

# TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING GUIDE

February 2026



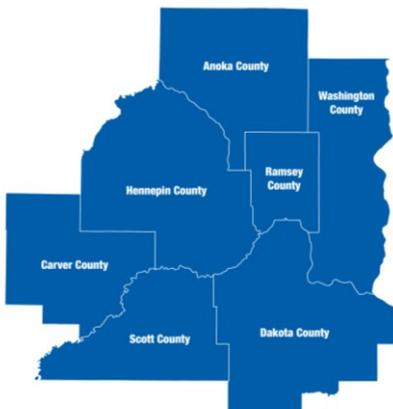
METROPOLITAN  
COUNCIL

The Met Council's mission is to foster efficient and economic growth for a prosperous metropolitan region.

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The Metropolitan Council is the regional planning organization for the seven-county Twin Cities area. The Met Council operates the regional bus and rail system, collects and treats wastewater, coordinates regional water resources, plans and helps fund regional parks, and administers federal funds that provide housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income individuals and families. The 17-member Council board is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the governor.

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# Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).....	4
Chapter 1: Participants .....	5
Metropolitan Council.....	5
Transportation Advisory Board (TAB).....	9
Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT).....	11
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) .....	11
Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC).....	11
Transit Providers .....	12
Counties and Municipalities .....	13
Regional Residents, Businesses, and Non-Profits.....	13
U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) .....	14
Tribal Relations .....	14
Chapter 2: Transportation-Related Planning Documents .....	16
Regional Development Guide.....	16
Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) .....	16
Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) .....	17
Minnesota GO Vision .....	19
Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan .....	19
Minnesota State Highway Investment Plan (MnSHIP).....	20
Chapter 3: Funding and Programming Process .....	21
Federal Funding Overview .....	21
Transit Funds .....	23
Regional Solicitation.....	23
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) .....	25
State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) .....	27
Chapter 4: Activities that Support Planning and Programming .....	28
Federal Requirements.....	28
State Requirements and Procedures.....	32
Transit Plans and Studies .....	33
Chapter 5: Useful Links.....	35
Chapter 6: Glossary & Abbreviations .....	37

## Introduction

Large U.S. metropolitan areas must have well-designed, carefully maintained transportation systems that cover travel by all modes including automobile, bus, rail, truck, bicycle, foot, and airplane. In every metropolitan area, an interconnected web of people and organizations works to set priorities, make plans, and implement projects that affect the region's transportation infrastructure.

In the Twin Cities, the regional transportation planning process involves an interconnected group of elected officials, transportation agencies, stakeholders, and residents. It is informed by national, state, district, metropolitan, and local plans and priorities. The participant roles, contributing documents and process for the region's transportation planning and programming are described on the following pages.

### Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Federal regulations require that the mutual transportation planning responsibilities of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the state, and the public transportation operators be incorporated into a written agreement—a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which is reviewed and updated as needed by the Met Council and MnDOT at least once every four years. The agencies may change the MOU by mutual agreement at any time. The Met Council signs the MOU in both its roles as the MPO and the major regional public transit operator and designated recipient of federal transit funds.

Here is the [current MOU between the Met Council and MnDOT](#).

This guide explains, in more detail than the MOU, the Twin Cities metropolitan area's transportation planning and programming process. National policy is that the MPO designated for each urbanized area must carry out a continuing, comprehensive and cooperative (3C) multimodal transportation planning process. The 3C process provides a basis for decision-making and ensures that transportation interests are balanced when public funds are spent.

Finally, this Transportation Planning and Programming Guide describes the participants that create and maintain the Twin Cities transportation system, how those participants work together, the primary products and processes that define their work, the sources and distribution of funds to transportation projects, the transition from plans to programmed projects, and the activities that support planning and programming.

## Chapter 1: Participants

Participants in the transportation planning process include:

- The Metropolitan Council (Met Council)
- The Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) and its Technical Advisory Committees
- The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)
- The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)
- The Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC)
- Transit providers
- Transportation management organizations
- Cities
- Counties and county regional railroad authorities
- Tribes and tribal governments
- Residents, non-profits, and businesses
- The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT)
- Other state and federal agencies

### Metropolitan Council

Federal law requires that designated metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) conduct transportation planning and program federal funds in urban areas. MPOs serve urban areas that have a population at or above 50,000. In areas with a population of at least 200,000, known as transportation management areas (TMAs), the MPO is responsible for directly receiving and distributing some federal transportation funds. MPOs develop transportation plans and programs based on the 3C planning process – cooperative, comprehensive and continuing – and carry out the process with participation from representatives of state and local communities.

The Metropolitan Council is the designated MPO for the Twin Cities area. Federal law requires some additional areas beyond the seven-county metro be included in regional transportation planning based on the contiguous urban area definitions. For these purposes, the metropolitan planning area (MPA) includes Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington counties, as well as adjacent urban areas portions of Wright and Sherburne counties, as shown in Figure 1 on the following page.

The Met Council, originally formed under state legislation in 1967, has 17 members, all appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the state senate. Sixteen members represent individual geographic districts of roughly equal population, and the chair serves at large. An organizational chart of Met Council committee and executive structure can be found in Figure 2 on page 7.

Under state law (Minn. Stat. § 473.145, 2025), the Met Council develops a comprehensive development guide and land use policy plan for the metropolitan area, currently branded as Imagine 2050, that includes policies for shaping the future growth of the region. State law (Minn. Stat. § 473.146, 473.147, 473.1565, and 473.157, 2025) also requires the Met Council to produce three system policy plans: transportation/aviation, parks, and water resources, which all take direction from the Regional Development Guide. The Met Council also produces a housing policy plan to support the land use policy plan.

Figure 1. Metropolitan planning area

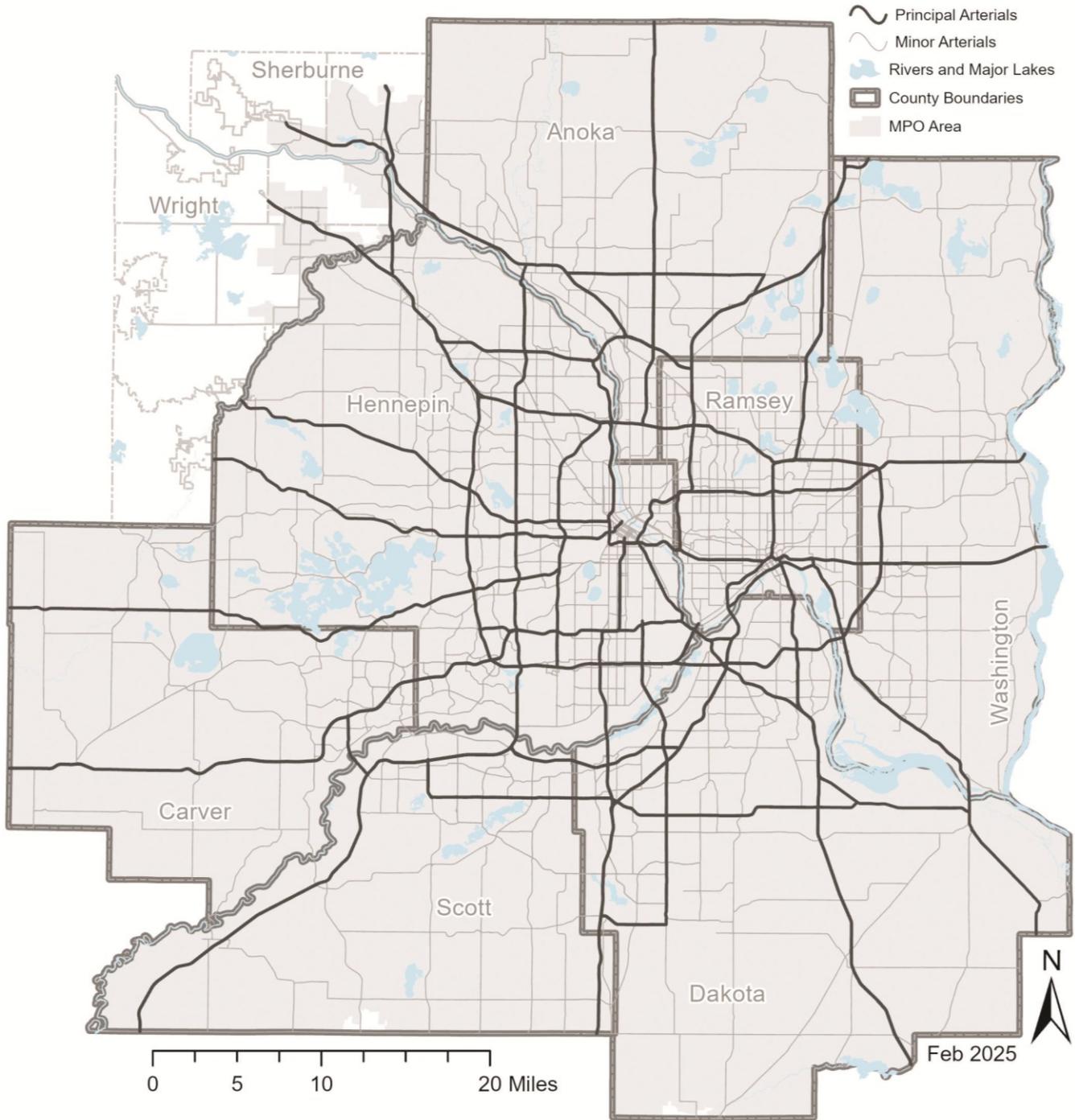
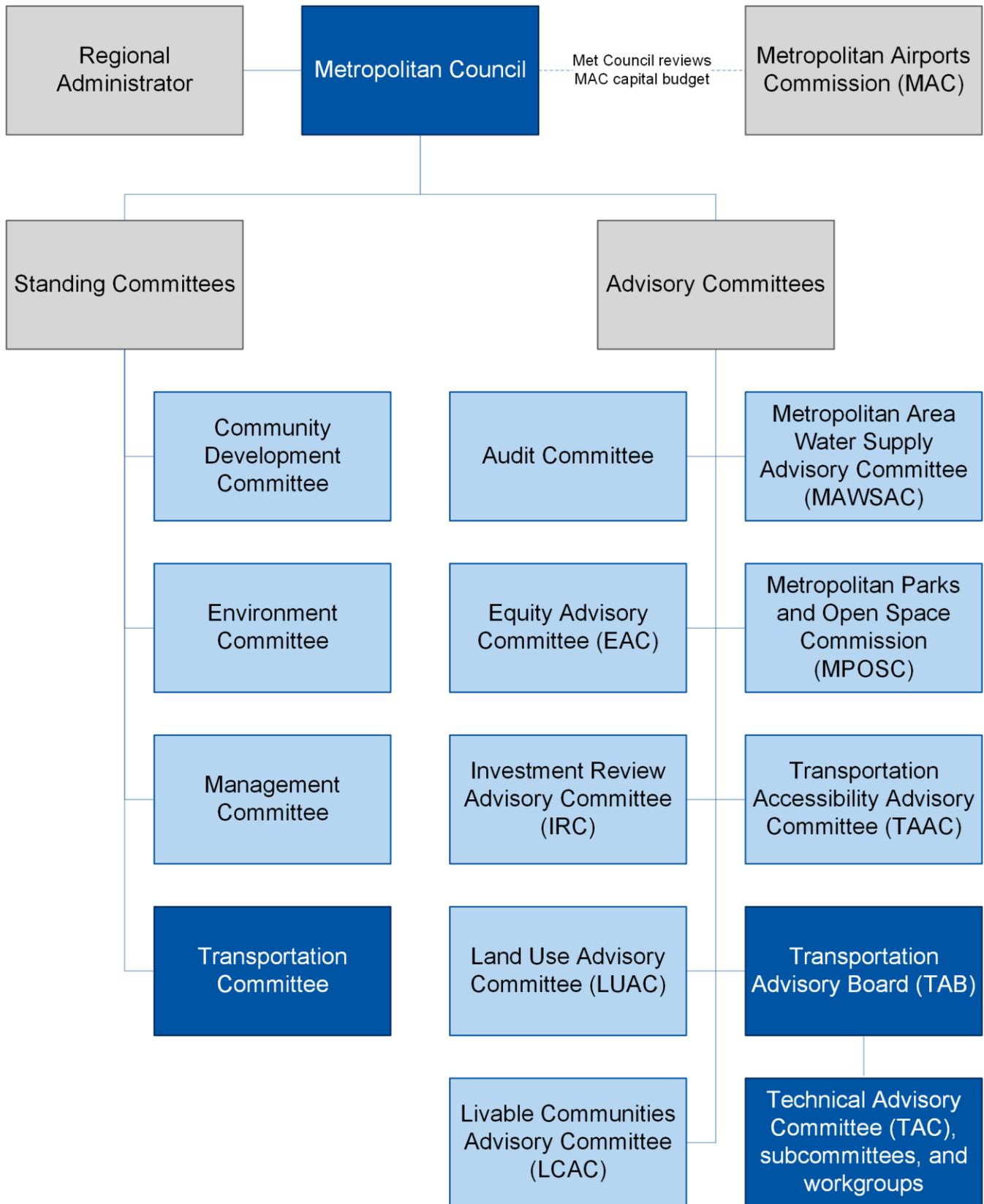


