

Business Item

Transportation Committee



Committee Meeting Date: May 22, 2023

For the Metropolitan Council: June 14, 2023

Business Item: 2023-111

2040 Transportation Policy Plan Administrative Modification – Transitway Advancement Policy

District(s), Member(s):	All
Policy/Legal Reference:	2040 Transportation Policy Plan and federal and state transportation planning law; Transitway Advancement Policy RF 1-7; Business Item 2022-315
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Division/Department:	Metropolitan Transportation Services (MTS)

Proposed Action

That the Council approve the attached administrative modification to the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) to establish a transitway advancement policy for transitway projects requesting a change to the TPP.

Background

The Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) is a state and federally mandated document, produced by the Council, that identifies major transportation investments for the metropolitan area. Among the major investments required to be included in the TPP are regional transitways. Transitways are projects where significant investment is being made in a single corridor to implement bus rapid transit, light rail, commuter rail, or modern streetcar.

Transitway projects typically originate from a local planning process, led by local government agencies (e.g., counties and cities for guideway projects) or by Metro Transit (arterial BRT). For projects to continue to advance and access various federal or state funding sources, they must be recognized in the TPP. However, there are expectations for projects that come from federal and state planning law, as well as expectations the Council has set to ensure a fair and proper process for long-range planning of major transportation investments. These expectations are documented in the proposed administrative modification and will provide a consistent understanding and expectation for all transitway project developers seeking a change to the TPP.

This proposed action does not impact any projects in the existing 2040 TPP and will apply to future transitway project changes that come forward. The administrative modification specifies the transitway information that must be provided before the TPP change can occur. Most of the information has been provided informally in the past to meet federal and state requirements.

Council staff developed the modification in consultation with several groups including local government representatives that are, or have in the past, advanced transitway projects in the 2040 TPP. These partners reviewed the draft document and Council staff responded to comments with a series of edits, responses, and meetings. These partners expressed appreciation for the Council's

efforts to engage and make changes in response to their input.

Rationale

An administrative modification to the TPP is not a formal amendment because it does not impact funding or specific projects in the TPP. Modifications do not require a formal engagement process, though Council staff worked with regional project partners as described above.

The Council passed business item 2022-315 adopting RF 1-7 Transitway Development Policy. During the same action, the Council gave direction to prepare the administrative modification to the TPP to incorporate policy RF 1-7.

This proposed action addresses that direction and provides policy direction for transitway advancement in the TPP.

Thrive Lens Analysis

The proposed action supports the Thrive Stewardship Outcome by providing effective risk management guiding the use of public resources in transitway decision making.

Transitway projects that request a change in the TPP will also address the project impacts to the other Thrive Outcomes of Prosperity, Livability, Sustainability, and Equity.

Funding

No funding is required for this proposed action.

Small Business Inclusion

This item does not involve contracting; small business inclusion is not applicable.





2040 TRANSPORTATION POLICY PLAN ADMINISTRATIVE MODIFICATION

Transitway Advancement Policy/May 22, 2023

Introduction

In order to fulfill the goals and objectives of this Transportation Policy Plan (TPP), it is necessary for the region to plan and implement transitways in an effective and coordinated manner. The Metropolitan Council has two primary roles in regional transitway projects: it has a role as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) leading regional transportation planning and it has a role in transitway implementation and operations. The Metropolitan Council's decisions regarding transitway planning are influenced by both roles as transitway projects advance. When projects are not intended to be developed or operated by the Council or with Council assistance, only the MPO roles apply.

To aid the Council's consideration to adopt or amend a project in the TPP the following information is required from each transitway's originating local planning agency:

- **Documentation of transitway alignment and station locations and selection process**
- **Resolutions of support from relevant government bodies and agencies**
- **Documentation of fiscal constraint, and**
- **Documentation of public engagement and feedback.**

The information is necessary for the Metropolitan Council to assist in evaluating the project against the TPP's goals and standards and to ensure the plan maintains fiscal constraint through the lifecycle of existing and new transitway assets. Metropolitan Council staff will work with originating local planning agencies to obtain and summarize project information for the purposes of this review. This review will occur when new or amended projects are considered for adoption into the TPP.

Metro Transit typically partners with originating local planning agencies in developing, implementing, operating and maintaining transitways within the region. For projects initiated by local sponsors, if Metro Transit is the intended project developer and operator, Metro Transit will lead coordination with local project sponsors during the planning phase to inform sponsor-led activities. If another transit agency is the planned operator of a transitway, early coordination and ongoing planning are expected to ensure operations and maintenance for the project's lifecycle are considered through the project's planning.

Transitway Advancement Requirements

Documentation of Transitway Mode, Alignment, and Station Locations and Selection Process

Originating local planning agencies will have to provide transitway mode, alignments, and station locations and documentation of the process for selecting the preferred transitway mode, alignment, and station locations along the transitway. Documentation of these processes is typically found in locally preferred alternative reports, corridor plans, and/or station area plans. Station location can shift some without amending the TPP, but adding or removing any planned stations requires a TPP amendment and proper documentation.

Resolutions of Support from Relevant Government Bodies and Agencies

Originating local planning agencies are required to provide resolutions of support from cities, counties, and government agencies that are directly impacted by the proposed transitway. Directly impacted includes stations or alignments passing through a community or using or altering another entity's infrastructure.

Documentation of Fiscal Constraint

Originating local planning agencies will provide documentation of planned capital, operating, and lifecycle costs as well as revenues for the transitway and assumptions of funding commitments for the construction, maintenance, and operation for the proposed project.

Documentation of Public Engagement and Feedback

Originating local planning agencies are required to provide documentation of the public engagement efforts engaged in each phase of the transitway project development process and provide the feedback that resulted from those efforts. Documentation of public engagement can be provided in the form of a public engagement report or excerpts from alignment and/or station location selection reports. This summary is typically included in a locally preferred alternative report.