

Chapter 3/Policies and Strategies

The purpose of this *Transportation Policy Plan* is to develop an integrated transportation system that advances regional economic land use and growth management goals. This section contains policies and strategies to help achieve the regional vision as defined by the *Regional Development Framework*.

The Council develops broad action policies so regional issues are effectively addressed. Accompanying strategies provide specific methods for implementing those policies. The Council and other partners will implement the policies and strategies to bring about the transportation facilities and services called for in this plan. The policies and strategies are closely related to the multi-modal transportation plan found in Chapter 4 of this plan.

The philosophy and focus of the plan is to implement the *Framework*. Specifically:

- Plan and invest in multi-modal transportation choices based on the full range of costs and benefits.
- Make more efficient use of the regional transportation system.
- Encourage travel demand management strategies, including flexible work hours and telecommuting.
- Focus highway investments first on maintaining and managing the existing system, and second on slowing the growth of congestion.
- Encourage local communities to implement a system of fully interconnected arterial and local streets, pathways and bikeways.
- Promote the development and preservation of various freight modes.
- Support airport facilities investments.
- Serve the region's economic needs.

Achieving this integrated, transportation system plan will require additional resources. The historic funding sources are no longer adequate to meet the growing and changing needs of the region. The Metropolitan Council will actively pursue an adequate level of funding to implement the plan and address the unmet investment needs.

Policy 1: Land Use and Transportation Investments

Regional transportation investments will be coordinated with land use objectives to support and encourage the intensification of development at key nodes and along major transportation corridors within the Metropolitan Urban Service Area to accommodate growth and reinvestment and minimize loss of vital natural resources. Transportation services and facilities will serve existing development needs and help shape future patterns and intensity of development.

Strategy 1a: Transportation investments and land development along major transportation corridors will be coordinated to intensify job centers and increase transportation links between job centers and medium-to-high density residential developments to improve the jobs/housing connections, community vitality and efficiency of the transportation system.

A balance of jobs and housing along transportation corridors can significantly improve the efficiency of the transportation system. Achieving and maintaining the jobs/housing links along corridors requires focusing development in centers, and connecting specialized land uses along the corridor. Analysis of individual corridors should determine the mix of investments – e.g., housing, employment, transit, other high-occupant-vehicle modes, increased road capacity, urban design, land use intensification, improved mix of uses, etc. – that are needed to optimize the utility of transportation investments in the corridor and improve community vitality.

Some investments that improve transportation efficiency can be made through sources not traditionally related to transportation, such as the Livable Communities Demonstration Account, the Tax Base Revitalization Account or local/subregional community design initiatives. Additionally, local and community transportation systems need to be integrated with the regional system through street patterns,

bikeways, walkways and transit access for optimum investment effectiveness. This concept should be reflected in the local comprehensive plans.

Strategy 1b: Transit stations and service should be catalysts for the development or growth of centers along transit corridors.

The location, design and amenities of transit stations should be selected with the goal of stimulating development and redevelopment. Station design elements should help to provide incentives for mixed use, convenient development in and around the specific station. Also, transit stations should facilitate connections to the surrounding community by effective transportation links as well as by designs that reflect the unique character and culture of the area, such as bikeways and sidewalks. Transportation investments will support transit centers and stations that provide access and facilitate connections to economic centers and neighborhoods.

Strategy 1c: Transportation investments and land development will be coordinated to create an environment conducive to alternative travel modes including transit, pedestrian and bicycle travel.

Transportation funding criteria should ensure that new transportation facilities are designed to provide an environment that encourages many purposeful trips to be made by transit, foot or bicycle as well as by car. Increasing mobility choices is the Council's objective. This will require design tools and amenities such as appropriately scaled lighting, landscaping and suitable path surfaces. Moreover, much adjacent land development will need to provide a concentration of mixed uses in order to complement the transportation investments and to improve walkability.

Strategy 1d: Transportation spending and land development will be coordinated to meet the needs of people of all levels of functional ability.

Regional transportation investments will give priority to projects accompanied by land development that provides adequate accessibility for people with varying levels of functional abilities, including especially the ADA community and frail elderly. Additionally, the neighborhood or activity centers should be interconnected by transportation service accessible for the ADA community.

Policy 2: Adequate Transportation Resources

Working with the Governor, the Legislature, the business community and other stakeholders, the Metropolitan Council will actively pursue an adequate level of transportation funding to implement this policy plan and address identified but unmet investment needs. The funding sources will be consistent with the evaluation criteria for revenue sources and funding principles identified in the "Regional Transportation Financial Plan" section and described in Appendix.

The Transportation Financial Plan identifies priority investments possible with anticipated resources for the next 22 years. However, additional funding needs also are identified. Existing revenue levels described in this policy plan are insufficient to deliver the projects and services required to meet the objectives of the *Regional Development Framework*. MnDOT estimates that the cost of the unmet highway needs to hold the level of congestion to 1998 levels could reach \$26 billion by 2030. The region will also need \$2.4-3.0 billion in additional transit capital funds between 2005-2020 and \$120 million annually by 2020 in additional transit operating funds to implement the transit system described in this document. Failure to fund these services will result in the deterioration of regional accessibility for work and personal trips.

Funding sources and levels established in the past are not adequate to meet the growing and changing needs of the region; additional revenues will be necessary. Working with the Governor, the Legislature, the business community, local governments and other stakeholders, the Council will actively pursue increased and/or additional revenue sources consistent with the evaluation criteria and funding principles contained in the financial plan. Priority criteria for judging additional revenue sources include:

- The ability to implement the *Regional Development Framework*;

- Percent of contribution returned to the region;
- Ability to modify travel behavior and improve efficiency of the transportation system; and
- Dedicated and reliable source(s) for transit.

A number of funding sources have the potential to modify travel behavior more than the sources currently used by the region and state. Alternative funding sources such as HOT lanes, FAST lanes, toll roads, variable rate tolls, value pricing, innovative parking charges or other user fees should be used when feasible to supplement existing funding sources. MnDOT and the Council will work together to develop regional policies for guiding the equitable use of alternative financing mechanisms, to modify travel behavior and provide increased resources for highways and transit. MnDOT, the Council and the University of Minnesota will continue their studies of alternative financing mechanisms to identify positive and negative impacts, to develop procedures that may be required to mitigate negative impacts and to provide outreach activities to educate the public and private sectors about these alternatives.

Policy 3: Priorities for Transportation Modal Investments

Regional transportation investments will be made on the basis of need and will be consistent with the forecasts, policies, strategies and priorities of this policy plan and the *Regional Development Framework*.

Strategy 3a: Highway System Investments

The priority for metropolitan highway system investments will be to: first, ensure preservation; second, manage existing facilities; and third, expand the system consistent with policies, strategies and priorities of this plan. Highway investments will include provisions for alternative modes, such as transit, pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Decisions about where and when to make investments in the highway system are made jointly by MnDOT and the Council in consultation with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB). Consistency with the *Regional Development Framework* is the primary criterion in making these decisions. The *Framework* has growth and reinvestment strategies for each planning area designed to support connected and efficient land use patterns. The *Framework* gives attention to how development occurs—such as the mix of land uses, the number of housing units per acre, the integration of transit and the connection of local streets. The *Framework* also emphasizes the need for intensified development in centers that have convenient access to transportation corridors and in rural centers that want to grow and that lie along major highways.

To ensure that transportation investments support the *Regional Development Framework*, priority will be given to transportation facilities and programs that are part of an approved local comprehensive plan that is consistent with the *Framework* and this guide.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation has jurisdiction over more than 1,110 miles of trunk highways in the region. The metropolitan highway system, or principal arterial system, consists of 657 miles of freeways and expressways, most of which are MnDOT trunk highways. Counties have jurisdiction over three metropolitan highway facilities that are not trunk highways. These principal arterials are shown in Figure 2-2. MnDOT has identified a system of Interregional Corridors (IRC), which connect regional trade centers within the state to each other. These roads, which connect to Greater Minnesota, have a higher priority for investment than other principal arterials and trunk highways outside the I-494/I-694 corridor. On and inside the I-494/I-694 ring, improvements to the most congested bottlenecks represent another set of priorities for the region that have been included in the highway system plan to the extent funds are available.

