

Information Item

Transportation Advisory Board



Meeting date: December 18, 2024

Topic

Draft Imagine 2050 Transportation Policy Plan changes responding to public comments

District(s), member(s):	All
Policy/legal reference:	Minn. Stat. 473.146, 23 U.S.C. § 134, and 49 U.S.C. § 5303
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Division/department:	Metropolitan Transportation Services (MTS)

Background

The draft Imagine 2050 Transportation Policy Plan was available for public comment August 15, 2024, through October 7, 2024. A summary of those comments was provided at the November 20, 2024, Transportation Advisory Board meeting. A full report of those comments will be provided at the January 15, 2025, Transportation Advisory Board meeting when the board will consider recommendation of plan adoption to the Metropolitan Council. Pending that recommendation and consideration of any TAB comments, the Transportation Committee and the Met Council are scheduled to consider adopting the plan on January 27, 2025, and February 12, 2025, respectively.

Met Council staff are preparing proposed plan changes and responses to these comments. The proposed changes are attached to this document and marked with red underlines (additions) and red strikethroughs (deletions). Not every comment received on the draft plan resulted in proposed changes.

These changes follow a regional stakeholder and advisory committee review of an earlier draft that generated about 3,000 comments. Revisions in response to those comments were completed prior to the public comment period.

Most formatting and graphic updates are not marked. The following documents had no changes or only minor corrections:

- Section 7 – Congestion Management Process
- Section 9 – Transit Design and Performance Guidelines
- Section 14 – Aviation System Plan
- Section 15 – Aviation Supporting Information

Summary of Changes

The following bullets summarize changes made by document, including referenced page numbers. Minor corrections to these documents are not listed here.

Section 1 – Overview

- Added references on page 37 to additional federal Safe Streets and Roads for All grants received since previous draft: Apple Valley, Bloomington, Brooklyn Park, Cottage Grove, Hastings, Hopkins, New Brighton, Saint Paul, Shakopee, and West Saint Paul.
- Changes to Figures 5 and 6 to clarify modes presented, update data, and correct a labeling error on pages 41-42.
- Updated introductory definition of the term “Travel Demand Management,” on page 44.
- Clarified sentence discussing multimodal investments alongside highway expansion projects on page 55.
- Updated long-range capital project lists and figures (pages 71-74) to match changes in that standalone section.

Section 2 – Policies and Actions

- Added Actions 2D, 4D, and 13L regarding early coordination with, engagement with, and better serving cultural resources for Tribal Nations on pages 7, 10, and 18, respectively.
- Added Action 13K on page regarding continued study of transportation as a social determinant of health, identify opportunities to improve public health related to transportation, and to provide technical assistance on best practices.
- Revised Actions 13D and 22F to address maintenance and operations considerations on pages 18 and 26.
- Revised Actions 16A, 16B, and 16C and deleted Action 22G (further detailed in work program section below) to clarify overlapping bicycle and/or pedestrian barrier content.

Section 3 – Regional Transportation Finance

- Many changes throughout the document related to removal of the Riverview Modern Streetcar project following the project sponsor’s discontinuation of streetcar development in 2024.
- Changes on pages 8 and 27-28 to text and tables to differentiate between new county and municipal spending opportunities that resulted from recent legislative changes.
- Corrections or updates to data on fare revenue and new revenue sources created by recent legislation.
- Added reference to the I-494 INFRA grant award.

Section 4 – Highway Investment Plan

- The sentence “Rural areas are especially difficult to serve with modes such as transit, biking, walking and rolling,” was added to page 4.
- Clarifying revisions were made to two paragraphs on page 10 describing implementation of the legislatively required Transportation Greenhouse Gas Emissions Impact Assessment.
- Two interchange safety projects were added to plan text and Figure 9.
- The sentence “Extended bridge closures negatively impact quality of life, the movement of goods, and the entire regional highway system,” was added to the section on river crossing resiliency on page 46.

Section 5 – Roadway Functional Classification

- Clarity added on page 6 regarding the purpose of principal arterial highways and accommodating bicycle and pedestrian travel across and adjacent to these highways.

Section 6 – Preliminary Interchange Approval Process

- A commitment added to a future review of this interchange approval process that includes regional stakeholders.



Section 8 – Transit Investment Plan

- Updated facts and context on the recent history of transit investment in the Regional Solicitation on page 6.
- Added several new references to external documents:
 - Minnesota State Statute definition of transitway on page 15
 - Legislatively required 2024 Transit Advantages and Transit Signal Priority Report on page 17
- Removed references to the planned Riverview Modern Streetcar on pages 37-38, 44, 47-48, and 65. Added a discussion of West Seventh Corridor in St. Paul as a transitway opportunity beyond the current plan on page 48. Updated financial tables on pages 65-66.
- Added a sentence in response to updating the region's transit vision on page 40. "The Met Council also intends to update the regional transit vision by working with partners to consider if and how new corridors, modes, or other major transitway system investments might serve the region's needs and goals."

