

CHAPTER 1

THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM VISION AND PERFORMANCE-BASED PLANNING

What is Performance-Based Planning?

Relationship to the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process

Long-range metropolitan transportation planning is required under federal law and Minnesota state law. Its purpose is to facilitate a process for determining how to invest in transportation to meet the travel needs of a metropolitan area. Federal law is grounded in the concept of the “Three C’s” in which the metropolitan transportation planning process should be comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing. State law also establishes a strong role for the regional integration of transportation planning with local government planning through the Metropolitan Land Planning Act.

The metropolitan transportation planning process provides for the consideration and implementation of transportation strategies, projects, and services that work toward addressing the travel needs of a metropolitan area. Performance-based planning provides a framework for evaluating the potential performance of a long-range transportation plan. Performance-based planning is a significant part of the “continuing” aspect of the federal planning law. There are five major aspects of the transportation planning process that can be described in terms of questions they are trying to answer:

The Three C’s Planning Process

Comprehensive: Consideration of a wide range of strategies and investments

Cooperative: Participation by all relevant agencies, organizations and the public

Continuing: Including an on-going performance-based monitoring, evaluation and update process

1. *Where are we now?* – Current conditions, system performance, and issues
2. *Where do we want to go?* – Goals and objectives for the transportation system
3. *How are we going to get there?* – Strategic direction and investment priorities
4. *What will it take?* – Funding levels and list of projects
5. *How did we do?* – Evaluation of performance measures and targets

These questions are generally addressed in sequential order. At the end of the process, the strategies and investments are put into practice and the planning process starts over again after a few years. If performance is less than expected, the “continuing” planning process allows for and expects the strategies and investments to be revisited. Figure 1-1 illustrates how this process functions and interacts with public involvement and data evaluation.

Figure 1-1 – Performance-based Planning Framework



Source: FHWA Performance-based Planning and Programming Guidebook, Page iv.

Elements of Performance-Based Planning

There are a number of key elements to performance-based planning described below: goals, objectives, performance measures and targets, and strategies. This chapter introduces the goals and objectives framework for the plan.

Goals

A goal is a broad statement that describes a desired end state. Transportation planning goals represent key priorities for desired outcomes for the transportation system and/or for society as a whole. Goals are typically broad, visionary statements focused on key priority topics.

Objectives

An objective is a specific, measurable statement that support the achievement of goals. Transportation objectives describe an achievable outcome within constraints (timeframe, funding). Objectives are more specific than goals and there often multiple objectives for every goal.

Performance Measures and Targets

Performance measures and associated targets serve as the basis for measuring objectives with technical analysis and data. Performance measures are used to compare alternative plan strategies and for tracking performance over time. Performance measures and targets can also be used to identify the location, extent, and intensity of travel needs or deficiencies.

More information on the plan's performance measures and targets can be found in Chapter 13, "Plan Outcomes."

Strategies

Strategies describe actions that can or will be taken to address goals and objectives. Strategies describe the role of programs, policies, and priorities in determining a list of projects and services for investment. Strategies can also address guiding principles for how implementing partners will act to progress toward goals and objectives. The strategies used to achieve the broad goals described in the plan may at times need to balance potential outcomes against one another to maximize benefits to the region while minimizing negative impacts.

This transportation plan's strategies are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2, "Transportation Policy Plan Strategies."

What are the Federal Requirements?

Federal transportation legislation first established performance-based planning requirements for metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) in 2012 with the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), which was continued in 2015 with the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. The requirement is for a streamlined and performance-based process for transportation planning, implementation, and evaluation that shows how these together will address national transportation goals. National goals for performance areas include:

- **Safety** – To achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads.
- **Infrastructure Condition** – To maintain the highway and transit system infrastructure assets in a state of good repair.
- **Congestion Reduction** – To achieve a significant reduction in congestion on the National Highway System.
- **System Reliability** – To improve the efficiency of the surface transportation system.
- **Freight Movement and Economic Vitality** – To improve the national freight network, strengthen the ability of rural communities to access national and international trade markets, and support regional economic development.