The Council must ensure that regional investments in this highway system produce the greatest benefit for the greatest number of residents. The Council will use various tools to achieve this strategy, such as:

- Review of local comprehensive plans;

- Develop and review the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP);
- Participate in corridor studies, IRC studies and major investment studies;
- Make corridor recommendations part of this plan;
- Conduct transit sector studies and review transit corridor studies’
- Review of environmental studies; and
- Develop priorities for use of state and federal funds.

Strategy 3b: Transit Capital and Operating Investments

Regional transit capital and operating investments will support implementation of the Transit System Plan and transit policies, including developing a system of transitways and doubling transit ridership by 2030. Because funding is limited, the Council will place priority on supporting preservation, maintenance and replacement of the existing transit system’s capital assets before considering new, expanded or enhanced capital facilities and equipment. The Council will seek dedicated funds from Congress and the state Legislature for transitways due to the high capital cost and limited resources available. New and additional funds will also be pursued to provide operating funds for the expanded transit system.

Strategy 3c: Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements

Federal STP, CMAQ and Enhancement funds will be made available for pedestrian and bicycle improvements on a competitive basis consistent with the *Regional Development Framework*, the policies in this guide and federal program guidelines.

Bicycle or pedestrian projects will only be funded through the regional transportation project selection processes if they are included in, or consistent with, the policies of a state or regional plan, a city or county comprehensive plan found to be consistent with Council plans, or an adopted capital improvement program. Funding priority will be given to bicycle and pedestrian projects that:

- Serve the greatest number of likely users, especially commuters;
- Provide a direct connection to a multi-modal transfer facility;
- Support compact and mixed-use development;
- Are integrated with other transportation modes;
- Serve a transportation need or purpose over recreation;
- Provide safety and security for users, or help educate residents regarding bicycle and pedestrian safety;
- Are cost-effective;
- Fill gaps in or add continuous segments to the regional bicycle and pedestrian systems.

Strategy 3d: Investment in Multimodal Facilities

Criteria used by the region to prioritize projects for federal funding will encourage multimodal investments, such as bicycle trails or pedestrian connections to transit stations, bus-only shoulder lanes on roadways, HOV bypasses at highway interchanges or rail/truck intermodal terminals.

Strategy 3e: Airport System Investments

Airport authorities should strive to deliver high-quality services at affordable prices to users. The Metropolitan Airports Commission should operate within a long-term financial plan that maximizes non-regional funding sources to minimize financial impacts on regional taxpayers while maintaining a high rating on aviation bonds.

Policy 4: Public Participation

Public participation will be promoted in formulating transportation policy and implementing decisions.

Strategy 4a: Public Participation

The Metropolitan Council, the TAB and MnDOT will foster a variety of citizen participation activities and methods to communicate with the public to solicit broad participation, comment, review and debate on proposed plans and implementation proposals. Such methods will vary with the scale of the project, the extent of impacts and the community involved. The participation strategies will be in full compliance with all federal and state regulations. The Council's complete public participation plan is found in Appendix D.

The TAB, made up of locally elected officials, agency representatives and citizens, is expected to represent the interests of the region and help the Council with its outreach activities. The TAB acts in an advisory and supportive capacity to the Council and coordinates the 3C (Comprehensive, Continuing and Coordinated) transportation planning process in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

TAB's role has enabled the transportation planning process of the Twin Cities metropolitan area to satisfy federal requirements, which specify that the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) functions as "the forum for cooperative decision-making by principal elected officials of general purpose local government." The majority of TAB members are locally elected officials; an additional seven are citizens appointed by the Council. Without the TAB, it is unlikely that federal agencies would recognize the Metropolitan Council as the MPO in the transportation planning process.

The Council has adopted the position that the TAB is responsible for assigning funding priorities and adopting the Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP). The Council may approve or disapprove the TIP in part or whole, but cannot modify it. If modifications are required, the TIP is sent back to the TAB with the Council's recommendations. The TAB then determines the manner in which the TIP will be resubmitted to the Council.

The regional *Prospectus*, which describes the regional transportation planning process, is available to foster understanding of the process and to facilitate meaningful public participation.

Strategy 4b: Participation of Non-traditional Populations

In compliance with federal environmental justice guidelines, the Metropolitan Council will increase its already significant efforts to reach out to groups that have not traditionally participated in the transportation planning and programming process. Special efforts are made to involve representatives of racial and ethnic minorities and low-income, elderly and disabled populations. A thorough discussion of these efforts can be found in Appendix D.

Strategy 4c: Public Awareness of Transportation Issues

Efforts to inform the public regarding important transportation issues should continue to be increased, similar to that done in recent transit sector studies.

Impacts of major transportation issues should be communicated to the public to encourage widespread discussion and to educate people on the rationale for regional transportation decisions. Topics that may benefit from more exposure include:

- Benefits and costs of alternatives to reduce the increasing rate of congestion;
- Impacts of declining investments on the regional transportation system;
- Revenue needs and dedication of long-term revenue sources;
- Benefits of transit advantages (shoulder lanes, metering and bypass lanes), transit centers and park-and-ride facilities;
- The roles of different roadways, such as minor arterials;

- The benefits of alternative revenue sources, such as HOT lanes, FAST lanes, tolls and variable pricing;
- The role of air transportation on enhancing regional economic objectives;
- The role of different airports;
- The role of transitways in promoting transit usage; and
- The effect of the region’s transportation investment on air quality standards.

Strategy 4d: Transit Customer Involvement

The Council will continue to solicit community, municipal and customer involvement in transit planning and service restructuring to ensure transit is tailored to meet community needs and markets for travel. To plan and implement effective transportation services, it is essential to communicate directly with local communities and employers, affected neighborhood residents, people who are transit-dependent or who have other special transportation needs, people of minority communities and agencies that provide social services.

Policy 5: Tailoring Transit Services to Diverse Market Conditions

The Council will make the transit system more compatible with different land use patterns and socioeconomic conditions, following the design standards and service delivery strategies defined in Tables 4 and 5 of the Transit System Plan. The Council will also promote development of more transit-compatible land uses, in line with *Regional Development Framework* objectives.

The integration of land use and transit strategies is an important element of the Council’s *Regional Development Framework*. Various employment, housing and population densities and varying concentrations of transit-dependent people define different transit markets. Those diverse markets must be served with different transit service strategies, service hours, operating frequencies and capital improvements. Those markets and the appropriate service standards have been incorporated in the Transit System Plan (Table 4).

Strategy 5a: Transit Service Options

The Council will continue to pursue a broad range of transit service options to better match services to demand, including:

- Local regular-route bus services (fixed route, fixed schedule);
- Express bus rapid transit (BRT) services;
- Regular route reverse commute;
- Community circulators;
- General public paratransit services (community based dial-a-ride/regular route services);
- Large and small vehicle operations;
- Light rail transit service;
- Commuter rail service;
- Ridesharing; and
- ADA services such as accessible buses and complementary services.

Strategy 5b: Transit Service Expansion

The Council will identify future transit service expansion based on projected population and employment intensification. This includes expansion of current market areas as well as the outward expansion of the transit service area boundary to include newly developing areas, as resources permit.

Strategy 5c: Rural Transit Service

The Council, in consultation with transit providers and local units of government, will develop service priority guidelines for the allocation of resources for rural transit services. The guidelines will

establish levels of rural coverage, with emphasis on preserving existing service levels and also providing a safety net for transit-dependent residents. These guidelines will serve to direct the development of transit and paratransit service in both rural communities and underdeveloped or agricultural areas.

