

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN
THE METROPOLITAN COUNCIL, REGION 7W TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD,
WRIGHT AND SHERBURNE COUNTIES, THE CITIES OF ALBERTVILLE, ELK RIVER,
HANOVER, OTSEGO, and ST. MICHAEL
TO CONDUCT FEDERALLY REQUIRED METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION
PLANNING ACTIVITIES**

The parties to this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) are the Metropolitan Council (Council), the Region 7W Transportation Policy Board (Region 7W TPB), Wright and Sherburne Counties (Counties), the cities of Albertville, Elk River, Hanover, Otsego, and St. Michael;

WHEREAS, federal transportation law and regulations (23 U.S.C. §§ 134 and 135; 49 U.S.C. §§ 5303 and 5304; 23 C.F.R. Part 450, Subpart A – *Transportation Planning and Programming Definitions*; 23 C.F.R. Part 450 Subpart B – *Statewide and Nonmetropolitan Transportation Planning and Programming*; and 23 C.F.R. Part 450 Subpart C – *Metropolitan Transportation Planning and Programming*) require a metropolitan planning organization (MPO) to be designated for all urbanized areas with a population of more than 50,000 to establish and maintain a continuing, coordinated, and comprehensive transportation planning process;

WHEREAS, the Council was established by the Minnesota Legislature in 1967 to plan for the orderly and economic development of the seven county Minneapolis-St. Paul region and was designated by the governor as the MPO for the Minneapolis-St. Paul Urbanized Area in 1973;

WHEREAS, the U.S. Census Bureau identified portions of Wright County including the cities of Albertville, Hanover, Otsego, and St. Michael and portions of Sherburne County including the cities of Elk River and Big Lake Township are included in the contiguous urbanized area identified by the U.S. Census Bureau in both the 2010 and 2020 U.S. census for the Twin Cities metropolitan area, as depicted on the map on Figure 1; hereinafter referred to as “the extended area.”

WHEREAS, under federal regulations, the MPO transportation planning area boundary must encompass, at a minimum, the entire “Urbanized Area” as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau and the area expected to become urbanized within the next 20 years;

WHEREAS, federal law does not require a re-designation of an MPO solely due to expansion of its boundary;

WHEREAS, US DOT policy encourages boundary changes to be accomplished through agreements between affected jurisdictions;

WHEREAS, an MOU between the Council and the urbanized areas of Wright and Sherburne counties was finalized and signed by all affected parties in 2012, that the subsequent 2020 census did not result in any

substantial changes to the urbanized areas of Wright and Sherburne counties that are included in the Twin Cities urbanized area as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau and that these changes have subsequently been discussed and agreed that only minor revisions were required to the adopted metropolitan urban area boundary;

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statutes section 473.146, subd. 4 says “(a) The Metropolitan Council is the designated planning agency for any long-range comprehensive transportation planning required by section 134 of the Federal Highway Act of 1962, Section 4 of Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964 and Section 112 of Federal Aid Highway Act of 1973 and other federal transportation laws. The Council shall assure administration and coordination of transportation planning with appropriate state, regional and other agencies, counties, and municipalities”;

WHEREAS, Wright and Sherburne Counties are part of the Central Minnesota Area Transportation Partnership (ATP) for federal transportation funding;

WHEREAS, Wright and Sherburne Counties are part of the Region 7W TPB established by Joint Powers Agreement duly executed by Benton, Sherburne, Stearns, and Wright Counties on January 4, 2000;

WHEREAS, the Region 7W TPB’s Statement of Purpose, as defined in the Joint Powers Agreement, is “to address regionally significant transportation issues, conduct regional transportation studies and plans, and solicit and select projects seeking federal transportation funding that support the activities of the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) and the Central Minnesota ATP”;

WHEREAS, Section 176(c) of the Clean Air Act, 42 U.S.C. § 7506(c), requires federally funded transportation plans, programs, and projects that are funded or approved under 23 U.S.C. (Highways), or the Federal Transit Act, 49 U.S.C. ch. 53 (Public Transportation) to conform with State and Federal air quality implementation plans; and

