

2050 Transportation Policy Plan Equity-Engagement Themes

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Introduction

The Metropolitan Council (“Met Council”) plays a unique and critical role in the Twin Cities by guiding the strategic growth of the seven-county Metro Area across areas of regional planning, transit, transportation planning, environmental services and more.

The Met Council’s regional plan is crafted every 10 years to guide development and planning across the region’s cities and counties. The Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) is one of several sub-plans that guides transportation funding and policy, specifically. Among consequential features, the TPP establishes the goals and objectives that will anchor the Regional Solicitation for the next decade. This funding process distributes federal transportation money to cities and counties for local road projects.

The Met Council is currently developing the 2050 Transportation Policy Plan, which happens alongside the 2050 update to the regional development guide. The 2050 TPP will be considered for adoption in late 2024.

SDK was engaged by the Met Council to bring diverse voices and perspectives into the TPP planning process through in-depth interviews, listening sessions and supporting survey. This report reflects the feedback and perspectives shared through that process, with a focus on understanding the unique needs and priorities of community leaders working on advancing racial equity, climate-friendly transportation advocates, corridor coalitions, business leaders and aging and disability leaders.

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Scope + Methods

The Met Council engaged SDK to lead engagement with diverse community stakeholders on the TPP and hopes for the future of metro area transportation, broadly. SDK’s work included in-depth interviews with key community leaders, listening sessions with stakeholder groups, consultation with equity-focused leaders, and an online survey for those who were otherwise unable to participate. SDK conducted this work largely in February and March 2023. The firm TC2 conducted listening sessions with local public sector leaders.

The Met Council is early in the process of setting its values, vision, and goals for its 2050 regional plan. The input SDK gathered is intended to provide community stakeholder perspectives that will help inform the 2050 Transportation Policy Plan.

Perspectives Engaged

In consultation with the Met Council, SDK invited input from a cross-section of people and perspectives who bring different lenses and interests to the Transportation Policy Plan conversation. Stakeholder perspectives engaged include:

- Equity-focused groups
- Climate-friendly transportation groups
- Aging, disability, and social service groups
- Business groups and associations
- Corridor coalitions and specialty projects
- Water and land use groups
- Neighborhood-level organizations

The following table details participation by method and stakeholder group.

Category	Interviews	Listening Sessions	Online Survey
Equity-Focused Groups and Leaders	6 Interviews (+5)	4 Attendees	4
Climate-Friendly Transportation Groups	3 Interviews (+3)	3 Attendees	1
Aging, Disability, and Social Service Groups	8 Interviews	5 Attendees	-
Business Groups and Associations	2 Interviews (+1)	5 Attendees	2
Corridor Coalitions and Specialty Projects	3 Interviews	3 Attendees	-
Water and Land Use Groups	N/A	8 Attendees	6
Neighborhood-level Organizations	1 Interview	2 Attendees	2
Unknown	N/A	N/A	3
TOTAL	32	30	18

Methods + Questions

In order to provide multiple venues for in-depth listening, SDK utilized three engagement methods: one-on-one and small group interviews, listening sessions, and an online survey for those unable to participate in the other two formats. Interviews were open-ended, and approximately 40 minutes per individual or small group. Listening sessions followed the same core questions as interviews, but invited discussion across attendees.

Participants were invited to provide input on two key topics that will anchor the policy update:

