

# Information Item

Committee of the Whole



Meeting date: May 15, 2024

## Topic

Summary of Met Council member comment on 2050 Transportation Policy Plan Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Actions Content

<b>District(s), member(s):</b>	All council districts
<b>Policy/legal reference:</b>	Minn. Stat. 473.146, 23 U.S.C. § 134, and 49 U.S.C. § 5303
<b>Staff prepared/presented:</b>	Amy Vennewitz, Deputy Director, 651-602-1058 Cole Hiniker, Senior Manager, 651-602-1748 Jed Hanson, Senior Planner, 651-602-1716
<b>Division/department:</b>	Metropolitan Transportation Services – Planning

## Background

Metropolitan Transportation Services (MTS) provided draft 2050 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) goal sections for Met Council member review and comment on March 20, 2024. These sections summarize the plan’s approach by goal area, and each contain context, objectives, policies, and actions. This memo includes a summary and full-text copy of those comments.

MTS received comments from three Met Council members:

- Dr. Gail Cederberg, District 11
- Susan Vento, District 12
- Wendy Wulff, District 16

## Comment Summary

Comments from the responding Met Council members is briefly summarized below, with comments summarized under their most-related section.

### General Comments

- A table of contents could help readers navigate the documents.
- The structure of the goals sections could be improved. Information on implementation and performance measurement are buried behind lengthy context.
- The plan needs a review to ensure it is inclusive of residents with varying identities, experiences, and needs.
- Document readability could be improved through simplification, tables and formatting changes, and copy-editing.
- The “Related Work by Others” section could be summarized in a table.

### Equitable & Inclusive

- Transit is a growing need for an aging population.
- Economic disparities need to be reflected in sections discussing disparities.
- Small-business displacement by transportation projects needs to be addressed.

- Disagreement with sections discussing awareness of tribal sovereignty, slavery and segregation, and displacement caused by construction of the Interstate Highway System.
- Conflict with “leading with race” and the needs of people with disabilities.
- Transportation infrastructure is underfunded in growing communities.
- A question if Action 6B, which concerns transportation project benefits for long-term residents of communities, applies to the whole region or just environmental justice communities.

### **Healthy & Safe**

- Disparities in traffic safety outcomes by race and how the effects of less enforcement are experienced by specific groups.
- A question on Action 10G, which concerns funding for pedestrian and bicyclist safety projects, if infrastructure investments are effective for crashes related to behavior or enforcement.

### **Dynamic & Resilient**

- There is limited discussion of business, industrial, and employer needs.
- Narrative on access to destinations ignores the lack of choice for people without good transit access or on-demand options.

### **Climate Change**

- Vehicle miles travelled is becoming a less relevant measure because of teleworking and less-polluting newer vehicles.
- Not accommodating new development may lead to more emissions as people get stuck in traffic.
- Related Policy 30, “*Evaluate and mitigate the greenhouse gas impacts of transportation plans and projects,*” does not include evaluation of the costs and benefits of greenhouse gas reduction.

### **Natural Systems**

- Related Policy 32, “*Prioritize projects which reduce total impervious surface coverage or minimize right-of-way needs,*” needs to consider snow removal and storage, and transit and emergency vehicle movement.



## Full Comments

All comments received by Met Council members are listed in this section.

### Dr. Gail Cederberg, District 11

- Include general roadmap document, telling the reader what all the parts/sections are before jumping in?
- Structure of the 5 Goals Chapters. Comment below relate to Goal "Our Communities are Health and Safe". Similar Comments for the 5 Goals Chapters.
  - Section 1.3 - There is all this context but the reader has to jump to the final Policies and Actions Section to read the related Performance Measures. Like to see them imbedded here (then summarized in Policies and Action Section?). Keep information together. Or a bit more text?
  - Section 2 - Context for the Goal. 11 pages of background information to read before getting to Section 3 Implementation. Does all this need to be included? less all? more? Specific examples are included, but others could argue for different examples. List out the headings and include background information as an appendix? Difficult to read through.
  - Section 3.3 - can that information be put into a table?
- Policies and Actions Chapter
  - Under each goal, Policies are listed out such as a Policy 1, .... etc. Including Section 2.1, there are 6 "Policy 1s" in this Chapter. Confusing, and how will they be referenced in future documents, use, etc.? Better way of managing these?
- When reviewing, can a person, senior, student, underserved, less-able bodied person, living in a rural residential area, outside the urban core see themselves in the Plan? Upon review, strengthen that perspective so it's clear.
- There is substantial information here, suggest take a 40,000 ft level look at the general structure (text, format, tables, etc.) to make it more readable and easier to pull out specific information. e.g., can all the Goals chapters be more in table format? Review with a critical eye as to what information is needed and what can be removed.
- Suggest a technical editor review document to tighten up text, clean up confusing text. An example would be Section 2.1 of Goal "Our Communities are Health and Safe - 4 separate paragraphs that don't link together very well. Shorten up and put in bullets?