Strategy 5d: Pedestrian- and Transit-Oriented Communities

The Council will encourage cities, through regional incentives, to create more pedestrian- and transit-oriented communities that can be more effectively and efficiently served by transit and ridesharing with an interconnected system of streets, bikeways and pedestrian walkways. Such regional incentives include federal TEA-21 funding, Livable Communities demonstration funding and other sources of funding available through the Council. The location of these types of communities with respect to the current and future regional transit system should determine whether they are transit-oriented or pedestrian-oriented. Pedestrian-oriented development, absent the presence of transit, is a desirable land use design.

Strategy 5e: Transit Service Evaluation

Every two years the Council will evaluate all regional transit services according to the performance standards integrated as part of this 2030 Transit System Plan.

Strategy 5f: Transit Centers/Stations/Park-and-Ride Facilities

The Council will work with cities to site and design transit centers and stations for access to economic centers and neighborhoods and to expand regional park-and-ride facilities to support service expansion as expected growth occurs within express corridor areas and along dedicated transitways. As land use changes occur, the opportunity to accommodate strategically located and appropriately sized transit facilities must be an active part of all regional and local planning and development processes. Well-planned and -located park-and-ride facilities provide transfer opportunities and create the intensification necessary to provide cost-effective transit service in low-density areas. Such facilities need to be designed for ease of access, both for the transit rider and for transit vehicle operations. The development by the private sector of complementary services such as childcare, convenience outlets and health clubs on sites adjacent to stations, centers and park-and-ride facilities will provide additional enhancements to of transit services.

Policy 6: Increasing Transit Service Attractiveness

The Council will continue to improve transit service coordination and passenger safety, provide financial incentives to transit users, and make the system more travel time competitive, visible and user friendly.

Strategy 6a: Coordination Among Services

The Council will promote coordination among the different transit services provided by various authorities throughout the region to ensure that the overall regional transit system functions as a seamless and understandable regional network, and to avoid inefficiencies and duplication. This coordination of regional transit will include social service transportation, suburban transit systems, local initiative transit and other services. Some support services may be provided regionally, whereas other support services may be the responsibility of individual providers.

Strategy 6b: Transit Fare Structure

The Council will support a transit fare structure that recognizes market forces and balances five objectives:

- Maximize ridership;
- Maximize fare revenues;

- Relate the price to the cost of providing the service;
- Be understandable and easy to implement; and
- Relate transit pricing to other transportation costs (parking and auto operating costs).

The Council will continue to pursue innovative fare packages and incentives with employers, school districts and other academic institutions.

Strategy 6c: Marketing Transit/Ridesharing Services

The Council will increase the perceived value, benefits and usage of transit/rideshare services through:

- A mixture of image and product-specific advertising;
- Ongoing targeted promotion of new and restructured services, such as those resulting from Sector Studies;
- Metropass, TransitWorks, Commuter Check and other employer incentives;
- Regional Guaranteed Ride-Home Program;
- Trip Planner;
- Region-wide coordination of outreach, public education and special events;
- Freeway signage for park-and-ride facilities and transit centers/stations; and
- Other initiatives and technologies that make the services more understandable and easier to use.

Annual regional transit and rideshare marketing plans will be developed by the Council based on input from providers and customers.

Strategy 6d: Safety and Security

Working with transit operators and communities, the Council will continue to give the highest priority to a safe and secure environment for transit passengers and employees. Transit security improvements on vehicles and around transit stops will continue to be given high investment priority by the Council.

Strategy 6e: Transit-Enhancing Services and Facilities

To enhance the overall attractiveness of the existing system, the Council will focus on improving transit travel time competitiveness through direct route alignment, appropriate bus stop spacing and fast fare collection; increasing the frequency and span of service; facilitating smooth transfer connections; and providing appropriate amenities; and sizing of facilities for customers and operations.

Policy 7: Transitways

The Metropolitan Council will strongly pursue the cost-effective implementation of a regional network of transitways on dedicated rights of way and express bus rapid transit-routes to provide a travel-time advantage for transit vehicles, improve transit service reliability and increase transit accessibility to jobs.

Strategy 7a: Transit Technologies

Transitway implementation will consider the modes of bus rapid transit (which may utilize busways, HOV lanes, bus only shoulders and/or arterial street bus lanes), LRT and commuter rail technology. Streetcars may also be appropriate, if proven cost-effective, in arterial corridors. Other technologies such as PRT may be considered for future implementation as they become proven, reliable and cost-effective to address needs in specific travel markets. The most appropriate technology in terms of mobility improvements, operating efficiency and effectiveness, environmental benefits and cost-effectiveness, according to the specific characteristics of each route or system segment, should be selected. The cost-effectiveness will be determined by applying the FTA cost-effectiveness criteria.

Strategy 7b: Transitway Connections and Design Characteristics

The Council will support flexibility in implementing transitways relative to various types of connections and design characteristics. Examples of such connections are: economic centers (including the major airport), urban, urban/suburban or suburban/suburban portions of the region. Design characteristics include a variety of examples – exclusive busways on their own rights-of-way, freeway /arterial shoulder bus lanes and arterial bus lanes.

Strategy 7c: Transitway Coordination

Transitway implementation will be coordinated with other transportation and transit facilities (for example, park-and-ride lots, transit centers, transit stations), with other transit advantages (for example, signal preemption, automatic vehicle location and other intelligent transportation system applications) and pedestrian facilities and regional trails, where appropriate.

Strategy 7d: Enhanced Transit Service Along Transitways

The Council will support enhanced transit service levels along transitway and HOV-lane corridors and the restructuring of routes along these corridors to connect passengers with the transitway and HOV-lane express routes.

Strategy 7e: Transitway Implementation

The Council will coordinate with MnDOT, regional rail authorities, transit providers and local units of government, including regional park implementing agencies, in the selection, design, construction and operation of transitways identified in the Transit System Plan. The Council and MnDOT will work with local units of government to identify opportunities for joint development of transitways and related facilities.

Strategy 7f: Transitways and Development

The Council will work with local units of government to ensure that transitway implementation promotes the *Framework* objectives of efficient, mixed-use development and redevelopment opportunities. Local units of government will be expected to develop consistent local comprehensive plans, zoning and community development strategies to ensure that more intensified mixed-use development occurs along transitway corridors and that the development is effectively linked to the transitway. Critical to the development of transitways, stations will be designed with weather-protective elements and provide transfer opportunities between different parts of the system.

Strategy 7g: Transit Alternatives

The Council will require that transitways and HOV lanes be considered as alternatives in feasibility, corridor scoping and environmental studies of how to provide additional capacity on metropolitan system highways.

Policy 8: Promoting Competition in the Delivery of Services

The Council and other transit providers should promote innovation, efficiency and greater diversity of options through increased competition in delivering transit services.

The Council and other transit providers should focus competition in the delivery of services on higher subsidy transit routes that may be more efficiently operated by the private sector through a competitive bidding process. These services may include paratransit operations provided in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), rural or suburban small vehicle operations and other high subsidy suburban services. Metro Transit will continue to be the primary provider of regular route transit services in the fully developed area of the region as legislatively defined.

Policy 9: Transit for People with Disabilities

The Council will provide transit services for persons with disabilities in full compliance with the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act.

A variety of transit service delivery methods will become even more critical to meet the transportation needs of the growing number of people who have physical, cognitive and mental health disabilities. These services include the accessible fixed-route transit system, Metro Mobility, county and community-based paratransit programs, and social service providers.

Strategy 9a: Accessible Vehicles

All newly purchased and leased transit vehicles purchased with public funds will be accessible to persons with disabilities.

Strategy 9b: Comparable Paratransit

Paratransit service comparable to the region's fixed-route transit system will be provided to individuals who are certified under the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) and who are unable to use the fixed-route transit systems. This comparable paratransit service, defined by the ADA law, will use Metro Mobility services and county transit providers to remain compliant.

Strategy 9c: Accessible Transit Facilities

The Council will ensure that all new transit facilities and alterations to existing facilities constructed with regional funds will be accessible.

Strategy 9d: Access to Transit for People with Disabilities

The Council will encourage cities to place priority on providing adequate access to transit stops and stations for persons with disabilities.