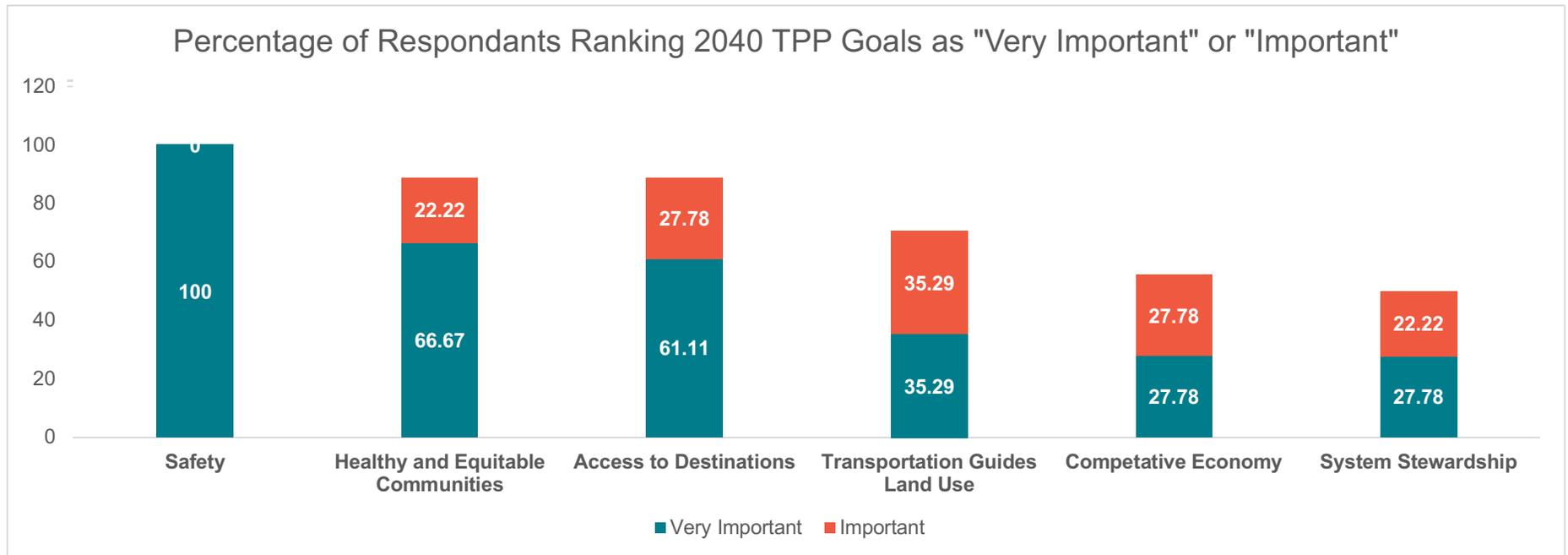
- **Reactions to the 2040 goals.** Participants reviewed the current 2040 TPP goals and provided input on their perceived relevance and importance to the region.
- **Thoughts on the draft 2050 vision.** Participants reviewed the draft for the 2050 regional vision and provided input on both the draft Vision overall, as well as suggestions for how the vision could translate into refreshed TPP goals.

Interviewees were also invited to weigh in with their personal priorities for transportation system planning.

Core Themes

Stakeholders interviewed represented a cross-section of perspectives, and all hold policy-oriented roles. In addition, a broader cross-section of stakeholders weighed in at two virtual listening sessions and the supporting survey.

Five core themes emerged from interviews and listening sessions about the future of transportation policy and planning in the Metro Area, and the survey reinforced the overall priorities heard. Specifically, the survey asked respondents to state how important each of the current, 2040 TPP goals is to for the future on a scale from “Not at All Important” to “Very Important.” The graph below shows, in rank order, the percentage of respondents who rated each goal as “Very Important” or “Important”



This overall priority-ranking is reinforced and expanded upon in the core themes below.

Theme #1: Equity is a top priority for many, but it needs to be more clearly defined.

Equity was consistently the topic of greatest interest to most respondents across almost all constituencies engaged. Business leaders were the one exception – these stakeholders emphasized equity, but it was not the top-tier priority that was heard across other groups. Also consistent was the desire for Met Council to clearly define what equity means in the context of its transportation system work. Several stakeholders spoke to an interest in repair from past transportation harms (e.g., highway construction through Rondo) and attention to environmental justice, while others talked about applying an equity lens moving forward.