Figure 2. Met Council committee and executive structure



## Roles as a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

The Met Council's role in transportation planning and programming includes leading studies, producing planning documents, and working with state and local agencies and other partners and stakeholders. That work sets regional direction and priorities for transportation investment in the region's highways, transit, freight, bicycle, pedestrian, travel demand management, and aviation systems.

These regional transportation planning documents, studies, and processes include:

- The Transportation Policy Plan (TPP), which includes plans and policies for regional highway, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, travel demand management, and freight investments and the aviation system.
- The four-year, multimodal Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), a program of multimodal transportation projects proposed for MnDOT and federal funding.
- Funding projects through the Regional Solicitation and Active Transportation Solicitation, which are processes for selecting and approving a program of projects to receive federal transportation funding and active transportation sales tax funding that comes directly to the MPO. This process is led by the Transportation Advisory Board.
- The Congestion Management Process (CMP), a process for evaluating and developing strategies that manage existing and expected future traffic congestion.
- Determining whether plans and proposed investments conform to federal Clean Air Act requirements.
- Classifying roadways as part of the metropolitan highway system, i.e., principal arterial system.
- Reviewing and approving applications for federal and state funds and assuring these applications are consistent with the stated goals, objectives, and policies of the Regional Development Guide and the Transportation Policy Plan.

## Other roles

In addition to its MPO and transportation planning roles, the Met Council also:

- Conducts regional land use planning.
- Reviewing the long-range comprehensive plans of local communities within the seven-county metropolitan area, to make sure they are in conformance with regional system plans and consistent with regional policy plans.
- Reviewing and approving airport long-term comprehensive plans and the Metropolitan Airports Commission's Capital Improvement Program.
- Plans and operates the regional wastewater system.
- Operates much of the public transit regular route system through Metro Transit and private contractors.
- Contractually operates Metro Mobility Americans with Disabilities Act complementary transit service, Metro Move waiver transit service, Metro micro and Transit Link shared public dial-a-ride services, and Metro Vanpool.
- Coordinates with transit providers on transit operations.
- Promotes ride sharing and other travel demand management strategies.
- Administers a revolving loan fund for buying highway rights of way.

[See more about the Metropolitan Council.](#)

## Transportation Advisory Board (TAB)

Among the Met Council's advisory committees, the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) has a very special role. TAB's structure brings local elected officials into the transportation planning and decision-making process, and that membership, spelled out in state law, is described below. TAB plays a major role in developing transportation policy, plans, and programs for the seven-county metropolitan area. Under the MOU on Metropolitan Planning Responsibilities, TAB is tasked with leading the solicitation, evaluation, and recommendation of projects selected for the federal transportation funds that are allocated to the metropolitan area through the Regional Solicitation. Additionally, state law extends those same responsibilities to TAB for a portion of regional transportation sales and use taxes collected for active transportation purposes.

The TAB consists of 34 members as follows:

- 10 elected city officials, appointed by Metro Cities;
- one commissioner from each of the seven county boards in the metro area;
- the Commissioner of the Department of Transportation or designee;
- the Commissioner of the Pollution Control Agency or designee;
- one member of the Metropolitan Airports Commission;
- one member representing non-motorized transportation appointed by the Met Council;
- one member representing the freight transportation industry appointed by the MnDOT Commissioner;
- two members representing public transit appointed by the Met Council;
- one member representing suburban public transit providers appointed by the Suburban Transit Association;
- eight citizen representatives from each of eight pairs of Met Council districts appointed by the Met Council; and
- one Met Council member.

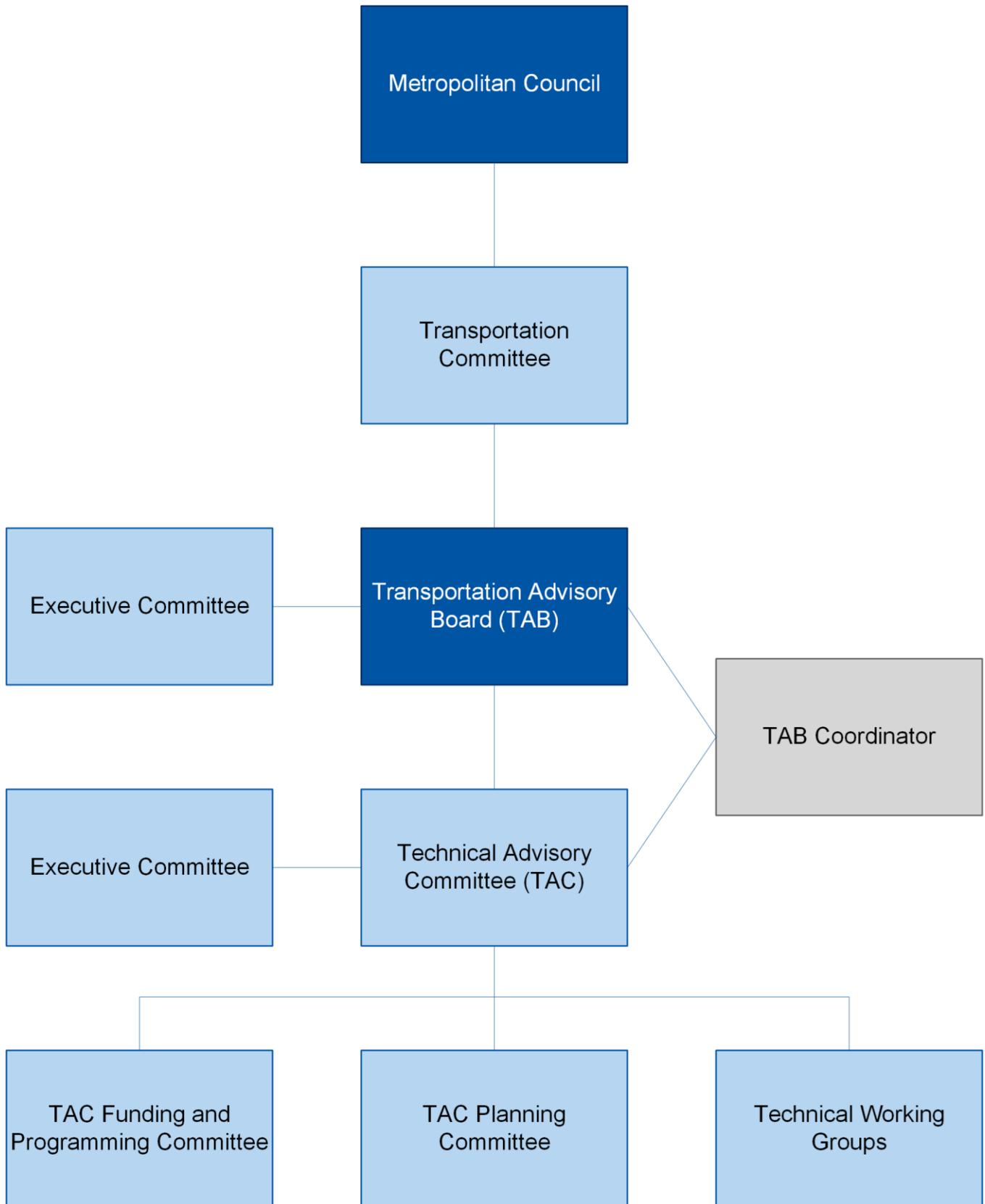
The board's chairperson is appointed by the Met Council from among the TAB members.

