. Entities receiving funds include the Dept. of Agriculture (\$33.3 million), Pollution Control Agency (\$49.2 million), Dept. of Natural Resources (\$28.8 million), Board of Water and Soil Resources (\$139.3 million), Dept. of Health (\$30.1 million), Metropolitan Council (\$4.1 million), and Public Facilities Authority (\$16.5 million).

Chapter 1 (Special Session), the omnibus environment and natural resources budget and policy bill, includes approximately \$2.1 million in each year for work at the Pollution Control Agency around emerging issues which includes their Minnesota PFAS Blueprint.

Chapter 15 (Special Session), the state general obligation bonding bill, includes \$6 million for a new statewide drinking water contamination mitigation grant program. Chapter 15 includes \$15 million for the Metropolitan Council to make grants to cities to mitigate inflow and infiltration problems on municipal wastewater collection systems.

See GG-11 for updates regarding funding for tree planting.

GG-11 URBAN FOREST MANAGEMENT FUNDING

Urban forests are an essential local infrastructure component. Dutch elm disease, oak wilt disease, drought, storms, and emerald ash borer threaten public investments in trees and controlling these issues can be greatly consequential for city budgets. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, through its Urban and Community Forestry program, and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, through its Shade Tree and Invasive Species program, have regulatory authority to direct tree sanitation and control programs. Although these programs allow for addressing some tree disease, pest, and other problems, funding has been inadequate to meet the need of cities to build capacity for tree programs and respond to catastrophic problems.

Cities share the goal of the state's ReLeaf Program – promoting and funding the inventory, planning, planting, maintenance, and improvement of trees in cities throughout the state. In addition, residents are facing significant costs for the removal, replacement, and treatment of emerald ash borer (EAB). Economic and environmental gains for storm water management, climate change mitigation, air quality management, tourism, recreation, and other benefits must be protected from tree loss. A lack of timely investment in urban forests costs cities significantly more in the long run.

Metro Cities supports continued funding for state programs to assist cities with building and increasing capacity for urban forest management, meeting the costs of preparing for, and responding to, catastrophic urban forest problems and preventing further loss and increasing canopy coverage. Specifically, direct grants to cities are desperately needed for the identification, removal, replacement, and treatment of trees related to management of emerald ash borer (EAB). Metro Cities supports direct grants and/or aid payments to local governments for reimbursement and retroactive relief to homeowners for treatment or removal, transporting and disposal of wood waste containing ash tree material.

Legislative Update:

Chapter 15 (Special Session), the state general obligation bonding bill contains \$1 million for the Metropolitan Council to make community tree planting grants to cities, counties, townships and implementing agencies. Chapter 1 (Special Session), the omnibus environment and natural resources budget and policy bill appropriates an additional \$900,000 to the Metropolitan Council for community tree planting grants.

In addition to the metropolitan area-specific funding, Chapter 1 appropriates funds to the Dept. of Natural Resources for urban and community forests. This includes \$900,000 for a statewide community tree planting grant program (mirroring the metropolitan area language) and \$400,000 in each year of the biennium for the department's ReLeaf program.

GG-12 POLLINATOR HABITAT RESOURCES

Recent declines in the abundance of pollinator insects, such as bees and butterflies, have been identified by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization as a threat to food security, as these insects are an important method of plant pollination. According to the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the main threats facing pollinators are habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation. Pollinators lose food and nesting sites they need to survive when native vegetation is replaced by roadways, manicured lawns, crops, and non-native gardens. This can have added detriment to pollinators that migrate. Research has shown that increasing habitats can create the conditions for these insect populations to recover. Converting traditional grass lawns has been identified as one way to increase pollinator habitat.

The Minnesota Legislature created the Lawns to Legumes program, which provides grants to private homeowners to convert traditional lawns to pollinator friendly landscape. The program also funds demonstration neighborhoods, which are pollinator programs run by local governments and nonprofit organizations. Metro Cities supports state funding to programs such as Lawns to Legumes that create pollinator habitat on both public and private lands.

Legislative Update:

No applicable legislative updates.

GG-13 REGULATION OF HARMFUL SUBSTANCES AND PRODUCTS

In metropolitan regions where most cities share boundaries with other cities, local bans of harmful drugs and substances such as synthetic drugs, which have been found to be dangerous, do not eliminate access to these products unless all cities take the same regulatory action.

