

Action Transmittal

Transportation Advisory Board



Committee Meeting Date: August 20, 2025

Date: August 11, 2025

Action Transmittal: 2025-27

2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

To: Transportation Advisory Board
From: Technical Advisory Committee
Prepared by: Amy Vennewitz, Director of Transportation Planning, 651-602-1058
Bethany Brandt-Sargent, Planning Analyst, 651-602-1725
Jed Hanson, Senior Planner, 651-602-1716
Cameron Kolbeck, Intern, 612-504-2392

Requested action

Recommend that the Metropolitan Council adopt the 2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) with a budget of \$11.1 million, including about \$5.9 million in federal funds.

Recommended motion

That the Transportation Advisory Board recommend adoption of the attached 2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

Background and purpose

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) serves as the Met Council's application for U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) transportation planning funds. Federal regulations require that every metropolitan planning organization (MPO) develop and submit a UPWP to the USDOT in order to receive these funds. The UPWP is prepared annually and describes the transportation planning activities that the Met Council will perform for the coming year. Participants in the UPWP include the Met Council, the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the Metropolitan Airports Commission, regional transit providers, cities, counties, and other stakeholders.

The UPWP includes activities required by federal regulation that address planning priorities of the metropolitan area. The document identifies budgeted expenditures, funding sources, and the allocation of staff resources for the MPO's transportation planning activities. Activities and projects with Met Council participation include staff hours and consultant costs that detail how the estimated \$5.9 million of federal planning money will be spent, along with a required minimum 20 percent local match to the federal funds. In 2026, the Met Council will continue initiating work program items identified in the 2050 Transportation Policy Plan.

Many of the tasks described in the UPWP are ongoing required activities for an MPO. Examples of these activities include staff support of the TAB/TAC committee process, the annual preparation of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and support of the Regional Solicitation. Other tasks are focused planning studies that help to move forward the region's transportation policies and knowledge, identify regional investments, and fulfill the transportation objectives as outlined in

the 2050 Transportation Policy Plan. The 2026 UPWP includes approximately \$2.1 million in planned consulting costs to complete these planning studies.

In addition, there are transportation planning activities that are fully regionally funded. These planning activities are described separately in the Regional Transportation Planning Work Program. The activities in the Regional Work Program are not eligible for federal planning funds and in some instances are activities required under state law such as the Right-of-Way Acquisition Loan Fund (RALF) and aviation planning activities.

The draft 2026 UPWP was available for public review and comment from Friday, July 11, 2025, through 5:00 p.m. on August 1, 2025. The Met Council proactively promoted availability of the comment draft through the Council's website and GovDelivery emails. There were 227 unique visitors on the website and 150 unique clicks on the GovDelivery email. No public comments were received. Minor comments were received from the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and MnDOT; the UPWP was modified to reflect their comments.

Relationship to regional policy

The UPWP is a federally required description and documentation of proposed transportation and transportation-related planning activities in the metropolitan area. The activities include both activities required for the MPO to operate as well as projects that reflect regional transportation objectives.

Committee comments and actions

At its July 10, 2025, meeting, the TAC Planning Committee:

- Recommended that the attached 2026 UPWP be released for public review and comment.
- Recommended that TAC recommend adoption of the attached 2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

Committee discussion noted significant change in the document's layout and organization from prior years; staff invited additional feedback on these changes during the public comment period.

At its August 6, 2026, meeting, the Technical Advisory Committee unanimously recommended that TAB recommend adoption of the attached 2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

Routing

To	Action Requested	Date Completed
TAC Planning Committee	Review and recommend; release for public comment	July 10, 2025
TAC	Review and recommend	August 6, 2025
TAB	Review and recommend	<i>August 20, 2025</i>
Transportation Committee	Review and recommend	<i>September 8, 2025</i>
Metropolitan Council	Review and adopt	<i>September 24, 2025</i>