[See more about the TAB.](#)

### Committees

The TAB operates with one standing sub-committee, the Executive Committee, and receives technical input from its Technical Advisory Committee. The relationship of these committees is shown in Figure 3 on the following page.

Figure 3. Transportation Advisory Board and committee structure



## **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to the TAB**

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) works closely with the TAB and the Met Council and is composed of professional staff from city governments, county governments, and other agencies involved in transportation in the metropolitan planning area. The TAC provides technical expertise to the TAB and provides recommendations on action items that will come before the board. The TAC has two standing committees, the Funding and Programming Committee and the Planning Committee, and may appoint technical working groups as needed.

[See more about the TAC.](#)

## **Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)**

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) is the state's principal agency for developing and implementing state transportation plans and programs. MnDOT builds and maintains state, national, and interstate highways, conducts statewide multimodal transportation planning, and allocates funding to various projects.

MnDOT also develops the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), which incorporates the Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) from each of Minnesota's metropolitan areas, as well as all other federally funded transportation projects within the state. MnDOT requests joint approval of the STIP and metropolitan area TIPs from the United States Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

MnDOT's Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan (SMTP) and its Minnesota State Highway System Investment Plan (MnSHIP) guide MnDOT's 10-year Capital Highway Investment Plan (CHIP). MnDOT's plans address performance-based needs in the metropolitan planning area. These plans address preservation, safety, management of the existing system, and other capital improvements that increase mobility consistent with the MPO's planning and policy framework. MnDOT also prepares various modal plans, including freight, passenger rail, aviation, pedestrian needs, and bicycle facilities.

MnDOT plays an integral part in the region's metropolitan planning process and serves as the liaison between the Met Council and the USDOT.

[See more about MnDOT.](#)

## **Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)**

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) helps Minnesotans protect, conserve, and improve the state's environment. The agency proposes a variety of plans and measurements to monitor pollution and keep it within US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) limits. It also guides the MPO in fulfilling environmental requirements and advises on how transportation and transit projects will affect Minnesota's compliance with environmental regulations.

[See more about the MPCA.](#)

## **Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC)**

The Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) is a public corporation providing coordinated aviation services throughout the metropolitan area. The MAC has broad powers to acquire, develop, and operate airports within a district that approximates the seven-county metropolitan

area. It owns and operates seven public-use airports and can raise money to finance airport development and operations. MAC answers directly to the state legislature, but its long-range plans must be consistent with Met Council plans and policies. Moreover, each airport development project that meets “significant effects” criteria and specific dollar thresholds of \$5 million or more at the Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport and \$2 million or more at the reliever airports must have Met Council approval.

[See more about the Metropolitan Airports Commission.](#)

## Transit Providers

A customer-focused, interconnected transit system is a strength of the region. Services are designed to meet the different needs of people around the region and these systems all work together for the benefit of the region’s riders.

The Met Council operates Metro Transit, the largest transit system in the state. This system includes the region’s largest bus network and an expanding network of transitways featuring light rail and bus rapid transit

[See more about transit projects in the region.](#)

The Met Council also operates:

- [Metro Mobility](#), a shared-ride public transportation service for certified riders who are unable to use regular fixed-route buses due to a disability or health condition;
- [Metro Move](#), a shared-ride public transportation service for people who have a disability and are served by certain waiver programs;
- [Metro micro](#), a shared-ride, on-demand public transportation service for riders in small, specific service areas;
- [Transit Link](#), a shared-ride public transportation service for the Twin Cities metro area where regular-route transit service is infrequent or unavailable;
- [Metro Vanpool](#), a commuter program that provides financial assistance for vanpools of five or more people, including a volunteer driver, commuting to and from work destinations not well-served by the regular-route transit network throughout the region.

Along with the services described above, several other providers operate transit service in the region. Suburban transit providers operate regular-route and some shared-ride services for 12 suburban communities. These public transit operators have a representative on TAB and TAC who provides input into regional planning. They also participate in the region-wide fare collection system and other regional technologies. In addition, the Met Council arranges bus lease agreements, and grant agreements for bus storage facilities, bus shelters, and regular-route transit services.

[See more about suburban transit providers.](#)

The University of Minnesota also provides public transit service on and between campuses in Minneapolis and St. Paul.

These transit providers participate in developing the TIP, the regional fare structure, the Regional Route Performance Analysis, and the Transportation Policy Plan. All regional transit providers serve on the Transit Planning Technical Working Group, an advisory group to the TAC and its standing committees.

## Counties and Municipalities

Metropolitan area counties and cities participate in transportation planning at two levels. At the policy level, elected county and city officers serve on the TAB. At the technical level, professional staff serve on the TAC and its standing committees.

State law allows Minnesota counties to form regional railroad authorities (RRAs) to preserve and improve local rail service and provide for the preservation of abandoned rail right-of-way for future transportation functions. Each of the seven counties in the metropolitan area has formed its own RRA, and each is used for different purposes.

## Regional Residents, Businesses, and Non-Profits

Public participation is an essential element of transportation planning in the Twin Cities metropolitan region. Because the region is growing and its demographics are changing, public participation needs to be coordinated and deliberate. The Met Council's public engagement approach is outlined in the Regional Development Guide, the Met Council's Public Engagement Plan, and the Transportation Policy Plan. Together, these policy documents set the tone and give overall policy direction for public participation in transportation planning.

The [Transportation Addendum to the Public Engagement Plan](#) establishes a framework for the region's stakeholders to influence both long-term transportation policy development and short-term transportation programming. It details the methods and strategies that the Met Council will use to engage the wide range of stakeholders, from policymakers to business interests to non-profits to residents of the region. It also identifies specific ways those stakeholders can connect to the decision-making process for transportation in the Twin Cities region.

The plan addendum refocuses participation activities on the people of the region, rather than just the infrastructure we are planning for and building, or the traditional processes that may be commonplace, but do not necessarily engage certain communities effectively. It sets the tone for the Met Council on how to do business with the people throughout the region.

Traditional processes include advisory committees, boards, and commissions associated with the Met Council's planning responsibilities. The Council has an open appointment policy, and meetings are open to anyone. Informational meetings, workshops, and public hearings are open to the public and all policy documents are posted on the Met Council's website.

The plan addendum focuses on building long-term relationships, which also include the expectation of ongoing communication (rather than self-contained projects that lack connection to the bigger picture). It is flexible to leverage opportunities for shared agenda-setting and meaningful engagement that might pop up between significant planning efforts.

The following principles are front and center when approaching outreach and engagement:

- Equity
- Respect
- Transparency
- Relevance
- Accountability
- Collaboration
- Inclusion
- Cultural Competence

[See more about getting involved](#) in transportation planning at the Met Council.

## **U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT)**

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) is a federal agency that funds, sets policy for, and provides other guidance for transportation for all modes of transportation. The USDOT includes the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), which maintains a local office; the Federal Transit Administration (FTA); the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA); and Federal Rail Administration (FRA); and other related transportation offices and administrations.

Both FHWA and FTA establish the regulations that govern the development of a metropolitan area's transportation plans and programs. Together, these two organizations review the Met Council's Transportation Policy Plan (TPP), MnDOT's State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), and the Met Council's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The two administrations also certify the 3C metropolitan transportation planning process. The USDOT is the primary funding source for metropolitan transportation planning.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) develops the National Plan for an Integrated Airport System (NPIAS), approves and funds planning and development projects, operates and maintains the national air traffic control system, certifies aircraft and pilots, and establishes and enforces flight operation rules. Metropolitan Airport Commission (MAC) policies must be consistent with both Met Council plans and those of the FAA.

## **Tribal Relations**

The Metropolitan Council seeks to promote timely, appropriate, and consistent government-to-government relations between the Met Council and the federally recognized Tribal Nations in Minnesota.

The geography of the seven-county metropolitan area encompasses two of the 11 federally recognized Minnesota tribal governments– the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community and the Prairie Island Indian Community. In addition, the Met Council is involved with lands and waters held sacred or historically significant to American Indian people beyond the geographic boundaries of tribal-owned land.

## **Consultation**

Government-to-government communication will be conducted in a timely manner by all parties, about a proposed or contemplated decision to:

- Secure meaningful tribal input and involvement in the decision-making process; and
- Advise the tribe of the final decision and provide clarification on the how decisions were reached.

Consultation is a process of meaningful communication and coordination between the Met Council members and tribal officials before taking actions or making decisions that may affect tribes or tribal interests.

## **Collaboration**

Met Council staff are encouraged to collaborate with tribal staff when project plans and development directly impact tribal resources. Met Council staff should include all 11 tribes recognized in Minnesota in this outreach and give them the opportunity to choose to participate or not participate in any given process.

Share and compare in a timely manner relevant plans, programs, projects and schedules with the related plans, programs, projects, and schedules of the other parties; and

Adjust plans, programs, projects and schedules as needed to maintain transparency and accountability.

## **Coordination**

Met Council staff are encouraged to coordinate directly with tribal groups and members of tribes who have no official capacity within the tribal communities for engagement and input about projects in and around the communities where they reside, or around areas that hold cultural importance.