In each instance, respondents focused on equity in terms of racial and ethnic community equity, and an overall desire to see transportation investments move toward helping people of color thrive. No one interviewed talked about equity in terms of geographic equity. This topic came up slightly in one of two listening sessions, and even here geographic equity was talked about as one type of equity in addition to equitable investments for racial and ethnic communities, older adults, and people with disabilities. Leaders interviewed gave some specific examples of current Met Council policies and practices that are seen as inequitable, such as allowing suburbs to opt out of Metro Transit. For these stakeholders, transit is deeply linked to equity in terms of race, ethnicity, age and ability because people from these communities rely on transit to access other neighborhoods, communities, jobs and opportunities more often than others.

- *"What are we actually trying to accomplish here? Are we talking about all kinds of equity across race, gender, and disability and income and what not? Are we trying to highlight certain priorities? Are we trying to right past wrongs...? Or are we solely forward looking?" – Climate-friendly transportation advocate*
- *"[Equity] is very important, this would be the top for me. ... You don't have anything if you don't have this." - Equity-focused leader*
- *"When we think about the jobs, transportation, housing mismatch, the lion's share of growth in family sustaining wages [are] located [in places like] Shakopee, Eagan, Savage, or outer ring suburbs that provide park and ride options only for downtown employees. Anybody else is required, essentially, to have a car to get to or around those communities..... [T]hey were allowed to opt out of the transportation aspect of Met Council's authority. I think that that is flies directly in the face of equity." – Corridor coalition*
- *"There are large disparities between the majority population and BIPOC people regarding livability in the Metro Area. Work to eliminate this should be at the forefront." - Equity-focused leader*

Theme #2: Safety is also a top priority, particularly for transit.

Safety is a top priority among people interviewed and all talked about safety in terms and priorities much broader than transportation design-related safety. Leaders interviewed consistently talked about safety largely in terms of Metro Transit and the personal safety people experience riding trains and buses. Several people interviewed rely on transit or have staff who rely on transit, and all reported riding trains and buses less often because they felt personally vulnerable on transit.

Some participants also spoke about the safety needs and challenges of those who have physical vulnerabilities, including older adults and people with disabilities. As an example, one person mentioned details like ensuring people are seated before moving a bus as an example of a safety concern for people with certain physical needs. Respondents also noted that some populations who are often perceived by the majority to be the cause of transit safety challenges, such as member of the unhoused community, are in fact people who also fear for their safety on transit.

Traffic and road safety was mentioned by some respondents, as well. The interplay of race and enforcement, and the history of inequitable enforcement against Black, Indigenous, and People of Color transit users, was also acknowledged by some as an important dynamic for consideration in defining transportation safety. On the other hand, only six people mentioned transportation safety in terms of bicycle and pedestrian safety, lane widths, and related details.

- *"I need to know more what [safety] means in practice, because if we're talking about safety in terms of people biking, about people's physical safety, the lack of accidents, absolutely [safety is a priority]. But if we're talking about the traditional generally police-focused responses to safety issues, then I would have a very different answer." - Equity-focused group*
- *"I think that unpacking that concept of safety is very important... safety and perceptions of safety are important points." - Climate-friendly transportation group*
- *"I think often people think about safety and policing or safety and crime. But often you would get a lot of people especially, you know, folks in the 50+ age group, folks with disabilities, talking about like the safety of the physical. 'I don't want to slip and fall,' or 'There's no lights here,' or 'I have arthritis, and this is so painful for me to be at this cold bus stop.'" - Aging, disability, and social service group*
- *"A lot of times safety is framed up as 'homeless people sleeping on the trains make me feel unsafe.' But in fact, those homeless people also feel unsafe, so it's really about safety for everybody." - Aging, disability, and social service group*

- *"To cover the growth in the region, we will need creative, innovative solutions that can adapt to differing area and diverse population needs. And if it isn't safe, no one will use it." - Business leader*

Theme #3: For system maintenance, a tension exists between investing in the current system and transforming the system for the future.