### Susan Vento, District 12

- Aging members of the community: transit is a growing need for this growing population in the metro area. As the baby boomers retire & continue to age, many are relying on various Met Transit modes. They need to be included. While many are hoping to retire comfortably, the housing options are posing a huge obstacle for many. And as many face declining mobility, Metro Mobility & Micro Transit will be increasingly in demand.
- We need to include residents without economic means in the sections that note disparities. Not all who are economic challenges are BIPOC, but certainly should be noted as among those we need to keep in the work we are doing.
- Almost no mention of the business/industrial/employer segments in our region concerns me.
- When addressing anti-displacement, we need to address the displacement that occurs when transportation projects occur, particularly for small businesses. During the last year, the Council has heard repeatedly from small business owners with very serious, very legitimate concerns about the impact on these businesses during the construction ... and for some, following. Loss of parking is one of the issues that we seem oblivious to. Loss of parking can mean the end of the business. Have we ever noted the businesses lost as a result of a transit project? I've heard a lot about the billions in investment along the Green Line LRT extension, but what about the loss of businesses ... which means the loss of customers, jobs, a sense of community?



## Wendy Wulff, District 16

- Equity 2 says: “This question frames the challenge for the region to produce more equitable transportation outcomes for residents. For too many groups of people in the region, their stories haven’t been heard, believed, or valued in advancing action and needed changes. It is reasonable for a Native American to doubt that anything meaningful might come from sharing their story in light of centuries of broken promises and broken treaties throughout American history. Today, many Americans do not realize or recognize that Tribal Nations and their people are distinct political entities whose fundamental sovereignty predates the United States. This leads to ongoing erasure and continued disparities. More information about the Dakota people, who are indigenous to the Twin Cities region, is collected on the Bdote Memory Map.”
  - Comment: I don’t know about awareness nationwide, but most Minnesotans are aware of sovereignty for Native Tribal governments, and there have been major strides within the state and within the Met Council in improving the relationships with Tribal governments. Unless we have some sort of statistic that shows that the most people in the region don’t know this, it seems inappropriate to speculate. Furthermore, there are lots of people who feel that both MnDOT and the Met Council are indifferent to their needs and concerns – particularly in the suburban edge and rural areas of the region. There has been a decades long underfunding of transportation infrastructure in growing communities, and the idea that necessary transportation infrastructure would be provided to places who accommodate planned regional growth has been a major broken promise. These are communities who have accommodated a diversity of housing types, income levels, and a diversifying population, without the major gaps in racial outcomes that are endemic in the core cities, but they have had to use local money to pay for what should have been regional transportation infrastructure.
- Equity 2 says: “Transportation is intertwined in the history of Black Americans, beginning with the transport of enslaved Africans to this land hundreds of years ago. After slavery ended, segregation continued to restrict how Black Americans traveled and where they could live. Beginning in the 1950s and in following decades, the construction of interstates across the country often destroyed Black neighborhoods while housing policy restricted where Black Americans could live. The University of Minnesota report Advancing Transportation Equity: Research and Practice further outlines impacts of segregation and the inequities of an auto-dominated system in Minnesota.”
  - I guess I don’t understand how slavery impacts our regional transportation system today. Slavery was not legal in MN, and in fact, the 1st Minnesota soldiers lost 82% of their soldiers in one battle in the Civil War fighting to end slavery. That was the most deadly battle of the war, and our soldiers did not hesitate to do what had been asked of them. That battle was pivotal in the union army winning the war. The construction of the interstate system displaced a lot of people, during a time when the region was almost entirely (98%+) white. There has been additional displacement for other state highways. Our job is to look at all of the evidence and data and consider all sides moving forward, not to push a narrative coming from a few organizations without looking at all of the data. Yes, there were predominantly black neighborhoods impacted, but there were a lot of predominantly white neighborhoods and businesses that were displaced as well. Discrimination in housing on the basis of race was made illegal more than 50 years ago, but minimum accommodations for public access for people with disabilities didn’t come into law until about 30 years ago.
- [Lead with race: Improve outcomes toward eliminating racial disparities] 3.1.1.1 says: “This condition is intersectional and doesn’t mean that other aspects of people’s identities are ignored. Race is the largest predictor for inequities in the region. Leading with race works on eliminating some of the highest disparities and will also improve outcomes for other disparities. The Government Alliance on Race and Equity notes that “As local and regional government deepens its ability to eliminate racial inequity, it will be better equipped to



