

Transportation Committee

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of April 24, 2019

Subject: Adoption of Amendment #2 to the Transportation Policy Plan

Proposed Action

2019-85 SW: Adopt Amendment #2 to the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan to Amend the METRO Gold Line Project and Amend the I-94 Project from MN 101 to I-494

Summary of Committee Discussion/Questions

Metropolitan Transportation Services Planning & Finance Deputy Director Amy Vennewitz presented this item.

Amendment #2 to the Transportation Policy Plan amends the Gold Line locally preferred alternative to extend the line .3 miles to a new terminus station in the city of Woodbury and adds general purpose lanes to the scope of the I-94 highway project from Dayton Parkway to MN 101 in the cities of Maple Grove and Roger. Vennewitz described the public participation process for the TPP amendment and summarized the five formal public comments received on the project – two in support of the Gold Line project, two in support of the I-94 project, and one comment requesting information on how the Council prioritizes transitway investments.

There were no questions or comments from Council Members.

Motion by Fredson, seconded by Atlas-Ingebretson. Motion carried.

Transportation Committee

Meeting date: April 22, 2019

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of April 24, 2019

Subject: Adopt Amendment #2 to the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan to Amend the METRO Gold Line Project and Amend the I-94 Project from MN 101 to I-494

District(s), Member(s): All members

Policy/Legal Reference: MN Statutes Sec. 473.175 and 473.176; FAST Act

Staff Prepared/Presented: Nick Thompson, Director MTS, 651-602-1754

Amy Vennewitz, Deputy Director MTS, 651-602-1058

Steve Peterson, Highway Planning Manager, 651-602-1819

Cole Hiniker, Multimodal Transportation Planning Manager, 651-602-1748

Division/Department: Transportation/MTS

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

- Accept the summary of public review and comment (included below) and,
- Adopt Amendment #2 (attached) to the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan to amend the Gold Line locally preferred alternative to extend the alignment and add a station in Woodbury and amend the I-94 highway construction project in Maple Grove and Rogers to add general purpose lanes.

Background

Under federal transportation planning law, the Council is required to develop a long-range transportation plan that is updated at least every four years. The plan must be multimodal and identify transportation system goals and investment priorities over at least a 20-year period. The plan is required to identify regionally significant transportation investments that will be implemented within the timeframe of the plan and must maintain fiscal balance between anticipated project costs and funding. The current 2040 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) was adopted on October 24, 2018.

The 2040 TPP includes a fiscally constrained list of major projects for investment in the region by 2040, known as the Current Revenue Scenario. All dedicated-guideway transitway projects and highway projects that add lanes to a Principal Arterial Highway are considered major projects under federal guidance. These projects must be identified as funded in a region's long-range transportation plan (i.e., the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan) in order to qualify for federal funding and respectively to begin construction. The attached proposed 2040 Transportation Policy Plan Amendment #2 document describes the project changes in detail.

Project #1: The METRO Gold Line project locally preferred alternative (LPA) was originally added to the 2040 TPP with the plan's adoption in February 2015. The LPA was subsequently revised to shift the project from terminating in Lake Elmo to terminating in Woodbury when the TPP was updated in October 2018. Ongoing corridor work related to early design of the project throughout 2018 resulted in a recommendation for a short extension of the project in Woodbury to a new station and terminus near I-494.

Project #2: This amendment adds general purpose lanes to the scope of the I-94 highway project from Dayton Parkway to MN 101 in the cities of Maple Grove and Rogers to the TPP's Current Revenue Scenario at the request of the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT).

The Council released the proposed amendment for public comment on Feb. 27, 2019, held a public hearing on April 2, 2019 and closed the public comment period on April 12, 2019. The Council promoted the public comment period through the website, email distribution lists, social media and an advertisement in the Star Tribune.

There were five unique comments on the proposed amendment:

- Two in support of the I-94 project
- Two in support of the Gold Line extension
- One requesting clarification on how the Council prioritizes Bus Rapid Transit (with the Council response shown in the TPP Amendment #2 attachment).

Rationale

Transitway project locally preferred alternatives in the fiscally constrained Transportation Policy Plan must be amended if planned stations are added or removed from the project. Federal Transit Administration guidance for Capital Investment Grants requires an LPA to be addressed in the TPP prior to the completion of the Project Development phase, which is scheduled to end for the Gold Line project in January 2020. The proposed change to the LPA does not affect the project's cost or timeline, so the LPA criteria to change the TPP only require that resolutions of support are adopted by local affected governments. These resolutions were passed by the City of Woodbury and Washington County prior to the Council's release of the draft amendment for public comment.

Highway projects can be added to the fiscally constrained Transportation Policy Plan when the following criteria are met:

- The proposal is consistent with the goals, objectives and strategies of the region's 2040 Transportation Policy Plan
- Documentation is submitted showing how the project can be built with revenues in the fiscally constrained plan (or reasonable proposed additional revenues)
- Air Quality Conformity is maintained
- Public Involvement is conducted

MnDOT has provided the appropriate information to meet these criteria for the added lanes along I-94 from Dayton Parkway to MN 101 in Northwest Hennepin County.

Thrive Lens Analysis

The draft 2040 TPP amendment #2 addresses all of the *Thrive MSP 2040* outcomes and principles as part of the broader Plan's six transportation system goals and their corresponding objectives and strategies. The text specifically discusses how the amendment supports the TPP goals of Access to Destinations, Competitive Economy, and Land Use and the associated performance measures impacted by the amended projects. These impacts are strongly aligned with the Thrive outcomes of Prosperity and Livability. The text also specifically discusses impacts to transportation finance, equity, and the environment, supporting the Thrive outcomes of Stewardship, Equity, and Sustainability.

Funding

Under federal law, regionally significant transportation projects and the expected funding for the projects must be identified in the fiscally constrained long-range plan before being eligible for federal funding and included in the region's Transportation Improvement Program. There is a discussion on the impacts on transportation finance in the amendment text.

Known Support / Opposition

This amendment was reviewed and recommended for release for public comments by the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB), Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and TAC Planning. MTS staff worked closely with the METRO Gold Line Project Office and MnDOT to review the requirements for a TPP amendment and to draft the amendment. A summary of the public engagement and comments are shown within the TPP Amendment #2 attachment.