Metro Cities supports statewide regulation and prohibition of products or substances in circumstances where there is evidence that products present a danger to anyone who uses

them, where there is broad local support for a ban and where corresponding regulatory issues have regional or statewide significance.

In addition, the Legislature should provide for the regulation of products that are known to damage water quality, sewer collection, and storm and wastewater treatment systems, not just at the treatment and infrastructure maintenance levels, but at the consumer and manufacturing levels, through accurate labeling of products, public education, and recycling and re-use programs.

Legislative Update:

No applicable legislative updates.

GG-14 WATER SUPPLY

Municipal water suppliers are charged with meeting the water supply needs of their communities and work to do so with safe, reliable, and cost-effective systems that are sustainable both for established cities and for all future growth.

The aquifers in the metropolitan area cross municipal boundaries and therefore require a coordinated regional approach to planning for their future availability. Currently, approximately 75% of municipal water supply in the metropolitan area comes from groundwater. With proper management of the resource, the current water supply in the region is adequate; however, Metropolitan Council projections predict localized declines in aquifer availability due to population growth estimates if current usage levels are maintained.

Regulation of water is complex and compartmentalized. Various agencies permit its use, plan for its availability, regulate stormwater, treat wastewater and protect the safety of water. To ensure that water supply remains adequate and sustainable across the region, we must understand how much water can be sustainably drawn from the aquifers and what effect increases in re-use, conservation and recharge can have on the sustainability and availability of both groundwater and surface water. Many of these strategies cross agency jurisdictions and will require improved coordination and cooperation.

Municipal water suppliers have made significant infrastructure investments in their systems based on calculated water availability and DNR permits. Proposals to reduce the reliance on groundwater by switching municipal water systems from groundwater to surface water supplies will come with significant costs that could place excessive burdens on local resources.

The outcomes and benefits of re-balancing the mix of groundwater and surface water use for specific municipalities and the region must be identifiable before any projects are undertaken. The sustainability of our water supply is an issue of regional and statewide significance and the

expense of any necessary projects that benefit the region should not fall on individual cities. Any attempts to address water supply sustainability must also consider all water users, including municipal water suppliers, industry, private wells, agriculture and contamination containment.

The metropolitan region must consider the effects of groundwater use beyond the borders of the metropolitan area on the region's groundwater availability and the cost of treating contaminants in surface water that comes into the metropolitan area for use.

Metro Cities supports the removal of barriers to wastewater and storm water re-use, improved inter-agency coordination, clarifying the appropriate roles of local, regional, and state governments with respect to water, streamlining and consolidating permit approval processes and the availability of statewide resources to plan for and ensure the future sustainability of water supply in the metropolitan area. Metro Cities also encourages the Metropolitan Council, in consultation with municipalities, to find ways to re-use wastewater and to develop other strategies to improve conservation.

Metro Cities supports state funding for costs associated with converting water supply from groundwater to surface water and funds to encourage and promote water conservation as a strategy to improve water sustainability and to improve and protect water quality.

Legislative Update:

Chapter 1 (Special Session), the omnibus environment and natural resources budget and policy bill, includes a \$750,000 appropriation to continue work developing a comprehensive plan that ensures communities in the White Bear Lake area have access to sufficient safe drinking water that allows for growth while also ensuring the sustainability of surface and groundwater resources. Article 4, Section 15 increases water-use permit processing fees (by more than double). The revenue from these fees is allocated to the Dept. of Natural Resources to staff their water supply programs. Section 16 increases the water appropriation permit application fee from \$150 to \$600.

Several line items funded in the Legacy bill (Chapter 36) from the Clean Water Fund are for purposes related to water supply/aquifer management, protection, and restoration.

As part of Imagine 2050, the adopted Water Policy Plan for the Metropolitan Region includes an updated Metro Area Water Supply Plan with seven separate subregional water supply action plans.

GG-15 PRIVATE WELL DRILLING RESTRICTION AUTHORITY

Cities are authorized to enact ordinances that disallow the placement of private wells within city limits to ensure both water safety and availability for residents and businesses. This authority is important for the appropriate management of local water supply conservation efforts.

Municipal water systems are financially dependent upon users to operate and maintain the system. A loss of significant rate payers resulting from unregulated private well drilling would economically destabilize water systems and could lead to contamination of the water supply.