When asked about system maintenance as a goal, many respondents see value in caring for existing roads. Given the visibly poor road conditions this winter, particularly in the urban core, pothole repair was mentioned as an area of particular interest. Some respondents described how pothole damage to cars can have disproportionate impact on people facing income challenges, who then face unexpected and expensive repair bills or lose their transportation to work.

Still, many caution against putting too much emphasis on caring for the current system. The urgency of climate change is seen as requiring a different system that is less dependent on personal vehicles and the emissions associated with them. For most respondents, there was a hesitancy to endorse system maintenance as a goal. Instead, leaders want to see Met Council making strategic choices about where to care for the existing system and where to invest in transforming the system for the future.

- *"Maintenance of the [current transportation] system is critical to us because those are the main ways that both the people that work here and our customers come to us from the Twin Cities." - Equity-focused leader*
- *"We want to build a new system, not maintain the existing system. It's not at all important to maintain the existing system." - Climate-friendly transportation leader*
- *"I think that the current system is important, but insufficient. So I think that over-emphasizing just maintaining the roads and maintaining the mass transit system, that it kind of loses the bigger picture..." - Equity-focused leader*
- *"I think that kind of inherent in that goal is maintaining the system that we have, and I don't think the system that we have is serving a lot of people." - Climate-friendly transportation*
- *"Obviously sustainable system stewardship is important, but the system itself is designed in an unsustainable way. We absolutely need significant and sustained investment in transportation, but it should simultaneously be transformed to reduce vehicle miles traveled, and make walking, biking, bus, and rail available to everyone in the region." - Equity-focused leader*

Theme #4: Stakeholders appreciate naming climate in the 2050 vision – and hope to see Met Council go further.

For stakeholders interviewed and those participating in listening sessions, the sustainability language of the adopted 2040 goals is seen as necessary but not sufficient to address urgent climate needs. The majority of leaders who participated in this process appreciated seeing climate change elevated as a headline in the draft 2050 regional vision. Several mentioned a desire to see Met Council go further in setting concrete goals and targets for climate impact. No one voiced opposition to seeing climate change highlighted in the region's vision.

Several leaders offered specific ideas of transportation goals that could make clear progress on climate change, such as targets for reducing vehicle miles traveled, increasing the percentage of the population with access to high frequency transit, and increasing electrification of transportation modes. Even if they did not name specific areas for goals, many stakeholders intuitively understand that transportation will play an important role in the Twin Cities region successfully addressing the risks of climate change.

- *"A very important absence [in the 2040 goals] is there's no mention of climate, which I think I would even say zero emissions.... And what else is there other than meeting those goals?" - Equity-focused leader*
- *"Well, one very glaring thing that's missing [in the 2040 goals] is an explicit mention of climate change. I do not think sustainability, broadly mentioned, is direct enough. And the Council is responsible for many, many, many of the levers that drive climate change in the state of Minnesota. I think that that should be really explicit." - Climate-friendly transportation leader*
- *"I don't know what it means to 'lead' on addressing climate change. If everyone else is doing sort of poorly, and we're doing ok, are we leading? Technically, yes, but I don't think we want to just be ok. We want to be taking the important steps that we need to take." - Climate-friendly transportation leader*
- *"Cities throughout the region need to take responsibility for the climate emergency and the well-being of all its people. Transportation is a significant part of our daily lives, and leveraging investments to advance climate, racial, and economic justice is essential for both the habitability of our planet and our ability to thrive here." - Equity-focused organization leader*

Theme #5: Stakeholders imagine a future of many nodes across the region, rather than the current suburbs-to-downtown transportation design.

