



Network**NOW**

Chapter 1: Regional Policy Guidance

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INTRODUCTION

[Network Now](#) establishes Metro Transit’s priorities over the next four years. This plan will recognize the changes to the region’s transit network that have occurred since 2019, build on the success of regional transitways and BRT networks advanced in [Network Next](#), and guide how Metro Transit will invest in service from 2024 to 2027.

The Network Now project is divided into three main phases. The first phase took place during spring and summer 2023 and included a review of regional policy guidance, assessment of recent transit network performance, and extensive public outreach to understand customers’ priorities for transit. Results are documented in the Establishing the Foundation Report and its component chapters as follows:

- Establishing the Foundation Report
 - Chapter 1: Regional Policy Guidance
 - Chapter 2: Network Performance and Opportunities
 - Chapter 3: Engagement and Customer Feedback

This document, Chapter 1: Regional Policy Guidance, summarizes the various policy documents that guide transit investment in the Twin Cities region. These policies will inform Network Now’s development of principles, evaluation criteria, and future service recommendations.

SUMMARY OF REGIONAL POLICY GUIDANCE

Metro Transit is guided by regional policy when making decisions related to service planning. Policy is documented in a variety of sources, including regional policy documents developed by the Metropolitan Council and procedures and best practices developed by transit agency staff. This document is a summary of existing sources of regional policy that shape transit and relevant Metro Transit practice and procedure, and are the foundation of Network Now.

The Metropolitan Council is required to plan for the region’s transportation and transit systems. Network Now fulfills this requirement by ensuring the transit system is designed to effectively and efficiently meet the region’s transit needs. The Network Now process will include robust engagement and communications plans, providing multiple opportunities for input and outreach. Strategies to promote equity will be woven throughout the Network Now process, in particular, through engagement, data analysis, and service improvement evaluation.

Thrive MSP 2040 is the primary policy document for all Council functions, and the Transportation Policy Plan is the main transportation system document. Within the Transportation Policy Plan, Chapter 6 and Appendix G are specific to the transit network. Other policy and guidance sources are also included in this review.

2050 Regional Development Guide and Transportation Policy Plan (2024)

Lead Agency: Metropolitan Council

Planning and engagement for the 2050 Regional Development Guide, which will replace Thrive MSP 2040, is ongoing. Thrive MSP 2040 was adopted by the council in 2014. The 2040 Transportation Policy Plan was also adopted in 2014 and last updated in 2020. Work on the 2050 Transportation Policy Plan started in 2022 with a draft plan expected in 2024 and adoption in late 2024.

The Regional Development Guide uses 2020 Census data to create a comprehensive plan for the seven-county region. The guide establishes the policy and vision for the region over the next 30 years. Other policy plans are

built off of the Regional Development Guide including the Transportation Policy Plan and municipal comprehensive plans.

The new TPP will include updated policies and strategies that respond to the change in travel patterns and transit demand that have developed since 2020, such as a reduced role for park and rides given the significant decline in the commuter express market.

Thrive MSP 2040 (2014)

Lead Agency: Metropolitan Council

BACKGROUND

Under state law, the Metropolitan Council is responsible for preparing a comprehensive development guide for the seven-county metropolitan area. Thrive MSP 2040 provides a framework for a shared vision for the future of our region over the next 30 years.¹ Thrive MSP 2040 serves as the comprehensive development guide which the Metropolitan Council is required to complete every 10 years. While the Council is responsible for developing Thrive and the plans for the three statutory regional systems — wastewater, transportation, and regional parks — the vision within Thrive can only succeed through partnerships with local governments, residents, businesses, philanthropy, and the nonprofit sector.

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

There are five desired outcomes that define our shared regional vision:

- **Stewardship** advances the Council's mission of orderly and economic development by responsibly managing the region's finite resources, both natural and financial, and making strategic investments in the future.
- **Prosperity** is fostered by investments in infrastructure and amenities that create regional economic competitiveness. A strong transit system is essential to attracting and retaining successful businesses, a talented workforce, and wealth.
- **Equity** connects all residents to opportunities and creates housing, transportation, and recreation options for everyone so that all communities share the opportunities and challenges of growth and change. The Twin Cities region currently has some of the largest disparities by race and ethnicity of any large metro area in the country.
- **Livability** focuses on the quality of our residents' lives and experiences, and how places and infrastructure create and enhance quality of life.
- **Sustainability** means protecting our regional vitality for future generations by preserving our capacity to maintain and support our region's well-being and productivity over the long-term. In 2012 the Council adopted a Sustainability Policy for Internal Operations and management, which states the Council will conduct its own operations in a sustainable manner when economically feasible.