Strategy 9e: Utilizing Transit Centers for Transfers

The Council will encourage the utilization of transit centers and rail stations for transfers between fixed-route services, dial-a-ride, ADA paratransit and other community transportation services.

Policy 10: Travel Demand Management

The Council supports use of travel demand management techniques to reduce peak-period vehicle trips.

Among the travel demand management measures that can reduce peak-period commuter vehicle trips are:

- Promoting development consistent with *Regional Development Framework* policies and strategies;
- Transit-, bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly mixed-use development;
- Pricing techniques such as FAST lanes and HOT lanes (see strategy 13d);
- Modified or flexible work hours;
- Telework/telecommuting and telework centers;
- Aggressive promotion of alternatives to solo commuting, including transit, bicycling, ridesharing, carpool/vanpool matching;
- Transit ridership incentives and programs, such as TransitWorks, Metropass, and U-pass;
- Parking supply limitations and charges for single-occupant vehicles;
- Discounted and preferential parking for pool vehicles; and
- The regional Guaranteed Ride Home program.
- Increase transit service in corridors which are under major highway construction.

Strategy 10a: Transportation Management Organization/Association Partnerships

The Council will encourage communities with high employment concentrations to establish transportation management organizations (TMOs) or transportation management associations (TMAs). TMOs and TMAs are public or private partnerships comprising employers, building owners/managers and local government interests that are established to deal with transportation concerns, especially mitigation of peak traffic congestion.

Strategy 10b: Travel Demand Management Assistance and Incentives

The Council will provide travel demand management (TDM) technical assistance and financial incentives to transportation management organizations, transportation management associations, and to employers and building owners/managers, especially those located within a one-mile radius of metro highway system interchanges that are highly congested.

Strategy 10c: Travel Demand Management Tax Incentives

Employers are eligible for reductions in both state and federal taxes when they provide transit and vanpooling passes to their employees. Employers and building managers will be encouraged to use these incentives and to develop and implement a meaningful, proactive TDM plan. The Council will support state legislation that equalizes tax incentives between highway and transit users.

Strategy 10d: Parking Pricing and Availability

The Council will continue to work with its partners to help define the relationship of parking supply, demand, location and cost relative to the use of the single-occupant automobile versus transit, ridesharing or other alternative modes. Where appropriate the Council will promote modifications to parking policy that will encourage park-and-ride usage, vanpooling and carpooling.

Strategy 10e: Alleviate Highway Construction Impacts

The Council will work with Mn/DOT to determine where and when TDM actions may be appropriate to alleviate highway construction related traffic delays. Effective methods will be duplicated and refined from one application to the next.

Policy 11: Highway Planning

Planning a cost-effective, multi-modal and safe regional highway system that reflects the needs of a growing population and economy. Plan and design the Regional Highway System and the Local Street System to be comprehensive and integrated with present and future land uses, and respect for natural resources.

MnDOT and the Metropolitan Council have worked together to prepare MnDOT's Transportation System Plan (for eight counties) and the Council's Transportation Policy Plan (for seven counties). The policies and recommendations of the two plans have never been more consistent or integrated. The strategies in this policy provide direction for highway planning activities carried out by various levels of government.

The Metropolitan Highway System is made up of principal arterials identified on Figure 2-2. The region has identified a system of "A" minor arterials that supplement the metropolitan highways and are important to meet the mobility needs of the region. Principals and "A" minor arterials constitute the regional highway system.

Strategy 11a: Integrate existing and planned land uses and the transportation system.

If land use and transportation planning are integrated, a much more cost-effective transportation system can result and many related problems can be eliminated or reduced. Such integrated planning needs to take place at all levels of government and in all geographic settings. Access management and

freight movement requirements should be considered as key land use and transportation integration issues.

A balance is required between the land access and mobility functions of the highway system. The transportation elements of local and county comprehensive plans should identify safety, capacity or other problems on the principal arterials and the “A” minor arterial system. If improvements to locally controlled minor arterials are needed, these changes should be included in the local government capital improvement program.

Cities control access through subdivision ordinances. Local ordinances should reflect this balanced access management approach. Cities also need to recognize the freight requirements of all land uses. In some cities, this may be a significant demand on the highway system that requires special facilities, such as truck lanes and routes or modified turning radii at intersections.

Strategy 11b: Plan a multi-modal system.

Whenever a roadway plan is conceived or a design is drawn, various surface transportation modes and uses should be considered. MnDOT and the counties must provide advantages for transit where needed, including shoulder bus lanes, park and ride lots and bypasses of ramp meters. The inclusion of facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists are appropriate uses for most streets and highways with the exception of freeways and expressways. When bridges are built or rebuilt, the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians should be met, even if space must be separated from other modes to provide for safe use.

In compact, mixed-use neighborhoods and communities, transit, bicycling and walking can play important roles in meeting travel needs. Traffic calming measures on collector and local streets can reduce vehicular speeds, improve bicycle and pedestrian safety, and reduce neighborhood noise. Measures that retain interconnectivity of local streets are preferable. Traffic calming measures are not appropriate on principal or minor arterials because they inhibit the highway from fulfilling its regional role of providing mobility.

Strategy 11c: Plan and design facilities that protect and enhance the environment.

If environmental impacts are taken into consideration as the highway and street systems are planned and designed, those impacts can be lessened and, in many circumstances, positive changes can result. Recently, Context Sensitive Design has become common in roadway project development by various implementing agencies. The intent is to be sensitive to community attributes by balancing economic, social, aesthetic and environmental objectives.

Strategy 11d: Metropolitan Area and Adjacent Counties

The Council will work cooperatively with MnDOT, the adjacent Area Transportation Partnerships (ATPs) and local units of government to support the connection to and the integration of the regional highway network with the statewide transportation system focusing on interregional corridors (IRCs). The Council will also work cooperatively to ensure orderly and economic development of nodes along transportation corridors and to preserve the safety and mobility function of these transportation facilities. IRC study recommendations will be incorporated into MnDOT's TSP and recorded in Appendix G. Additional IRC studies are needed. Access management must be a significant part of protecting IRCs if the region is to support higher levels of investment.

Strategy 11e: Utilize Transportation corridor studies or sub-area studies.

Implementation planning of a highway or other transportation facility is generally done on a corridor basis or at times for a sub-area. Examples include the recent IRC studies done by MnDOT, EISs and studies for transitways. The Metropolitan Council regularly participates with other agencies and jurisdictions in highway corridor studies, transitway studies and some “A” minor arterial studies. These studies typically examine concerns about land use, access, capacity, level of service, geometrics, safety and impacts to the environment. Recommendations for improvements and other implementation

activities should be incorporated into the local comprehensive plans of the participating cities and counties and used by implementing agencies to guide improvements in the corridor.

The recommendations for regionally important highway facilities must be consistent with the corridor investment designation and cost estimate in this plan. The Council includes completed corridor studies in the Policy Plan. As new studies are completed, the Council adopts the recommendations as part of the Policy Plan by reference until the TPP is updated. Appendix G contains summaries of adopted corridor studies the Council considers current. The recommendations of these corridor studies will be used when setting priorities for regional highway and transit improvements and allocating federal funds

Strategy 11f: Plan for the management of the corridor investments.

The Council supports the implementation of a variety of management techniques to maximize the efficiency of existing highway corridors: high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, HOV bypasses at freeway ramp meters, access management, pricing strategies and bus-only shoulders. Such strategies should be evaluated in highway corridor studies and a management plan must be developed in all highway corridor expansion studies. As traffic volumes increase in highway corridors, a higher level of management should be pursued.

Policy 12: Implement a regional highway system in a cost-effective manner consistent with this Policy Plan.

Investment priorities for the Metropolitan Highway System are included in the 2005-2008 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in Appendix B, MnDOT's 10-year highway work plan in Table 4-11 and the financial plan in Chapter 5 of this plan.

Regional investments must be carefully made due to the significant limitations of transportation funds. The region and MnDOT are committed to deliver the projects now in the TIP and the 10-year work plan in a timely manner and within the estimated budgets recorded in this plan and the TSP. Major projects should move into the highway work plan only after full consultation between the Council, TAB and MnDOT.

