

WORK PROGRAM



IMAGINE ²⁰₅₀
transportation policy plan

A prosperous, equitable, and resilient region with abundant opportunities for all to live, work, play, and thrive." The statement builds off of the regional values and goals set by the Met Council to guide our policy work.

Regional core values

Equity | Leadership | Accountability | Stewardship

Regional goals

Our region is equitable and inclusive

Racial inequities and injustices experienced by historically marginalized communities have been eliminated; and all residents and newcomers feel welcome, included, and empowered.

Our communities are healthy and safe

All our region's residents live healthy, productive, and rewarding lives with a sense of dignity and wellbeing.

Our region is dynamic and resilient

Our region meets the opportunities and challenges faced by our communities and economy including issues of choice, access, and affordability.

We lead on addressing climate change

We have mitigated greenhouse gas emissions and have adapted to ensure our communities and systems are resilient to climate impacts.

We protect and restore natural systems

We protect, integrate, and restore natural systems to protect habitat and ensure a high quality of life for the people of our region.



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Introduction

The Metropolitan Council will carry out or participate in many studies and plans over the next five years that will contribute to updates to the 2050 Transportation Policy Plan. This is not an exhaustive list of all the work to be completed, but rather a list of projects that will build on areas of uncertainty, need, or concern resulting from the 2050 Transportation Policy Plan development that require further exploration. Ongoing work items that the Met Council regularly conducts are not included here. Work Program items will address aspects of the 2050 policy plan that include investment prioritization tools, project lists, evaluation and performance management, exploration of emerging topics, and policy direction.

This chapter provides an overview and description of the planned work program items. The items directly respond to the needs identified in the Policies and Actions chapter of the 2050 Transportation Policy Plan. This chapter reflects the five regional goals in Imagine 2050, which in turn guides the long-term transportation policies and actions. The work program items are organized by the policy area and specific actions that require further study, as outlined in the Policies and Actions chapter.

Policies That Guide All Work

Policy 2: Ensure the region has funding to achieve our goals.

Action 2D: Develop resources, data, and guidance for local agencies to support their federal discretionary grant pursuits, focusing on workforce development, equity, and climate and sustainability.

Work Program Item: Local Agency Federal Grant Resource Guide

The Inflation Reduction Act and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act allocated a historic amount of funding for transportation, including competitive grant programs like Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity, Safe Streets and Roads for All, Mega/, and Infrastructure for Rebuilding America. To help the region increase its competitiveness at the federal level, the Met Council will create a federal grant resource guide. This guide will focus on best practices, opportunities and project alignment, programs, and training to bolster responses to the merit criteria surrounding climate and sustainability, equity, and inclusive economic growth. This guide is intended for agencies of all sizes and will require close coordination with agencies already advancing this work, including MnDOT. It may also identify areas where further regional prioritization studies are needed.

Policy 3: Asset management activities and investments should advance regional goals and objectives.

Action 3C: Complete an Existing Interchange Modification Study to prioritize investments on existing interchanges based on infrastructure condition, presence/absence of multimodal elements, mobility, equity, safety, and other factors.

Work Program Item: Existing Freeway Interchange Improvement and Modernization Study

This study will prioritize improvements on existing interchanges based on infrastructure condition; presence of bicycle, pedestrian, and transit elements; and mobility, resiliency, freight, equity, safety, and other factors. The study process will include close coordination with cities and counties who often own the cross-street at an existing freeway interchange. Local agencies and communities can be negatively affected by a variety of deficiencies at current interchanges, but also stand to benefit most from future improvements. The study also has a potential tie-in to help prioritize future funding applications as several local agencies have applied for this project type and have received funding in the past.

Goal: Our region is equitable and inclusive

Policy 4: Conduct engagement activities and implement shared decision making with historically underrepresented communities throughout policymaking, planning, and project development to ensure equitable distribution of the benefits and burdens of transportation investments.

Action 4E: Create processes and guidelines and implement training for a community assessments process. Document project processes and decision making for future reporting.

Work Program Item: Community Assessment and Project Public Engagement Guide

The Equity Evaluation of Regional Transportation Investments Study identified the need for technical assistance on early community engagement. A more equitable distribution of transportation benefits and burdens starts with including community in identification of a project's purpose and need. This guide will draw on existing work, like the Federal Highway Administration's Community Impact Assessment: A Quick Reference Guide, Equity Evaluation of Regional Transportation Investments study recommendations, and other resources, to develop a project-level public engagement guide. This will provide guidance on identifying and defining community, methods for mapping community assets and context, methods for engaging with communities about their transportation needs, and integrating those findings into a project's purpose and need, planning, development and decision-making.