Table 1 lists objectives and strategies embedded in Council policy that are most applicable to transit planning and operations. Please note that it is not intended to be an all-inclusive list of all references to transit in Thrive 2040.

¹ [https://metro council.org/Planning/Publications-And-Resources/Thrive-MSP-2040-Plan-\(1\)/ThriveMSP2040.aspx](https://metro council.org/Planning/Publications-And-Resources/Thrive-MSP-2040-Plan-(1)/ThriveMSP2040.aspx)

Table 1. Thrive MSP 2040 Transit Objectives

Outcome	Promoting this outcome means...	The Council will...
Stewardship	Leveraging transit investments with higher expectations of land use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize expanded bus service and transitway investments in areas where infrastructure and development patterns to support a successful transit system are either in place or committed to in the planning or development process, balancing transit ridership with added connectivity. • Expand the geographic coverage of bus service and transitway investments in areas with a local commitment to transit-supportive development patterns and the market for future development. • Stage transit modes, coverage, and service levels to match the intensity of development to both minimize the risk to public resources and maximize return on public investments. • Collaborate with municipalities to coordinate land use and development patterns with frequency, all-day transit service to increase ridership, increase the likelihood of successful transit investments and respond to new market opportunities
Prosperity	Fostering the conditions for shared economic vitality by balancing major investments across the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intentionally consider regional balance—that is, balancing its investments and activities across the region—in its planning, operations, and investment decisions.
	Planning for and investing in infrastructure, amenities, and quality of life needed for economic competitiveness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus expansion of bus service and transitway investment to and within existing and emerging high-density Job Concentrations, high-density activity centers (such as shopping and educational institutions), and dense residential areas. • Construct and support park-and-rides to provide access to transit in less dense residential areas.
Equity	Using our influence and investments to build a more equitable region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use equity as a lens to evaluate its operations, planning, and investments, and explore its authority to use its resources and roles to mitigate the place-based dimension of disparities by race, ethnicity, income, and ability. • Work to mitigate Areas of Concentrated Poverty and Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty by better connecting their residents to opportunity and catalyzing neighborhood revitalization.
	Creating real choices in where we live, how we travel, and where we recreate for all residents, across race, ethnicity, economic means, and ability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a measure of households who do not own private automobiles as one of the elements driving the Council’s Transit Market Areas and defining the level of bus service neighborhoods expect to receive. • Conduct Title VI service equity analyses—a federally prescribed process—to ensure that major changes in transit service do not lead to disparate impacts on low-income residents and communities of color. • Prioritize transportation investments that connect lower-income areas to job opportunities. • Provide accessible transit vehicles and facilities and offer Metro Mobility service to supplement regular-route transit service to create transportation choices for people with disabilities. • Engage neighborhood residents in transit planning to understand how to most effectively use transit service and investments to promote access to opportunity.
	Engaging a full cross-section of the community in decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate and consult with members of the community, especially historically underrepresented populations. • Focus on developing lasting relationships with the region’s residents and constituencies. • Work toward making decisions with people, not for people.

Outcome	Promoting this outcome means...	The Council will...
Livability	Increasing access to nature and outdoor recreation through regional parks and trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote expanded multimodal access to regional parks, regional trails, and the transit network, where appropriate.
	Providing housing and transportation choices for a range of demographic characteristics and economic means	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in bus service and transitways to expand the spectrum of transportation options, particularly to connect workers to jobs and opportunities throughout the region. Construct and support park-and-rides to expand access to transit as an alternative to driving in less dense residential areas
	Aligning resources to support transit-oriented development and walkable places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritize transit-oriented development in the planning, engineering, and operation of transit and in the development of Council-owned land and facilities. Encourage transit-friendly development patterns, including increased density and concentration of uses, to expand walkability and lay the groundwork for future transit-readiness.
Sustainability	Providing leadership to support climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [Support efforts to minimize greenhouse emissions by] Providing and promoting alternatives to single-occupant vehicle travel, including transit, carpooling, bicycling, and walking.

