

METRO CITIES

Association of Metropolitan Municipalities



Dear City Official:

On behalf of the Metro Cities Board of Directors and staff, thank you for your membership in the Association of Metropolitan Municipalities (Metro Cities).

The primary mission of Metro Cities is to advocate for the shared interests of cities in the seven-county metropolitan region at the Legislature, Executive Branch and Metropolitan Council. This work encompasses transportation, housing, economic development, state aids, funding for state programs, regional fees, water supply, fiscal disparities, comprehensive planning requirements and many other issue of significance to metropolitan cities.

Engagement by city officials in the work of Metro Cities is paramount in ensuring that legislative policies adequately reflect shared objectives of cities in the metropolitan region.

As the pandemic struck and created unprecedented challenges for municipalities, the participation of city officials in Metro Cities' work was vital. Metro Cities conducted city surveys and engaged with city officials and staff to gauge the pandemic's effects on cities' operations, finances, and resource needs. Metro Cities' focus is on ensuring that metropolitan cities' needs are well-represented to policymakers as resources to address the pandemic are considered.

Metro Cities often works with other local government associations, and highly values its partnership with the League of Minnesota Cities. These partnerships have been crucial as city officials across the region and state manage COVID-19 challenges in their communities and associations work to seek adequate legislative remedies for cities.

Enclosed you will find highlights of Metro Cities' recent legislative work and accomplishments. Metro Cities is highly committed to providing high quality service for your dues.

As your President, I will continue to advance Metro Cities' values of stewardship, partnership, quality, integrity, and leadership. I look forward to working with you over the coming year.

Sincerely,

Melanie Mesko Lee, President

City Manager, City of Burnsville



HIGHLIGHTS of 2020-21 LEGISLATION

COVID-19

- Metro Cities supported the distribution of \$841.4 million of the state's share of **Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF)** to local governments. Metro Cities closely monitored and worked with MMB on funding requirements and deadlines.
- Metro Cities supported funding for cities from the 2021 **American Rescue Plan Act (ARP)** and is monitoring federal guidance and state and federal reporting and other requirements.
- Metro Cities surveyed city officials in early Spring 2020 to identify local challenges and needs for resources to address COVID-19. The responses informed advocacy on local finances, community development, and housing stability, among other issues.
- Metro Cities supported modifying the open meeting law to allow city officials to participate in meetings via telephone or interactive technology. A temporary law passed that expired on July 1, 2021.
- Metro Cities advocated for **flexibility in tax increment financing (TIF) laws** to allow cities to use unobligated increment to address COVID-19 needs. The new law provides cities temporary authority to use increment to assist businesses and for certain housing developments.
- Metro Cities advocated for and supported a new Metropolitan Council policy to defer **Sewer Availability Charge (SAC)** for outdoor seating during the pandemic until January 1, 2022.

LOCAL CONTROL

- Metro Cities **supports local decision-making authority**. Metro Cities is actively opposing local **residential development preemption** legislation that would harm long-standing municipal zoning, land use and planning roles and authority.

HOUSING

- Metro Cities supported recent appropriations totaling \$200 million for **housing infrastructure bonds**, a new housing tax credit funded at \$10 million to incent private support for affordable housing, and new state match funding for **local housing trust funds**.
- Metro Cities continues to support legislation on **statutory clarity for providing local street infrastructure** for new residential development.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & REDEVELOPMENT

- Metro Cities supported \$12 million for the **Minnesota Investment Fund** and \$8 million for the **Job Creation Fund** funded in the 2021 session.
- Metro Cities championed funding for the state's **redevelopment grant program**, which will be accessible to cities in 2021.



THE WORK and ACCOMPLISHMENTS



- Metro Cities is working with city officials and Metropolitan Council staff on concerns with the **2018 comprehensive plan process** and improvements in advance of the next planning cycle.
- Metro Cities provided input on **housing goals** required for cities participating in the Livable Communities Program and supported adoption of a formula that is realistic and based on expected levels of public financing.

TAXES

- Metro Cities supported a new law requiring a study of local tax base effects if the state **4d Low Income Rental Classification Program** is expanded. Metro Cities will monitor the study and encourage input from local officials.
- Metro Cities supported a new 2021 law that exempts construction materials for public safety facilities from state sales tax.
- Metro Cities advocated for allowing cities to use tax increment to capitalize local housing trust funds. A new law temporarily allows increment to be used for assistance to businesses for creating jobs. Pooling rules were also expanded for owner-occupied affordable housing developments that meet the requirements of a housing TIF district.
- Metro Cities will work with city associations and legislators to examine the local government aid (LGA) formula. Metro Cities supports stability in the distribution of aid and a formula that adequately recognizes the needs of metropolitan cities.

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

- Metro Cities championed a recent \$5 million state appropriation to assist metropolitan cities with local **inflow-infiltration mitigation** and continues to work with the Metropolitan Council on requirements for grant funds.

TRANSPORTATION

- Metro Cities consistently supports **funding for local transportation needs** and supported appropriations for Trunk Highway Bonds, the Local Road Improvement and Local Bridge Programs, Municipal Street Aid and Small Cities account.
- Metro Cities supports state and regional funding **support for transit providers**. The Legislature appropriated base level funding for the Metropolitan Council and \$57.5 million for arterial bus rapid transit.

