

2015 Legislative Session Review

Metropolitan Council
May 27, 2015



2015 Legislative Session

- Divided Legislature -- House under Republican control; Senate under DFL control
- Odd-numbered years are when legislature passes the two-year, biennial budget
- \$1.8+ billion surplus as Legislators prepared budgets
- House, Senate and Governor had different priorities
 - Agreed on need for transportation bill; disagreed on funding mechanism
 - E-12 Education Funding
 - Tax bill

Transportation Proposals

- The Governor, Senate and House each listed Transportation as a top priority, but had substantially different approaches.

Governor's Proposal

- The Governor proposed a comprehensive transportation package that included a new gas tax and increase of the metropolitan area sales tax to provide a permanent, dedicated revenue source for transportation and transit.
 - \$2.8 billion over 10 years for expansion and improvement of our transit system
 - Expand regional bus system by almost 30% by 2025
 - More routes, more frequent service, more coverage
 - Modernized system using new technologies and real-time updates
 - +1,000 shelters and amenities

Legislature's Proposals

- *The Senate* passed a transportation bill similar in many ways to the Governor's proposal - creating new, dedicated funding sources for roads & bridges and transit.
- *The House* bill did not include new revenue, but instead reallocated money currently going to the General Fund for roads & bridges.
- End result of negotiation attempts was a “**lights on**” transportation bill.

“Lights On” Transportation Bill

- **\$76.6 million** per year in 2016-2017 for transit operations
- **\$29.7 million** re-appropriated from the remaining 2013 SWLRT appropriation of \$37 million
 - \$2 million to Suburban Transit Providers for suburb-to-suburb demonstration project
 - \$200,000 to Transportation Management Organizations
 - Remaining funds go to transit operations, including light rail operations, A-Line operations, and Metro Mobility
- **\$89.82 million** per year base for 2018-2019

Transportation Policy

New member added to the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB)

- Added 34th member
- Appointed by the Suburban Transit Association
- Must be elected official from a city receiving Suburban Transit Provider service
- Membership change effective the day after enactment

End of 2015 Regular Session

- Governor will call a Special Session to handle remaining business – could be very soon
 - **Legacy Fund**- passed by the House; Senate ran out of time to pass
 - **Environment Finance**- vetoed by the Governor
 - **E-12 Education Finance**- vetoed by the Governor
 - **Tax Bill & Bonding Bill**- No bill passed during session, may be part of special session negotiations
 - Specific provisions in other bills that the Governor wants revised
- Budget bills must be enacted by June 30 to avoid any agency shutdowns

Additional Items with Council Impact

- \$1 million in Legislative-Citizens Commission on Minnesota Resources Bill for park land acquisition
- \$35.403 million for Parks & Trails in **Legacy Bill**
- \$975,000 for Water Supply Planning and \$250,000 for water demand reduction grants each year in **Legacy Bill**
- Changed from voting member to ex-officio member of Clean Water Council in **Legacy Bill**

Additional Items with Council Impact

- \$8.54 million for Metropolitan Regional Parks in **Environment Bill**
- Park Interest Earnings – **Environment Bill** ends current dedication of interest to North Mississippi Regional Park effective 2018
- Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee changes made and \$200,000 appropriated for water supply technical and planning support in **Environment Bill**

Confirmations

- Chair and Council Members were confirmed by the Senate after a confirmation hearing in the State & Local Government Committee

What did **not** happen

- Housing plans and affordable housing allocations require approval by the legislature
- Legislative approval of development guide required
- Metropolitan Council governance changes
 - Staggered terms
 - Only local elected officials eligible to serve as Members
 - Local government approval of Members
 - Chair elected by Council
 - “Blue Ribbon Commission” to recommend changes



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