Metro Cities supports current law that authorizes cities to regulate and prohibit the placement of private wells within municipal utility service boundaries and opposes any attempt to remove or alter that authority. Metro Cities supports funding that can be used to cap private wells.

Legislative Update:

No applicable legislative updates.

GG-16 ORGANIZED WASTE COLLECTION

Cities over 1,000 in population are required by law to ensure all residents have solid waste collection available to them. A city can meet the statutory requirement by licensing haulers to operate in an open collection system, authorize city employees to collect waste, or implement organized collection through one or multiple haulers to increase efficiency, reduce truck traffic and control costs to residents.

Metro Cities supports current laws that allow cities to work with existing haulers to achieve the benefits of organized collection or investigate the merits of organized collection without the pressure of a rigid timeline and requirement to pass ‘an intent to organize’ at the beginning of the discussion process. Metro Cities opposes any legislation that would further increase the cost or further complicate the process cities are required to follow to organize waste collection or prohibit cities from implementing, expanding, or using organized waste collection. Metro Cities supports state funding to local governments to increase the availability of material and organic recycling.

Legislative Update:

Chapter 15 (Special Session), the state general obligation bill for capital investment includes \$6 million for grants to eligible local governments as part of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency’s waste management capital assistance program.

Chapter 1 (Special Session), the omnibus environment and natural resources finance and policy bill, includes \$18.45 million each year of the biennium for SCORE block grants to counties. Some cities receive these funds via their county. The same chapter of law includes \$2 million for recycling grants but only greater Minnesota communities are eligible to apply.

No policy items related to organized waste collection were passed into law.

GG-17 FRANCHISE FEES, ACCOUNTABILITY AND COST TRANSPARENCY

Minnesota cities are authorized by Minn. Stat. § 216B and Minn. Stat. § 301B.01 to require a public utility (gas or electric) that provides services to the city or occupies the public right-of-way within a city to obtain a franchise. Several metro area cities have entered agreements that require the utility to pay a fee to help offset costs of maintaining the right-of-way.

Cities are also adopting energy policies that use renewable energy resources to light or heat public facilities. Policies and programs have also been instituted in cooperation with the public utility franchisee to increase energy efficiency for all users. Cities contract, at city expense, with public utilities to “underground” wires. State laws also require energy companies to provide more electric energy from renewable sources. The specific amounts vary by type of utility.

Metro Cities supports state policies adopted by legislation or through rules of the Public Utility Commission that provide cities with the authority to include city energy policies and priorities in a franchise or similar agreement with a franchisee.

Metro Cities supports greater accountability and transparency for city paid costs associated with underground utility and similar work performed by electric utilities as part of a local project.

Metro Cities supports legislation authorizing cities to franchise broadband/internet service providers (ISPs) in the public right-of-way and to collect franchise fees from these providers. Broadband Franchising will allow a city to require equal access to the same quality of broadband service throughout a city, to require reasonable build-out and system upgrades of broadband systems, to require uniform pricing and other customer service requirements, as well as other public benefits. Furthermore, Metro Cities supports the use of franchise fees on broadband or other dedicated funding to support local community television, which has seen declining funding from cable franchise fees and public, educational, and governmental (PEG) access fees as consumers switch to internet-based streaming over traditional cable tv service.

Legislative Update:

SF 2045 (Rest) would have allowed for cities to require a broadband service provider within its jurisdiction to obtain a franchise and pay fees that raise revenue, reduce a municipality’s costs resulting from the use of the public right-of-way, or both. This bill did not become law.

Chapter 23 (Regular Session) eliminated the requirement that at least two safety-qualified underground telecommunications installers be present during directional drilling. It also eliminated the requirement that underground telecommunications infrastructure installation in the metropolitan area be done by safety-qualified installers (beginning July 1, 2025). The law

retains a statewide requirement for safety-qualified underground telecommunications installers (beginning January 1, 2026).

GG-18 ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

Cities play a critical role in managing and ensuring the integrity of elections. Any changes made to election laws should not place undue financial or administrative burdens on local governments. Metro Cities supports reimbursement by the state to local units of government for any costs associated with changes to election laws.

State laws that allow the filling of municipal vacancies by special election on one of four days specified in law, can create logistical and financial challenges for municipalities. Metro Cities supports changes to state laws that allow sufficient flexibility for municipalities in addressing vacancies in municipal offices.