## Chapter 2: Transportation-Related Planning Documents

Major transportation-related planning documents include the:

- Regional Development Guide (RDG)
- Transportation Policy Plan (TPP)
- Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
- Minnesota GO Vision
- Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan (SMTP)
- Minnesota State Highway Investment Plan (MnSHIP)

### Regional Development Guide

State statute requires the Met Council to prepare a regional development guide for the metropolitan area. The Regional Development Guide is updated every ten years after the U.S. Census is complete to establish new growth forecasts for population, employment, and households. It establishes a regional vision, values, and goals shared by all system and policy plans, including the Transportation Policy Plan. It also provides the regional policy framework that forms the basis for the type, location, investment priorities, review procedures to implement the policies for these plans through agencies and city and county comprehensive plans.

[See more about Imagine 2050.](#)

### Transportation Policy Plan (TPP)

#### Transportation Policy Plan Overview

The Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) is a federally required metropolitan transportation plan that is prepared and updated by the Met Council every five years. The TPP describes the region's approach to metropolitan transportation investments for at least the next 20 years. The TPP is also required by state law as a component of the Regional Development Guide.

It highlights planned investment and infrastructure needs for highways, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, travel demand management, freight, and aviation in the region. The TPP addresses federal transportation planning and Clean Air Act requirements, major planning studies conducted since the last update, and the funds expected to be available to maintain or replace transportation infrastructure. The Met Council produces studies that include information and analysis to inform future revisions of the TPP, including future transportation system investment decisions. These studies are prepared with stakeholder involvement, including review, comment, and, as appropriate, recommendations from the TAB and its committees. Studies conducted by other agencies are often presented to the TAB for information or comment.

The plan must balance planned investments against reasonably expected resources and assure that there are no negative impacts on air quality.

[See the full Transportation Policy Plan.](#)

The Met Council produces studies that include information and analysis to inform future revisions of the TPP, including future transportation system investment decisions. These

studies are prepared with stakeholder involvement, including review, comment, and, as appropriate, recommendations from the TAB and its committees. Studies conducted by other agencies are often presented to the TAB for information or comment.

## **Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) Update Process**

The following steps describe how the TPP develops from initiation to adoption. The TPP can be amended or modified as needed. The process to amend the TPP is similar to the process to update a plan, though some steps are more flexible.

1. Council Transportation Committee is briefed on the TPP update scope and schedule.
2. TAC Planning Committee, TAC, and TAB are briefed on the TPP update scope and schedule.
3. Council announces TPP update scope and schedule.
4. TPP update is drafted with input and recommendations from the TAB, TAC, TAC Planning and other committees that may be formed.
5. TAB reviews the draft TPP and provides comments prior to the public comment process.
6. Council reviews draft TPP, considers TAB's comments and approves a final draft TPP for release for public comment.
7. Council holds a public hearing and open house meetings, receives public feedback through multiple processes as specified in the adopted Transportation Public Engagement Plan and compiles a public comment record.
8. Both the TAB and Transportation Committee consider the public comment record and policy implications.
9. Proposed responses to the public comment, including recommended changes to the draft TPP, are reviewed by TAB\* and then the Transportation Committee, considering TAB's input.
10. A final TPP is prepared for Council adoption based on public comments, TAB's review and comment, and Council's discussion and direction.
11. Council accepts the public comment report and adopts the final TPP.

\*For TPP amendments, public comments and responses may be provided to TAB after Council action. Administrative modifications to the TPP are reviewed by TAC and TAB and approved by the Council but do not require a public comment process.

## **Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**

The federally required Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) outlines and documents the proposed transportation-related planning activities in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area for the upcoming year. The UPWP also serves as the Met Council's application for USDOT transportation planning funds. The UPWP describes four agencies' metropolitan-area transportation planning activities: the Met Council (as the planning agency and major public transit operator), MnDOT, MPCA, and MAC. The Met Council, with participation by MnDOT, prepares a draft UPWP that TAC and TAB review and recommend for Met Council adoption. MnDOT submits the final UPWP to the FHWA for review and approval and serves as the grant administrator for the planning funds.

## Annual Process

1. Council notifies MnDOT, MAC, MPCA, and TAB about UPWP preparation process, procedures, and schedule.
2. Agencies submit drafts of their annual work program to the Council to be included in the proposed UPWP.
3. TAC Planning Committee reviews the proposed UPWP and forwards to TAC.
4. TAC reviews, comments, and forwards the proposed UPWP to TAB.
5. TAB reviews and recommends adoption of the UPWP to the Council’s Transportation Committee.
6. Transportation Committee reviews and recommends UPWP adoption to Council.
7. Council adopts the annual UPWP.
8. Council forwards UPWP to MnDOT, who forwards it to USDOT to receive planning funds.

## Interagency Participation

The following table summarizes the roles and responsibilities of partners in the regional transportation planning and programming process for the various documents produced.

Agency	TPP role	TIP role	UPWP role
<b>Metropolitan Council</b>	Prepares and approves the TPP.	Lead agency in preparing and adopting the TIP. Forwards TIP to MnDOT for inclusion in STIP.	Prepares and approves UPWP. Submits UPWP to MnDOT to forward to USDOT.
<b>Transportation Advisory Board</b>	Participates in plan development; reviews and recommends to the Met Council.	Conducts Regional Solicitation for federally funded projects for incorporation into TIP. Recommends TIP to the Met Council for adoption.	Reviews and comments on UPWP to the Met Council.
<b>Technical Advisory Committee</b>	Participates in plan development; reviews and recommends to TAB.	Facilitates Regional Solicitation process for TAB. Recommends projects for inclusion in TIP and recommends TIP to TAB.	Reviews and comments on UPWP to TAB.
<b>MnDOT</b>	Participates in TAC/TAB review; may comment directly to Council.	Provides region with federal funding target. Participates in TIP review and adoption through TAC/TAB. Central Office incorporates the TIP into STIP and approves the STIP as governor’s designee. Then submits to USDOT for approval.	Prepares agency work program components for inclusion in UPWP; participates in TAC/TAB review; submits UPWP to USDOT for approval; may comment directly to Council.
<b>MPCA</b>	Participates in TAC/TAB review; may comment directly to Council.	Participates in TIP review/adoption process through TAC/TAB. Reviews and comments to TAB and/or Council.	Prepares agency work program component for inclusion in UPWP; participates in TAC/TAB review; may comment directly to Council.

Agency	TPP role	TIP role	UPWP role
<b>MAC</b>	Participates in TAC/TAB review; may comment directly to Council.	Reviews and comments through TAC/TAB; may comment directly to TAB or Council.	Prepares agency work program component for inclusion in UPWP; participates in TAC/TAB review; may comment directly to Council.
<b>Local Governments</b>	Reviews and comments through TAC/TAB; may comment directly to Council.	Reviews and comments through TAC/TAB; may comment directly to TAB or Council.	Reviews and comments through TAC/TAB.
<b>Transit Providers</b>	Review and comment through TAC/TAB; may comment directly to Council.	Reviews and comments through TAC/TAB; may comment directly to TAB or Council.	Prepares agency work program component for inclusion in UPWP; participates in TAC/TAB review; may comment directly to Council.
<b>USDOT</b>	Participates as non-voting member in TAC review and comment. FHWA and FTA must determine that the plan conforms to federal regulations.	Participates as non-voting member in TAC review and comment. FHWA and FTA must determine that the TIP conforms to federal regulations.	Reviews and approves UPWP.

## Minnesota GO Vision

The Minnesota Department of Transportation completed the Minnesota GO visioning process in 2011 to better align the transportation system with what Minnesotans expect for their quality of life, economy, and natural environment. Minnesota GO describes a desired future 50 years from now. It answers the question “what are we trying to achieve?” It does not answer the question “how will we do it?” This latter question is addressed in subsequent statewide, modal, and regional planning efforts. The Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan and MnDOT’s Minnesota State Highway Investment Plan are discussed in more detail below. MnDOT is currently leading an update to the Minnesota GO vision.

[See more about Minnesota GO.](#)

## Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan

The Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan (SMTP) serves as the statewide policy framework for all transportation partners, as well as MnDOT’s family of modal system investment plans. This multimodal plan establishes guidance and priorities for state transportation decisions, which filter down into specific plans for each mode, and into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), which identifies priority projects and how money will be spent.

Development of a Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan per [Minnesota Statute 174.03](#) is an integral element in the overall MnDOT planning process. The statewide plan must be updated every five years, with the most recent plan adopted in 2022. To keep pace with changing priorities, opportunities, and challenges, the different modal plans are updated as

federally required, every four to six years; though some have no requirements and are updated less frequently. The plan establishes overarching guidance and priorities for making state transportation decisions across all modes—from roadways, to railroads, to bikeways, and beyond. The plan focuses on activities over a 20-year time frame. The plan is intended for use as a guiding document for local and regional planning efforts, so the input of these groups is important. Within MnDOT, the plan guides future modal system and investment decisions, such as the State Aviation System Plan and the Highway Investment Plan.

[See more about the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan.](#)

## **Minnesota State Highway Investment Plan (MnSHIP)**

MnDOT creates and maintains MnSHIP, the 20-Year Highway Investment Plan, as a guide to future investments in the state trunk highway system. The plan reflects federal, state, and regional policies as well as priorities and projected funding availability as it identifies the long-term system and corridor improvements necessary to achieve and maintain established performance targets. The plan is informed by the 10-year Capital Highway Investment Plans created by each MnDOT district. The Metro District's 10-year plan must reflect the investment goals and policies of Imagine 2050 and the TPP.

[See more about MnSHIP.](#)

## Chapter 3: Funding and Programming Process

Programming is the process of selecting projects and investments to be made over a time period and identifying and committing funds to those projects. MnDOT and the Met Council develop long-range policy plans typically covering a period of at least 20 years. Consistent with the long-range policy plans, MnDOT develops statewide and district-specific investment plans. Cities, counties, and transit providers also develop their own capital investment plans.