Section 10 – Bicycle Investment Plan

- Added a discussion on page 10 on e-bike stimulus programs around the country and a discussion of safety concerns related to e-bike use, including the Council's role as a convener on the topic.
- Revised a discussion on page 17 about coordinating ongoing Regional Bicycle Transportation Network discussions with regional parks implementation agencies.

Section 11 – Pedestrian Investment Plan

- Added text on page 4 on the Council's role in monitoring the progress of ADA transition plans for the region and certifying that the regional transportation planning process complies with the ADA. Additional context on MPO role in ADA-focused work also added to page 8. Updated facts on page 9 regarding the work of state and federal agencies in ADA planning.
- Added text on page 6 regarding pedestrian treatments that provide a buffer between pedestrians and curb line for vehicle travel.
- Added text on page 6 regarding community context for pedestrian treatments, including a reference to the plan's Work Program item, Complete Streets Local Implementation Guide.
- Added the seven universal design principles, including a citation, on page 10.
- Added additional context or moved context to page 13 on safer roads and safer speeds elements of the safe system approach.
- Deleted or moved some context on page 14 on pedestrian fatalities or serious injuries because the discussion was confusing to readers as written.
- Simplified a discussion on page 19 regarding pedestrian safety investment prioritization factors, providing more flexibility to define in the future through programs like the Regional Solicitation.
- Added text on page 21 to acknowledge local governments that received federal Safe Streets and Roads for All grants in 2024.
- Added a discussion on page 22 about Statewide Health Improvement Partnership that provides health funding to support active living projects.

Section 12 – Travel Demand Management Investment Plan

- Updated facts and context on the recent history of travel demand management investment in the Regional Solicitation on page 18.



Section 13 – Freight Investment Plan

- Added a discussion on page 9 regarding the GHG efficiency of moving freight by truck versus rail. Included a reference to future work on this topic.
- Added additional context and facts on pages 9-10 regarding barge freight traffic in the state and region.
- Updated a discussion of the 2024 Minnesota State Freight Plan on pages 10-11, as requested by MnDOT.
- Added a discussion of Minnesota Statewide Freight Bottlenecks Report on page 12, as requested by MnDOT.
- Added references to relevant policies and actions on pages 18-21 with regard to e-commerce and last-mile distribution of freight, including a discussion of air-based drones.
- Updated a discussion of Critical Urban Freight Corridors and made some corrections to tables on pages 26-28. These changes recognize that MnDOT is the lead for designating Critical Rural Freight Corridors in the region, in coordination with the Met Council.
- Updated a discussion on page 29 of specific regional port eligibility for a MnDOT freight funding program.

Section 16 – Evaluation and Performance

- Roadway safety performance measures were consolidated in one place (additions on pages 7-11; deletions on page 26) in response to Federal Highway Administration feedback and public comments. Data was also updated with most recent information and corrections to rate measures.
- The transit asset management and transit safety performance measures tables were updated, and additional narrative was added for the transit safety measures (pages 15-16).

Section 17 – Work Program

- Pedestrian Accessibility and Barrier Study deleted due to issues prompted by comments not specific to this work program item. The item was not well-defined and has overlapping tasks with other work program items. Its deletion does not preclude addition of similar work to a future Unified Planning Work Program.
- Changes to description of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Region Freight Study Update to address greenhouse gas emissions and truck bottlenecks.

Section 18 – Long-range Capital Project Lists

- Added previously undetermined cost and date to the I-494 Managed Lanes project from U.S. Highway 169 to east of Minnesota State Highway 77. Change prompted by USDOT awarding the project an INFRA grant.
- METRO Blue Line Extension cost estimate corrected to reflect the route modification is not yet reflected in the plan; this will be addressed in a future plan amendment.
- Removed Riverview Modern Streetcar Project in response to coordination work with project partners.

Section 19 – Environmental Justice Analysis

- Text describing the scope and purpose of this analysis on pages 4 and 12 were clarified.
- The sentence “An action in the healthy and safe goal specifically addresses opportunities for supporting access to Dakota, Ojibwe, and Ho-Chunk cultural resources,” was added to a section describing the Healthy & Safe goal area to reference changes to the Policies & Actions section.



Outstanding Changes

Some changes remain outstanding between the draft published on this agenda and the draft to be considered for adoption in early 2025. Some of these changes may include:

- Updates to quantitative data and related discussion:
 - Regional land use and transportation models
 - Travel Behavior Inventory Household Survey
 - University of Minnesota Accessibility Observatory analyses
 - Performance measures
- Refinements to maps and figures responding to data updates, project additions or removals, and public comment feedback
- Some outstanding changes related to removal of the Riverview Modern Streetcar project
- Refinements responding to some recommendations from the U.S. Department of Transportation's quadrennial transportation management area certification review to address regulatory requirements and guidance

Some of these outstanding changes will be addressed in the copy of the Imagine 2050 Transportation Policy Plan presented for initial adoption in early 2025, and select changes will wait for future plan amendments or administrative modifications.