Respondents imagine a future where transportation and transit better and more equitably connect where and how people live and work. Some refer to a “15-minute city.” Others refer to “multi-node” communities. Almost all talk about the hub-and-spoke model of transportation and transit funneling into and out of downtowns as less relevant today, particularly given the changes in life and work brought about by the pandemic. Many look to an aging future and commitment to equity as signaling an even greater need for dispersed transit access.

- *"It's important to keep everybody connected and as long as our transit system and our multimodal systems are relatively hub and spoke, they're not going to keep up with the current demographic shifts." -- Aging, disability and social service leader*
- *"I do think [there should be an] emphasis on transportation nodes—equitable transportation nodes—things that allow people to not have to travel beyond a geographic space to be employed or to be a part of employment." - Corridor coalition*
- *"Reliable, affordable, efficient, and multimodal are key aspects of what I hope our transportation system will be. There's much that needs to be done to get there. For example - my house is over a mile from the nearest bus stop. To get to it, I would need to cross a busy road with no crosswalks, and no sidewalks for a significant stretch. Even upon boarding the bus, it would then take me over an hour and multiple bus changes to get to work, something that takes me 15 minutes or less using a car. I would strongly prefer to take transit, but it's rarely a realistic option." - Water and land use leader*
- *"Even if you live in Eden Prairie, to take the transit system takes you two hours to get to Shakopee just because of how it's laid out right now." – Equity-focused leader*
- *"When I think about the Phillips neighborhood, if I live in Phillips and my work is at Southdale, I have to take two buses. But southwest Minneapolis had, at the time that we studied it [in grad school], at least 10 routes that serve southwest Minneapolis. And they had the lowest transit ridership." – Corridor coalition*
- *"The D Line that connects Chicago Avenue and South Minneapolis, up through downtown Minneapolis, up into North Minneapolis...that's good. But also, that line is connecting underserved communities throughout the city. It's not connecting any of those communities to more opportunity...If we want to have an actual upward mobility ladder ...we're going to have to not just connect people in the Phillips neighborhood to opportunities in North Minneapolis, but we're going to have to get them to opportunities on the university campus, the Lowry Hill area, wherever [opportunities and resources are]." - Climate-friendly transportation advocate*

Additional Themes & Findings

In the course of SDK's listening work, several ideas and themes emerged that go beyond the specific questions in guiding the Met Council's TPP goals and future vision for the region. The additional themes below summarize the topics and ideas that came up with enough consistency that they warrant further consideration by the Met Council in its TPP and broader regional planning.

Theme #6: Community stakeholders want to see accountability, measurement, and action on goals.

Many respondents named a desire for clear benchmarks to track progress on Met Council's goals, especially around equity and climate change. Clearly defining "equity" is seen as a necessary step in setting measures of progress on achieving equity. These leaders are eager to see clear measures of accountability from the Met Council, as measures are perceived as maximizing the Council's ability to influence actions of cities and counties. At the same time, there is some skepticism that Met Council will take a forward role in guiding the direction of cities and counties within the region.

- *"[The 2040 goals are] good as policy or strategic directions, but I'm not sure how we're actualizing them." - Corridor coalition*
- *"With Met Council, the words on the page are almost always helpful, and the implementation is almost always weak." - Climate-friendly transportation leader*
- *"I want these goals to be taken seriously, and I want there to be a real implementation plan for them, and that is going to be really politically tough...We have been building a system that is not climate sustainable, and not very equitable, for like 75 years....We're going to have to change how we do things. And no one alive right now remembers a time when we weren't on the trajectory that we're on." - Climate-friendly transportation leader*
- *"I've never seen maps of commute times for known commute routes [from communities that we know have high ridership and are transit dependent] mapped out and measured. If [Met Council is] serious about equity, that's what I want to see. And I'm not really interested in any of the conversation around transportation inequity if that's not a part of it." - Corridor coalition*

Theme #7: Don't forget the economy in the 2050 vision.

Some respondents noted the relative absence of economy from the draft 2050 Regional Vision. The attention to economy in the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan was appreciated by these respondents. Not everyone noted the absence of economy, but those that did felt strongly.