### Federal Funding Overview

Figure 4 shows that the majority of the highway and transit funds are distributed by federal formulas to the state of Minnesota from four programs:

- National Highway Performance Program (NHPP)
- Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG)
- Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Improvement program (CMAQ)
- Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)

Additionally, there are a number of smaller formula programs created by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) available to the region and state. The region may also receive federal funds through national competitive programs like the Capital Investment Grant program (CIG) or the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) program. A full listing of these programs is available on [USDOT's competitive grants dashboard](#).

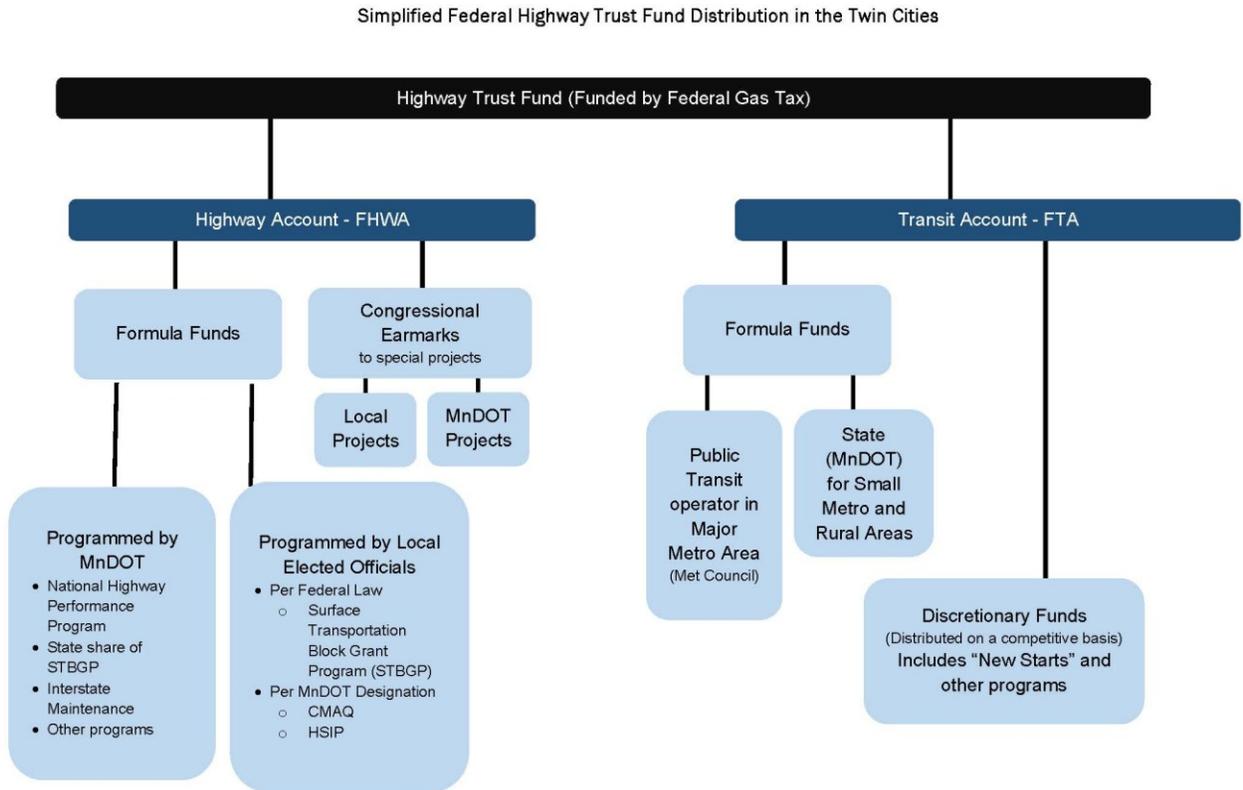
In Minnesota, selecting projects for funding happens both centrally at the statewide level, as well as by MnDOT districts and offices and through the Area Transportation Partnerships (ATPs) with involvement by local elected officials. ATPs were established at the MnDOT district level to create a more collaborative decision-making process between the districts and stakeholders, including MPOs, cities, counties, and tribal governments, for the selection of roadway projects receiving federal funds. The Met Council and its TAB serve as the ATP in the Twin Cities metropolitan area; projects for the urban portions of Wright and Sherburne Counties are selected by the ATP in MnDOT District 3.

The federal transportation funds for ATPs are distributed according to population. The federal program funds received by the Met Council and TAB for allocation are determined by agreement between MnDOT, the TAB and the Met Council. These include the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program federal formula funds, the state's Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) funds, metro area Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) formula funds, Carbon Reduction Program funds, and PROTECT (resiliency) program funds.

Some federal transportation funds designated to the metro area are allocated to projects through the Regional Solicitation process. All federal transportation funds that will be spent in the metro area, whether programmed through the Regional Solicitation process, by MnDOT for metro area highway projects, or by the Met Council and transit providers for metro area transit projects, must be included in the region's four-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). MnDOT must select projects for the federal funds and state funds it intends to spend in the metro area in a manner consistent with the established state and regional performance objectives as well as the other investment policies and direction in the adopted TPP and state plans. MnDOT's Metro District projects are incorporated into the TIP, along with the projects

selected through the Regional Solicitation and federally funded transit projects and are recommended by TAB and approved by the Met Council.

Figure 4 Highway Trust Fund distribution chart



## Transit Funds

As shown in Figure 4, the FTA distributes federal transit funds as either formula or discretionary funds. Formula transit funds are allocated to the public transit operator in the major metropolitan areas. In the metro area, the Met Council/Metro Transit is the designated recipient of federal transit formula funds and in Greater Minnesota MnDOT is the recipient of federal funds for the small metropolitan and rural area transit systems. The Met Council and Suburban Transit Providers must select projects for the federal transit funds in a manner consistent with established investment policies and direction in the metro area TPP and Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan. These projects are then incorporated into the TIP, which is recommended by TAB and approved by the Met Council.

Discretionary transit funds are distributed nationally on a competitive basis for specific projects or programs. The Met Council and the TAB are not directly involved in the allocation of discretionary transit funds. If received, these funds must also be included in the regional TIP.

## Regional Solicitation

Every two years, the TAB administers the Regional Solicitation to distribute federal transportation funds to locally initiated projects that meet regional transportation needs. These projects also help implement regional transportation and development policies as described in the regional long-range plan.

Federal funds are available for roadway, bridge, transit capital and operating, and bike and pedestrian projects. The Met Council, MnDOT, other transit providers, local governments, and other agencies like the MPCA can all submit project proposals.

The criteria and measures for evaluating project applications and the solicitation process itself are reviewed and updated every two years through the region's cooperative planning process and the revised application is adopted by TAB. Project applications are solicited, reviewed, scored, and ranked through this process. Once selected, the TAB sends the recommended program of projects to the Met Council, which either approves TAB's recommendation or sends it back to TAB for reconsideration. The selected projects are then included in the next draft of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The following section outlines the Regional Solicitation project selection process.

## Regional Solicitation Process

1. Based on TAB direction on regional criteria and issues raised from the previous solicitation, TAC F&P develops draft solicitation scoring measures and process for project selection.
2. Draft is forwarded to TAC, which may modify the package, and recommends approval to TAB.
3. TAB reviews the draft solicitation package, may modify it, and approves for purposes of public comment.
4. TAB solicits public comment on the draft Regional Solicitation.
5. TAC F&P reviews public comments, proposed responses, and any previous TAC and TAB modifications and forwards recommended Regional Solicitation to TAC.
6. TAC reviews public comments, proposed responses, and the recommended solicitation, may modify it, and forwards a recommended Regional Solicitation to TAB for adoption.

7. TAB considers public comment, proposed responses, and the recommended Regional Solicitation, may modify it, recommends a final Regional Solicitation and forwards it to the Metropolitan Council for approval.
8. Council approves the Regional Solicitation application package (or may send it back).
9. Regional Solicitation is announced, training and information sessions held for potential applicants, and applications received.
10. Council staff leads review of projects against the qualifying criteria. Applicant is notified if a project appears to not meet the criteria and are invited to defend the project. TAC F&P makes final qualification determination.
11. Scoring groups comprised of volunteers from state and local agencies evaluate applications and develop ranked project lists for each category.
12. TAC F&P reviews and recommends ranked list, then notifies applicants that scores are available; applicants may request re-evaluation of project scores.
13. TAC F&P discusses and may revalue and adjust project scores and rankings. Final scores are forwarded to TAC and TAB for information.
14. TAC F&P develops funding options based on anticipated available funding, adopted procedures and guidance from TAB; options are forwarded to TAC.
15. TAC may modify the funding options prior to forwarding a recommended option for approval to TAB.
16. TAB discusses and may modify the funding recommendation. TAB votes to award funds to specific projects and forwards the program of projects to the Council for concurrence.
17. Met Council votes to concur with TAB's recommended program of projects.\*
18. The selected projects are included in the next draft TIP, which is ultimately approved by the Met Council.

\*The Council may only concur with the Regional Solicitation proposed program of projects or send it back for reconsideration by TAB.

[See the Project Selection Process and Changes Policy](#)

[See more about the Regional Solicitation process.](#)

## **Project Implementation**

It's the responsibility of MnDOT Metro District's State Aid Division or Metropolitan Council's Grants Department, depending on funding source, to ensure that each project funded through the Regional Solicitation is being done per TAB and federal expectations.

## **Scope Changes**

Projects that receive funding through the Regional Solicitation are subject to the Scope Change Policy. The scope change process allows project sponsors to adjust their projects as needed while still providing substantially the same benefits described in the original application. Additionally, federal rules require that any federally funded project scope must go through a formal review and TIP amendment process if the project description or total project cost change substantially. T Scope changes are approved by the TAB and are not forwarded to the Met Council for concurrence.