Metro Cities supports laws to increase efficiencies in administering absentee ballots and early voting, to reduce the potential for errors, and to improve absentee balloting and early voting processes.

Metro Cities further supports:

- Statutory changes to allow direct balloting for the duration of the absentee voting period.
- Establishing an earlier deadline for ending in-person absentee voting.
- Authorizing cities to schedule election judges to conduct absentee voting at an earlier date in health care facilities.
- Additional funding and flexibility for cities that administer absentee balloting and early voting.
- Requiring the legislature to conduct a cost-benefit analysis for Minn. Stat. §203B.085, which mandates certain days and hours for early voting, weighing the number of voters served by extended hours on evenings and weekends with the cost to local governments.

Legislative Update:

Chapter 39 (Regular Session), the omnibus state and local government and elections bill, made several changes of note to election law. Article 7 contains campaign finance provisions and Article 8 contains elections provisions.

Article 8, Section 5 amends current law to remove the requirement that a residential facility operator prepare a list of employee names to be certified to the county auditor for the purpose

of vouching for residents living at that facility. Instead, employees of the facility are required to provide proof that they are employed by the facility in question.

Section 22 amends current law regarding technology requirements for electronic rosters and the use of an electronic roster at a combined polling place. Section 23 allows precincts to use electronic rosters to update voter registration and requires each precinct to have a paper backup system.

Section 27 requires county auditors, municipal clerks, or election judges to include a voter registration application with the election materials provided to an absentee applicant who needs to update their registration. Section 28 requires that instructions for updating one's voter registration be sent along with materials sent to an absentee voter applicant.

Section 30 renames the absentee return envelope to "signature" envelope and changes the deadline for dropping off absentee ballots on election day from 8:00 PM to 5:00 PM. Section 31 makes further updates to the terminology regarding absentee envelopes. This chapter of law requires that county auditors and the Secretary of State post notice of absentee polling places on their websites along with the days and hours of operation for those locations. Chapter 39 makes several changes to ballot board procedures.

Section 36 specifies that if a municipality and county agree that the county's ballot board retains the responsibility for UOCAVA ballots, the county ballot board opens, counts, and retains the ballots.

Section 40 requires election officials to remove, secure, and document ballots each day during the early voting period.

Section 49 requires governing bodies to post a notice at any closed/changed polling place with information on the location of the new polling place. This notice must be posted for each special, primary, and general election until a November presidential election or redistricting has occurred.

Section 52 outlines requirements for county chain of custody plans and requires municipal clerks to either use their county's plan or develop a local plan (for the physical and cyber security of election-related materials).

Section 53 applies the existing law regarding party balance for election judges to include any location where ballots are being counted. Each major political party must be represented by at least one election judge in each precinct.

Section 57 allows municipal clerks to secure election materials/supplies from the county auditor at any point until the day before the election (as opposed to four days before the election).

GG-19 REGULATION OF MASSAGE THERAPISTS

In the absence of statewide regulation for massage therapy practitioners, many cities have enacted local ordinances that require massage therapists to obtain a local professional license to assist law enforcement in differentiating between legitimate providers and illegitimate businesses fronting as massage therapy establishments.

Metro Cities supports statewide registration or licensure of massage therapists to aid local law enforcement efforts in this area. Metro Cities supports cities' ability to continue to license massage therapy businesses.

Legislative Update:

Chapter 22 (Regular Session) authorizes cities and counties to conduct national criminal background checks (via the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension) for individuals seeking a local license to operate an adult entertainment establishment or massage business.

Legislation was introduced in both bodies to establish statewide licensing for massage therapy. This legislation did not become law.

GG-20 PEACE OFFICER ARBITRATION REFORM

Many municipalities in the metropolitan area provide law enforcement services and employ licensed peace officers. To ensure the public's safety and trust, and to strengthen collaboration between citizens and peace officers, cities must have the authority to effectively govern local law enforcement agencies. City officials are ultimately responsible for the safety and protection of the local community.

Metro Cities supports statutory arbitration reforms to allow for the discipline, including removal, of law enforcement officers who have been found to have violated local law enforcement agency policies.

Metro Cities further supports a reasonable standard of review in law enforcement arbitration cases, which would limit the determination of arbitrators to whether the actions of an employer were reasonable and consistent with city and agency policies. Metro Cities further supports using administrative law judges (ALJs) or arbitration to address grievances and discipline related to police misconduct.