PRINCIPLES

The Council will achieve these five outcomes by following three principles:

- Integration** – coordinating effectively with partners and stakeholders across and throughout the region. Moving beyond silos allows the Council to produce more benefits from each investment. Integrating activities such as requiring land use in transitway corridors to be commensurate with the level of transit investment and identifying critical relationships between regional systems and local investments (such as local pedestrian network to access regional transit) will help address complex issues that single approaches cannot address.
- Collaboration** – being open to shared strategies, supportive partnerships, and reciprocal relationships to address complex regional issues.
- Accountability** – a commitment to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of our policies and practices towards achieving shared outcomes. Acting accountably with transit means adopting a data-driven approach to measure progress and providing clear and easily accessible information.

Planning for a strong regional transit network supports the five Thrive outcomes of Stewardship, Prosperity, Equity, Livability, and Sustainability. These outcomes will inform the identification and evaluation of transit improvements in Network Now. Through its data-driven and engagement-rich approach, the Network Now process will use the three principles of integration, collaboration, and accountability to develop a plan that meets the region’s needs.

2040 Transportation Policy Plan (Updated 2020)

Lead Agency: Metropolitan Council

BACKGROUND

The 2040 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) is one of the council’s major system plans that builds upon the region’s development guide, Thrive MSP 2040. The original plan was adopted in January 2015 and updated in October

2018 with the most recent update being adopted in November 2020.² The TPP lays out a course of action to maintain and enhance our existing facilities, better connect people and communities, and provide more transportation choices that make the region stronger and a better place to live. It describes issues and trends facing the region's transportation system, identifies challenges and opportunities facing the region, and establishes specific goals, objectives, and strategies to address anticipated future conditions.

These challenges include aging transit infrastructure that will not meet the demands of a growing population, inadequate financial resources, population and job growth increasing congestion, significant racial disparities, and an aging population. Within these challenges there are opportunities:

- Land use and development patterns affect our stewardship of the transportation system
- Investments can help sustain and strengthen the region's economic competitiveness
- Growth in population and employment will lead to more travel
- People and businesses demand more and better travel options
- Access to jobs and opportunity is an equity issue

The region will maintain its existing infrastructure before considering expansion. Additional investments will maximize the existing system through efficiencies and provide the best user experience the region can afford.

The two key sections of the TPP that focus on transit are Chapter 6 and Appendix G.

CHAPTER 6 – TRANSIT INVESTMENT DIRECTION AND PLAN

Chapter 6 addresses transit specifically and provides direction on transit investment, linking goals such as stewardship, safety and security, access to destinations, a competitive economy, healthy and equitable communities, and guiding land use with objectives to guide investments. It provides an overview of planning basics and outlines a bus and support system investment plan, as well as a transitways system investment plan and investment summaries of two revenue scenarios. Finally, it includes the requirement that all transit providers must evaluate their service improvement plans every two years and prepare or update them regularly, ideally identifying priorities for service expansion for at least the next two to four years. Network Now will serve as Metro Transit's service improvement plan update.

Demographic and urban design factors are generally outside the direct control of Metro Transit but play a significant role in the design of transit service. Urban design factors that relate to local land use decisions and transit planning:

- Encourage population and activity density
- Design for a pedestrian-friendly environment
- Encourage a mixed-use land use pattern
- Develop an interconnected street network that maximizes pedestrian and bike access and allows for simple route design
- Support travel options that encourage using transit
- Plan for linear growth in nodes along corridors

Transit route and design factors guide the design of service and play an important part in the success of transit. Important design factors include serving a variety of trip purposes and destinations, designing routes with strong anchors at both ends, matching the level of service to demand, and designing simple, direct routes. Other factors include avoiding duplication of service, balancing coverage and frequency, balancing walking distance and

² <https://metro council.org/Transportation/Planning-2/Key-Transportation-Planning-Documents/Transportation-Policy-Plan/2040.aspx>