NOW, THEREFORE, the parties understand:

1. **PURPOSE.** As part of its charge from the state legislature to “assure administration and coordination of transportation planning with appropriate state, regional and other agencies, counties, and municipalities” the Council desires to enter into an understanding with the above named counties and cities in the “extended area” to meet the metropolitan transportation planning requirements as required by federal law;
2. **APPLICABILITY.** This memorandum only addresses to federal metropolitan transportation planning requirements; it does not extend any of the Council’s other statutory roles and responsibilities, such as provision of wastewater treatment or transit service, nor the requirement for local land planning in conformance to the Metropolitan Development Guide, to be applicable to these parties;
3. **PLANNING AREA BOUNDARIES.** The metropolitan planning area boundary agreed upon by the “extended area” parties in accordance with federal law will be accepted by the Council and certified by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) as the metropolitan transportation planning area for the affected areas of Wright and Sherburne Counties;

4. **TRANSPORTATION PLANNING.** The parties will conduct a transportation planning process that is continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive and provide for the consideration of projects, strategies, and services that address the requirements in 23 C.F.R. Part 450, Subpart C – *Metropolitan Transportation Planning and Programming*. A primary responsibility of the MPO is to prepare an updated multimodal transportation plan every five years. Under federal law, this plan must be “fiscally constrained”, so it does not plan for expenditures beyond those revenues expected to be reasonably available within the time frame of the plan. The Council will coordinate with the technical staff representing agencies of the extended area to discuss and agree upon projects in the extended area that are to be included in the MPO’s fiscally constrained plan. The Council will coordinate with the Region 7W technical representatives if plan amendments that impact the extended area are needed prior to the usual five-year plan update cycle;
5. **TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMMING.** A primary responsibility of the MPO is to prepare a short-range Transportation Improvement Program to cover a four-year period. The Council and its Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) will work cooperatively with the extended area participants and MnDOT District 3 to develop the Transportation Improvement Program for the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, adopt it and transmit it to MnDOT for incorporation into the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) by October 1 of each year. The TAB will continue to select projects with federal funds for the seven-county area through its regional solicitation process. Projects to be funded with federal money in the extended area will be selected through the existing District 3/7W ATP process, and transmitted to the Council for inclusion in the TIP and STIP. If a TIP amendment that impacts the extended area is needed prior to the usual annual TIP update cycle, MnDOT District 3 and the Region 7W TPB will submit the amendment to the Council for inclusion in the MPO’s TIP and subsequently the STIP;
6. **METROPOLITAN PLANNING FUNDING.** The parties understand that the Council will utilize funding from the Consolidated Planning Grant (CPG) from the USDOT to carry out this planning work and will not request additional funding for metropolitan planning activities from the other parties in the extended area;
7. **AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY.** The MPO must assure that its transportation plan and TIP are in conformity with the federal Clean Air Act, as applicable. This will continue to be accomplished under the process described in the “Transportation Conformity Procedures for Minnesota.” Portions of Wright County, as well as portions of the original seven county MPO area, were included in the air quality maintenance area in the past and may be included should the region be designated as a non-attainment area by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in the future;
8. **COMMUNICATION.** Provision of a forum for interaction among local jurisdictions, between local jurisdictions and state agencies, and between state/local agencies and the public is a key responsibility of MPOs. In order to maintain open communication on transportation planning issues, the Council plans to coordinate meetings with the extended area on an as-needed basis. The meetings will include, at a minimum, key technical staff from both the Council and the extended area. Upon request from staff of the extended area, meetings may also include elected

officials from extended area cities, Wright and Sherburne counties, and/or TAB and Council leadership. All meetings will take place virtually or in-person within the extended area unless an alternative meeting location is requested and agreed upon by the parties. The extended area will be invited to send a representative to the MPO's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), per the TAC Bylaws. The TAC reviews and recommends for approval the long-range transportation plan, the TIP, UPWP and other studies and plans undertaken by the Council;

9. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.** Public participation in the preparation of all transportation planning documents, including the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP, will be facilitated by provision of public meeting and/or public hearing and dissemination of information through local channels in Sherburne and Wright Counties, such as libraries and community media. Material will also be electronically available on the Council's website;
10. **LEGAL AUTHORITY.** This MOU is not a legally binding agreement and creates no legally binding obligations for any party. Because of the mutual desire to proceed and achieve the goals stated in this MOU, each party fully intends to make a good faith effort to achieve the goals described above to work together to comply with the federal and state laws;
11. **GOVERNMENT DATA.** The parties acknowledge that this MOU, as well as any data created, collected, stored, or received under the terms of this MOU, are "Government Data" within the meaning of the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (Minnesota Statutes Chapter 13), and that they must comply with the provisions of the Act as if related to such data;
12. **REVIEW.** All parties agree to review the MOU (and amend as necessary) following the release of urban areas boundaries by the U.S. Census Bureau based on the 2030 U.S. Census;
13. **TERMINATION.** The terms of this MOU may be terminated by any one of the parties by giving notice to each of the other parties.

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I concur with this Memorandum of Understanding

Sherburne County

By: Raeanne Danielowski
Raeanne Danielowski (May 11, 2026 15:46:26 CDT)

Board Chair

Title:

Date: 05/11/2026

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I concur with this Memorandum of Understanding

Wright County

By: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Jul 14
Board Chair

March 17, 2026

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I concur with this Memorandum of Understanding

City of Albertville

By:

Title:

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Date:

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I concur with this Memorandum of Understanding

City of Elk River

By:  _____
Title:  _____

Date: _____

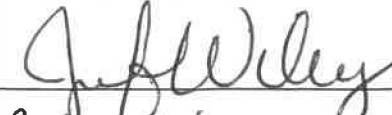
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I concur with this Memorandum of Understanding

City of Hanover

By:

Title:


City Administrator

Date:

08-05-2024

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I concur with this Memorandum of Understanding

City of Otsego

By: Germa Stockenp
Title: Mayor

Date: February 23, 2026

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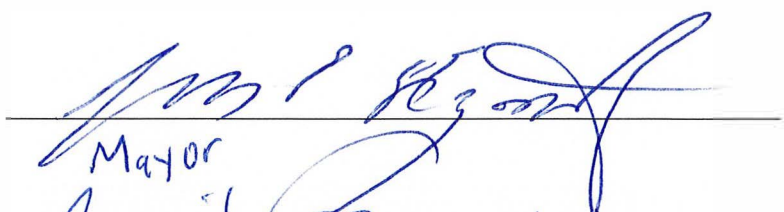
I concur with this Memorandum of Understanding

City of St. Michael

By: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____


Mayor
April 28, 2026

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I concur with this Memorandum of Understanding

Region 7W Transportation Policy Board

By: Raeanne Danilowski
Title: Board Chair

Date: 6-12-26

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I concur with this Memorandum of Understanding

Metropolitan Council

By: _____
Title: _____

Date: _____

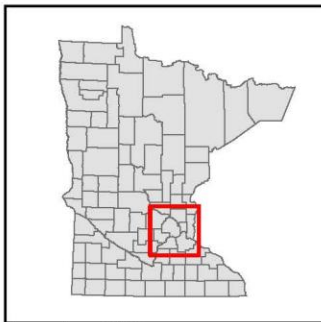
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Figure 1: Map of Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary

2020 Metropolitan Planning Organization Area

Note:
The Metropolitan Planning Area
must include the entire 2020
Urbanized Area as defined by
population density in the
2020 US Census.

- National Highway System
- ▬ 2020 Metropolitan Planning Area
- ▬ County Boundaries
- ▬ Municipal & Township Boundaries



December 2024