- *"There's nothing in the vision statement about jobs, the economy, or income. And this is huge, and really, I think reveals a disconnect between the main way all of those other aims are achieved. There is no equity, there is no justice, there is no environmental quality, no quality of life unless people have really good jobs. And it's missing from this whole frame." - Business leader*
- *"I think it's important how 'economic competitiveness and prosperity' is defined, because that can be used to justify a wide variety of infrastructure, strategy. Prosperity for whom?" - Equity-focused leader*
- *"It says, 'Depends on the strength and inclusiveness of our economy, as well as the quality, safety, and reliability of our public and infrastructure and services,' and I don't know that that explicitly includes the businesses. It talks about the inclusiveness of our economy, but it doesn't necessarily talk about how do we plan and support the existence of key businesses in all areas." - Aging, disability, and social service leader*
- *"When I think about transportation planning, I think a lot about activating and opening up areas of our region that will then create the economic growth opportunities." – Business leader*
- *"With low unemployment we are competing with many markets on things such as availability of safe, economically affordable, multimodal ways to get around. It's not just about jobs, it's about getting to shopping and to the doctor." - Business leader.*

Theme #8: The context of post-pandemic uncertainty makes this a unique moment for long-range planning.

Across all perspectives, people engaged recognize that the Twin Cities is in a unique moment in time grappling with, and ripe for, change. Business respondents talked about the uncertainties they continue to face with challenges such as shortages in workers and supply chains, and the move to hybrid or remote work. Racial equity advocates highlighted the important moment of the pandemic and the murder of George Floyd as a watershed moment in how people understand and think about equity and racial justice. Climate-friendly transportation advocates and corridor coalitions highlighted the precarious position of transit due to pandemic disruptions, and the urgency of action required to transition to new energy sources at the scale required to mitigate the worst risks of climate change.

These societal shifts will have a lasting impact on how people move through the region and beyond, but the final direction is not yet known. And, equally important, the changes mark a new chapter in the public's expectation of the public sector, in the eyes of many leaders interviewed.

- *“There's certainly no playbook right now. I mean, post COVID, we all thought that we would get through the pandemic, we'd flip the calendar and things would go back to the way they were. And that's clearly not the case...We're dealing with a whole different set of issues now than we were back in 2019.” – Business leader*
- *“[A new model] would take a total rework of how we look at transit in the metro. We saw some of this play out during the pandemic, where nobody wanted to go downtown anymore. Nobody needed to go downtown anymore.” – Aging, disability, and social service leader*
- *“Well, you know, I think a lot of it is, there's so much uncertainty that we can't make a plan, right? And so if we don't know what's happening in the next five years on highway 65, how can we talk about what we want in 25 years or 10 years or whatever?” – Business leader*
- *“The pandemic is something that you can't really disentangle from the fact that ridership is down and service is being cut. [It's] led transit into a bit of a death spiral.” – Climate-friendly transportation leader*

Theme #9: Stakeholders noted the connections between housing and transportation on many levels.

Stakeholders interviewed highlighted the very interconnected nature of transportation policy to many other topics, but especially housing. Business leaders highlighted the importance of transportation for seeding housing and business development. They see transportation and transit planning as essential to spurring housing at all price-points. Older adult and disability advocates talked about the tight connection between transit routes and housing choice for those who depend on transit and Metro Mobility. Some shared fear that reduced routes could force them to search for more expensive housing. Social service respondents highlighted the precarious nature of homelessness, especially for those without a car. Transit dependence can force trade-offs between being on-time for work and being in line with time to secure a shelter bed that can make escaping homelessness even more challenging.

Across stakeholders, the connection between housing and transportation stood out as especially connected in setting the fate of a number of other policy topics like economic mobility, health and more.