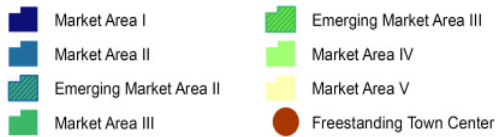
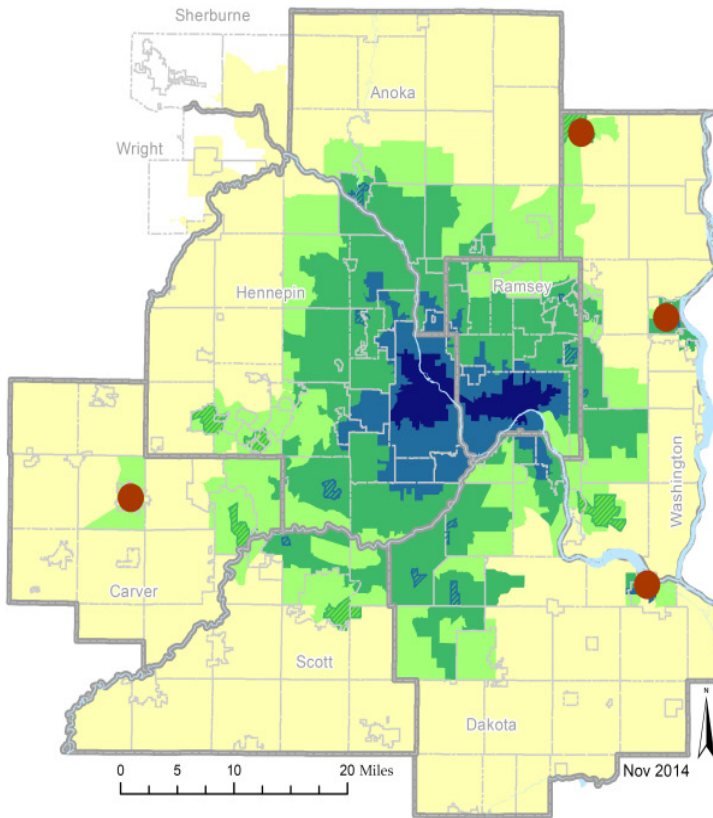
travel speed, and providing useful customer information and comfortable amenities.

Chapter 6 defines Transit Market Areas and the types and level of service that various areas of the region can support. Transit Market Areas are determined by an index that uses population density, employment density, automobile availability, and intersection density. To account for these differences in demographics and urban form in the planning and evaluation of transit service, the region is divided into five distinct Transit Market Areas representing different levels of potential transit demand, shown in Figure 1. These Market Areas are defined by the following characteristics:

- **Transit Market Area I** has the highest density of population, employment, walkability, and lowest automobile availability. These areas have a more traditional urban form with a street network laid out in grid form. Market Area I has the potential transit ridership necessary to support the most intensive fixed-route transit service, with higher frequencies, longer hours, and more options available outside of peak periods.
- **Transit Market Area II** has high to moderately high population and employment densities and typically has a traditional street grid comparable to Market Area I. Much of Market Area II is also categorized as an Urban Center and it can support many of the same types of fixed-route transit as Market Area I, although usually at lower frequencies or shorter service spans.
- **Transit Market Area III** has moderate density but tends to have a less traditional street grid that can limit the effectiveness of transit. It is typically Urban with large portions of Suburban and Suburban Edge communities. Transit service in this area is primarily commuter express bus service with some fixed-route local service providing basic coverage. General public dial-a-ride services are available where fixed-route service is not viable.
- **Transit Market Area IV** has lower concentrations of population and employment and a higher rate of auto ownership. It is primarily composed of Suburban Edge and Emerging Suburban Edge communities. This market can support Rush Hour express bus services if a sufficient concentration of commuters likely to use transit service is located along a corridor. The low-density development and suburban form of development presents challenges to fixed-route transit. General public dial-a-ride services are appropriate in Market Area IV.
- **Transit Market Area V** has very low population and employment densities and tends to be primarily Rural communities and Agricultural uses. General public dial-a-ride service may be appropriate here, but due to the very low-intensity land uses these areas are not well-suited for fixed-route transit service.

Figure 1. Transit Market Areas

Transit Market Areas



2040 TRANSPORTATION POLICY PLAN | METROPOLITAN COUNCIL
Figure 6-3



Chapter 6 includes ways to manage the transit system to ensure public resources are used effectively to meet customer needs while considering the impacts and benefits on under-represented populations. The region manages the transit system using policies and procedures, for instance:

- Performing Service Equity and System Monitoring Analyses as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Creating an annual Regional Route Performance Analysis, an evaluation of how transit service performs compared to the TPP performance standards for all fixed route and dial-a-ride services in the region, as well as Metro Mobility