Legislative Update:

HF 1375/SF 2111 was introduced this year and would have repealed a 2020 law requiring the maintenance of a six-person roster of arbitrators appointed by the Bureau of Mediation Services to hear grievance arbitrations for written discipline, discharge, and termination of peace officers that arise under collective bargaining agreements covering peace officers. The law includes requirements for the arbitrators to ensure they have the appropriate education and experience. This legislation did not become law.

GG-21 PUBLIC SAFETY TRAINING AND RESOURCES

Metro Cities acknowledges that the tasks public safety responders have been asked to address are increasingly the result of inadequate social services and programs.

Metro Cities recognizes the need for adequate resources for social service and mental health services and programs to help reduce the need for public safety responders to perform these services. Metro Cities supports allocated ongoing state funding to local governments for public safety purposes such as imbedded social workers, mental health response, training, innovation, and more.

Metro Cities supports tools and incentives such as scholarships and/or reimbursements for local law enforcement agencies to use and help with recruitment and retention barriers.

Metro Cities supports resources for the MN Department of Public Safety to acquire and store with a third-party vendor anti-scale fencing, pedestrian doors, and vehicle gates for local government facilities to improve equitable access to these de-escalation and safety tools.

Legislative Update:

Chapter 35 (Regular Session), the judiciary, public safety, and corrections bill, includes \$4.942 million each year for the Philando Castile Memorial Training Fund, with base funding of \$878,000 beginning in 2028. These funds reimburse local law enforcement agencies for state-mandated training on use of force, crisis response, conflict management, cultural diversity, and autism training. The law also includes \$2.95 million in each year of the biennium for the POST Board for reimbursements to local governments for officer training costs.

Chapter 35 amends current law to provide expanded authorization for the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) to document evidence that is at imminent risk of being destroyed, over a private area with the occupants consent, and to help search for missing persons. This chapter also modifies how tracking devices can be used by law enforcement for vehicles that have been reported stolen or on fleeing motor vehicles.

Chapter 8 (Special Session), the omnibus transportation finance and policy bill, includes \$745,000 each year for soft body armor reimbursements.

Legislation was introduced in both bodies to appropriate funding (\$3.5 million) for anti-scale fencing, pedestrian doors, and vehicle gates. These funds would be directed to the Fencing Consortium currently operating in metropolitan area. This legislation did not become law.

GG-22 COPPER AND OTHER METAL THEFT

Wire theft from streetlights, other public infrastructure, and private property negatively impacts communities, by reducing public safety for all transportation modes. These thefts also cost cities hundreds of thousands of dollars each year to replace and repair damaged streetlights.

Metro Cities supports efforts to curtail the theft of copper wires from public infrastructure and private property. Metro Cities supports statutory changes that would require appropriate controls on the purchase and sale of scrap copper and other metals. Metro Cities also supports increasing penalties for copper wire and other metal theft.

Legislative Update:

Chapter 35 (Regular Session), the judiciary, public safety, and corrections bill, amends section 609.593, subd. 1 to make it a felony crime to intentionally damage streetlights, street lighting systems, EV charging stations, traffic-control signals and camera systems.

GG-23 EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

The Emergency Medical Services Regulatory Board (EMSRB) is the state regulatory entity that oversees and issues ambulance licenses and also has authority to designate exclusive emergency medical services (EMS) operating areas, or primary service areas (PSAs), for ambulance providers. Once a provider has been approved to operate in a PSA, the provider is authorized to serve the area for an indefinite period of time. Currently, no other state health licensing board grants providers an exclusive operating area.

Health licensing boards play a critical role in setting professional standards and credentialing processes. However, the EMSRB has not imposed operational standards to ensure an area has adequate coverage and service levels such as response time requirements. Nor is there state oversight of ambulance billing rates. The current system does not require ambulance services to disclose the number of ambulances staffed, where an ambulance is responding from or any other important data points that would ensure a community is receiving quality ambulance services. The lack of transparency within Minnesota's ambulance industry compromises accountability by EMS providers.

In 2024, legislation was passed establishing the Office of Emergency Medical Services, which will replace the EMSRB, effective January 1, 2025. The new office is comprised of three divisions for Medical Services, Ambulance Services, and Emergency Medical Service Providers. Additionally,

three advisory councils are established to provide input and guidance to the office. Metro Cities supports the local government representation on the Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council. Metro Cities supports regional balance among the membership of the various advisory councils established by the office.