Policy 7: Evaluate processes, policies, programs, and plans to ensure that community benefits and burdens from transportation investments are distributed equitably.

Action 7F: Develop an analysis methodology and environmental justice framework to evaluate how projects benefit and harm different communities and demographics.

Work Program Item: Transportation Project Impacts to Disadvantaged Communities

This project should build on the Equity Evaluation of Regional Transportation Investments study recommendations to develop an analysis methodology for evaluating how transportation projects benefit and harm different demographics and communities. This work will need to address different federal contexts for transportation planning, including environmental justice populations and Justice40 project benefits requirements for specific federal funding programs. In addition, Imagine 2050 may also include considerations that should be incorporated into this work. This project should include guidance from representatives of environmental justice communities. This methodology should address different levels of detail and analysis needed, such as inclusion in the Transportation Policy Plan or selection for funding in competitive processes.

Policy 8: Implement investments that repair harms and impacts to historically disadvantaged communities from past highway investments.

Action 8A: Complete and implement the Freeway Harms Study.

Work Program Item: Freeway Harms Study

It is well established that the construction of freeways and other controlled access highways across the nation imposed significant impacts, costs, and burdens on communities and people in the path of and living nearby these highways. These impacts were borne most strongly by members of disadvantaged communities including Black people, Indigenous people, and other people of color, and people experiencing low incomes, and people otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequity. In Minnesota, these freeways and expressways comprise what is defined as the Metropolitan Highway System. Communities near the Metropolitan Highway System today still bear the harms, impacts, and consequences from the original highway construction and the continued operation, maintenance, and presence of these facilities. This study will identify the types and levels of long-term and continuing

harms and impacts of the Metropolitan Highway System on adjacent communities and populations, propose mitigation investment actions, and will prioritize mitigation investments and locations for funding and eventual inclusion in the transportation policy plan.

Goal: Our communities are healthy and safe

Policy 11: Emphasize and prioritize the safety of people outside of vehicles in the transportation right-of-way.

Action 11D: Develop and implement a Safe Routes to Transit program to ensure safe and year-round access to transit for people walking, rolling, and biking.

Work Program Item: Safe Routes to Transit Study

The Regional Pedestrian Safety Action Plan identified that significant percentages of pedestrian crashes happen near transit stops or stations, though this does not mean that transit is *causing* these crashes. While these locations are common destinations for pedestrians, they are also proxies for where more people tend to be walking. To help reduce the numbers of pedestrians who are killed or seriously injured in the region, this plan recommended further study to understand the relationship with pedestrian safety and elements of transit system design and roadway design that can affect traffic safety outcomes for pedestrians. This study will address how to improve these relationships. Additional work may be included to develop a methodology for identifying barriers to accessing transit by walking, rolling, or biking, as well as recommended strategies for addressing those barriers. This work will build on related work from other partners such as MnDOT and local agencies. This study will also engage transit riders and residents living near transit to collect information on the barriers that keep them from safely accessing transit services. This study will be the precursor for potentially developing a safe routes to transit funding program.

Policy 13: Use transportation investments and priorities to reduce negative health impacts influenced by the transportation system.

Action 13K: Define, inventory, and map essential destinations to aid local and regional partners to connect communities to these destinations and improve public health outcomes. Expand the accessibility analysis to include essential destinations when defined and inventoried.

Work Program Item: Framework for Accessibility to Public Health Destinations

Accessibility measures frequently focus on how many jobs people reach in a certain amount of time by different travel modes (for example, bus, car, bike, etc.) But people need to access more than just jobs and shopping centers. To maintain and improve their quality of life, people need access to services such as food, health care, educational facilities, restorative open spaces, and social and cultural events. This study will help communities identify where and how they can improve peoples' access to these services. The first step will be to work with partners to identify and then create an inventory of essential destinations in different community contexts (including rural areas) that positively contribute to public health. The next step will expand existing accessibility analysis to include an evaluation of accessibility to these public health destinations across the region.

Goal: Our region is dynamic and resilient

Policy 18: Use a variety of transit service types to match transit services delivery to meet residents' daily needs based on transit markets.

Action 18E: Create a microtransit policy framework to establish an understanding of the opportunities to deliver local microtransit services in a consistent manner across regional providers and service models.

