

Transportation Committee

Meeting date: October 13, 2014

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of October 22, 2014

Subject: Authorization to release the draft Service Improvement Plan for public review and comment

District(s), Member(s): All

Policy/Legal Reference: 1-3b Public Involvement in the Planning Process; 2-1 Public Accountability Policy; 2-1b Public Hearings Procedure

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Division/Department: Metro Transit

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council release the draft Service Improvement Plan for public review and comment.

Background

The Service Improvement Plan (SIP) is a long-term plan to guide the expansion of the local and express bus route network. The draft SIP reflects the transit policy direction in Thrive MSP 2040 and the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan as well as significant public engagement and fundamental transit planning principles to identify the service improvements that best achieve regional goals. It is a specific and prioritized list of improvements that could be implemented if increased transit funding is available.

The SIP does not include any transitways eligible for CTIB funding. However, bus routes connecting with these projects and unfunded bus rapid transit projects are included. Arterial BRT corridors will not be evaluated and prioritized in this project, since this was the purpose of the amendment that added enhanced bus services to the Transportation Policy Plan.

Projects were prioritized using these evaluation measures:

- **Productivity (50%):** Demonstrate the ridership potential of service improvements using land use, population, jobs, regional Job Concentrations served, passengers per in-service hour and subsidy per passenger.
- **Social Equity (25%):** Evaluate how well improvements serve people most reliant on transit, based on low-wage jobs, auto availability and the percentage of low-income, people of color and disabled populations.
- **System Connectivity (25%):** Establish how effectively projects improve access to transit service based on the number of connecting transit routes, persons served by a new route or extension of an existing route, key destinations, regional

Educational Institutions served, and improvements to off-peak, span or reverse commute service.

There were a total of 166 projects initially identified. Only 123 projects (which ranked high and medium) are recommended for implementation. Those ranking low are included for reference.

Implementation is recommended in three phases: 2015-2017, 2018-2020, and 2021-2030. These projects represent nearly 29 million new annual rides, 161 additional peak buses, and \$106 million in annual operating expenses. Arterial BRT projects are already included in TPP. As such, they were not ranked, but bus and operating resources are included in the total.

There will be numerous opportunities for the public to learn about the contents of the draft SIP and to give feedback during the public comment period in November.

Public meetings:

- Wednesday, November 5th: Hennepin County Central Library (Minneapolis), 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
- Saturday, November 8th, North Community YMCA (Minneapolis), 1:00 p.m.-3:30 p.m.
- Thursday, November 13th, Hennepin County Southdale Library (Edina), 6:00 p.m.-7:30 p.m.
- Saturday, November 15th, Conway Recreation Center (St. Paul), 1:00 p.m.-3:30 p.m.
- Monday, November 17th, Anoka County Northtown Central Library (Blaine), 6:00 p.m.-7:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, November 18th, Metropolitan Council (St. Paul), 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. (official public hearing)

Public information will be available at www.metrotransit.org/sip, libraries, on YouTube and social media, *Connect* (rider newsletter) and a press release will be sent to local media. Brochures, posters and other information about the SIP will also be available on transit vehicles.

In addition to providing comments at the meetings and hearing, the public will be invited to submit comments via telephone, fax, mail and at sip@metrotransit.org. Also, staff will specifically reach out to community-based organizations to meet with them, review the SIP and hear their comments and concerns.

Following the public comment period, Metro Transit will summarize public comments, and recommend adjustments to the SIP. This public comment report will be presented along with the final SIP for Council acceptance and approval in early 2015.

Rationale

Council policy requires informational materials for the public hearing to be available to the public by request at least 10 days prior to the hearing.

Funding

The outreach, public meetings, and public hearing will be funded through existing operating budgets. The service improvements recommended in the SIP will require additional operating resources to be identified before implementation.

Known Support / Opposition

There is no known opposition to releasing the draft SIP for public review and comment.