

# Transportation Planning

---

## Planning to ensure a mobile region

The Metropolitan Council is charged under state and federal law with overall planning for the region's transportation system, including aviation, highways, transit, bicycles and pedestrians. Because moving people and goods efficiently supports a healthy economy, transportation is key to a prosperous regional future.

The Council's 2030 *Transportation Policy Plan* details regional transportation goals, plans and investment priorities to ensure an efficient, well-functioning transportation system as the region's population grows by one million between 2000 and 2030. The plan was adopted in 2004, and will be updated by the end of 2008 to take into account new studies, funding realities and other data.

## Slowing the growth of congestion

In 1990, 30% of the region's freeways were considered congested during peak travel periods. By 2000, the figure had grown to 60%. That same year, transportation issues

were ranked as the region's single-most important problem, according to an annual survey of residents conducted by the Council, and they have stayed at or near the top of the list ever since.

The Council's transportation plan contains policies and strategies designed to slow the growth of congestion, increase transportation choices and improve mobility. The plan calls for:

- Planning and investing in multi-model transportation choices based on a full range of costs and benefits.
- Encouraging mixed-use development along transportation corridors to reduce auto trips.
- Making more efficient use of the transportation system by encouraging flexible work hours, telecommuting, ridesharing and transit.
- Focusing highway investment first on maintaining and managing the existing system, and second on adding lanes.
- Building transit ridership by expanding the current bus system and developing a network of dedicated rail and/or bus transitways.

- Encouraging local communities to interconnect arterials and local streets, pathways and bikeways.

## Planning involves local officials

Federal law and regulations require that all communities with more than 50,000 residents have a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and a continuing, cooperative and coordinated transportation planning process in order to receive federal transportation funding. The Council is the MPO for the seven-county Twin Cities area.

The Council established the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) in 1974 as a forum where state, regional and local officials, transportation providers and private citizens deliberate issues that affect the region's transportation planning and funding. The TAB provides formal reviews and comments for regional and state transportation planning, conducts public hearings, and adopts the region's Transportation Improvement Program.

TAB membership includes a chair, 10 elected members of

city governments, 1 county commissioner from each of the seven metro counties, 8 citizen members, 4 representatives of state and regional government agencies, and 4 persons to represent transit, freight and non-motorized transportation interests.

### **Transit planning**

The Council performs long-range transit planning to implement the policies established in the *2030 Regional Development Framework* and the *2030 Transportation Policy Plan*. The Council operates Metro Transit and coordinates with other transit operators in the region, and works with the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the county regional rail authorities and the new County Transit Improvement Board to complete planning, environmental and engineering studies for transit corridors.

### **Aviation planning**

The Council prepares and updates the aviation system plan for the Twin Cities area, and reviews the long-range plans and capital budget of the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC). The MAC operates Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport and the region's smaller general aviation airports. The Council coordinates aviation planning

and development activities with local, regional, state and federal governmental units, airport users and citizens.

### **Loans help with right-of-way purchase**

In 1982, the Minnesota Legislature authorized the Metropolitan Council to levy a regional property tax to establish a revolving loan fund for advance acquisition of metropolitan highway rights-of-way threatened by imminent development. The Council uses those funds to make loans to counties, towns and cities so they may purchase property within rights-of-way of mapped state trunk highways. Local partners must repay the Council for the interest-free loans, prior to starting highway construction.

Since July 1983, the Council's annual levy of about \$3.3 million has provided more than 100 loans totaling over \$57 million.

### **For more information**

For more information about the Council's transportation planning activities, visit:

- The Council's Transit and Transportation page online: <http://www.metrocouncil.org/transit/index.htm>
- Regional transportation reports, plans, and programs: <http://www.metrocouncil.org/planning/transportation/transportation.htm>

<http://www.metrocouncil.org/planning/transportation/transportation.htm>

- Guide for Transit-Oriented Development at <http://www.metrocouncil.org/planning/tod/tod.htm>
- Right-of-Way Acquisition Loan Fund Coordinator Ann Braden at 651-602-1705 or [ann.braden@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:ann.braden@metc.state.mn.us)
- Transportation Advisory Board Coordinator Kevin Roggenbuck at 651-602-1728 or [kevin.roggenbuck@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:kevin.roggenbuck@metc.state.mn.us)
- Senior Aviation Planner Chauncey Case at 651-602-1705 or [chauncey.case@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:chauncey.case@metc.state.mn.us)
- Related fact sheets:
  - [Regional Transit Services](#)
  - [Metro Mobility](#)
  - [Metro Transit](#)
  - [Metro Transit Rideshare](#)
  - [Hiawatha Light Rail](#)

Pub. 14-08-042

July 2008