Work Program Item: Microtransit Regional Policy Framework Study

SouthWest Transit began operating the region's first microtransit service, SouthWest Prime, in 2015. Since then, other regional transit providers have been launching or testing microtransit services. The Met Council will work with transit planning partners and operators to create a regional framework guide that defines where providers should operate microtransit, creates regional service guidelines that support a consistent rider experience, integrates microtransit with the rest of the transit system, and develops performance baselines. This framework will recognize that different service delivery models may work for different contexts and the varying needs of transit riders across the region.

Policy 19: Plan for, invest in, and implement a network of transitways to expand access to reliable, frequent, high-capacity transit services.

Action 19E: Update the network of arterial bus rapid transit corridors. Identify, evaluate, and prioritize future lines for investment.

Work Program Item: Metro Transit Arterial Bus Rapid Transit Network Plan Update

The region has successfully built and opened three arterial bus rapid transit lines (METRO A Line, C Line, and D Line) and is working on five additional lines to be opened by 2030 (METRO B, E, F, G, and H lines). A previous planning effort in 2020-2021 selected the METRO F, G, and H Lines while also prioritizing the candidate corridors for future arterial bus rapid that are included in the Transit Investment Plan. Metro Transit will lead an Arterial Bus Rapid Transit Network Plan Update project in 2024 and 2025 to identify the next programmed corridors beyond the METRO H Line. This effort will work collaboratively with regional partners to identify potential candidate corridors including those already in the Transit Investment Plan, screen the corridors for the highest BRT potential, evaluate the corridors for implementation prioritization, and identify the next three lines, targeted to open between 2030-2035. A future update to the 2050 Transportation Policy Plan will include an updated list of arterial bus rapid transit corridors.

Policy 21: Use travel demand management to plan, fund, and promote multimodal travel options and alternatives to driving alone.

Action 21H: Create methodologies and guidance to integrate travel demand management activities into highway planning and project development processes.

Work Program Item: Integrating Travel Demand Management into Highway Planning

The Metropolitan Council will work with regional highway planning partners to identify travel demand management considerations and implementation strategies in highway planning and the project development processes, including the corridor planning process. This work will acknowledge that the processes will vary by the type, context, and operator of each roadway. The work will create context-specific guides and methodologies to integrate travel demand management into the regional highway planning process. The work will also explore how to better link highway planning to policies that are not typically the responsibility of highway authorities, like land use and development review, and employer relations. This work will advance details on elements of the Travel Demand Management Plan and the Congestion Management Process and build on corridor planning processes at MnDOT and counties.

Action 21I: Create frameworks for travel demand management incentives, pricing, and development review programs to support implementation of actions.

Work Program Item: Travel Demand Management Implementation Framework Development

The Travel Demand Management Plan identifies a number of frameworks necessary to create to guide the implementation of new regional travel demand management approaches. The frameworks will address traveler incentives and pricing, development-based programs, expanded employer-based programs, and create a sense of place. The frameworks will address priority focus areas, both geographic and demographic, structure of programs, potential costs or scalability, performance evaluation, and roles for implementation. These frameworks will be developed in partnership with regional travel demand management stakeholders through a new Travel Demand Management Program Advisory Group. The Transportation Policy Plan will incorporate these frameworks and any policy direction that emerges from their development through a future update.

Policy 22: Provide high-quality connections within and between modes of transportation.

Action 22G: Identify and prioritize pedestrian barrier connections, focusing on locations that do not meet ADA requirements.

Work Program Item: Pedestrian Accessibility and Barrier Study

The Regional Bicycle Barriers were identified through a study that focused on crossing opportunities of regional barriers including rivers and streams, railroad corridors, and freeways and expressways. This project will assess similar barriers for pedestrians on a regional scale.

Policy 23: Implement a Complete Streets approach in policy, planning, operations, and maintenance of roads.

Action 23E: Create a regional complete streets typology that is context sensitive and supplements functional classification. Provide local assistance and workshops to aid in the implementation of complete streets policies and processes.

Work Program Item: Complete Streets Local Implementation Guide

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) provides increased design flexibility in federal-aid roadway projects. This task will provide partners with guidance on using this flexibility, particularly adapting roadway design to different land use contexts or as a tool to guide desired land uses. The project may provide partners implementation guidance on common complete streets project elements, recommend actions for prioritizing projects with complete streets elements in selection processes, and provide a land use and traveler-sensitive supplement to functional classification. This project will build upon existing guidance like the Federal Highway Administration's Complete Streets Transformations scenarios, Minnesota Department of Transportation's Complete Streets Handbook, National Association of City Transportation Officials' Urban Street Design Guide, and similar work by peer metropolitan planning organizations. This guide may be supported with assistance and workshops to support implementation.