- **Environmental Sustainability** – To enhance the performance of the transportation system while protecting and enhancing the natural environment.
- **Reduced Project Delivery Delays** – To reduce project costs, promote jobs and the economy, and expedite the movement of people and goods by accelerating project completion through eliminating delays in the project development and delivery process, including reducing regulatory burdens and improving agencies’ work practices.

The legislation also requires metropolitan regions to use a performance-based planning process when identifying how transportation funds will be allocated and to assess progress towards meeting national and regional goals. This Transportation Policy Plan responds to this mandate in its regional transportation goals and objectives that address and go beyond federal goals to align with the region’s new metropolitan development guide, *Thrive MSP 2040*.

Federal Requirements for Performance-Based Planning

“Metropolitan planning organizations ... in cooperation with the state and public transportation operators, shall develop long-range transportation plans and transportation improvement programs through a performance-driven, outcome-based approach to planning...” 23 USC § 134(c)(1); 49 USC § 5303(c)(1).

“The metropolitan transportation planning process shall provide for the establishment and use of a performance-based approach to transportation decision-making to support the national goals....” 23 USC §134(h)(2); 49 USC § 5303(h)(2)

What is the Relationship to *Thrive MSP 2040*?

Thrive MSP 2040 is our region’s long-term development guide and provides the coordinated vision for transportation, water resources, parks, housing and other essential services for our region’s future.

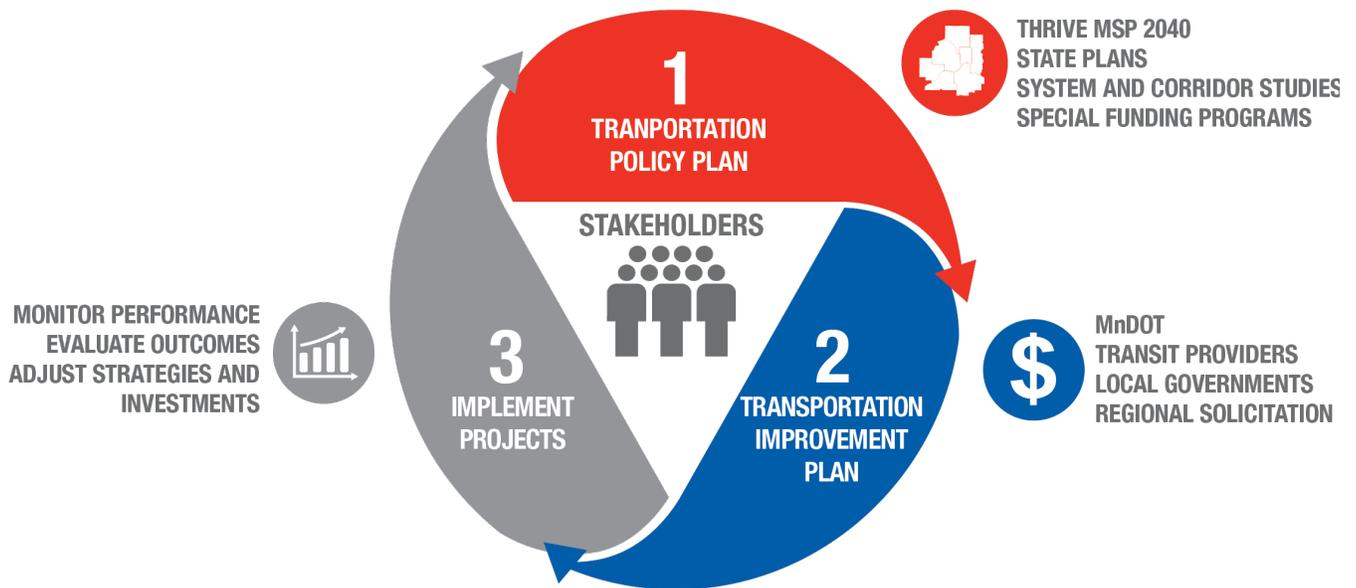
Thrive MSP 2040 identifies five key outcomes for the region to achieve over the next 25 years:

- **Stewardship** advances the Council’s longstanding mission of orderly and economical development by responsibly managing the region’s natural and financial resources and making strategic investments in our region’s future.
- **Prosperity** is fostered by investments in infrastructure and amenities that create regional economic competitiveness, thereby attracting and retaining successful businesses, a talented workforce, and consequently, wealth.
- **Equity** connects all residents to opportunity and creates viable housing, transportation, and recreation options for people for all races, ethnicities, incomes, and abilities so that all communities share the opportunities and challenges of growth and change.
- **Livability** focuses on the quality of our residents’ lives and experiences in our region, and how places and infrastructure create and enhance the quality of life that makes our region a great place to live.
- **Sustainability** protects our regional vitality for generations to come by preserving our capacity to maintain and support our region’s well-being and productivity over the long term.

In addition to providing a coordinated vision, *Thrive MSP 2040* establishes the socio-demographic forecasts and land use policy for the region’s future. The Transportation Policy Plan goals, objectives, strategies and investments reflect how the transportation system will contribute to achieving the regional outcomes identified in *Thrive MSP 2040*.

About the long-range planning process

The 2040 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) identifies policies, strategies and investments for the regional transportation system that work toward the desired outcomes found in *Thrive MSP 2040*, the region’s development guide. State plans, system and corridor studies and the conditions of special funding programs influence the TPP strategies and investments for the region’s highways and roads, transit and transitways, bike and pedestrian infrastructure, aviation and freight.



All proposed federally funded transportation projects in the Metropolitan Council’s planning region are included in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Those projects include major local projects, projects awarded federal funds through the regional solicitation or other competitive federal grant, and projects programmed by regional transit providers or the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

Whether a state project led by MnDOT, a local project led by a county, or a transit project led by a transit provider, as projects are completed, the Council monitors changes in how well the transportation system is performing as a result of these investments. This assessment provides the Council with insights on where investments are most needed and the types of investment that gain the most benefits for the region.

Throughout these steps, the Council regularly engages in discussion and feedback from policymakers and technical partners throughout the region, and incorporates ideas and feedback from other regional stakeholders, including residents, business owners, and advocates for various community and transportation organizations.

What are the Region's Transportation Goals and Objectives?

There are six goals and 20 objectives that make up the performance-based planning vision for the Transportation Policy Plan. Below is a general overview of the six goals and Table 1-1 includes a list with the objectives.

Transportation System Stewardship – *Sustainable investments in the transportation system are protected by strategically preserving, maintaining, and operating system assets.*

The transportation system that exists, at any given time, needs to be maintained and operated. The priority is to keep the system we have in working order and maximize its potential in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. Keeping up a well-maintained, functional transportation system is at the core of transportation investment.

Safety and Security – *The regional transportation system is safe and secure for all users.*

In order for the transportation system to function well, it needs to be safe and secure. Safety and security are not only essential to protect life, but also to instill confidence in the user of the system. Every investment in the transportation system should strive to make it safer and more secure for the users.

Access to Destinations – *A reliable, affordable, and efficient multimodal transportation system supports the prosperity of people and businesses by connecting them to destinations throughout the region and beyond.*

Transportation is fundamentally about providing access to destinations, the places where people and goods want to go. People choose destinations based on the ease of access, whether that relates to cost, their trust that the system will work reliably, or the transportation mode that might be able to get them there. When access is possible, other factors will also affect how people choose to get to destinations, such as the travel time, reliability, pleasantness, comfort, and safety of the trip. Travel preferences can vary widely across people and transportation modes.

Competitive Economy – *The regional transportation system supports the economic competitiveness, vitality, and prosperity of the region and state.*

A well-developed and functioning, multimodal transportation system is a significant attractant to worldwide business and talent. It also helps the region retain existing businesses and residents, allowing them to thrive in current and future work environments by supporting efficient movement.