Strategy 12a: The first highway investment priority is the preservation of the entire trunk highway system as described in MnDOT's TSP.

The Council supports the level of investment identified in the TSP and the financial plan chapter of this document for pavement and bridge preservation.

Preservation investments need to be made on a continuous basis. MnDOT should continue to effectively utilize its resources by incorporating management and safety improvements with preservation activities. Annually, MnDOT should continue to include the appropriate funds in the TIP to fund these activities.

Strategy 12b: Management investments are the second highest highway priority and should be upgraded as traffic demand warrants.

Safety and mobility benefits from major recent management activities are high. Highway technology provides an array of new and effective tools for this purpose. Management investments generally have the highest benefit to cost ratio of all investments in providing higher capacity and safer highways. The specific and general management investments defined in MnDOT's TSP and in Chapter 4 of this plan are higher priorities than expansion projects, even though expansion projects should move forward in the time frame described in this plan given the assumed resources are available.

Key management investments include access management, high-technology traffic management tools, as well as lot-technology activities such as FIRST (the Freeway Incident Response Safety Team). Cities are expected to incorporate access management policies in their plans and revise their ordinances incorporating MnDOT and county standards and procedures. MnDOT should systematically bring

additional management infrastructure on line.

Strategy 12c: Expand the Metropolitan Highway System in a cost-effective manner to meet the demands of the residents and economy to the extent possible within the constrained fiscal resources.

The growing population and economy of the region requires an expanded highway system. The expanded highway system will need to address many issues that exist today. The expanded system must address:

- Safety problems
- Barriers to movement of freight
- Bottlenecks caused by design issues, such as lane drops, left exits and limited interchange capacity.
- Capacity/congestion
- Transit needs
- Environmental concerns

Expansion projects on the metropolitan highway system should be consistent with the project scope and cost defined in Chapters 4 and 5 of this plan. As the project develops, changes to the scope of the project (number of through lanes and the number and location of interchanges) or increases in cost estimates of more than 20 percent would require an amendment to this plan. Procedures to accomplish this are in Chapter 5, subsection titled "Managing Projects; Scope, Cost and Revenue Sources".

Strategy 12d: Expenditure of federal transportation funds allocated by the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) should be consistent with this plan and the process and criteria adopted by the TAB.

The TAB and Council allocate federal funds in a number of defined funding categories. The TAB works with the concerned parties in the region to develop the process, criteria and weights to allocate these funds. The projects are intended to help implement this plan and the city and county comprehensive plans that also are required to be consistent with this plan. In some cases, MnDOT projects are funded through this process. The adopted criteria should ensure that selected projects will be consistent with this plan and the TSP.

Strategy 12e: Highway interchanges.

New or reconstructed trunk highway interchanges to expand capacity or meet safety concerns should be considered only if they are consistent with MnDOT's TSP. Construction and related improvements should not negatively affect the safe operation of the main roadway. Requests for new or expanded highway interchanges should follow the procedures and respond to the criteria described in Appendix I. MnDOT and the Council (with the input of TAB) should complete its interchange needs study to prioritize investments in land access interchanges. The construction of two or more consecutive interchanges is considered an expansion investment.

Strategy 12f: Access management of the regional highways system must be included in all categories of investments.

The Council supports an access-controlled metropolitan highway system. It is clear the capacity, safety and the ability of these roads to help implement land use plans diminish as access increases. MnDOT and the counties can manage access either on access-controlled highways or where access rights have been purchased.

Control of access on other principal arterial and "A" minors must be managed through other techniques. Cities that contain non-freeway principal arterials or "A" minor arterials are expected to adopt either MnDOT's or the appropriate county's access management guidelines and incorporate them into their zoning, subdivision and platting regulations.

MnDOT and the Council encourage the integrated development of local land use, transportation and access plans that increase or preserve the mobility on IRC routes and other trunk highways. Applicable

cities and towns are expected to implement IRC access management plans before capital investments are programmed. In the absence of a corridor management plan, MnDOT will review and approve access changes based on adopted access management guidelines.

Policy 13: Manage and operate the Metropolitan Highway System and “A” minor arterial system to provide maximum safety and mobility.

Building the highway system is not enough to meet the mobility needs of the region and state in a safe and cost-effective manner; it must be managed appropriately. Management activities include access management, enforcement of traffic laws, the traffic laws themselves, education of users and how disabled vehicles or incidents are handled. MnDOT is preparing an operation plan that will cover many topics. There are some aspects of operation and management of the highway system that are legitimate elements under the TSP and for this plan. The material below provides the Council policy position on these topics.

Strategy 13a: Highway jurisdiction should reflect the role the highway plays in the region and state.

The Metropolitan Highway System, comprised of principal arterials, and the “A” minor arterial system are the high capacity highways that serve the longest trips and address the mobility needs of the state and region. MnDOT should attempt to obtain jurisdiction over all principal arterials that are not currently trunk highways and any new principal arterials. MnDOT should also seek to transfer the ownership of any trunk highway in the region that is not a principal arterial or an “A” minor arterial to the appropriate county or city.

Strategy 13b: Managing access to principal and “A” minor arterials.

The capacity, safety and utility of principal and “A” minor arterials are dictated in large part by how access to these highways is provided. Managing access to those highways is a critical aspect of managing and operating the highway system and must be carried out in cooperation between MnDOT, the counties and the cities.

Strategy 13c: Managing traffic entering and exiting highways.

MnDOT has been a pioneer in managing traffic at ramp meters to maximize highway safety and capacity. Meter bypass ramps provide incentives to transit and HOV as alternatives to single occupant autos. MnDOT has used various technologies to manage other facets of its highways, some in conjunction with meters. The use of TV cameras to monitor traffic, changeable message signs, traffic radio, and many other techniques and technologies assist the travelling public and industry. The benefit-cost ratio of the hardware and application is usually quite favorable and these technologies should be provided when feasible.

Strategy 13d: Pricing.

Pricing of highway facilities offers a very effective tool to manage traffic and raise revenues. The Council and MnDOT have studied and supported testing of a spectrum of pricing techniques in the region for the past decade, with the assistance of the Humphrey Institute’s State and Local Policy Program and the Center for Transportation Studies at the University of Minnesota. State legislation allows the state or local highway authority to implement priced projects under certain conditions. By 2005 the I-394 HOT lane will begin operation as the first regional demonstration of variable-rate pricing. Single occupant vehicles and some commercial vehicles will be able to buy their way into the HOV lane as long as the level of service does not deteriorate for transit and carpoolers. Federal FAST lane legislation is now being considered to allow many more pricing projects to add capacity on the Interstate system or other trunk highways. FAST lanes would use variable rate prices to provide a congestion-free alternative to the adjacent free lanes. MnDOT and the Council are working on a FAST/HOT lanes system plan (MnPass study) that will assess the benefits of pricing applications on the recommended expansion projects in this

plan. This plan will be completed early in 2005. The study will help MnDOT evaluate pricing proposals from the private sector. MnDOT and the Council will work closely with the cities and counties to implement any selected projects.

Policy 14: Maintain an Effective and Efficient Regional Freight Transportation System.

The role of freight transportation in ensuring economic vitality is increasingly recognized in this era of global and interstate competition. Freight movement plays a critical role in the economic prosperity of the state of Minnesota and the region.

The efficient movement of goods or “freight mobility” requires an extensive high-capacity transportation network capable of moving large amounts of freight quickly, reliably and cost-effectively. Since 1991, federal transportation funding policies have encouraged public sector transportation agencies to give more attention to freight movement. Even though much of the actual movement is conducted by the private sector (airlines, rail, truck and barge companies), they use public facilities such as roads and airports, and the lock-and-dam system on the Mississippi River.

In today's competitive global economy, the importance of a logistics system that serves the needs of customers, shippers and receivers is a key strategy for increasing the economic competitiveness of businesses, industries and their customers. Changes in technology and markets will continue to redefine how freight is moved and commodities flow to state, national and international markets.