Action 23F: Identify regional priorities for Minnesota Department of Transportation's new main streets / urban pavement funding program.

Work Program Item: Main Streets / Urban Pavement Funding Program Priorities Study

The Met Council will co-lead, with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), a study that identifies regional priorities for MnDOT's main streets / urban pavement investment category, added as a new program in the latest Minnesota State Highway Investment Plan. This investment category is intended to facilitate more complex fixes to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, include local priorities, and coordinate with local government to address water and sewer infrastructure. With this new

investment category comes the need to prioritize the limited funding to best meet the goals of the program. This study will also examine a potential use in future Regional Solicitation funding processes.

Policy 24: Plan for and invest in first / last-mile freight connections between major freight generators and the regional highway system.

Action 24J. Perform an update to the Twin Cities Metropolitan Regional Freight Study

Work Program Item: Twin Cities Metropolitan Region Freight Study Update

The Twin Cities Metropolitan Region Freight Study (insert link to study summary), a cooperative effort led by Met Council and MnDOT, was finalized in 2013. Several goals were accomplished through the original study in that it

- Highlighted the importance of freight transportation and its contributions to a healthy and sustainable regional economy
- Identified issues and trends related to freight transportation
- Developed a framework for a coordinated regional freight planning and implementation strategy that prioritized critical freight transportation planning activities

Since 2013 the metropolitan freight system has continued to evolve amidst new and emerging freight mode technologies and the rapidly growing presence and impact of e-commerce freight logistics. This update will revisit the earlier study's findings and conclusions, determine their current levels of significance, and develop potential planning-level solutions. Among other potential issues to be defined later, this study may examine these known issues:

- Lack of available overnight truck parking areas
- Potential last-mile solutions to encourage development of distribution microhubs that incentivize transfers from large trucks to small trucks/vans and/or micro-delivery, zero-emission modes (such as bikes, e-cargo bikes, scooters, robots, drones, and automated vehicles)
- Added burdens placed by e-commerce distribution on the overall freight logistics and transportation system

Policy 25: Provide transportation options and transit advantages on roadway corridors with delay and travel time reliability issues.

Action 25G: Identify and prioritize investments for dedicated transit lanes and transit advantages.

Work Program Item: Transit Advantage Priority Guide

The Metropolitan Council will work with regional transit planning partners, including transit operators, MnDOT, and local agencies, to develop a consistent methodology for identifying and prioritizing corridors for implementing transit advantages. This work will acknowledge that the processes vary by type and context of the corridor, as well as the agency that owns and operates corridor facilities. The work will create context-specific guides and methodologies. In addition, the study will identify regional priority corridors for implementing new transit advantages and modernizing or improving existing transit advantages. A future Transportation Policy Plan update will include results from this study.

Policy 26: Focus highway mobility investments on corridors with high levels of existing delay and travel time reliability issues.

Action 26E: Identify, prioritize, and fund corridors for traffic technologies that would most effectively mitigate impacts from recurring and non-recurring congestion.

Work Program Item: Congestion Management and Traffic Management Technology Prioritization Study

Enhancing traffic management technologies along congested corridors is one part of the Met Council's mobility hierarchy. Relatively low cost and high impact, traffic technologies can reduce delay and emissions, increase transit reliability, and improve safety. The Metropolitan Council, through its Regional Solicitation process, has invested in traffic technologies as part of its objective to provide reliable highway travel for transit and personal vehicles. Focusing on non-freeway arterials, this study will identify new technologies, coordination opportunities, implementation and best practice guidance, and prioritize corridors for technology investment that could improve safety, reliability, universal design, and accommodating high-frequency transit.

Action 26F: Update the Congestion Management Safety Plan to identify congestion- and safety-related problem locations and potential solutions on state highways.

Work Program Item: Congestion Management and Safety Plan, Phase 5

This study will build upon existing work to update both the solutions and specific locations that should be prioritized for funding and will address congestion and safety problems within the metro area. The Congestion Management Safety Plan is a program that seeks to implement low-cost, high benefit improvements on the regional highway network, specifically aiming to maximize return on investment. The recommendations are typically lower in cost and smaller in scope than traditional highway investments, allowing them to be completed more quickly and efficiently. This study will identify problem locations and update potential solutions that may best mitigate the problem in a cost-effective and timely manner.

