

Business Item

Transportation Committee



Committee meeting date: September 8, 2025

For the Metropolitan Council: September 24, 2025

Business Item: 2025-225

2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

District(s), member(s):	All
Policy/legal reference:	Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act (IIJA)
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Division/department:	Metropolitan Transportation Services (MTS)

Proposed action

That the Metropolitan Council:

- Adopt the 2026 Unified Planning Work Program with a budget of \$11,124,064
- Authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute an agreement with the State of Minnesota, Department of Transportation for receipt of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) planning funds.

Background

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) serves as the Met Council's application for U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) transportation planning funds. Federal regulations require that every metropolitan planning organization (MPO) develop and submit a UPWP to the USDOT in order to receive these funds. The UPWP is prepared annually and describes the transportation planning activities that the Met Council will perform for the coming year. Participants in the UPWP include the Met Council, the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the Metropolitan Airports Commission, regional transit providers, 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 MPO's transportation planning activities. Activities and projects with Met Council participation include staff hours and consultant costs that detail how the estimated \$5.9 million of federal planning money will be spent, along with a required minimum 20 percent local match to the federal funds. In 2026, the Met Council will continue initiating work program items identified in the 2050 Transportation Policy Plan.

Many of the tasks described in the UPWP are ongoing required activities for an 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 that help to move forward the region's transportation policies and knowledge, identify regional investments, and fulfill the transportation objectives as outlined in the 2050 Transportation Policy Plan. The 2026 UPWP includes approximately \$2.1 million in

planned consulting costs to complete these planning studies.

In addition, there are transportation planning activities that are fully regionally funded. These planning activities are described separately in the Regional Transportation Planning Work Program, also attached to this agenda item. The activities in the Regional Work Program may not be eligible for federal planning funds and in some instances are activities required under state law such as the Right-of-Way Acquisition Loan Fund (RALF) and aviation planning activities.

The draft 2026 UPWP was available for public review and comment from Friday, July 11, 2025, through 5:00 p.m. on August 1, 2025. The Met Council proactively promoted availability of the comment draft through the Council's website and GovDelivery emails. There were 227 unique visitors on the website and 150 unique clicks on the GovDelivery email. No public comments were received so no public comment report was prepared. Minor comments were received from the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and MnDOT; the UPWP was modified to reflect their comments.

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 values, vision, goals, objectives, policies, and actions of Imagine 2050 and the 2050 Transportation Policy Plan.

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

On February 12, 2025, the Council adopted Imagine 2050, which builds on policy direction in Thrive MSP 2040. The 2026 UPWP supports the goals within the Regional Development Guide with work tasks and major products associated with each goal.

Funding

The proposed planning work is funded with approximately \$5.9 million in federal transportation planning grant funds distributed through MnDOT and \$1.2 million in required local match plus \$4.1 million in local over match using budgeted MTS Council funds.

Small business inclusion

There are no direct impacts to small businesses with the proposed action. When receiving Federal Funds from MnDOT, their DBE program requirements will be applicable.

