

POLICY

Transitway Advancement Policy

RF 1-7

Category: Regional and Foundational Policies

Business Unit Responsible: Metropolitan Transportation Services & Metro Transit

Policy Owner: Executive Director of Metropolitan Transportation Services
General Manager of Metro Transit

Policy Contact: Amy Vennewitz, Deputy Director, Metropolitan Transportation Services (MTS)
Nick Thompson, Deputy General Manager, Capital Programs, Metro Transit

Synopsis: Provides a framework from which the Metropolitan Council can identify and manage risk and help ensure informed decisions when advancing major regional transitway investments.

POLICY

The Metropolitan Council will plan effective regional transportation services and facilities, coordinate regional transportation priorities, and invest transportation resources in a cost-effective manner. Effective and coordinated planning and implementation of transitway services comprise key elements of the [Thrive MSP 2040](#) framework. The Council executes two primary functions in transitway projects: its role as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) leading regional transportation planning; and its role in transitway project implementation and operations. The Council's decisions are influenced by both roles as transitway projects advance.

When the Council or local project sponsors propose the adoption or amendment of a transitway project into the region's Transportation Policy Plan ("Plan"), the Council requires information from project sponsors on critical aspects of the project. These aspects must include, but are not limited to, planned costs and revenues (capital, operating, and lifecycle), ridership and service productivity, demonstration of local support, equity, and other key factors and risks expressed through the Plan. The Council compares project information to standards established within the Plan to aid its consideration of the project.

When implementing transitway projects, the Council will lead or participate in risk management activities at each phase of project implementation including the development and maintenance of a project risk register that considers both project-specific and system-level risks. The risk register must include, but is not limited to, implementation risks (construction, design, market, and requirements risks); stakeholder, legal, and contractual risks; and consideration of project effects on enterprise-level operations and maintenance risks. For key project risks, for and at each phase of project implementation and operations the Council and local project sponsors must establish partner roles and responsibilities and will reflect these in project partnership or grant agreements approved by the Council. The Council will also identify risks that must be reduced, mitigated, or resolved, including the work that must be completed and agreements that must be in place before the Council advances the project.

PURPOSE OF POLICY

This policy provides a framework for transitioning proposed transitway projects from project sponsors (typically local governments) to the Council and for advancing transitway projects once projects have

been transitioned to the Council. This policy also applies to transitway projects initiated by the Council. This policy will help ensure the Council manages project and system risks, makes informed decisions when advancing proposed transitway projects in the region, and identifies funding commitments for ongoing operation and maintenance of the transitway projects.

BACKGROUND & REASONS FOR POLICY

[Minnesota Statutes section 473.146](#) directs the Council to adopt the Plan as part of the Metropolitan Development Guide. As the MPO, the Council is responsible under federal law for carrying out the metropolitan transportation planning process for this region. Non-transit elements of the Plan are developed in coordination with the Metropolitan Airports Commission and the Transportation Advisory Board. Federal regulations require metropolitan transportation plans to be “fiscally constrained” and include “sufficient financial information for demonstrating that projects in the metropolitan transportation plan . . . can be implemented using committed, available, or reasonably available revenue sources, with reasonable assurance that the federally supported transportation system is being adequately operated and maintained.” 23 C.F.R. § 450.104.

The Council is responsible for operating regional transit services within the seven-county metropolitan area, pursuant to [Minnesota Statutes sections 473.371 to 473.449](#). The Council generally exercises these powers in close coordination with project partners. In many cases, projects are implemented by the Council following planning by local governments. Local efforts often propose a locally preferred alternative (mode and alignment) for a project. The Council advises these efforts to help ensure transitway projects will be “developed, owned, and capable of operation in an efficient, cost-effective, and coordinated manner in coordination with buses and other transportation modes and facilities.” Minn. Stat. § 473.399, subd. 1(c).

For fixed guideway, fixed guideway extension, and corridor-based bus rapid transit system projects assisted with Federal Transit Administration (“FTA”) capital funds, the FTA evaluates the “current capital and operating financial condition of the project sponsor” and the “commitment of capital and operating funds for the project and the entire transit system.” 49 C.F.R. §§ 611.205(b) and (c); 611.305(b) and (c). Accordingly, the Council’s ability to secure FTA capital financing for transitway capital projects depends on the Council’s ability to demonstrate it has funding commitments for the construction, maintenance, and operation of a proposed project and its entire transit system.

