

City of Hopkins

2023 Legislative Agenda

Inspire. Educate. Involve. Communicate



About Hopkins

Founded rich in tradition and growth, Hopkins offers the advantages and conveniences of a large city, with the pride and opportunities of a hometown. Mainstreet was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2022, and is a point of pride for the community.

The City of Hopkins is a fully developed, dynamic urban community located five miles west of Minneapolis with a current population of approximately 19,079. Hopkins is demographically unique to the Twin Cities with 38% of the population identifying as non-white and 65% of residents in Hopkins renting their homes. The City is four-square miles, making it one of the densest communities in the metro area.

The METRO Green Line light rail extension is driving rapid population and housing growth. The Metropolitan Council forecasts that the population will be 21,000 by 2030 and 21,800 by 2040.

Affordable Housing

Production

- Establish a dedicated revenue source for the production of affordable housing.
- Allow for an affordable housing fee on new development.
- Establish a Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) affordable housing fund and financial resources.
- Support additional funding for the housing choice voucher programs or other rental assistance programs and financial, tax, and/or other incentives for rental property owners to participate in these programs.
- Support exemptions from, or reductions to sales, use and transaction taxes applied to the development and production of affordable housing.

Preservation

- Allow pooled Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to be deposited in Local Housing Trust Funds (LHTF) for affordable housing.
- Ensure all residents qualify for homestead benefits by providing an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN).
- Establish a rental rehab program for small to medium size developments to preserve Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH) multi-family residential rental properties.
- Increase support for General Obligation Bonds towards Public Housing preservation and rehabilitation.
- Maintain local regulatory authority for fee-for-service building inspections to ensure public safety and verify compliance.
- Providing funding source to support the installation of fire suppression systems in Public Housing buildings.

Protections

- Support additional funding for emergency rental assistance payments for low income residents as rent increases in our region.
- Preserve the current 4d Low-Income Rental Classification that provides a class rate reduction in property taxes to qualifying low-income rental properties. Oppose any changes to the 4d program that substantially increases the tax responsibility for existing residents and businesses.

Transportation

- Increase flexibility in funding for street maintenance, repairs and construction. Support legislation to allow street improvement district authority.
- Support increasing the State's Highway User Tax Distribution Fund. An increase is needed in order to increase MSAS apportionments to meet required cost participation on State and County projects and maintain/repair state aid eligible streets.
- Support stable and growing revenue sources to fund regional transit providers.

General

- Preserve local control.
- Oppose the establishment of levy limits.
- Oppose reductions to local government aid.
- Advocate that a percentage of tax revenue generated by recreational marijuana (if approved by legislature) be allocated to cities to cover law enforcement and mental health services.
- Increase funding to hire more officers to prevent crime in our community, while implementing continued outreach and community building efforts.
- Increase funding to support the police cadet program to support a more diversified pool of candidates to become police officers in our community.
- Continue the expansion of mental health support in our community with social workers to assist our public safety department.
- Support the implementation of a statewide driver's license system to accurately and privately gather and maintain race/demographic information related to traffic stops.
- Expand statutory authority of the Closed Landfill Program to authorize and fund proactive work on property reuse, including solar development, and provide funding to establish a Closed Landfill Beneficial Reuse Program.
- Appropriate funds to retire bond debt early and legislatively authorize the release of state bonding restrictions for select Closed Landfill Program sites.
- Support/reinstate funding for the Minnesota Historic Structure Rehabilitation Tax Credit program.
- Oppose any reductions or alternations of cities' existing authority in land use planning or the ability to utilize planned unit development in a locally-determined manner.
- Support expansion of special legislation to allow communities with little or no greenfield development to seek park development funds without the subdivision of land.

Climate Action

- Expand the use of the special assessment tool for energy/sustainability to dwelling units with five units or less.
- Provide funding to assist low-income property owners with Emerald Ash Borer removal efforts on private property.
- Support efforts to encourage zero emissions vehicles/low emission vehicles (ZEV/LEV).
- Support funding for electric vehicle infrastructure and funding for fleet conversion to electric alternatives.
- Support funding for environmental justice and areas most impacted by climate change.

Funding for Southwest Light Rail Transit

- Maximize usage and acknowledge the regional benefit of the METRO Green Line Light Rail by providing funding for structured parking at the Shady Oak LRT Station.
- Support the implementation of funding for transit improvement areas and authorize various funding mechanisms for transit improvement areas including; tax increment financing, tax abatement, bonding, and general fund appropriations for a revolving loan program or grant program.

Bonding Bill for Inflow and Infiltration

- Assist local communities in funding repairs and upgrades to local sewer infrastructure, including bonding bills for this purpose.

Redevelopment Funding from Bonding Bill or DEED

- Support an increased, flexible and sustained Contamination Cleanup and Investigation Grant Program, administered by DEED.
- Support an increased and sustained general fund and state bond funds for the Redevelopment Grant Program, administered by DEED, dedicated to Metropolitan Area projects.
- Support expansion of existing tools or development of new funding mechanisms to correct unstable soils.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

- Oppose any statutory language that would further constrain or directly or indirectly reduce the effectiveness of TIF.
- Expand the flexibility of TIF to support a broader range of redevelopment projects.
- Increase the ability to pool increments from other districts to support projects.
- Support the creation of transit zones and transit related TIF districts to address development and redevelopment issues associated with transit or transfer stations.
- Shift TIF redevelopment policy away from a focus on “blight” and “substandard” to “functionally obsolete” or a focus on long range planning for a particular community, reduction in greenhouse gases or other criteria’s more relevant current needs.
- Consider creating an inter-disciplinary TIF team to review local exception TIF proposals, using established criteria, and make recommendations to the legislative on their passage.
- Encourages the State Auditor to continue to work toward a more efficient and streamlined reporting process.

For questions or more information, please contact
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