The TPP states that the regular-route bus system will need to expand to meet growing demand and improve access to destinations, especially for those relying on transit. Types of regular route service improvement opportunities are identified on core local routes, high-frequency routes, supporting local routes, suburban local routes and commuter and express routes:

- Expansion of core local routes will concentrate on providing more frequent and longer span of service on existing routes to meet growing demand along these corridors.
- Expansion of supporting local routes will focus on adding new routes to fill in the grid and providing better service coverage to moderately dense areas. Frequency and span on existing routes will also be improved to better serve customer needs.
- Commuter and express routes will be expanded in coordination with transit advantages to provide a congestion-free alternative in congested highway corridors, where demand warrants. Existing routes may be improved to add reverse-commute service to connect urban residents with suburban jobs and provide midday service to allow a more flexible schedule.

The TPP also includes policy and direction for transitways, including Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). BRT is differentiated from other routes in the region by service operations, runningway, technology, branding, stations, vehicles and off-board fare collection. Metro Transit's Network Next plan identified the next three arterial BRT corridors for implementation and identified other corridors for mid-term and long-term implementation. Network Now will not identify new arterial BRT projects but may modify the recommended opening day service including frequency and/or span. The recommendations from Network Next designating the F, G and H Line corridors were formally amended into the TPP in 2021.

Highway BRT projects have been developed as the result of corridor-specific studies to evaluate potential BRT improvements along major highways. These evaluations are typically the product of planning-level study partnerships between transit providers, local governments, and the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT). In addition to evaluation of potential highway BRT improvements, past corridors developed for highway BRT have also included pre-BRT service demonstration efforts with expanded all-day, bi-directional limited stop service in the proposed corridor ahead of BRT implementation. These efforts demonstrate the market for all-day transit service prior to the development of BRT plans or projects. Transit improvements along highway corridors are also developed in close coordination with major highway reconstruction efforts within the MnDOT program. Current BRT projects in highway corridors include the METRO Red Line and METRO Orange Line. The METRO Gold Line is under construction as of 2023.

APPENDIX G – TRANSIT DESIGN GUIDELINES AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Appendix G: Transit Design Guidelines of the 2040 TPP provides guidance on transit design and performance standards, including network design & access, service levels, facility siting & design and performance standards. The Transit Design Guidelines are intended to guide the appropriate allocation of transit resources and ensure regional coordination and consistency.

Appendix G outlines which transit service types and levels are appropriate for each market area, as shown in Table G-2 below:

TPP Appendix G Table G-2: Transit Market Area Transit Demand and Typical Services

Transit Market Area	Transit Market Index Range	Propensity to Use Transit	Typical Transit Service
Market Area I	TMI greater than 256.0	Highest potential for transit ridership	Dense network of local routes with highest levels of service accommodating a wide variety of trip purposes. Limited stop service supplements local routes where appropriate.
Market Area II	TMI between 128.0 and 256.0	Approximately 1/2 ridership potential of Market Area I	Similar network structure to Market Area I with reduced level of service as demand warrants. Limited stop services are appropriate to connect major destinations.
Market Area III	TMI between 64.0 and 128	Approximately 1/2 ridership potential of Market Area II	Primary emphasis is on commuter express bus service. Suburban local routes providing basic coverage. General public dial-a-ride complements fixed route in some cases.
Market Area IV	TMI between 32.0 and 64.0	Approximately 1/2 ridership potential of Market Area III	Peak period express service is appropriate as local demand warrants. General public dial-a-ride services are appropriate.
Market Area V	TMI less than 32.0	Lowest potential for transit ridership	Not well-suited for fixed-route service. Primary emphasis is on general public dial-a-ride services.
Emerging Market Overlay	Varies.	Varies. Typically matches surrounding Market Area.	Varies. Typically matches surrounding Market Area.
Freestanding Town Center	TMI at least 64.0	Varies. Typically matches surrounding Market Area.	Varies. Potential for local community circulator as demand warrants. Some peak period commuter express service may be appropriate

For the purposes of the regional transit design guidelines and performance standards, routes in the regional transit network are classified based on their mode and role within the overall network. While light rail and commuter rail descriptions are also included, here are the relevant route types for Network Now:

- Core Local – routes that typically provide access to a downtown or major activity center and travel along important commercial corridors.
- Supporting Local – routes that typically don’t serve downtown but provide crosstown connections and transfers to core local routes
- Suburban Local – routes that operate in a suburban context and, while often less productive than core local routes, play an important role in providing basic-level of transit coverage throughout the region.
- Commuter and Express – routes that operate primarily in peak periods and travel to a downtown or major activity center.
- Arterial Bus Rapid Transit – routes that operate in high demand urban arterial corridors, with improved service, facility, and technology improvements.