The Council supports improving the efficiency of the region's commercial motor carriers, railroads, air cargo carriers and barge operators through strategic investments in the freight transportation system. Regional investments coordinated with investments by the private sector and local governments must provide sufficient access to freight terminals, transportation hubs, business and industrial concentrations and distribution centers.

Strategy 14a: Promote clustering of freight with industrial facilities to improve logistics operations efficiencies

The Council should promote the location of freight facilities in close proximity to their customer base as a means to improve multi-modal transfer efficiencies and reduce the number of freight-related trips, trip lengths and time in transit. This concept of clustering is referred to as “freight villages” where all activities relating to the transport of goods, support services, manufacturing, logistics and the distribution of goods are located in a specially designed industrial complex. Although the freight village concept is more suitable for large-scale developments, the concept can be applied to the redevelopment of existing underutilized industrial areas and on brownfield sites. This strategy includes the following:

- Encourage the consideration of the freight village concept in the planning of a proposed regional distribution center for air cargo should a site within the region be selected.
- Encourage communities with suitable locations to support the development of freight villages through their comprehensive plans and capital investments for infrastructure.

Strategy 14b: Identify Access Needs to Major Regional Freight Facilities

The Council will work with MnDOT and its Minnesota Freight Advisory Committee (MFAC), which represents freight carriers and freight terminal operators, to analyze freight terminal access needs and develop improvements for all modes of freight, including truck, rail, air and water. This strategy includes the following:

- Prepare and maintain a regional freight data base to complement the Minnesota Statewide Freight Data Base to be maintained by MnDOT for use in the regional freight planning and the analysis of freight investment needs;

- Coordinate with MFAC to identify and effectively communicate major investment needs to improve access and freight mobility;
- Coordinate with MnDOT to identify significant freight connections to the National Highway System; and
- Coordinate regional and private freight investments with local units of governments through their comprehensive land use plans and capital improvements programs used to manage infrastructure investments.

Strategy 14c: Reduce Congestion Impacts on Truck Travel

Congestion becomes an issue for moving freight on a timely basis. It impedes deliveries, adding costs to the carrier and the shippers' movement of goods. Through coordinated planning efforts between the public and private sectors with a vested interest in reducing costs of transportation, it should be possible to maintain and improve the regional freight transportation system. Strategies to be considered are:

- Developing analytical tools and performance measures to evaluate and identify needed improvements to the regional freight system;
- Determining the feasibility of shared-use facilities such as daytime park-and-ride lots located on the urban fringe and within key freight corridors that can function as overnight parking for trucking and reduce emissions;
- Supporting the use of FAST and HOT Lanes for appropriate types of commercial vehicles; and
- Using intelligent transportation system technology and emerging freight management technology to share real time information on congestion.

Policy 15: Develop and Maintain Efficient Pedestrian and Bicycle Travel Systems
Safe, high-quality, continuous, barrier-free pedestrian and bicycle facilities must be developed, maintained and improved to function as an integral part of the region's transportation system.

Compact, mixed-use development with facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists helps reduce short automobile trips. Over the last 10 to 15 years, the region has made an effort to direct a higher level of transportation investments to special facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists, either as freestanding projects or as part of larger transportation projects. As the region promotes the development of mixed-use centers, providing facilities for these non-motorized modes becomes an increasingly important component of planning at the city, county and regional level. As recognized in the federal surface transportation law, well-developed pedestrian and bicycle systems help promote energy conservation, reduce the pressure on the highway system, and preserve the environment. In addition, recent research indicates that residents of places designed with accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians are more active and therefore healthier than residents of other areas.

Strategy 15a: Funding Priorities for Pedestrian and Bicycle Projects

Funding priority will be given to bicycle and pedestrian projects that:

- Serve the greatest number of likely users, especially commuters;
- Support compact and mixed-use development;
- Serve a valid transportation need or purpose;
- Provide safety and security for users, or help educate residents regarding bicycle and pedestrian safety;
- Are cost-effective;
- Are integrated with other transportation modes;

- Provide a direct connection to a multi-modal transfer facility;
- Link schools, office, commercial, industrial, recreational and residential destinations; and
- Fill gaps in or add continuous segments to the regional bicycle and pedestrian systems.

Projects must be included in or consistent with the policies of a comprehensive plan or an official agency capital improvement program in order to receive federal funding (see Strategy 20c).

Strategy 15b: Pedestrian and Bicyclist Linkages to Transit

Linking pedestrian and bicycle facilities to transit is important to developing a multi-modal transportation system for the region. The Council installs bike racks on all buses. This allows travelers to use their bicycle at either end of a transit trip in order to reach their destination. Good sidewalk access and on-street bike lanes in the vicinity of bus stops and transitway stations can encourage travelers to use transit. Heated bus shelters, marked crosswalks, bike racks and lockers, and other facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists will be provided at park-and-ride lots, transit hubs and at major destination centers throughout the region, including the downtowns.

To encourage a strong intermodal link, the operating policy for all transit modes, including LRT and commuter rail, will be to allow bicycles on board, and bicycle racks and lockers will be located at transitway stations. Bicycle and walking paths to the stations and on-site bike storage are important components to consider in station design in order to achieve strong connections with the community and create a quality bicycle/pedestrian environment around the stations.

Strategy 15c: Pedestrian and Bicycle Elements of Local Comprehensive Plans

No pedestrian or bicycle project will be funded through regional transportation project selection processes unless included in or consistent with the policies of a state or regional plan, a city or county comprehensive plan found to be consistent with Council plans, or an adopted capital improvement program.

Pedestrian and bicycle elements of local comprehensive plans shall:

- Promote safety of pedestrians and bicyclists;
- Provide connections to adjacent (local and county) jurisdictions and their walkway and bikeway systems;
- Fill gaps and remove barriers in the existing local, county or regional walkway/bikeway systems;
- Design and locate walkways and bikeways to serve both travel and leisure purposes;
- Provide pedestrian and bicycle facilities to and within high activity nodes, especially commercial and transit centers; and
- Include programs for educating motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists to increase awareness of and respect for the rights and responsibilities of all three types of travelers.

Strategy 15d: Coordinated Planning Among Local Jurisdictions

Local, county, regional and state agencies will coordinate planning efforts to develop efficient and continuous pedestrian and bikeway systems, eliminate critical gaps and ensure adequate interjurisdictional connections and signage. The Council publishes a Regional Parks Map that shows the state and regional off-road trails in the metropolitan area, and state, regional and local agencies are nearing completion of a metropolitan bikeway map. Cities and counties can use these maps as starting points to develop integrated metro wide walkway and bikeway systems.

Strategy 15e: Pedestrian and Bikeway Improvements to Roadways

When a principal or minor arterial road is constructed or reconstructed, off-road walkway designs and both on- and off-road bikeway designs should be considered, with special emphasis placed on safety and barrier removal. Bikeways and combined bicycle/pedestrian facilities shall meet MnDOT State Aid

standards and AASHTO guidelines, and also consider MnDOT Bicycle Transportation Planning and Design Guidelines. Pedestrian facilities will be provided along roads when feasible, as many roads in the region currently do not have adjacent sidewalks or separated pedestrian paths. Bicycle facilities shall be provided within existing rights-of-way when feasible instead of acquiring exclusive new rights-of-way for these facilities. Every bridge that is newly constructed or reconstructed that removes or crosses a barrier for pedestrians and bicyclists must include a walkway and bikeway to allow these travelers safe access to the same regional resources as motorized vehicles unless a reasonable alternative exists within one-quarter mile for pedestrians or one mile for bicyclists. When feasible, bicycle facilities should be separate from pedestrian facilities.