Metro Cities supports allowing local units of government to designate which licensed ambulance service provider(s) serve their community and to determine the appropriate level of service. Metro Cities further supports additional tools and local authority that ensure transparency by EMS providers. Metro Cities supports decoupling the professional standards overview role from the service area determination.

Legislative Update:

Much attention was devoted to the topic of emergency medical services this year with a particular focus on rural providers in greater Minnesota. Provisions that passed into law attempt to tackle EMS workforce challenges and the financial difficulties faced by providers outside of large population centers.

Chapter 3 (Special Session), the omnibus health, children, and families bill, includes \$27.5 million for EMS related spending and several policy provisions of note. This legislation requires the Office of EMS to reimburse all eligible licensed ambulance services who apply for costs associated with initial emergency medical responder (EMR) and emergency medical technician (EMT) education as well as continuing education costs for the same two groups of EMS employees. The bill details specific reimbursement amounts and eligibility criteria. These reimbursements are limited to ambulance services that have responded to fewer than 5,000 calls in the most recent calendar year. The reimbursements will also be discontinued if the state lacks sufficient funds.

The same article in Chapter 3 establishes the Rural EMS Uncompensated Care Pool Payment Program, Ambulance Service Training and Staffing Grant Program, and the Ambulance Operating Deficit Program. Of these programs, only the Training and Staffing Grant Program makes metropolitan area service providers eligible for grants. Chapter 3 appropriates \$2 million for this program.

GG-24 RACE EQUITY

In the seven-county metropolitan region, people of color represent 28% of the population, and this percentage is expected to grow to 44% by 2050, according to the current population forecast from the Metropolitan Council. As racial and ethnic diversity increases in the region, people of color continue to experience significant barriers in housing, employment, criminal justice, public infrastructure, health, and education, and disparities are becoming more

apparent. Across the metropolitan region, many cities are working to examine local policies and systems, to revise the delivery of public services, and to allocate resources to help advance race equity. All levels of government as well as the nonprofit and business sectors have roles to play in addressing race inequities and must work collaboratively to ensure that services and resources are considered, designed, and implemented in a comprehensive, purposeful, informed, and inclusive way to achieve race equity. Metro Cities supports:

- An examination and revision of state, regional, county and city laws, ordinances, and policies to address racial disparities.
- State resources to assist with comprehensive data collection, disaggregation and sharing to ensure informed policy and funding decisions at all levels of government.
- Funding to assist in the development of tools and resources that advance racially equitable outcomes.
- Activating partnerships among state, regional and local governmental institutions, and other entities to advance race equity.

Legislative Update:

In Chapter 1 (Special Session), references to a federal supplemental demographic index score were removed from language governing certain grant programs (community tree planting grants in the metropolitan area and the ReLeaf program). The tool the scores rely on was recently discontinued by the federal government. Language has been inserted instead to reference data from the tool as it appeared/was available on July 31, 2024.

One of four core values adopted as part of the Metropolitan Council's Imagine 2050 Regional Development Guide is Equity. "Our region is equitable and inclusive" is one of the five endorsed goals for the guide. Current and future work at the Council will be oriented around the idea of addressing inequities and disparities in the metropolitan region.

GG-25 OPEN MEETING LAW

Public meetings in the State of Minnesota, including city council meetings and local boards and commissions, must be conducted in accordance with the Open Meeting Law under Minnesota Statute 13D.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, cities successfully pivoted to working remotely while maintaining and even increasing transparency and accessibility.

Metro Cities supports amending the Open Meeting Law to allow city councilmembers and non-elected city board and/or commission members the ability to participate remotely in up to fifty percent of scheduled meetings each year without making their location open and accessible to

the public as otherwise required under Minn. Stat. § 13D.02, subd. 1. Metro Cities also supports amending the Open Meeting Law to remove the three-times-per-year cap for medical and military exceptions.

Legislative Update:

Chapter 39, the omnibus state and local government and elections bill passed during the regular session strikes the requirement in section 13D.02, subd. 1 that members of a public body participating remotely have their location open and accessible to the public. This, along with other changes to this section, results in an unlimited ability of city council members and members of boards and commissions to participate remotely in public meetings.