Healthy and Equitable Communities – *The regional transportation system advances equity and contributes to communities’ livability and sustainability while protecting the natural, cultural, and developed environments.*

The transportation system can be the catalyst for improving communities, but it can also contribute negatively to communities, and historically has had disparate impacts on communities of color and other underrepresented communities. The transportation system needs to contribute to the health and vitality of all communities, and avoid worsening the world we all live in. This includes protecting and enhancing the existing communities and their cultures as well as future communities and cultures.

Leveraging Transportation Investments to Guide Land Use – *The region leverages transportation investments to guide land use and development patterns that advance the regional vision of stewardship, prosperity, livability, equity, and sustainability.*

The effective use of land by people and businesses requires a transportation system to access it. Similarly, land use drives the need for the transportation system. The two systems must work together to be effective, and the transportation system can be a catalyst for land use change that will contribute toward achieving the other five goals.

Table 1-1 – The Plan’s Performance-Based Planning Framework of Goals and Objectives

Goal	Objectives
<p>A. Transportation System Stewardship</p> <p>Goal Statement</p> <p><i>Sustainable investments in the transportation system are protected by strategically preserving, maintaining, and operating system assets.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficiently preserve and maintain the regional transportation system in a state of good repair. Operate the regional transportation system to efficiently and cost-effectively connect people and freight to destinations
<p>B. Safety and Security</p> <p>Goal Statement</p> <p><i>The regional transportation system is safe and secure for all users.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce fatal and serious injury crashes and improve safety and security for all modes of passenger travel and freight transport. Reduce the transportation system’s vulnerability to natural and human-caused incidents and threats, including climate change and terrorism.
<p>C. Access to Destinations</p> <p>Goal Statement</p> <p><i>A reliable, affordable, and efficient multimodal transportation system supports the prosperity of people and businesses by connecting them to destinations throughout the region and beyond.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the availability of multimodal travel options, especially in congested highway corridors. Increase travel time reliability and predictability for travel on highway and transit systems. Ensure access to freight terminals such as river ports, airports, and intermodal rail yards. Increase the number and share of trips taken using carpools, transit, bicycling and walking.

Goal	Objectives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the availability and quality of multimodal travel options for people of all ages and abilities to connect to jobs and other opportunities, particularly for historically under-represented populations.
<p>D. Competitive Economy</p> <p>Goal Statement</p> <p><i>The regional transportation system supports the economic competitiveness, vitality, and prosperity of the region and state.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve multimodal access to regional job concentrations identified in <i>Thrive MSP 2040</i>. • Invest in a multimodal transportation system to attract and retain businesses and residents. • Support the region’s economic competitiveness through the efficient movement of freight.
<p>E. Healthy and Equitable Communities</p> <p>Goal Statement</p> <p><i>The regional transportation system advances equity and contributes to communities’ livability and sustainability while protecting the natural, cultural, and developed environments.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce transportation-related air emissions. • Reduce impacts of transportation construction, operations, and use on the natural, cultural, and developed environments. • Increase the availability and attractiveness of transit, bicycling, and walking to encourage healthy communities through the use of active transportation options.
<p>F. Leveraging Transportation Investments to Guide Land Use</p> <p>Goal Statement</p> <p><i>The region leverages transportation investments to guide land use and development patterns that advance the regional vision of stewardship, prosperity, livability, equity, and sustainability.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus regional growth in areas that support the full range of multimodal travel. • Maintain adequate highway, riverfront, and rail-accessible land to meet existing and future demand for freight movement. • Encourage local land use design that integrates highways, streets, transit, walking, and bicycling. • Encourage communities, businesses and aviation interests to collaborate on limiting incompatible land uses that would limit the use of the region's airports.

The strategies or actions that the Metropolitan Council and its transportation partners can take to help achieve the regional transportation goals and objectives are discussed in Chapter 2, “Transportation Policy Plan Strategies.” The key regional performance measures, how the system is currently performing and the performance that can be expected in the future under the both the current revenue and increased revenue scenarios is discussed in the Chapter 13, “Performance Outcomes.”