transform systems and institutions impacting other marginalized groups.”

- Comment: We don't keep good data on disparities based on disability, so we can't say whether race is a bigger issue than disability. If you look at what happened in MN during COVID, people with disabilities were impacted more than anyone – people who lived in group homes or assisted living situations were literally confined to their rooms with no visitors for months on end. They could not leave to go to a job if they had one, because they would be quarantined for 14 days any time they left the building, while the people who worked in the group home or care facility could come and go each day and see their families. People literally died from despair, loneliness, and lack of care because their family members could not make sure their basic needs were met.
- Safety 2.3.1 Race and Ethnicity
  - Comment: Some of the data referenced is really old, and a lot of things have changed since then. During COVID, when there was much less enforcement of speed limits, traffic deaths increased, but the largest increases were among black or African-American residents. The loss of police personnel in Minneapolis, and changes in prosecution led to major increases in stolen vehicles and carjackings. The dangerous way those vehicles are driven after being stolen puts everyone at risk, and that dangerous driving occurs in some of the most diverse neighborhoods, which has not only led to increase traffic accidents, but also increased pedestrian deaths. The people most impacted when laws are not enforced are people of color, women, people with disabilities, and other vulnerable people.
- Dynamic and Resilient 2.2.1
  - Comment: The limited access narrative only discusses choice for people who live in areas served by transit, and completely ignores some of the lack of choice for people who don't have good transit service. We have parts of the region that only get limited metro mobility under state law, rather than the more robust service required by federal law, and some parts of the region only have dial a ride where the system can refuse your ride request because of lack of capacity. Rideshare apps have provided some help to people without access to transit, but now they are at risk due to decisions by the Minneapolis City Council.
- 2.4.2 Opportunities to reduce VMT: “The target is not intended to ask people to forgo trips they want to take (for example, trips to the cabin, school, and social events)”
  - Comment: Many voluntary trips are central to our economy – going to shows, restaurants, etc, and I agree that we should not be telling people not to go places, but it would seem that VMT is becoming less and less relevant – the change to telework has given us much better mobility in the existing system, and the vehicles that are newly coming onto the roads are less polluting than older vehicles. Some of the current work that state law is putting into place for road projects will make it harder to accommodate new development, possibly leading to more emissions as people get stuck in traffic.
- Policy 6B says: Explore opportunities for long-term residents to benefit from transportation investments, including tools and programs like community benefits agreements, workforce development, and anti-displacement strategies. (See 2D for additional component of this work.)
  - Comment: Is that everywhere, or just in EJ communities? Typically since funding for suburban projects is hard to come by, there isn't money for that sort of thing.
- [Policy] 10G: Ensure the region is distributing funds for pedestrian and bicyclist safety-focused transportation projects in proportion to the percent of all pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities and serious injuries. As an example, if pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities and serious injuries are 15% of the total for these severities in the region, a minimum of 15% of available funding must be spent on projects that improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety. (RS)
  - Comment: Doesn't that depend on the reason for the accident? It could be unsafe



infrastructure, but if it is due to lack of safety/driving enforcement, putting more money into bike/ped isn't going to make any difference.

- Policy 30 GHG impacts
  - Comment: There is nothing in this section about evaluating the cost/benefit of any of the GHG reduction plans.
- Policy 32 Reducing impervious surface
  - Comment: need to consider snow removal and storage to make sure you either have enough surface (pervious or impervious) to store the snow, or a viable plan to remove it to another location. We see too many instances where buses and emergency vehicles have difficulty getting through places where snow removal has not been adequately planned for.

