

PUBLIC COMMENT REPORT

2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

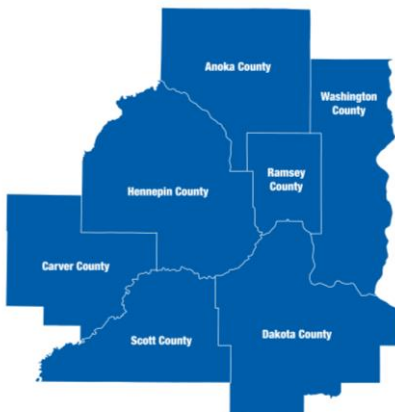


September 2024

The Council's mission is to foster efficient and economic growth for a prosperous metropolitan region

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The Metropolitan Council is the regional planning organization for the seven-county Twin Cities area. The Council operates the regional bus and rail system, collects and treats wastewater, coordinates regional water resources, plans and helps fund regional parks, and administers federal funds that provide housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income individuals and families. The 17-member Council board is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the governor.

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Background

The Metropolitan Council sought public comments on the region's draft 2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) between August 9, 2024 and August 30, 2024. The Met Council proactively promoted availability of the comment draft and public meeting, advertising them through the Council's website, GovDelivery emails, and other means.

The 2025 Unified Planning Work Program outlines and documents the transportation-related planning activities in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area for the upcoming year. The Metropolitan Council serves as the [Metropolitan Planning Organization](#) for the region and facilitates the cooperative, continuing, and comprehensive transportation planning process for the region.

The following report includes a table of comments received and responses from Met Council staff. One commenter participated and provided four topical comments.

People engaged

- Web page
 - 81 unique visitors
- GovDelivery
 - Unique Openings: 2,761
 - Unique Clicks: 151

Methods used

- Web announcement and web page notice
- GovDelivery email announcement and reminder

Comments received through:

- Email

Comments and Responses

The table below contains written comments as received, along with a response from Met Council staff and any recommended change to the UPWP.

Commenter	Topic	Comment	Response
Benjamin Werner	UPWP accessibility for the public	Although I am an urban planner, I struggled to read this document. It is not accessible, even to someone in the field. I recognize how difficult it is to explain this to the public, but unless it is simplified and explained in the greater context of the work, you will receive very few public comments.	Thank you for your comment. We are currently evaluating UPWPs in peer regions and gathering feedback from our federal partners on ideas that could potentially make our UPWP more accessible and easier for the public to understand. The Council understands that the current format is complex, but federal requirements of the UPWP often do not allow for a great deal of flexibility.
Benjamin Werner	Transit expansion	I was excited to see the emphasis on pedestrian and bicycle planning, and the greenway extension in particular. I'd like to see a dedicated section on increasing BRT and rail throughout the metro area. Light rail, trains and streetcars are important. I'd also like to see commuter rail to bedroom communities such as Hudson, WI studied. I didn't see this highlighted in the document.	Thank you for your comment. The UPWP is focused on planning work items over the next year. Please see the region's Transportation Policy Plan for a comprehensive overview of all major transit corridors planned for improvement or being studied. The Council is committed to a multimodal transportation system and has multiple BRT expansions that will be starting operation over the next few years or are in development currently. Further, there are many corridors being studied through multiple efforts. Regarding rail, the Council is currently constructing Green Line Extension and Blue Line Extension is going through the municipal consent process. If you live in one of the communities this project will serve, please consider contacting your local elected officials to tell them your thoughts on the project. There are no planned expansions of commuter rail like the NorthStar Line currently. However, the State of Minnesota is pursuing the Northern Lights Express line which would run between Minneapolis and Duluth, serving some communities in between.
Benjamin Werner	UPWP budget	In general, the amount of money allocated seems low. I am afraid the planning will go over budget very quickly.	Thank you for your comment. Funding for metropolitan planning organizations is provided by the USDOT, distributed to state departments of transportation, and provided to individual MPOs by an agreed-upon funding formula. The amount of federal funds for planning work has increased in recent years and the Council provides funds to fulfill both the required 20% match and additional funding to complete the work outlined in the UPWP. The UPWP thus reflects the funding level available, which is largely set by the federal government. Other funding sources support specific project planning.
Benjamin Werner	Decreasing reliance on cars; growth patterns	The document spends a fair amount of time discussing analysis of current travel methods and needs. However, I think I'd like to see some emphasis on social engineering as well (gasp!). We need to get people out of their cars and onto trains, buses and bikes. We also need to ramp up transit oriented development. We need to return people en masse to the city, without displacing current city residents with lower incomes. How do we do that? Let's study it.	<p>Thank you for your comment. The Council's draft 2050 Regional Development Guide includes commitments to shift people to more sustainable modes of transportation, which includes transit oriented development (e.g. <i>By 2050, the region reduces vehicle miles traveled by 20% per capita below 2019 levels; Maximize opportunities for residential growth and supportive commercial growth in areas with mixed land uses that offer multiple travel choices.</i>) The Regional Development Guide is now taking public comments through October 7, 2024 at Home Engage Twin Cities (metrocouncil.org).</p> <p>Regarding displacement, the Council is working extensively with Hennepin County on anti-displacement efforts along the Blue Line Extension project corridor. Additionally, the Regional Development Guide includes an <i>Anti-Displacement Framework</i> to mitigate the inequitable consequences of public investment on neighborhoods as well as policies and actions to support this framework (e.g. <i>Implement strategies against gentrification and displacement caused by transportation investments</i>).</p>



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