IMPLEMENTATION & ACCOUNTABILITY

The Council's Metro Transit and Metropolitan Transportation Services Divisions are responsible to implement this policy.

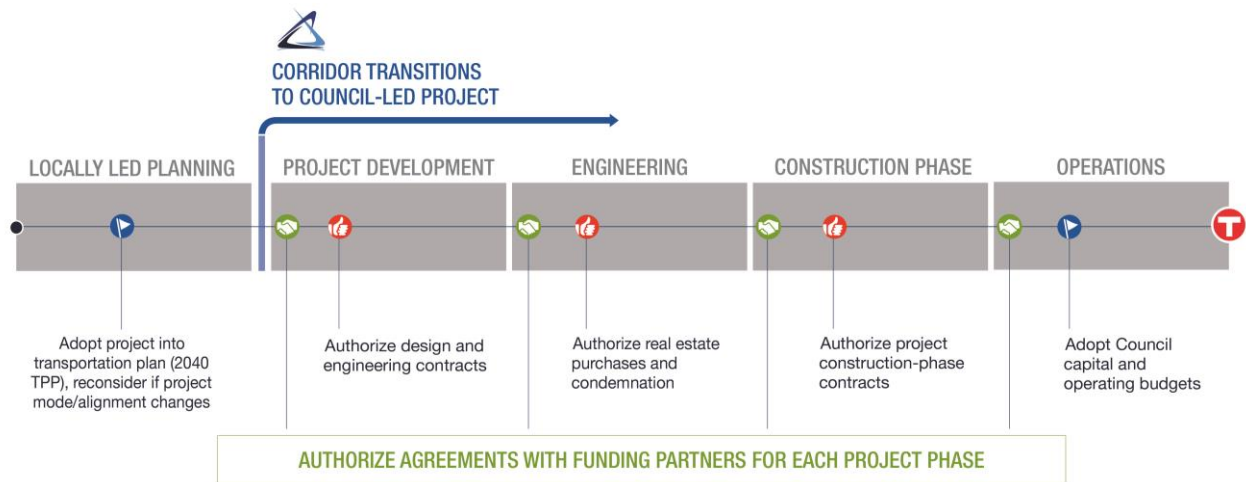
Metropolitan Transportation Services (“MTS”) maintains the region’s long-range transportation plan. The Plan will designate critical information required for evaluation against the Plan’s goals and standards, and to ensure fiscal constraint through the lifecycle of transitway assets. MTS staff will work with local project sponsors to obtain and summarize requisite project information for the Council in accordance with the Plan. This review will occur when new or amended projects are considered in the Plan.

Metro Transit is typically responsible for developing, implementing, operating, and maintaining transitways within the region. For projects initiated by local project sponsors, Metro Transit, as the eventual primary project developer, will lead coordination with local project sponsors during the planning phase to inform sponsor-led activities. Metro Transit will participate with sponsors to identify risks, provide input on issue resolution, and identify risks that local project sponsors are expected to satisfactorily mitigate or resolve prior to project transition to the Council. If another regional transit

provider is the implementor-operator of a transitway and the Council is not responsible for or involved in implementation or operations, this aspect of the policy is not applicable.

As projects advance under Council leadership, including transitway projects initiated by the Council, Metro Transit will lead risk management activities in coordination with local governments and project partners, including assignment of roles and responsibilities for the project throughout each phase of implementation and operations.

Figure 1. Transitway Advancement Process



PROCEDURES

RESOURCES

Related Policies

- RF 1-5 Transportation Planning and Transit Services Policy

Related Procedures

- [RF 1-5a Public Involvement in the Transportation Planning Process Procedure](#)
- [RF 1-5b Transportation Relationship to State, Regional and Local Governments Procedure](#)

Statutory Resources (Minnesota Statutes or Rules, U.S. Code, Federal Regulations)

- [Minnesota Statutes sections 473.371 to 473.449](#)

Other Resources (training, relevant links)

- [Thrive MSP 2040](#)
- Transportation Policy Plan
- Regional Transitway Guidelines

HISTORY

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N/A

Version

1