Action 26G: Update the Managed Lane System Study to establish a managed lane system vision and a prioritized list of corridors.

Work Program Item: Managed Lane Vision and System Study, Phase 3

This study will update the MnPASS (now E-ZPass) System Study Phase 2, published in 2010, to analyze and make recommendations for potential managed lane locations within the region. It will go further by establishing an overall long-term vision for managed lanes within the region, which will in turn direct a prioritized list of corridors.

Managed lanes may help achieve lower greenhouse gas emissions by incentivizing the traveling public to use high-occupancy vehicles instead of single occupant vehicles. This equates to less vehicles on the road carrying the same amount of people, serving also to assist in reducing congestion during peak periods. This study will provide an updated recommendation for the conversion of general-purpose lanes to managed lanes and to develop a regionally agreed upon vision for managed lanes.

Policy 27: Identify and implement activities and investments that will mitigate current or anticipated climate or weather-related impacts.

Action 27I: Complete and maintain a resilience improvement plan and associated mapping applications. Consider ways to customize to the metro area's needs.

Work Program Item: Twin Cities Transportation Resilience Improvement Plan

As part of the new federal funding program Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation, MnDOT is developing a statewide Resilience Improvement Plan. Building off the statewide plan and ongoing and completed Met Council work, this study will

identify the key issues within the region and develop mapping applications, best practice guides, and investment priorities to improve transportation resilience in the Twin Cities region.

Policy 28: Pursue opportunities to minimize disruption and non-recurring delay from weather, security, and traffic incidents.

Action 28D: Analyze the regional roadway network to identify where system redundancy is needed or where a missing connection would improve the overall system (interchanges, over / underpasses, river crossings, frontage roads, grid connections, or other similar elements).

Work Program Item: Twin Cities Incident Management and Redundancy System Plan

When natural and human caused events disrupt transportation facilities, a redundant transportation network paired with quick response can minimize the impacts. This study would evaluate opportunities to build out a redundant network for all modes and identify where connections would improve system outcomes including interchanges, missing interchange ramp movements, over / underpasses, river crossings, frontage roads, grid connections, bicycle and pedestrian connections and crossings, parallel routes, or other similar elements.

Goal: We lead on addressing climate change.

Policy 29: Ensure the availability, visibility, and accessibility of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Action 29F: Identify methods and processes to prioritize targeted charging and fueling infrastructure funding with a focus on historically disadvantaged and rural communities.

Work Program Item: Electric Vehicle Public Charging Needs Analysis

The 2021-2022 Electric Vehicle Planning Study, included an analysis of public charging needs at an aggregate level at various levels of electric vehicle market share for the region. This technical analysis will extend that work to consider the more detailed ecosystem of public charging needed if the region is to accommodate and accelerate equitable light-duty electric vehicle adoption. The study results will estimate and identify remaining gaps in charging infrastructure investment needs beyond what exists, and the investments anticipated from utilities, the private sector, and available federal funding. This work will be coordinated with MnDOT's ongoing Minnesota Infrastructure Needs Assessment.

Policy 30: Evaluate and mitigate the greenhouse gas impacts of transportation plans and projects.

Action 30D: Develop, evaluate, and implement other transportation strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Work Program Item: Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Strategy Development

This study will follow up on global, national, and state work on greenhouse gas reduction strategies to further develop local priorities and implementation details in coordination with partners. It will consider cost-effectiveness, equity, implementation ease, geographic context, and other factors. The work will build off of the Multimodal Measures Study which is identifying methods for estimating the emissions impacts of projects. It will further consider solutions to implement strategies like funding. This work will follow from the state's Climate Action Framework, State Multimodal Transportation Plan and Carbon Reduction Strategy, and other local and regional work. It will include work in the areas of electrification, travel options, low carbon infrastructure and operations.

Work Program Item: Electric Vehicle Public Engagement and Support for Local Implementation

Individuals and cities will play a central role in determining how fast the benefits of transportation electrification are realized. This work will develop and provide the information these important

stakeholders need to make decisions related to charging infrastructure and electric vehicles and accelerate the adoption of electric vehicles. This work will provide updated information to the public in a variety of forms, and direct technical support (for example webinars, published guidance and one-on-one discussions with electric vehicle experts) to cities to better plan and regulate for accelerated electric vehicle adoption, to educate their residents and to implement in their own operations and programs for electric vehicles. This project is a 2024 work program item and listed in the 2024 Unified Planning Work Program with the title: Electric Vehicle Public Engagement and City Support.

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