

Business Item

Transportation Committee



Committee Meeting Date: May 23, 2022

For the Metropolitan Council: May 25, 2022

Business Item: 2022-112 SW

Transportation Addendum to the Metropolitan Council Public Engagement Plan

District(s), Member(s):	All
Policy/Legal Reference:	23 US Code § 134(i)(5) and 134(j)(1)(B), and 49 US Code § 5303(i)(5) and 5303(j)(1)(B) require that MPOs provide adequate opportunity for the public to participate in and comment on the MPO's products and planning processes. Public involvement requirements are detailed in 23 CFR § 450.316(a) and (b)
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Division/Department:	Metropolitan Transportation Services

Proposed Action

Request that the Transportation Committee recommend to the Metropolitan Council that the draft Transportation Addendum to the Metropolitan Council Public Engagement Plan be released for public comment.

Background

In March 2021, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) jointly released the [Transportation Management Area Planning Certification Review](#) results for the Met Council. This review is conducted every four years to assess how the Council's transportation planning processes align with federal planning requirements. The review found that Council satisfies most of the federal requirements related to public participation, however FHWA and FTA identified three recommendations:

- Update the Transportation Public Participation Plan to include tribal governments and tribal consultation strategies.
- Identify an update cycle for the Transportation Public Participation Plan. Ideally, this would occur the year before each Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) update.
- Evaluate the Council's transportation public participation efforts using effectiveness measures and include the measures and findings in the updated the document.

Rationale

23 US Code § 134(i)(5) and 134(j)(1)(B), and 49 US Code § 5303(i)(5) and 5303(j)(1)(B) require that MPOs provide adequate opportunity for the public to participate in and comment on the MPO's products and planning processes. Public involvement requirements are detailed in 23 CFR § 450.316(a) and (b), which require MPOs to develop and use a documented public participation plan that includes explicit procedures and strategies to include the public and other interested parties in the transportation planning process. Specific requirements include:

- Giving adequate and timely notice of opportunities to participate in or comment on transportation issues and processes.
- Using visualization techniques to describe Metropolitan Transportation Plans and Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP).
- Making public information readily available in electronically accessible formats and means such as the world wide web.
- Holding public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times.
- Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input.
- Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the public participation plan.

Staff conducted a peer review of six Metropolitan Planning Organizations. The Denver Regional Council of Governments, (Portland) Metro, Puget Sound Regional Council (Seattle), the San Diego Association of Governments, Hillsborough (Tampa) Transportation Planning Organization, and The North Central Texas Council of Governments (Dallas-Fort Worth). This review compared the Met Council Transportation Public Participation plan with their public participation and identified places where the Met Council could improve and expand on the current plan. In addition to the peer review and the Transportation Management Area Planning Certification Review, staff also considered recent events like Gov. Tim Walz’s 2019 executive order to expand tribal-state relations that included the Met Council in the government-to-government relationships between the State of Minnesota and Minnesota Tribal Nations.

As part of this update, staff is recommending that the federally required transportation participation plan document be adopted as an Addendum to the [Met Council’s Public Engagement Plan](#) rather than as a stand-alone document. The Council Public Engagement Plan serves as a foundational document to which the federal requirements for transportation engagement and participation should be connected and grounded. This combination of the documents also allowed for removing language that was duplicative, as well as expanding on certain areas. The expansion areas that are not transportation specific will be considered for future updates to the Public Engagement Plan. The resulting recommended changes and updates for transportation engagement can be found in the draft document.

Thrive Lens Analysis

The Transportation Addendum to the Metropolitan Council Public Engagement Plan advances the Thrive MSP 2040 equity outcome by setting methods and expectations for engaging a full cross-section of the community in decision-making.