GG-26 ADULT-USE CANNABIS

The Minnesota Legislature legalized adult-use cannabis in 2023. The law establishes the Office of Cannabis Management, which will be responsible for licensing cannabis businesses and regulating the industry. The law includes a local registration process for cannabis business license holders where local governments are authorized to charge a registration and renewal fee. Responsible local governments are required to conduct compliance checks for age verification and the enforcement of local ordinances at cannabis businesses. Cities are authorized to establish, own, and operate a municipal cannabis store. The law also includes an optional, population-based limit on the number of retail locations in each city or county. It is vital that local governments retain the ability to suspend retail registrations for businesses that pose an immediate threat to public health or safety.

The law permits local units of government to establish reasonable restrictions on the time, place, and manner of cannabis business operations and includes a zoning compliance requirement for businesses where a local jurisdiction certifies that a business' plans are appropriate and in line with local requirements.

The law establishes a Local Cannabis Aid Account to provide aid to cities and counties. The account will receive 20% of the revenue from the 10% gross receipts tax on cannabis products. Half of the local cannabis aid will go to counties and half will be distributed to cities based on the number of businesses located in each city.

Metro Cities opposes any efforts to reduce cities' local control and zoning authority related to cannabis. Metro Cities supports legislation providing cities the ability to prohibit cannabis businesses within their jurisdiction.

Metro Cities expects the Office of Cannabis Management to work closely with cities as this legislation is fully implemented. This includes working with local governments to create model ordinances and providing technical assistance on cannabis-related issues.

Metro Cities supports the ongoing evaluation of costs associated with the legalization of adult-use cannabis. Funding should be made available to cities without cannabis businesses if such studies show that those communities face additional budgetary pressures because of cannabis legalization.

Metro Cities supports the distribution of tax revenue from adult-use cannabis sales to cities based on the number of products sold and not the number of stores located in each municipality.

Legislative Update:

Chapter 31, the omnibus cannabis policy bill, made a change to Chapter 342 to allow cities to issue retail registrations to cannabis businesses that have preliminary license approval from the Office of Cannabis Management (rather than having to wait until the applicant is fully licensed). Sections 59 and 71 of Chapter 31 allow cities with a municipal cannabis store to also hold a lower-potency hemp edible retailer license.

Chapter 13 (Special Session), the omnibus tax bill, eliminates the Local Government Cannabis Aid Account and cancels the remaining balance and any future revenues from the gross receipts sales tax on cannabis products to the general fund.

GG-27 STREET RACING AND CARJACKING

Street racing and carjacking are issues of concern for cities across the metropolitan region. The highly mobile nature of street racing makes it difficult to prevent or stop. Street racing is strongly associated with other illegal activity and poses significant public safety risks for participants, third-party observers, and the public. The crime of carjacking has serious consequences for individual and community public safety. While data provided by the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) shows recent decreases in the number of carjacking incidents, more should be done to curb this behavior.

Metro Cities supports state funding to help state and local law enforcement agencies prevent and respond to street racing and carjacking. This could include funding for State Patrol air support and funding for costs, including overtime, associated with targeted law enforcement saturations and Toward Zero Deaths initiatives. Metro Cities also supports state resources to increase the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension's intelligence gathering capabilities and to enhance existing coordination efforts among law enforcement agencies.

Metro Cities supports modifications to state laws to prohibit street racing and activities associated with promoting and undertaking the activity of street racing. Specifically, Metro Cities supports statutory changes that address the activity and associated risks posed by street racing, sliding, and drifting. These could include penalties such as license suspension, minimum impoundment periods, and vehicle forfeiture.

Metro Cities supports consumer protection efforts that require motor vehicle manufacturers to offer antitheft protection devices on certain vehicles that have been shown to be especially susceptible to theft.

Metro Cities further recognizes the importance and value of diversion programs that emphasize behavior modifications, which can help curb illegal activity and minimize recidivism.

Legislative Update:

Chapter 35, the omnibus public safety and judiciary finance and policy bill, creates an exception to the current prohibition on the use of tracking devices on fleeing motor vehicles with several guardrails around how long the device can be attached and enabled, and what kinds of officer and agency reports will be required.

Legislation was considered during the regular session that would have appropriated funds needed for the State Patrol to purchase and equip a helicopter and a replacement single-engine airplane. This did not become law.