Transit design guidelines are intended to guide the appropriate allocation of transit resources and ensure regional coordination and consistency. The design guidelines are organized by Transit Market Area and/or route type. These guidelines are representative of the general types of transit service that are appropriate to implement, however exceptions often exist based on specific local circumstances.

Specific guidelines for route spacing, span of service, minimum frequency, passenger amenities and route productivity can be found in Appendix G of the 2040 TPP available on the Met Council website.

The technical guidance in the TPP will inform the identification and evaluation of transit improvements included in Network Now.

Transit Information and Shelter Placement Guidelines (2015 and 2017)

Lead Agency: Metro Transit

TRANSIT INFORMATION AT BUS STOPS (2015)

In 2015 Metro Transit conducted a background study and released guidelines for the amount of transit information available at bus stops.³ Low-boarding bus stops, with less than 10 boardings a day, have at a minimum a bus stop sign, route numbers, and NexTrip Instructions. Where there are 10 or more daily boardings, route descriptions and route maps are added. Timetables are usually only offered at bus stops with shelters. Additional information helps improve customer experience but information must be maintained because inaccurate information is worse than no information.

SHELTER PLACEMENT GUIDELINES (2017)

After gathering public input in 2016 and 2017, Metro Transit updated the shelter placement and additional amenities guidelines in 2017.⁴ Locations with at least 100 boardings a day are considered high or highest priority locations for a shelter. Medium and low priority locations for a shelter have more than 30 boardings while if there are less than 15 boardings a day Metro Transit considers removing a shelter. Light and heat are not standard shelter features but are considered depending on the circumstances.

Regional Transitway Guidelines (2012)

Lead Agency: Metropolitan Council

The Metropolitan Council adopted regional transitway guidelines in 2012 and added minor amendments related to light rail in 2015 and 2016.⁵ The document includes guidelines for all-day frequent service such as arterial bus rapid transit, highway station-to-station BRT and LRT, as well as commuter express service like commuter rail and highway BRT express. Details on minimum frequency, station spacing, station siting, travel time, productivity, maximum loading guidelines, and other transit service coordination are included. These guidelines may be updated or modified during the 2050 TPP process, happening concurrently with Network Now.

3 https://www.metrotransit.org/Data/Sites/1/media/about/improvements/shelters/transit_info_at_bus_stops_august2015.pdf

4 https://www.metrotransit.org/Data/Sites/1/media/about/improvements/06-115-01-18_bbs-placement-guidelines.pdf

5 <https://metrocouncil.org/Transportation/Planning-2/Transit-Plans,-Studies-Reports/Transit-Transitways/Regional-Transitway-Guidelines.aspx>

Council Policies & Procedures (Ongoing)

Lead Agency: Metropolitan Council

The Metropolitan Council has policies and procedures that focus on upholding the council's mission and customer relations and outreach approach. These include the following:

- **Transportation Planning and Transit Services Policy** – The council must plan effective regional transportation services and facilities, coordinate regional transportation priorities, and invest transportation resources in a cost-effective manner. Transit service will be planned to match different land use patterns and socioeconomic conditions and evaluated for effectiveness.
 - Major service changes require a public hearing, but smaller changes should also include community involvement. Customer feedback, task forces and advisory committees, project specific input solicitation, and public hearings all are tools that allow the public to assist in the planning process.
 - The Council raises public awareness of issues facing the region to give citizens a better idea of the challenges addressing them and uses advisory bodies like Transportation Advisory Board and Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee to include public involvement in the decision-making process. Public hearings, meetings, and notices are also tools to engage citizens and businesses impacted by regional policies and proposed solutions to regional transportation issues.
- **Equity Policy** – Equity is an important aspect to examine the council's actions to support orderly and economic development of the metropolitan region. An equity framework and accountability to upholding it are central to the council's mission. The Metropolitan Council will conduct its own operations and use its assets and authorities to equitably serve the needs of the metropolitan area. To help achieve equity, the Council will:
 - Evaluate its operations, planning, and investments through an Equity Lens
 - Identify and mitigate disproportionately adverse effects of the Council's work
 - Engage a full cross-section of community members in decision-making
 - Provide just and fair access to opportunities and services that support regional diversity
 - Coordinate the network of infrastructure development to benefit all residents in the metro area
- **Title VI Major Service Change Policy** – Major service changes require a Title VI Service Equity Analysis before implementation. This policy defines what is a major service change and certain situations that are exempt from this policy. A 25% reduction in service, a new route, restructuring of transit service in an area, or elimination of a transit route without alternate fixed route service all qualify as a major service change. Seasonal service changes, demonstration routes, special event services, and emergencies do not qualify under the policy.
- **Title VI Disparate Impact and Disproportionate Burden Policy** – Major service changes and fare policy changes are required to be evaluated to measure the potential for disparate impacts to BIPOC communities and disproportionate burdens to low-income populations. The Metropolitan Council defines a 10% difference between populations as evidence of a disparate impact or disproportionate burden. If the threshold is triggered, mitigations must be considered.
- **Accountability to the Public Policy** – The Metropolitan Council recognizes its responsibility to use its resources wisely to fulfill its mission and to serve the public and uphold the public's trust. The support and cooperation of the public is necessary for the council to fulfill its mission. This includes the need for strong public and community relations which can be supported with the use of public participation in projects. The Council will monitor its effectiveness by measuring progress against its stated mission and goals.
- **Education and Outreach Policy** – information from the council must be shared with the public so citizens can make informed decisions and give input on the effectiveness of regional services provided by the council.

- **Communications Policy** –The Metropolitan Council is committed to providing timely, accurate and consistent information to the general public, stakeholders, and other units of government. It is a priority of the Council to maintain active and regular dialogue with the public and for staff to design communications to meet the needs of the Council’s diverse stakeholders.

Metro Transit Equity Statement (2022)

Lead Agency: Metro Transit

BACKGROUND

In addition to the Metropolitan Council’s equity policies, Metro Transit adopted a Transit Equity statement in 2022. Drafted by the agency’s Equity & Inclusion team, the statement includes feedback from employees throughout Metro Transit and guides the tangible steps Metro Transit is taking to be more equitable and inclusive within the organization and the community.

TRANSIT EQUITY STATEMENT

Metro Transit acknowledges that providing safe, affordable, and reliable transportation increases opportunity. Transit services and programs should be built to equitably benefit all, especially under-served communities, including BIPOC, low-wealth, women, people with disabilities, LGBTQ, youth and older adults. Transit equity requires identifying and addressing injustices and building actionable pathways to create a fair and more just future.

Metro Transit understands that transit decisions can impact the ability of under-served communities to find and keep jobs, reach medical care, access educational opportunities and affordable housing, and develop and maintain social connections, among other impacts. Transit services and investments can reduce spatial inequalities that contribute to racial, environmental, and economic disparities.

Metro Transit has an essential role and responsibility to examine all decisions impacting our region’s access to quality transit, reduce existing disparities, and prevent further inequities by:

- *Reviewing and revising policies*
- *Seeking partnerships with other responsible institutions; and*
- *Improving planning and operational practices*

The Transit Equity statement informs all agency functions, including planning and project prioritization. Network Now will use this guidance to prioritize equity in the principles and evaluation criteria that ultimately drive the creation of future service recommendations.

Public Engagement Plan (2015)

Lead Agency: Metropolitan Council

Thrive MSP 2040 required the Met Council to create a public engagement plan.⁶ The Metropolitan Council drafted this plan based on feedback and lessons learned from the Corridors of Opportunity effort. Corridors of Opportunity was an initiative completed in 2014 that focused on the goal of promoting development along the

⁶ <https://metrocouncil.org/About-Us/Publications-And-Resources/Public-Engagement-Plan.aspx>

region's emerging transitway system while advancing economic vitality and benefits to people of all incomes and backgrounds. The goal of the Engagement Plan is to make a shift in the planning process from thinking about traditional outreach and participation processes to an engagement model that fosters shared problem solving, supportive partnerships and reciprocal relationships. In the plan, outreach is defined as "the act of reaching out" and initiating contact with others. Engagement is the act of specifically organizing others to help the Council generate ideas, better understand issues, identify concerns and considerations and help with problem-solving.

