

## **East Metro Mayor's Association (EMMA)**

### **Purpose/Mission:**

To provide a forum and platform for East Metro mayors to strongly and formally collaborate, build consensus, and speak with one united voice to advance an agenda that promotes the growth, well-being and equitable distribution of federal, state, and regional resources to East Metro communities.

The East Metro area is experiencing significant population growth. With this growth, there is increasing need to address a host of challenges in the environmental area, transit & transportation, infrastructure improvements, water quality issues, public safety, housing issues, equitable governmental transfer payments, economic development and job opportunities to name just some of the areas that require attention.

The East Metro Mayor's Association (EMMA) is organized to provide research and advocacy services on a broad range of issues that affect its members, community partners and the broader east metro area.

EMMA is to serve as the champion organization encouraging private and public investments in the eastern suburbs and the collective voice for issues impacting the East Metro area at the federal, state, and regional levels of government.

### **Organizational Structure**

EMMA would provide an opportunity for all East Metro communities to become a member. Each would be asked to contribute an annual fee to cover the cost of the association (see suggested fee structure). The association would select a Chair & Board of Directors, determine the frequency of meetings and a weighted voting system. The Board would select an Executive Director to manage the association and carry out the directives of the Board.

### **Examples of Possible Policy & Legislative Priorities & Work Plan:**

#### **Transportation Funding**

- Work with the Minnesota Department of Transportation, legislative leadership and transportation committees, Governor's Administration, Metropolitan Council, Minnesota Transportation Alliance and key congressional members and staff to secure transportation funding.

## Transportation Advocacy

Support the regional efforts to improve:

- Highway 36
- I-94
- I-694
- Highway 61
- BRT/Gold Line
- Expand transit options
- Assist East Metro cities to secure funding for county, state, aid highway (CSAH) reconstruction/improvement projects

## Fiscal and Tax Issues

- Work with the EMMA legislative delegation, the League of Minnesota Cities, Metro Cities, Washington County, Ramsey County, and other stakeholders to be sure the collective East Metro voice is heard on tax and fiscal items that impact east metro cities.
- Advocate for property tax changes that support the needs of cities across the East Metro.
- Oppose levy limits and tax policy that takes away local control for East Metro city elected officials.
- Advocate for additional tools to assist economic development in East Metro cities.

## Activities

- Work with the League of Minnesota Cities, Metro Cities, and other local government partners in a collaborative manner to advance key local government legislative objectives.
- Support Metropolitan Council changes, including staggered terms, elected city officials' significant participation in nominating Metropolitan Council members, and increased transparency in the appointment process.
- Conduct legislative candidate forums in EMMA member districts to inform candidates on EMMA issues and to assist voters in determining their choices.

## Environment/Water Protection & Water Quality

More than 17 years after water contamination from the 3M site in the East Metro was discovered, water quality and water protection is as pertinent an issue as ever before. Even today, the state is still finding new residents in our communities that could be at risk.

According to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, unsafe levels of PFCs have been discovered in 951 private wells since 2007. As new wells are continually being identified, those numbers will grow, and could lead to harmful effects for residents over the course of their lifetimes.

EMMA would act as a collective voice for East Metro communities to work in concert to mitigate these potentially harmful effects by:

- Support of federal, state and regional efforts to remediate polluted sites. Work on innovative ways to promote and adopt sustainable practices.
- Support regional efforts to strengthen and enhance drinking water protection & water quality in the East Metro area.
- Watershed District Management
- Wetlands
- Best practices, policies and procedures related to solid waste, recycling, land management and other natural resources.

## Additional Issues

- Regional Recreation: Assist in securing funding for regional trails and parks
- Housing: Support consistent application of state housing financing programs to help facilitate local housing goals in addition to state goals.
- Public Safety: Support law enforcement's efforts to gain and retain qualified peace officers.
- Elections: Support legislation creating early voting opportunities that create administrative and financial efficiencies for local governments.