- *“We're exceeding our goals when it comes to market rate housing, which no one wanted to talk about, like, no we should talk about that, we're exceeding our goals. And then no one thought in this process to bring up the transit system...the total percentage that was in the highest volume transit corridors.... Transportation is helping to solve housing... But I don't ever hear the housing folks talking about transit, or really vice versa ” – Business group*
- *“One of the biggest impediments in Scott County is the cost of living and the lack of affordable housing.” – Equity-focused leader*
- *“When I think about the folks that were living in a homeless shelter, whether or not they have access to a bed when beds are already at a limited supply [is a big deal]...If they're working, trying to get themselves out of homelessness, they may get back [into homelessness] because transit doesn't support their commute. They may get back late and either not have a bed or take like sleeping in a place that isn't conducive to them being well rested. And they're oftentimes doing physical labor, so you've got folks who are showing up for work, maybe not showing up for work or showing up for work late, that challenges their ability to earn a wage. Or if they show up, they're tired, because they haven't had a good night's rest, because transit that gets them to work doesn't get them back in time for them to secure a bed.” – Aging, disability, and social service leader*

Theme #10: Several observed that federal investment, such as the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), presents opportunities for new types of investment.

Some respondents see the recent wave of Federal investments as an opportunity to approach transportation and transit differently. Business leaders mentioned the importance of rethinking work and transportation planning to locate jobs. Equity advocates talked about the opportunity to advance anti-displacement efforts and invest in repair for communities harmed by past transportation investments.

- *“We're in this moment, right now with a lot of big federal funding opportunities that I'm sure you're aware of, you know, the infrastructure bill, the Inflation Reduction Act, the CHIPS act, some of the American Rescue Plan Act, like some of these really big pots of dollars that are creating a moment across the country, for regions specifically to be thinking about how they want to grow. What's the new economy? What's the next economy? What are the industries that are going to drive the next economy for your region?” – Business leader*

- *“We are also -- between the IIJA and ARPA dollars and an impending climate crisis -- needing to electrify our transportation system, both in terms of city and county fleets, how we move goods, but also personal vehicles.” – Equity-focused leader*
- *“Met Council doesn't, as far as I can tell, try to incentivize the behaviors they would like to see out of local units of government. We're seeing the federal government is finally starting to do that, by trying to incentivize behavior by states. The Met Council can do that vis-à-vis individual cities.” – Corridor coalition*

Theme #11: Met Council's role is unclear to most interviewed.

Across stakeholder groups and engagement methods, a general lack of clarity around Met Council's role, authority, and accountability provided a consistent backdrop to the conversations. This held true across respondents from small community-based organizations and prominent policy groups, and across perspective from equity-focused groups and climate-friendly transportation advocates to aging and disability advocates -- many of which are deeply experienced in policy, government, and governance. The only stakeholders who began conversations with a clear understanding of Met Council's role in transportation beyond transit were those who have held some form of appointment with the Council at some time.

This lack of clarity about the Met Council's role influenced the nature of feedback received. For example, when we asked about transportation, we often received comments centered on transit. Very few people interviewed know what the Regional Solicitation is or seemed to understand the important role the Met Council plays in city and county road projects. Few people know the minutia of how roads are built.

However, everyone engaged appreciates the consequential nature of transportation choices for impacting the community issues like jobs and economic opportunity, climate change, equity, and environmental justice. Many hope that the Met Council will more fully articulate and embrace the consequences of its TPP goals and objectives on broader community issues so that a wider set of constituencies will appreciate and engage on the plans and projects that will flow from the TPP.

- *“I think this sort of outreach is great. I have been in this role for 13 years, and I don't recall once ever having anybody from the Met Council reach out to me to try to get input from either me or our membership. We've had the Met Council out, I think twice, to do kind of a listening session roundtable with our members so they were able to get direct feedback, but that was us reaching out. I think some sort of constituent outreach should be in any sort of plan or goals at a more consistent level. It shouldn't be every 10 years, it should be like every year. This is who your representative is, this is who you go to with questions. I mean, look at the Met Council, they are such a unique body in that they're not elected, they have taxing authority, they have such a wide scope. And so to me, I feel like there needs to be some more accountability and transparency with constituents.” - Business group*

Conclusions

The total input across interviews, listening sessions and survey have led SDK to five conclusions offered to the Met Council to help shape the TPP goals and objectives.