[See the scope change policy.](#)

## Regional Program Year Policy

The Regional Program Year Policy is intended to promote the timely development and delivery of transportation projects awarded federal funds through the Regional Solicitation. At the conclusion of the Regional Solicitation process, each project is assigned a program year in the TIP. The program year is July 1st to June 30th. For example, a 2027 project would be started between July 1, 2026, and June 30, 2027. The TAB may grant a one-time, one-year program year extension due to unforeseen circumstances, provided the sponsor has been working on project development. Exceptions to the one-year and one-time limits can be granted if TAB determines that extraordinary circumstances exist. The TAB has adopted criteria and procedures for determining whether a program year extension should be granted. Program year extensions are approved by the TAB and are not forwarded to the Met Council for concurrence.

[See the program year policy, criteria, and procedure.](#)

## Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) describes all proposed federally funded transportation projects within the Twin Cities seven-county metropolitan area, including highway, transit, bike and pedestrian improvements. The Met Council, as the MPO, is federally required to prepare the TIP as a short-range program that complements its long-range transportation plan. The TIP must be fiscally constrained, which means that its estimated project costs cannot exceed anticipated revenues.

The Met Council prepares the TIP in cooperation with MnDOT. The TIP must include all federal funds proposed to be spent in the MPO urbanized area. This includes funds allocated through the Regional Solicitation process; federal funds programmed by MnDOT for the Metro District; federal transit funds programmed by the Met Council and transit providers; and federal funds programmed for the urbanized portions of Wright and Sherburne counties. The projects in the TIP must be consistent with and implement the regional long-range transportation plan (known as the Transportation Policy Plan, or TPP). The TIP and amendments to the TIP are reviewed and recommended by the TAC and TAB and approved by the Met Council. Minor TIP adjustments are done administratively by MnDOT and the Met Council.

## Annual TIP Development Process

1. Council works with MnDOT and MPCA to prepare a draft four-year TIP that includes all projects proposed for federal funding in the metropolitan planning area.
2. TAC F&P reviews and comments on draft TIP pending public comment and forwards to TAC.
3. TAB reviews and releases draft TIP for public comment.
4. TAC reviews and comments on the draft TIP pending public comment and forwards to TAB.
5. Council staff hosts a public meeting.
6. Council staff summarizes public comments and proposes responses.
7. Council prepares final TIP and public comment report.
8. TAB reviews comments and responses and recommends the TIP to the Council for adoption.

9. Council's Transportation Committee reviews the TIP and recommends it for approval by the Met Council.
10. Council adopts the TIP.
11. Council publishes TIP and forwards it to MnDOT.
12. MnDOT incorporates the TIP into its STIP\*, approves its STIP, and forwards to USDOT for review of conformity with federal transportation law.

\*The DOT must incorporate the adopted TIP and cannot change the projects or funding amounts.

## **TIP Amendments and Administrative Modifications**

Sometimes it is necessary to make project changes that cannot wait for the next annual adoption cycle. These changes require TIP amendments or administrative modifications. An administrative modification requires no board action and is reserved for minor changes, including program year changes, minor cost changes, funding source changes, technical corrections, and splitting a project into multiple projects. More significant changes require TIP amendments. The two most common types of TIP amendments are changes in project scope and changes in project cost. TIP amendments are reviewed and recommended by the TAC Funding and Programming Committee, and TAB, and then sent to the Met Council for approval. If a TIP amendment request is for a project that is not funded through the Regional Solicitation and not regionally significant, it is eligible for the streamlined TIP amendment process. This allows the request to bypass the Funding and Programming Committee.

### **TIP Amendment Process**

1. Project sponsor alerts Council to the need for a TIP amendment.
2. Council staff and the TAB Coordinator determine whether the amendment can be streamlined. If not, it is considered by TAC F&P; if so, the amendment proceeds to step 4.
3. TAC F&P recommends approval of the amendment to TAC.
4. TAC recommends approval of the amendment to TAB.
5. TAB recommends approval to the Council.\*
6. The Council's Transportation Committee recommends approval.
7. The Council approves the TIP amendment.
8. Council forwards approved amendment to MnDOT for incorporation into the STIP.

\* If the amendment is regionally significant, the amendment will be released for a 21-day public comment period. TAB considers public comment and approves the amendment at its subsequent meeting and the remaining steps occur as shown.

[See Streamlined TIP Amendment Process](#)

## **Annual List of Obligated Projects**

Early each fiscal year, the Met Council prepares a list of federally funded projects obligated in the previous fiscal year. This is required to be completed no later than 90 calendar days following the end of the program year, per section 450.332 of Title 23 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

## **State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)**

TIP projects are incorporated into the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The STIP identifies the schedule and funding of transportation projects by state fiscal year (July 1 through June 30). STIPs include all state and local transportation projects with federal highway and/or federal transit funding. Rail, port, and aeronautic projects are included for information purposes. In each state, the STIP is developed and updated annually and must be approved by FHWA and FTA.

[See more about the current Minnesota STIP.](#)

## Chapter 4: Activities that Support Planning and Programming

Several requirements and procedures support transportation planning and programming activities. Various agencies and individuals participate in these required supportive activities.

Federal requirements include:

- Congestion Management Process
- Air Quality Conformity
- Performance Measures and Targets
- Highway Functional Classification Designation Process
- Travel Forecasting Process
- Public Participation

In addition to federal requirements are state requirements and procedures.

### Federal Requirements

#### Congestion Management Process

Under federal law, metropolitan planning organizations in areas with populations over 200,000 must develop a Congestion Management Process (CMP) that manages traffic congestion and provides information on transportation system performance. The process must measure the performance of all modes in the transportation system, identify the causes of congestion, assess alternative actions, outline cost-effective actions to implement, and evaluate the effectiveness of those actions.

The process incorporates and coordinates the various activities of the Met Council, MnDOT, transit providers, counties, cities, and transportation management organizations (TMOs) to increase the efficiency of the transportation system and provide lower-cost mobility projects where possible. The CMP Advisory Committee is made up of technical staff from partner agencies and meets quarterly to discuss and advance the CMP.

The process is supported by two documents, the Congestion Management Process Policies and Procedures Handbook and the Traffic Trends Report. The handbook describes the process to assess congested corridors and evaluate the toolbox of strategies that could be implemented to manage congestion. The traffic trends report tracks the effectiveness of the strategies on congestion and documents the individual corridors as they are evaluated.

See more about the [Congestion Management Process and handbook](#) and the [traffic trends report](#).

#### Air Quality Conformity

The federal Clean Air Act Amendments passed in 1990 instruct that transportation plans, programs, and projects in non-attainment and maintenance areas must undergo an air quality conformity analysis. Because all of the region is currently in full attainment for all transportation related pollutants, conformity analysis and conformity determinations are not required.

The Minnesota Interagency Air Quality and Transportation Planning Committee, involving the Met Council, MnDOT, FHWA, EPA, and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency still meets periodically to discuss air quality issues and to review attainment status.

## Performance Measures and Targets

As stated in 23 CFR 490.29, all state DOTs and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) must adopt a program to measure system performance and set performance targets in order to monitor progress toward achieving these targets. These requirements establish a planning program that is performance and outcome based. The overall objective of the program is for states and MPOs to invest resources in projects that contribute to achieving national goals. The federal performance management program establishes national performance goals in the following areas:

- Safety and security
- Infrastructure condition and asset management
- Congestion reduction and system reliability
- Freight movement and economic vitality
- Air quality
- Reduced project delivery delays

Federal requirements further require establishing specific performance measures and targets that will be used to help achieve the seven national performance goals. The required performance measures are as follows:

- Roadway safety
  - Total fatalities and serious injury crashes on all public roads
  - Rate of fatalities and serious injury crashes per 100 million vehicle miles travelled
  - Total non-motorized fatalities and serious injury crashes
- Roadway infrastructure condition
  - Percent of NHS bridges by deck area in good condition
  - Percent of NHS bridges by deck area in poor condition
  - Percent of pavement on the Interstate system in good condition
  - Percent of pavement on the Interstate system in poor condition
  - Percent of non-interstate NHS pavement in good condition
  - Percent of non-interstate NHS pavement in poor condition
- Roadway reliability
  - Percent of reliable person-miles traveled on the Interstate
  - Percent of reliable person-miles traveled on the non-Interstate NHS
  - Percent of interstate system mileage providing for reliable truck travel time
  - On-road mobile source emissions measure.
  - Non-single occupancy vehicle measure
  - Peak hour excessive delay measure
- Transit safety and security
  - Fatalities
  - Injuries
  - Assaults on workers
  - Major safety/security events

- Transit Asset Management (TAM):
  - Rolling Stock (revenue vehicles): percent of the following exceeding useful life
    - Articulated bus
    - Bus
    - Cutaway
    - Light rail vehicle
  - Equipment (non-revenue): percent of the following exceeding useful life:
    - Automobiles
    - Trucks/other rubber tire vehicles
  - Facilities: percent rated below a 3 on a condition scale
    - Passenger/parking facilities
    - Administrative/maintenance facilities
  - Infrastructure: percent of track with performance restrictions
    - Light rail
  - Reliability
    - Distance between mechanical failures

The Met Council, in coordination with the Minnesota Department of Transportation, has adopted regional targets for the outlined performance measures. Additional information and the specific targets can be found in the [Evaluation & Performance section of the Transportation Policy Plan](#).

In addition to the federally required performance measures, the Met Council also incorporates a performance-based planning approach that is based upon the goals and objectives outlined in Imagine 2050 and the Transportation Policy Plan. These performance measures are intended to be clear, quantifiable metrics that communicate whether the region is achieving these goals and objectives. Where applicable, the plan outlines the potential 2050 modeled outcomes of these regional goals based on two different investment directions: a “no build” scenario and the fiscally-constrained “build” scenario. The specific performance measures and a summary of their modeled outcomes can be found in the [Evaluation & Performance section of the Transportation Policy Plan](#).