Strategy 15f: Pedestrian and Bicyclist Education

To maximize safe and pleasant pedestrian travel, the Council encourages educational promotions to increase awareness of and respect for the rights and responsibilities of pedestrians and bicyclists. Local, state and regional agencies should be encouraged to establish safety programs oriented toward educating the public in the proper use of sidewalks and crosswalks by pedestrians and of bicycle lanes and paths by bicyclists. Programs will also provide training in proper bicycling procedures such as making turns, stopping at stop signs and signals. In addition, programs will educate motorists regarding pedestrian roadway crossing laws, how to safely interact with bicyclists riding legally in the roadway, and generally to be aware of pedestrians and bicyclists. The Council also supports the implementation of Safe Routes to Schools programs at the local level and programs aimed at teaching children to walk and bike safely, including the use of proper equipment and helmets while bicycling.

Policy 16: Preservation of Linear Rights-of-Way

Linear rights-of-way in the region should be preserved as corridors for public use.

Linear rights-of-way are difficult to obtain and have value for purposeful and recreation travel and other uses. Preserving existing linear rights-of-way in public ownership should continue unless specific reasons exist not to do so. The Council's role is to facilitate and promote cooperation among the implementing agencies regarding funding priorities, ownership, maintenance and near- and long-term use of linear rights-of-way.

Strategy 16a: Railroad Corridor Preservation

The Council will support an interagency approach to preserve abandoned railroad right-of-way. Abandoned linear rights-of-way can accommodate a variety of public uses for transportation, recreation and habitat preservation purposes. Multiple uses can coexist and may change over time to serve changing transportation and public needs. For instance, during the 1970s and '80s many rail lines in the region were abandoned and purchased by the county regional rail authorities for future transit use. Several of these corridors are currently being used on an interim basis as bike and pedestrian trails.

Agencies coordinating a preservation strategy include the Metropolitan Council, the state Department of Natural Resources, county regional rail authorities and MnDOT. Other agencies may participate as needed. The appropriate agencies, rail authorities and local governments will be convened by MnDOT to initiate the preservation process at the time an abandonment notice is issued by the U.S. Interstate Commerce Commission. The assembled agencies will adopt strategies to respond to the rail line abandonment notice, preserve the corridor and prepare a use plan to manage the corridor. Where appropriate, the Metropolitan Council will mediate multiple-use conflicts that may occur in the development of a linear right-of-way.

Strategy 16b: Right-of -Way Acquisition Loan Fund (RALF)

The Council will use the RALF revolving fund to continue to purchase property within the highway corridors listed in the *Transportation Policy Plan* or any "officially mapped" state highway project within the metropolitan area. The responsibility to identify, acquire and maintain the parcels will rest with local

governments, in accordance with adopted Guidelines.

MnDOT should consider developing a procedure that would allow immediate right-of-way acquisition once the environmental review process has been completed. This would save money and ensure right-of-way is available when funds become available for construction.

Strategy 16c: Identification and Preservation of Rights-of-Way by Local Governments

Local governments are responsible for identifying and preserving rights-of-way for transportation uses, such as roads, transit, bikeways and walkways, as well as for multiple purposes that include environmental and utility uses. Local transportation plans should identify future right-of-way needs and describe procedures to preserve them, including official mapping.

Policy 17: Environmental Considerations in Transportation

The investment decisions and operations of transportation projects and facilities are to be consistent with federal, state and regional environmental standards, regulations, plans, programs and policies.

Strategy 17a: Air Quality Planning

Air quality planning is needed to meet the requirements of the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendment and promote effective transportation control measures and other strategies to reduce transportation emissions.

The Council is responsible for determining the conformity of this *Transportation Policy Plan* and the transportation improvement program with the State Implementation Plan for Air Quality. The results of the air quality analysis for the plan are shown in Appendix K, which documents the anticipated reductions in carbon monoxide emissions if the projects listed in the plan are implemented.

Since December 1999, the region has been classified by the EPA as an attainment area for the federal eight-hour standard for carbon monoxide. However, air quality alerts have been issued for ozone and particulate matter by the MPCA over the past few years. The alerts were issued when the federal air quality standards for these pollutants were exceeded. The Council will actively participate with public and private sector partnerships such as Clean Air Minnesota to implement strategies to reduce particulate matter and precursor emissions that cause the formation of ozone.

Strategy 17b: Improved Air Quality Analysis Procedures

The Council will develop improved air quality procedures to analyze impacts of regional transportation projects. The Council will prepare these procedures with the cooperation of MnDOT and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

Strategy 17c: Funding Priorities for Air Quality

The Council, the TAB and MnDOT should continue to give priority to implementing improvements that help the region maintain compliance with federal air quality standards and support funding priorities for transportation projects that prevent air quality violations through the reduction of emissions.

Strategy 17d: Preserving and Enhancing Cultural and Natural Resources

Regional transportation projects should give special consideration to the preservation and enhancement of the region's cultural and natural resources. New highway and transit projects should carefully consider the aesthetic relationship of facilities with the natural, scenic, historic, archaeological, social and cultural environment. The transit and highway improvements should also avoid fragmenting large habitat areas or disturbing high-quality native plant areas to the greatest extent possible. The metrowide Natural Resources Inventory should be used by implementing agencies to develop facilities that are more sensitive to the environment including significant natural areas and regional wildlife corridors. In addition, in certain areas of the region, specific environmental rules such as the Mississippi

River Critical Area law also apply to transportation projects.

Investments in new highways and transit facilities should be consistent with regional plans and policies for parks and open space to the extent feasible. The enhancements should add value to their use. Priority for funding for such purposes should be placed on projects that create a more livable urban environment and foster increased use of alternative modes to the auto.

Strategy 17e: Protecting Surface Water

Section 208 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act designated the Metropolitan Council as the area-wide water quality management planning agency. Under the act, the Council is given the responsibility to ensure that water management programs and policies are implemented in the metropolitan area.

Local water management plans are required under Minnesota Statutes 103B.235 to be prepared by all local governments in the metropolitan area. The Metropolitan Land Planning Act (473.859 Subd. 2) requires that the land use plan include the local water management plans required under 103B.235. The Council provides comments on the local water plans to the watershed organizations for use in their approval process for the plans.

The Council supports the State Wetland Conservation Act of 1991. The Wetland Conservation Act indicates that it is in the public interest to achieve no net loss of existing wetlands, to enhance diminished wetlands, to restore drained wetlands, to avoid direct or indirect impacts, and where wetlands must be filled or dredged, to replace them at a one-to-one ratio in agricultural areas and a two-to-one ratio in urban areas.

The draining and filling of wetlands, alterations of floodplains and lakes, and diversion of natural watercourse for the construction of transportation facilities may be unavoidable. These resources provide natural storage, water fowl and wildlife habitat, conveyance of runoff and the recharge of groundwater. Replacing these resources with large impervious areas will increase the rate and volume of runoff from the site and may lead to costly management techniques to avoid or abate downstream flooding.

The runoff from transportation facilities could affect the quality of lakes, streams and other surface waters. The construction and maintenance of transportation facilities may be a source of a variety of potential nonpoint source pollutants, such as sediments from construction erosion, chemicals from deicers, maintenance operations and nutrients from on-site vegetation.

Transportation facility development and operations plans must include a surface water management plan to protect groundwater and surface water. In addition to including information that must be consistent with watershed management organization plans and the state wetland regulations, the surface water or local water management plan should include provisions to avoid or to mitigate impacts from construction, restore or retain natural functions of remaining wetlands and water bodies, and include an emergency plan to control accidental spills of fuel or hazardous materials.

The plan should include standards and requirements that are consistent with the Council's model ordinance for stormwater management as well as require the use of best management practices during and after facility construction. When wet detention basins are required, basins must be designed according to Nationwide Urban Runoff Program (NURP) or similar criteria. Communities that have approved local water management plans may be able to use this plan as a substitute for developing a new plan if the local water plan contains all of the information referenced above.

Policy 18: Transportation and Land Use Elements in Local Comprehensive Plans.
Local comprehensive plans must be consistent with the *Transportation Policy Plan* and should recognize the special transportation opportunities and problems that various planning areas present with regard to transportation and land uses.

