

Business Item

Transportation Committee



Committee Meeting Date: Oct 14, 2024

For the Metropolitan Council: Oct 23, 2024

Business Item: 2024-262

2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

District(s), Member(s):	All
Policy/Legal Reference:	Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)
Staff Prepared/Presented:	David Burns, Planning Analyst (651-602-1887) Amy Vennewitz, Deputy Director of Finance & Planning (651-602-1058)
Division/Department:	Metropolitan Transportation Services (MTS)

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

- Adopt the 2025 Unified Planning Work Program with a budget of \$8,789,570.
- Authorize the Regional Administrator to enter into an agreement with the State of Minnesota, Department of Transportation, for distribution of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) planning funds.

Background

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) serves as the Council's application for USDOT transportation planning funds. Federal regulations require that every metropolitan planning organization (MPO) develop and submit the UPWP to the USDOT in order to receive federal transportation planning funds. The UPWP is prepared annually and describes the transportation planning activities that the Council will perform for the coming year. Participants in the UPWP include the Metropolitan Council, the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, regional transit providers and local cities, counties, and other stakeholders.

The UPWP includes activities required by federal regulation that address planning priorities of the metropolitan area. The document identifies budgeted expenditures, funding sources, and the allocation of staff resources for the transportation planning activities of the MPO. Activities and projects with Metropolitan Council participation include staff hours and consultant costs that detail how the estimated \$6.1 million of federal planning money will be spent, along with a required minimum 20 percent local match to the federal funds and any additional matching funds. In 2025, the Council will begin initiating the work program items identified in the newly adopted 2050 Transportation Policy Plan.

The total budget of almost \$8.8 million reflects the salary increases provided in the recently settled union contracts and new planning positions planned for 2025. Salary and benefit amounts also impact the indirect cost amounts charged to the grants. The UPWP version recommended by the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) totaled about \$8.4 million and did not include these increases as adjustment calculations were in progress. The recommendation to adopt the UPWP from TAB recognized that the budget would be adjusted for these increases.

Many of the tasks described in the UPWP are ongoing activities that are required to be performed by the MPO. Examples of these activities include staff support of the TAB/TAC committee process, the annual preparation of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and support of the Regional Solicitation. Other tasks are focused planning studies on issues that help to move forward the region's transportation policies and knowledge, identify regional investments, and fulfill the transportation system vision as outlined in the Transportation Policy Plan. The 2025 UPWP includes approximately \$2.1 million in planned consulting costs to complete these planning studies.

The draft 2025 UPWP was available for public review and comment from August 9, 2024, to August 30, 2024. The Public Comment Report is available on the agenda link.

Rationale

The UPWP is a federally required description and documentation of proposed transportation and transportation-related planning activities in the metropolitan area. The activities include both activities required for the MPO to operate as well as projects that reflect the regional transportation vision.

The Metropolitan Council may enter into agreements with other governments and organizations which provide income/grants to the Council which are consistent with the Council's mission and priorities. Policy 3-2-2 requires Council approval for grants exceeding \$500,000.

Thrive Lens Analysis

This item supports all the Goals and Outcomes of Thrive MSP 2040, as it includes work tasks associated with each goal and outcome. The 2025 UPWP includes work items that focus on furthering engagement with historically disadvantaged populations and increasing equity in transportation planning and investment processes.

Funding

The proposed planning work is funded with approximately \$6.14 million in federal transportation planning grant funds distributed through MnDOT and \$2.64 million in Council match funds.

