

PURPOSE OF THE GUIDELINES

The purpose of the Regional Transitway Guidelines is to provide technical guidance, based in best practices, that supports the development and operation of transitways in a way that is consistent, equitable, and efficient, and delivers an effective, integrated, and user-friendly transit system throughout the Twin Cities region.

These Guidelines are used by transit partners across the region including counties, cities, consultants, and transit providers to ensure that the transitway system that this region develops appears seamlessly designed to the transit user. This is particularly important because this region has a growing transitway system, multiple agencies involved in its implementation, new modes like bus rapid transit being introduced, and a need to align transit and land use planning and sustainable communities. The Guidelines currently address light rail, commuter rail, highway bus rapid transit, and arterial bus rapid transit, but other modes could be added as the region explores their implementation.

THE GUIDELINES AND COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

The Regional Transitway Guidelines can support communities in their efforts to update or amend their comprehensive plans by strengthening their understanding of what a transitway is and how it integrates to serve a community. Each section of the Guidelines addresses a different topic that may impact a community's Comprehensive Plan or the implementation of that plan. The following is a description of how the different Guidelines sections may relate to Comprehensive Plans:

- **Service Operations:** There is an important relationship between higher levels of service that transitways typically provide and existing or planned density that can support a high level of service in a cost-effective way. The 2040 Transportation Policy Plan outlines the densities needed to support the levels of service in dedicated right-of-way transitways (15-50+ residential units per acre) and highway bus rapid transit (8-25+ residential units per acre) and arterial bus rapid transit (15+ residential units per acre) corridors. These residential densities should also be supported by destination-oriented intensity, such as density of jobs, major education facilities, and walkable entertainment and service districts.
- **Station Spacing and Siting:** Communities should be aware of the trade-offs between transit travel time competitiveness and access, since more stations will lead to a slower service. Slower service can lead to fewer transit users looking for an alternative to drive, but fewer stations can also limit the number of people that can potentially access the service. Communities should consider focusing intense uses and centers of activity at distances that balance these trade-offs.
- **Station and Support Facility Design Guidelines:** The important considerations in the design of a transitway station and access for connecting modes, including pedestrians, bicycles, local bus, and private cars, are critical to the integration of transitway stations into the community. This is especially important in the development of supportive local plans for multi-modal access to a station. In most cases, the access for connecting modes is a local responsibility that will not be built through a transitway project's limited budget.
- **Runningway Guidelines:** For communities, the transitway runningway may include the local road system and require traffic coordination. Wherever a runningway is dedicated to transit, it can have a transformative effect on the local transportation network and also present opportunities to change such things as pedestrian and bicycle access, streetscape design, and intensity of uses that surround the transit facilities. If a transitway runs in mixed-traffic, there are transit advantages that communities can support, such as curb bump-outs and optimized traffic light timing.



- **Vehicle Guidelines:** Communities with transitways should be aware of the considerations that go into vehicle decision-making. Vehicle design significantly impacts the design of stations, including the amount of space needed to accommodate the vehicles and access and egress for vehicles.
- **Fare-collection Systems Guidelines:** Communities should be aware of the considerations in the fare-collection system to better understand how these technologies impact access and movement within and around stations. Fare collection systems can exist on vehicles, at the station, and a mix of the two.
- **Technology and Customer Information Guidelines:** Communities may need to plan for integration for traffic control systems and should be aware of the other technology considerations in transitways. This also includes the relationship between access and movement within and around stations that relates to where and how customer information is provided.
- **Identity and Branding Guidelines:** Identity and branding of the transitways system takes into account the “brand promise” of transitways that many of the other guidelines discuss. The guidelines establish the parameters for how the features of transitways relate to the branding of the system and the transitway lines. These considerations can help communities understand how transit customers might view transitways and stations in their community as significant and requiring important coordination in adjacent areas. Communities may also be interested in the station naming criteria that outline the importance of recognizable, distinct, and succinct station names.
- **Project Development, Leadership, and Oversight Guidelines:** It is important for communities to understand the process, relationships, and responsibilities of transitway project partners because they will be integrally involved in the development of a transitway project. This is especially important since projects may change lead agencies throughout the process.

UPDATING THE GUIDELINES

The Guidelines were developed in collaboration with regional partners that included counties, cities, transit providers, and consultants. At the time of their initial development, a number of additional topic areas were identified for future inclusion in the transitway guidelines, including additional modes and more information on land use planning that would support transitways. The Council has identified a work program item to update the Guidelines in the future. Given their basis in best practices, the Council is always open to interim suggestions for improving the Guidelines if best practices or other new information becomes available. It is also important to consider that these are Guidelines and not requirements or rules.

ACCESSING THE GUIDELINES

The Regional Transitway Guidelines are available on the Council’s website:

<http://www.metrocouncil.org/Transportation/Projects/Future-Projects/Regional-Transitway-Guidelines.aspx>



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