## Highway Functional Classification Designation Process

The federal government requires that states and regions cooperatively designate roads according to their primary function. This is called functional classification. For example, principal arterials exist primarily to move large volumes of traffic at higher speeds over long distances while other roads, like local streets, primarily provide access to land. Appropriate roadway width, speed limits, intersection controls, and other design features vary depending on the function and context of the road. Functional classification is used to determine whether a road is eligible to receive federal highway funds.

The Met Council has adopted criteria for classifying roads into one of four federally defined categories: principal arterials (which include interstate freeways), minor arterials, collector roads, and local roads as defined in the TPP.

The function of a road within the regional network of streets and roads is fairly stable over time. Occasionally a change in the overall network or adjacent land use will cause a change in function and the government with jurisdiction over the road may request that this change be reflected in the official functional classification designation. Principal arterials are designated

by the Met Council through the TPP because these roads make up the legislatively required metropolitan highway system. Principal arterials can be designated only through a TPP update or administrative modification and require letters of support from all impacted jurisdictions.

The functional classification of minor arterial roads is reviewed and recommended to TAB by TAC and the TAC Planning Committee. The TAB considers city and county functional classification requests and works to keep the region's mileage in each classification category within federal guidelines on principal arterial, minor arterial, and collector road mileage.

### **Functional Classification Designation and Change Process for Minor Arterials and Collectors\***

1. Functional classification designations or changes are identified through or caused by:
  - a. Updates to the regional Transportation Policy Plan;
  - b. City and county comprehensive plan updates or amendments;
  - c. Development proposals that add new roadways or add large volumes of traffic to existing roadways; and
  - d. The desire to make a roadway eligible for federal funds through TAB, if the existing functional classification designation is not in alignment with current function of the roadway.
2. Government agency sends request for functional classification designation or change to TAC Planning Committee.
3. Council reviews request relative to functional classification criteria in Transportation Policy Plan and against mileage targets for each classification and makes comments/recommendations to TAC Planning.
4. TAC Planning reviews request with staff comments and forwards a recommendation to TAC.
5. TAC approves or denies the request. If approved, the request is forwarded to TAB for information.
6. Council staff informs applicant that the requested change has been approved/denied. If necessary:
  - a. Forwards a summary of adopted changes to MnDOT; and
  - b. Updates functional classification GIS files and map.
7. MnDOT: Reports functional classification changes to FHWA.

\*Principal Arterial requests continue to TAB and then are considered by the Met Council.

[See more about the Highway Functional Classification Designation Process.](#)

### **Travel Forecasting Process**

The Met Council, as the region's MPO, is responsible for ensuring that high-quality, consistent, and justifiable travel forecasts are completed for all transportation projects in the Twin Cities region. The Met Council maintains a multimodal transportation forecasting model that uses a newly revised activity-based travel demand modeling process.

The Met Council conducts a regional Travel Behavior Inventory (TBI). The information gathered from the inventory is used to update the regional travel forecast model. The TBI is funded jointly by the Met Council, MnDOT and the TAB. The TBI consists of a series of household travel surveys, a transit on-board survey, and "special generator" surveys conducted for locations such as the airport and University of Minnesota. Household travel surveys are now conducted on a two-year rolling basis, as opposed to conducting one major

survey every ten years as was the past practice, providing more up to date data for inclusion in the regional travel model.

[See more about the Travel Behavior Inventory.](#)

## Public Participation

As described above, the Met Council's transportation planning efforts include a proactive public involvement process and comply with federal public participation plan requirements.

[See the Transportation Addendum to the Public Engagement Plan.](#)

## State Requirements and Procedures

A number of state requirements and procedures also support transportation planning activities. These include the:

- Metropolitan Land Planning Act
- Metropolitan Freeway Approval Process
- Right-of-Way Acquisition Loan Fund Program (RALF)

## Metropolitan Land Planning Act

The state Metropolitan Land Planning Act ([MINN. STAT. 473.851 et seq.](#)) requires local governments in the seven-county region to update their comprehensive plans every 10 years. It also mandates that the Met Council create a regional development guide and plans for managing the region's land use and housing, transportation, water resources, and regional parks and trails systems.

The act also requires the Met Council to review local comprehensive plans to ensure that they conform to metropolitan system plans, are consistent with adopted policy plans, and are compatible with adjacent and affected jurisdictions. The Met Council's review is designed to determine how a community's planned actions relate to the long-term interests of the entire region. It helps ensure that costly public infrastructure, like roads and sewers, is built in an economical and timely fashion, so that public resources are used wisely.

After a city adopts its plan and the Met Council finds it to be in conformance with regional system plans, a city may change, or amend, a portion of its plan at any time. The Met Council must also review these comprehensive plan amendments to determine their conformance with regional system plans.

See more about the Metropolitan Land Planning Act in [Minnesota Statutes, 473.851 through 473.871](#). See more about the [comprehensive plan update process in the Local Planning Handbook](#).

## Metropolitan Freeway Approval Process

Minnesota state law ([MINN. STAT. 473.166](#)) requires the Met Council to approve any controlled access highway (freeway) projects in the seven-county metropolitan area before construction or right-of-way acquisition begins. Requests for approval come from the constructing agency, which is typically MnDOT. Under this law, Met Council approval of a freeway happens at the time it adopts a locally preferred alternative.

See more about the [Metropolitan Freeway Approval Process](#).

## Right-of-Way Acquisition Load Fund Program (RALF)

Minnesota state law ([MINN. STAT. 473.167](#)) allows the Met Council to levy a regional property tax for advance acquisition of highway right-of-way. The funds are used by the Met Council to make loans to counties, cities, and townships, which in turn buy property within the officially mapped right-of-way of state or metropolitan highways. The loans are repaid before highway construction begins.

See more about the [Right-of-Way Acquisition Loan Fund Program](#).

## Transit Plans and Studies

Several transit studies are prepared or updated as required or needed, including:

- The Transit Investment Plan section of the Transportation Policy Plan
- The Regional Transit Design and Performance Guidelines section of the Transportation Policy Plan
- The Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Coordinated Plan
- Transit studies

## Transit Investment Plan

As the region's metropolitan planning organization, the Met Council creates a long-range, fiscally-constrained plan for regional transit investment included in the Transportation Policy Plan. The plan describes the scope and decision-making process for transit projects by category, list of funded investments, and identifies investment opportunities beyond what is included in the plan.

See more about the [Transit Investment Plan](#).

## Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Coordinated Plan

Federal law requires the creation of locally developed, coordinated plans for public transit and human services transportation. These plans identify needs and strategies for delivering efficient, coordinated services to older adults, people who have low incomes, and people who have a disability.

See more about the [Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Coordinated Plan](#).

## Regional Transit Design and Performance Guidelines

The Met Council created and adopted the Regional Transit Design and Performance Guidelines in partnership with transitway planning and development agencies in the region. The guidelines provide consistent practices for developing, operating, maintaining, and evaluating performance of local buses, express buses, and transitways like light rail and bus rapid transit.

See the [Regional Transit Design and Performance Guidelines](#).

## Transit Studies

The Met Council often leads transit system studies that analyze policy issues or prioritize regional transit needs across all jurisdictions. Transit providers conduct transit studies to inform needs in their specific service areas. Agencies like regional railroad authorities (typically part of

county governments) study corridors to determine viable transit alternatives. These studies examine potential alignments and modes, including both bus and rail options. Land use and zoning needs are also evaluated. These transit studies often inform the Transportation Policy Plan and local plans. Most studies require and include agency coordination from multiple regional transit planning partners.

See more about [regional transit system studies](#).

## Chapter 5: Useful Links

Resource	Link
<b>MOU between Council and MnDOT</b>	<a href="https://metro council.org/Transportation/Planning-2/Key-Transportation-Planning-Documents.aspx">https://metro council.org/Transportation/Planning-2/Key-Transportation-Planning-Documents.aspx</a>
<b>Transportation Advisory Board</b>	<a href="https://metro council.org/Council-Meetings/Committees/Transportation-Advisory-Board-TAB.aspx">https://metro council.org/Council-Meetings/Committees/Transportation-Advisory-Board-TAB.aspx</a>
<b>Technical Advisory Committee</b>	<a href="https://metro council.org/Council-Meetings/Committees/Transportation-Advisory-Board-TAB/TAB-Technical-Advisory-Committee.aspx">https://metro council.org/Council-Meetings/Committees/Transportation-Advisory-Board-TAB/TAB-Technical-Advisory-Committee.aspx</a>
<b>MN Department of Transportation</b>	<a href="https://www.dot.state.mn.us/">https://www.dot.state.mn.us/</a>
<b>MN Pollution Control Agency</b>	<a href="https://www.pca.state.mn.us/">https://www.pca.state.mn.us/</a>
<b>Metropolitan Airports Commission</b>	<a href="https://www.metroairports.org/Airport-Authority.aspx">https://www.metroairports.org/Airport-Authority.aspx</a>
<b>Individual Participation Information</b>	<a href="https://www.metro council.org/About-Us/TheCouncil/Getting-involved.aspx">https://www.metro council.org/About-Us/TheCouncil/Getting-involved.aspx</a>
<b>Regional Development Guide (Imagine 2050)</b>	<a href="https://imagine2050.metro council.org">https://imagine2050.metro council.org</a>
<b>Transportation Policy Plan</b>	<a href="https://imagine2050.metro council.org/read-the-plans/transportation/">https://imagine2050.metro council.org/read-the-plans/transportation/</a>
<b>Unified Planning Work Program</b>	<a href="https://www.metro council.org/Transportation/Planning-2/Key-Transportation-Planning-Documents/Unified-Planning-Work-Program.aspx">https://www.metro council.org/Transportation/Planning-2/Key-Transportation-Planning-Documents/Unified-Planning-Work-Program.aspx</a>
<b>Federal Funding Overview – FHWA</b>	<a href="https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/resources/topics/funding.cfm">https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/resources/topics/funding.cfm</a>
<b>Federal Funding Overview - FTA</b>	<a href="https://www.transit.dot.gov/grants">https://www.transit.dot.gov/grants</a>
<b>Regional Solicitation Process</b>	<a href="https://www.metro council.org/Transportation/Planning-2/Transportation-Funding/Regional-Solicitation.aspx?source=child">https://www.metro council.org/Transportation/Planning-2/Transportation-Funding/Regional-Solicitation.aspx?source=child</a>
<b>Scope Change Policy</b>	<a href="https://metro council.org/Transportation/Planning-2/Transportation-Planning-Process/Transportation-Advisory-Board/TAB-Policies/Scope-Change-Evaluation-Process.aspx">https://metro council.org/Transportation/Planning-2/Transportation-Planning-Process/Transportation-Advisory-Board/TAB-Policies/Scope-Change-Evaluation-Process.aspx</a>

