

Transportation Committee

Meeting date: June 22, 2020

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of June 24, 2020

Subject: Release draft update of the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan* for Public Comment and Set Public Hearing Date

District(s), Member(s): All

Policy/Legal Reference: M.S. 473.399 & 23 CFR 450.104; MAP 21

Staff Prepared/Presented: Nick Thompson, Director MTS, 651-602-1754; Amy Vennewitz, Deputy Director MTS, 651-602-1058

Division/Department: Metropolitan Transportation Services

Proposed Action

That, for the purposes of holding a public hearing and receiving public comment, the Metropolitan Council:

- Release the 2020 draft update to the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan* (TPP) for public review and comment; and
- Authorize a public comment period from June 25, 2020 to August 7, 2020, including a public hearing on the draft document to be held on July 27, 2020 at 4:00 PM.

Background

Under federal transportation planning law, the Council is required to develop a long-range transportation plan that is updated at least every five years. The plan must be multimodal and identify transportation system goals and investment priorities over at least a 20-year period. The plan is required to identify regionally significant transportation investments that will be implemented within the timeframe of the plan and must maintain fiscal balance between anticipated project costs and funding. The current 2040 TPP was adopted in October 2018 and approved by the U.S. DOT in December 2018, thereby requiring a new plan at a minimum by December 2023.

The timing of the 2023 update would be awkward given that the Council will be in the process of developing the 2050 Regional Development Guide (update to Thrive MSP 2040) and will likely be in the midst of a public outreach effort both for the 2050 Regional Development Guide and accompanying 2050 system plans, including the Transportation Policy Plan. In addition, under federal law the plan is required to cover a minimum of a 20-year time frame on the date of its adoption. Adopting an update after December 2020, would require that the plan cover a new 20-year time period, such as to 2042, rather than the current 2040 date.

In order to avoid this conflict in future timing and keep a 2040 planning period, it was determined that the best course of action would be to have a minor update to the Transportation Policy Plan in 2020. This minor update will be followed by a major update and development of a 2050 Transportation Policy Plan in 2022-2024, with final adoption prior to the end of 2024.

The 2020 update to the TPP kicked-off in January 2020, prior to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. In the spring of 2020, staff discussed with Council members and regional partners, including TAB, whether to continue with the schedule for the planned update. It was determined that, given the unknown time frame for



understanding the outcomes and changes the Covid-19 event will have on travel and transportation finances, the best course of action was to: continue the planned TPP update; add language recognizing the event in chapters as necessary; and, add three planning studies into the Work Program chapter related to Covid-19 as follows:

1. Update the region's financial analysis for highways and transit to incorporate the revenue and project spending impacts of the Covid-19 outbreak;
2. Conduct travel surveys and analyze the travel behavior impacts of the outbreak, along with predicting any longer-term impacts to travel choices; and,
3. Analyze the impacts of the outbreak on the region's aviation system and incorporate any necessary changes to the aviation system long range plan.

The results of these important studies will be incorporated into the region's 2050 plan and potentially in the short-term as amendments to the 2040 TPP.

In addition to the Covid-19 related changes, the plan contains the following additional changes:

- Update the Work Program chapter to include other new planning studies related to Climate Change and Vehicle Electrification, Assessing the Region's Approach to Mobility, and a Mobility Hub Planning Guide, among others.
- Updates to regional travel data to include the results of the 2019 Travel Behavior Inventory.
- Updates to the status of major highway and transitway projects, including removing completed major projects.
- Updating the fiscal outlook for transit to fully incorporate the Riverview project funding, D Line funding and February 2020 MVST forecast.
- Incorporating the results of planning studies that have been completed since 2018 including the Regional Bicycle Barriers Study, Freeway Interchange Study, and Regional Solicitation update.

The proposed draft TPP chapters can be found on the attached links.

Staff provided the Council with information items on the contents of the plan through Committee of the Whole meetings in December 2019 and February 2020. Most recently staff presented the proposed draft document to Council members in small on-line meetings. The TAB and its technical committees have reviewed the proposed changes and TAB recommended the draft document for public comment at its May meeting.

Rationale

This draft update to the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan* meets the federal law and rules requiring a long-range metropolitan transportation plan that is updated at least every five years and cover a 20-year planning time frame. It identifies the regionally significant projects expected to be implemented under reasonably expected revenues (fiscally constrained) over the time period of the plan and meets federal requirements for a performance-based plan.

Thrive Lens Analysis

The draft *2040 Transportation Policy Plan* addresses all of the Thrive MSP 2040 outcomes and principles. The plan establishes six transportation system goals along with objectives and strategies that align and coordinate with the Thrive outcomes and principles. The plan Overview and first chapter, Transportation System Vision and Performance-Based Planning, describe and contain a matrix demonstrating the relationship between Thrive MSP 2040 and the plan's goals and objectives.

Funding

This action does not directly require or involve funding. However, under federal law regionally significant transportation projects and the expected funding for the projects must be identified in the fiscally constrained long-range plan before being included in the region's Transportation Improvement Program and allowing projects to move forward with implementation.

Known Support / Opposition

The draft update to the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan* was reviewed by the Transportation Advisory Board and recommended for release for public comment on May 20, 2020. There is no known opposition to this action.