1. **The TPP 2040 goals and objectives remain relevant in theory but are not clearly understood in practice or outcome.** Stakeholders interviewed see the TPP 2040 goals and objectives as positive and relevant to transportation in the Twin Cities, broadly. At the same time, no one interviewed felt clear on how the region has progressed in achieving these goals and objectives. Several asked for more information about how the region is performing against these goals over the course of interviews. Most people engaged shared an interest in seeing the Met Council adopt clearer results-based measures aligned to the goals and objectives of plans, like the TPP.
2. **The Met Council's regional vision adds bold language on equity and climate that stakeholders would appreciate seeing reflected in the TPP.** Most stakeholders hope that the TPP will build on its strong foundation by reflecting the regional vision's commitment to climate change and direct commitment to equity. Several stakeholders interviewed mentioned climate, specifically, as missing from the 2040 TPP goals and objectives, even before seeing the draft 2050 regional vision.
3. **Perceptions of transit shape impressions of Met Council's broader transportation work.** Across conversations, stakeholder comments about Met Council's transportation work would consistently veer toward transit. This consistent trend points to the large role that Metro Transit plays in the public and stakeholders' experiences with Met Council, and stakeholders' limited understanding of the Met Council's role outside this context.
4. **Safety is the top transportation priority – and it looks drastically different from an equity lens.** Stakeholders interviewed and surveyed prioritized safety for Met Council's transportation plan as a top issue. At the same time, leaders talked about safety in really different terms from traditional transportation conversations about safety. Most highlighted the importance of personal safety on Metro Transit trains and buses. Others also highlighted the importance of safe enforcement of traffic laws, pointing to the disproportionate amount that people of color are targeted for traffic stops or have traffic-related, unkind interactions with the law. These topics of focus differ sharply from the multi-modal safety conversations common in many transportation circles.

Recommendations

1. **Expand and elevate communication.** SDK's engagement work concentrated on diverse organizations and leaders with some knowledge of policy issues and processes, but with topical focus on things like racial equity, social services, aging and disability, business, or others. It's clear from our listening work that even among these audiences, the Met Council's scope and process is not well understood. Expanded communications could include more frequent and consistent engagement with key audiences; more strategic communications that frame the Met Council's role and scope in metro area policy; and added materials (written, videos, etc.) that explain and reinforce the Met Council's mission, to name a few. Here, the focus would be on strategic communications to policy and influence audiences, rather than the broader public, as well. We believe that added communications could bolster transparency and understanding in ways that would help the Met Council meet its mission and support future, ongoing engagement.
2. **Develop and refine clear accountability and measurement to match TPP goals and objectives.** Exact accountabilities and measures would be a natural next step after the TPP's goals and objectives are set for 2050. Still, stakeholders interviewed consistently asked for more information about Met Council's progress on its 2040 goals and objectives in their responses to questions about these goals and objectives. Equally important, stakeholders consistently emphasized the importance of effective implementation in making the Council's goals worthwhile.
3. **Explore avenues to acknowledge the interconnected nature of transportation and other topics in planning processes and measures.** The Met Council is taking steps to ensure greater interplay between its policy area plans and the overall regional vision for the 2050 planning process, and it's clear this approach will be fully supported by leaders engaged.
4. **Continue engagement through to the full TPP adoption.** Most stakeholders and listening session participants asked about how to best stay involved with the TPP process. All shared an appetite to see the Met Council continue to engage perspectives outside of local government in its planning process and offered appreciation for the Council's work to create and manage this process.