<b>Resource</b>	<b>Link</b>
<b>TAB Regional Program Year Policy</b>	<a href="https://metro council.org/Transportation/Planning-2/Transportation-Planning-Process/Transportation-Advisory-Board/TAB-Policies/Regional-Program-Year-Policy-TAB.aspx">https://metro council.org/Transportation/Planning-2/Transportation-Planning-Process/Transportation-Advisory-Board/TAB-Policies/Regional-Program-Year-Policy-TAB.aspx</a>
<b>Congestion Management Process</b>	<a href="https://metro council.org/Transportation/Planning-2/Key-Transportation-Planning-Documents/Congestion-Management-Process.aspx">https://metro council.org/Transportation/Planning-2/Key-Transportation-Planning-Documents/Congestion-Management-Process.aspx</a>
<b>Functional Highway Classification</b>	<a href="https://www.metro council.org/Transportation/Planning/Transportation-Resources/Functional-Roadway-Classifications/Functional-Roadway-Classifications-Defined.aspx">https://www.metro council.org/Transportation/Planning/Transportation-Resources/Functional-Roadway-Classifications/Functional-Roadway-Classifications-Defined.aspx</a>
<b>Travel Forecasting / Travel Behavior Inventory</b>	<a href="https://www.metro council.org/Transportation/Planning/Transportation-Resources/Transportation-Behavior-Inventory.aspx">https://www.metro council.org/Transportation/Planning/Transportation-Resources/Transportation-Behavior-Inventory.aspx</a>
<b>Public Participation Plan</b>	<a href="https://metro council.org/About-Us/Publications-And-Resources/Transportation-Public-Participation-Plan.aspx">https://metro council.org/About-Us/Publications-And-Resources/Transportation-Public-Participation-Plan.aspx</a>
<b>Metropolitan Land Planning Act</b>	<a href="https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=473.859">https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=473.859</a>
<b>Right-of-Way Acquisition Loan Fund</b>	<a href="https://www.metro council.org/Transportation/Planning/RALF.aspx">https://www.metro council.org/Transportation/Planning/RALF.aspx</a>
<b>Transportation Coordination Action Plan</b>	<a href="https://metro council.org/Transportation/Planning-2/Transit-Plans,-Studies-Reports/Transit-Transitways/Transportation-Coordination-Action-Plan.aspx">https://metro council.org/Transportation/Planning-2/Transit-Plans,-Studies-Reports/Transit-Transitways/Transportation-Coordination-Action-Plan.aspx</a>
<b>Regional Transitway Guidelines</b>	<a href="https://metro council.org/Transportation/Planning-2/Transit-Plans,-Studies-Reports/Transit-Transitways/Regional-Transitway-Guidelines.aspx">https://metro council.org/Transportation/Planning-2/Transit-Plans,-Studies-Reports/Transit-Transitways/Regional-Transitway-Guidelines.aspx</a>

## Chapter 6: Glossary & Abbreviations

Term	Abbreviation	Definition
<b>Continuing, Comprehensive, and Cooperative Planning Process</b>	3C	
<b>Americans with Disabilities Act</b>	ADA	Civil rights legislation passed in 1990. The ADA sets design guidelines for accessibility to public facilities, including sidewalks, trails, and public transit vehicles by individuals with disabilities.
<b>Arterial Bus Rapid Transit</b>	Arterial BRT	
<b>Area Transportation Partnership</b>	ATP	
<b>Bus Rapid Transit</b>	BRT	
<b>Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program</b>	CMAQ	A categorical funding program that directs funding to projects that contribute to meeting national air quality standards and further reducing transportation-related air pollution.
<b>Congestion Management Process</b>	CMP	A systematic process for evaluating and developing transportation strategies and plans for addressing existing and future traffic congestion.
<b>Environmental Protection Agency</b>	EPA	
<b>Federal Aviation Administration</b>	FAA	Federal part of DOT that addresses the air transportation mode and all aspects of pilot licensing, airport certification, aircraft certification, aviation rules and regulations, safety, operation, air traffic control, navigational system, fees and taxes, security, airline operations, etc.
<b>Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act</b>	IIJA	Federal infrastructure law that, among other purposes, authorized the surface transportation program for federal fiscal years 2021-2026. Also commonly known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).
<b>Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act</b>	FAST Act	Federal infrastructure law that authorized the surface transportation program for federal fiscal years 2016-2020.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Federal Highway Administration</b>	FHWA	
<b>Federal Transit Administration</b>	FTA	
<b>Highway Safety Improvement Program</b>	HSIP	
<b>Metropolitan Airports Commission</b>	MAC	An airport authority established for the Twin Cities area by the state legislature in 1943 to promote aviation in and through the area, operate a system of public airports and ensure provision of air passenger and cargo services.
<b>Metropolitan Urban Service Area</b>	MUSA	The geographic area in which the Metropolitan Council ensures that regional services and facilities under its jurisdiction are provided.
<b>Minnesota Department of Transportation</b>	MnDOT	
<b>Minnesota State Highway Investment Plan</b>	MnSHIP	
<b>Memorandum of Understanding</b>	MOU	
<b>Metropolitan Planning Area</b>	MPA	The geographic area a metropolitan planning organization plans for and provides services to.
<b>Minnesota Pollution Control Agency</b>	MPCA	
<b>Metropolitan Planning Organization</b>	MPO	
<b>Motor Vehicle Sales Tax</b>	MVST	

<b>Term</b>	<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Right-of-Way Acquisition Loan Fund</b>	RALF	This program grants interest-free loans to communities within officially mapped highway corridors to purchase property threatened by development. The loan is repaid when the property is purchased by the highway construction authority. The Minnesota Legislature established the RALF program in 1982. It is funded by a property tax levied by the Metropolitan Council and funds are loaned out on a revolving basis.
<b>Regional Development Guide (Imagine 2050)</b>	RDG	
<b>Regional railroad authority</b>	RRA	Regional railroad authorities are political subdivisions and local government units that are formed to preserve and improve local rail service or preserve abandoned right-of-way for future transportation uses. These authorities are organized by resolution or joint resolutions of county governments, and their boards are usually comprised of some or all commissioners of covered counties.
<b>Surface Transportation Block Grant program</b>	STBG	Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG) One of the core federal highway funding programs. STBG provides flexible funding that may be used by States and localities for projects on any Federal-aid highway, including the national highway system, bridge projects on any public road, transit capital projects, and intra-city and intercity bus terminals and facilities.
<b>State Transportation Improvement Program</b>	STIP	
<b>Transportation Advisory Board</b>	TAB	

<b>Term</b>	<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Technical Advisory Committee (of the TAB)</b>	TAC	The TAB'S Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) provides technical expertise and makes recommendations to the TAB and provides a public forum for discussion of technical issues that impact the TAB's role and responsibilities. The TAC is composed of professional staff from city and county governments and the agencies involved in transportation in the seven-county region. The TAC has two standing committees - the Funding and Programming Committee and the Planning Committee.
<b>TAC Funding and Programming Committee</b>	TAC F&P	
<b>TAC Planning Committee</b>	TAC Planning	
<b>Transportation Asset Management Plan</b>	TAMP	
<b>Travel Behavior Inventory</b>	TBI	
<b>Transportation Improvement Program</b>	TIP	
<b>Transportation Management Area</b>	TMA	
<b>Transportation Policy Plan</b>	TPP	The Transportation Policy Plan implements the values, vision, and goals outlined in the Imagine 2050 Regional Development Guide and presents the region's transportation objectives, policies, actions, and investments approach to guide development of the region's transportation system. The TPP is updated every five years.
<b>Unified Planning Work Program</b>	UPWP	
<b>Expansion</b>		The addition of new or added capacity to the transportation system and can occur in different forms and different modes.
<b>Infrastructure</b>		Fixed facilities, such as roadways or railroad tracks; permanent structures or improvements.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Metro Mobility</b>		A service of the Metropolitan Council that provides door-to-door dial-a-ride transit service for persons with disabilities that prevent them from using the fixed-route bus and rail system.
<b>Metro Transit</b>		A service of the Metropolitan Council that provides rail transit and the largest amount of regular route bus service in the region.
<b>Mode</b>		Type of transportation, for example car, bus, bicycle, etc.
<b>Mode share</b>		The share of one of the types of transportation as a percentage of all transportation types. Driving continues to have the largest mode share of all transportation types in the region.
<b>Multimodal</b>		Including or pertaining to multiple modes of transportation, this can be used to describe a transportation system, transportation project, or a travel trip.
<b>Performance measures</b>		An accountability tool that measures progress toward achieving goals and objectives.
<b>Preservation</b>		Preservation activities are directed toward the elimination of deficiencies and major replacement of existing facilities.
<b>Transitway</b>		High-demand travel corridors that offer improved transit service that includes bus rapid transit, light rail or commuter rail.
<b>Functional classification</b>		Federal taxonomy for roadways based to their primary function— mobility for through trips or access to adjacent lands. A four-class system is used to designate roads (principal arterials, minor arterials, collectors and local streets) in the Twin Cities.
<b>Fiscal constraint</b>		



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