WATER and ENVIRONMENT

- Metro Cities supported creation of an advisory group of Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) conveyed to wastewater treatment facilities and supports participation by local officials in the advisory group.
- Metro Cities supported funding for Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) mitigation that was included in the 2021 omnibus environment bill.

POLICE TRAINING

- Metro Cities supported the \$12 million appropriation by the Legislature in 2021 for crisis intervention and de-escalation training. Metro Cities advocated for more comprehensive police arbitration reforms that were not included in any final legislation.



HISTORY and MISSION

Metro Cities is a service and lobbying association for cities in the seven-county metropolitan region. Established in 1974, the mission of the association is to represent the shared interests of cities in the metropolitan area at the state and regional levels of government. Metro Cities is active in proposing and lobbying legislation of concern and significance to metropolitan cities. Metro Cities is unique among local government associations in its representation of metropolitan city interests at the Metropolitan Council and the association closely monitors and responds to the scope of funding and policy activities of the Council.

COMMUNICATIONS and SOCIAL MEDIA

Metro Cities publishes a regular electronic newsletter and provides legislative alerts and other communications to help keep metropolitan city officials informed on evolving legislative and regional policy and funding activity.

Metro Cities' website includes published newsletters, legislative policies, COVID-19 resources, upcoming meetings and materials, and MAMA meetings and information.

See our website at: MetroCitiesMN.org

Follow us on Twitter: [@MetroCitiesMN](https://twitter.com/MetroCitiesMN)

LEGISLATIVE POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Policies are developed by four standing committees based on input from member city representatives. An important function for Metro Cities is to provide a forum for consensus building that gives city officials and staff opportunities to develop an understanding of other cities' problems, concerns, and points of view.

Policy recommendations are transmitted to the Board of Directors and general membership and the adopted legislative policies serve as the foundation of Metro Cities' work at the State Capitol and Metropolitan Council. The 2021 policy adoption meeting will be held on December 9. Watch for details.

OTHER ASSOCIATION SERVICES and ACTIVITIES

Metro Cities:

- Provides staff support to the Metropolitan Area Management Association (MAMA)
- Collaborates with the League of Minnesota Cities and other entities to prepare and manage an annual local salary survey
- Holds periodic forums on pertinent topics of interest for its members
- Convenes an annual meeting in April for the election of new Board officers and members
- Convenes an annual Legislative Policy Adoption Meeting

2021 METRO CITIES MEMBERSHIP

Andover	Elko New Market	Medicine Lake	St. Louis Park
Anoka	Excelsior	Mendota Heights	St. Paul
Apple Valley	Falcon Heights	Minneapolis	St. Paul Park
Arden Hills	Forest Lake	Minnnetonka	St. Paul Port Authority *
Bayport	Fridley	Minnnetonka Beach	Savage
Blaine	Golden Valley	Minnetrستا	Shakopee
Bloomington	Greenwood	Mounds View	Shoreview
Brooklyn Center	Hanover *	New Brighton	Shorewood
Brooklyn Park	Hastings	New Hope	South St. Paul
Burnsville	Hopkins	Newport	Spring Lake Park
Carver	Hugo	North St. Paul	Spring Park
Centerville	Independence	Oak Park Heights	Stillwater
Chanhassen	Inver Grove Heights	Oakdale	Sunfish Lake
Chaska	Lake Elmo	Orono	Vadnais Heights
Circle Pines	Lakeville	Osseo	Victoria
Columbia Heights	Lauderdale	Plymouth	Waconia
Coon Rapids	Lilydale	Prior Lake	Watertown
Corcoran	Little Canada	Richfield	Wayzata
Cottage Grove	Long Lake	Robbinsdale	West St. Paul
Crystal	Mahtomedi	Rogers	White Bear Lake
Dayton	Maple Grove	Rosemount	Woodbury
Eagan	Maple Plain	Roseville	
Eden Prairie	Maplewood	St. Anthony Village	
Edina	Marine on St. Croix	St. Francis	<i>*=Affiliate Member</i>



BOARD AND STAFF

Metro Cities is governed by a 19-member Board of Directors of city officials from across the metropolitan area. Association staff include an Executive Director, two Government Relations Specialists and an Office Manager.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President
Melanie Mesko Lee

Burnsville, City Manager

Vice President
Matt Stemwedel

Coon Rapids, City Manager

Past President
Myron Bailey

Cottage Grove, Mayor

Josh Berg
Elko New Market
Councilmember

Steve Fletcher
Minneapolis
Councilmember

Mitra Jalali
St. Paul
Councilmember

Steve Morris
Woodbury
Councilmember

Daniel Buchholtz
Spring Lake Park
City Administrator

Jason Gadd
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Mayor

Jan Jenson
St. Anthony Village
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Jay Stroebel
Brooklyn Park
City Manager

Jeffrey Dahl
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Rosemount
Mayor

Clint Hooppaw
Apple Valley
Mayor

Fatima Moore
Minneapolis
IGR Director

ThaoMee Xiong
St. Paul
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