The Plan places emphasis on eight principles: equity, respect, transparency, relevance, accountability, collaboration, inclusion, and cultural competence. Strategies include commonly used practices as well as emerging strategies that focus on the idea that better engagements result in better planning outcomes. The PEP lists ten strategies for outreach, including creating an engagement plan for all large planning efforts, building long-term relationships within the community, leveraging existing partnerships and using online interactive spaces. Success is measured before, during, and at the conclusion of the project.

Network Now will have extensive community engagement at several points throughout the project. A Public Engagement Plan was developed that outlines how and when specific engagement and outreach will take place. Public comments will be accepted throughout the policy, especially when a draft plan is released. The results of different activities and opportunities for stakeholders and the general public to convey their perspectives on how Metro Transit can best serve their communities.

Network Next (2021)

Lead Agency: Metro Transit

Network Next was launched in 2019 as a 20-year plan for expanding and improving the bus network, including local and express routes, integrated shared mobility options, and new arterial bus rapid transit (BRT) lines. In 2020, Metro Transit modified the Network Next project to focus specifically on identifying the region's next arterial BRT lines. The plan was completed in 2021.⁷

The Metropolitan Council adopted Network Next plan outcomes in March 2021. The METRO F, G, and H lines will join a growing network of BRT lines that provide an improved customer experience with frequent service and faster trips in our region's busiest bus corridors.

- The [METRO F Line](#) will serve the Central Avenue corridor, largely replacing Route 10 from downtown Minneapolis to Northtown Mall via Central and University avenues.
- The [METRO G Line](#) will serve the Rice/Robert corridor, traveling between West St. Paul and Little Canada via Robert and Rice streets and replacing portions of routes 62 and 68.
- The [METRO H Line](#) will serve the Como/Maryland corridor from downtown Minneapolis to Sun Ray Transit Center in St. Paul via Como Avenue and Maryland Avenue, replacing and extending Route 3.

Network Now will build on Network Next to focus on the future of the local and express bus network.

2023 Legislative Session: Additional Funding

Body: Minnesota State Legislature

The 2023 state legislative session included a variety of programs that benefit the Metropolitan Council and Metro Transit. For the seven-county metro region, the session delivered a new sustainable funding source for transit operations, landmark investments in regional parks and trails, and significant investments in clean water, among other changes.⁸

⁷ <https://www.metrotransit.org/network-next>

⁸ <https://metro council.org/News-Events/Council-News/Newsletters/2023-Legislative-Recap.aspx>

The transportation bill brought a new sustainable revenue source for region's transportation system with a ¾-cent regional transportation sales tax that goes into effect in October 2023. These funds will be split between the region's counties (17%) and the Met Council (83%). The Met Council share will primarily go toward transit operations, maintenance, and capital projects, with a small portion focused on active transportation like walking and biking.

Other areas of investment include:

- [Metro Mobility](#)
- [METRO Blue Line Extension](#)
- Highway bus rapid transit development along Highways 169 and 55
- Transit systems operations
- Motor Vehicle Sales Tax allocation and formula changes
- Fleet replacement and small capital projects
- [Transit Service Intervention Project](#)

The adopted statute, Minn. Stat. § 473.4465, requires the Metropolitan Council to invest in thirteen specific categories using the new sales tax funding. These include the following:

- Improvements to bus service levels
- Improvements related to transit safety, including additional staff
- Maintenance and improvements to bus accessibility at transit stops and transit centers
- Transit shelter replacement and improvements
- Planning and project development for expansion of arterial bus rapid transit lines
- Operations and capital maintenance of arterial bus rapid transit
- Planning and project development for expansion of highway bus rapid transit and bus guideway lines
- Operations and capital maintenance of highway bus rapid transit and bus guideways
- Procurement of zero-emission buses consistent with the Metro Transit Zero-Emission Bus (ZEB) Transition Plan⁹
- Demand response microtransit service (Metro Transit micro¹⁰)
- Financial assistance to microtransit service providers
- Financial assistance to local governments and nonprofits for active transportation
- Wage increases for Metro Transit hourly operations employees

Funding provided through the 2023 legislative session and regional sales tax will help Metro Transit continue to restore and expand transit service offerings, as well as to continue building the region's network of high-quality transitways. Network Now will guide investments in local and express bus service that make efficient and effective use of additional regional funding for transit.

⁹ <https://www.metrotransit.org/electric-buses>

¹⁰ <https://www.metrotransit.org/micro>