The ultimate success of this guide to help achieve the Council's vision for the region will, in large

part, be based on the compatibility between travel demand, and the transportation system capacity. The level of travel demand is directly related to land use type and intensity within the travel shed. Land use planning must recognize and respect transportation capacity limitations, while promoting alternatives to auto dependency whenever possible, thus increasing mobility choice. Local communities are expected to provide an interconnected system of streets, bikeways and pedestrian walkways for local trips and to work with MnDOT and the county to plan a minor arterial system that provides for moderate length vehicle trips within, to or from the community.

The Council's authority for ensuring land use/transportation compatibility rests in the Metropolitan Land Planning Act (MLPA). Under that act, local comprehensive plans must be consistent with the Council's regional plans for such systems as transportation and sewers. Local units make the initial determination if a revision to their plans is needed to respond to changes in the *Regional Development Framework* and regional system plans. The Council will work with local governments to ensure that their highway, transit and land use plan components are internally consistent, coordinated and compatible with this guide.

This plan identifies policy and geographic areas such as the transit market areas, urban service area, employment concentrations, airport influence areas, airport service areas, airport search areas, dedicated transitways, arterial transit corridors and congested corridors that present various opportunities and problems that need to be considered and acted upon in local comprehensive plans.

Strategy 18a: Nonconformance Between Comprehensive Plans and the System Plan

Under the MLPA, local units of governments must address any nonconformance between their comprehensive plans and this plan.

After adoption of this policy plan, the Council will send system statements to provide local units of government with community level detail related to the changes in regional policy and plans. Local units of government are expected to review their plans in light of the *Regional Development Framework* and the policy plans/guide chapters. If nonconformity exists, a community must amend its plan to bring it into conformance with the guide.

The Council's adopted *Framework* policies and strategies for planning areas provide the foundation for planning the transportation system. One measure of conformance with the regional transportation system is consistency with the Council forecasts on which the system plan is predicated. A community that bases its plans and development on different forecasts, either too much or too little, may have a substantial impact or contain a substantial departure from this plan and therefore need an amendment. (The Metropolitan Council's Local Planning Handbook, available at the Council's Data Center or online, records the transportation requirements of a local comprehensive plan.)

Strategy 18b: Balance Between Demand and Transportation Capacity

A common theme that appears throughout this plan is the need for compatibility and mutual reinforcement between land use, development, natural resources and the capacity of the transportation system. Congestion is a major problem that requires multiple strategies to address its impacts and to reduce its rate of growth. The Council's goal is that locally generated trips will not exceed the capacity of local or regional transportation facilities.

The Council recognizes that in a large part of the region, added development will have to be accommodated on congested streets and highways. Nevertheless, local planning for new or added development should assume there is a need to continue to provide new or expanded transportation facilities and capacity. Unless this is the approach of cities and towns as they permit land use changes, the transportation system will never function at an acceptable level. Local government must look at various issues, including:

- A mix of land uses that can maximize transportation capacity, depending on schedules of the various activities.

- Higher density will generate more trips per acre, but may also allow more walk, bike, or transit trips to be made so the percentage of vehicle trips may be lower.
- A grid system of local streets provides many options for completing a trip. An interconnected local street system permits direct trip-making between development concentrations and neighborhoods so vehicles do not have to access minor arterials.
- The location and type of access for development and local streets can significantly improve or reduce the capacity and safety of highways (using MnDOT or county access management guidelines).
- Intersection design must be appropriate for the volume of trips.
- Signal interconnections are important to move the maximum volume of cars. The timing needs to be monitored and updated regularly.
- The Private sector should be expected to provide facilities that allow a parcel to support the planned development. Off-site improvements may also be appropriate.

Local governments are expected to articulate the impacts of new development in their plan. If the capacity of the local, county or regional transportation system or other public facilities or regional systems will be exceeded, this needs to be documented. If safety problems are anticipated, they need to be identified before a development is permitted. These issues should be inventoried in the comprehensive plan and should be corrected by the appropriate level of government or in a development proposal.

Strategy 18c: Rural Highway Design and Improvements

Highway system investments in the rural area must be compatible with the *Regional Development Framework* strategies, particularly for lands designated for urban reserve. Metropolitan highways in the diversified rural and agricultural areas and urban reserve area shall be planned, designed and operated to emphasize safety, transporting products to market, delivering goods and services to the rural communities, and providing for the mobility needs of the state.

One overall objective of the Council's *Regional Development Framework* is to focus urban development within the developed and developing areas. Another is to protect locally designated agricultural activities in the rural area. Good roads are needed to serve agriculture and other appropriate activities in the rural area. These roads should not be overdesigned or built to give undue encouragement to commuting to the urban service area. Access should be consistent with the planned rural land uses and not to encourage premature urban development or to preempt their mobility function as the area urbanizes.

MnDOT has designated an Interregional Corridor System (IRC) to ensure mobility needs across the state are met. MnDOT has carried out studies to establish individual management and improvement plans for many of these corridors. Townships, cities, counties, the Metropolitan Council and the private sector have all participated in these studies. The Council and MnDOT have included the needed investments and management activities to protect these corridors from falling below the established performance levels. The cities and towns are expected to implement the access management plans before improvements are programmed in these corridors.

Strategy 18d: Urban Service Area Expansion and Development

The Council will approve the timing of urban service area expansion through local comprehensive plans to help local governments plan for and stage development to accommodate 20 years worth of forecasted growth. Local plans should address local transportation, transit, pedestrian and bicycle investments to build connections between workplaces, residences, retail, services, and civic and entertainment activities and to support the transportation needs of the planned build-out of the community. Expansion requests will be feasible when the appropriate local unit of government

demonstrates that adequate transportation improvements will be provided when needed to mitigate significant negative impact on the affected metropolitan highway and consistent with plans for and the capacity of the regional wastewater system. In addition, local plan evaluation will address housing production, surface and ground water management and natural resource conservation and regional park issues.

The Council and MnDOT have limited financial capabilities to fund transportation improvements other than those described in this plan. Local, county and private resources are needed in most cases to allow urban development to occur. The capital improvement programs of local and county governments should reflect these investments.

Strategy 18e: Transportation Facilities That Match and Support Planned Land Use

Transportation facilities will be planned, designed and operated to support and be compatible with existing and planned land use as recorded in local and county plans.

The *Regional Development Framework* provides strategies for various planning areas in the region. Local and county government and MnDOT should recognize the transportation facilities must vary to help implement the vision and plan for these areas.

Strategy 18f: Needs and Opportunities of Job Concentrations

Minneapolis, St. Paul, Bloomington and other communities that contain job concentrations should address the specific needs and opportunities of these areas in their plans.

In the developed area, four areas – downtown Minneapolis, downtown St. Paul, the University of Minnesota Twin Cities campus area, and the Airport South/Mall of America – have the most compact mix of land uses and trip destinations in the region. These areas require transportation facilities and services significantly different from those in other areas of the region. These areas provide the best opportunity to achieve changes to travel behavior that will increase the efficiency of the transportation system and allow the intensification of development. They require and can support alternatives to the single occupant vehicle. Therefore, the transportation elements of local comprehensive plans must include specific analysis and strategies to address these areas. Specific issues include the need to increase vehicle occupancy and access by alternative modes, and to provide for freight movements. The plans for these areas also need to address the benefits of mixed land uses, including housing to promote access to jobs and reduce vehicle demand.

Strategy 18g: Mixed-Use Centers

The Council will encourage cities to develop more compact mixed-use centers that are transit- and pedestrian-oriented along transitways and high-frequency transitways and arterial transit corridors. Mixed-use centers are compact integrated arrangements of some or all of the following:

- Affordable and lifecycle housing;
- Moderate to high numbers of housing units per acre;
- Employment;
- Supporting commercial uses; and
- Community activities and services.

Centers are generally one-quarter to one-half mile radius in size. The urban design and arrangement of land uses in such centers should encourage transit, bicycle use and walking “to and within the node.”

Developed and developing cities along transportation corridors with higher-frequency transit (including existing and proposed HOV lanes, transitways, and frequently operating all-day bus service) should plan for more efficient mixed-use nodes that are transit- and bicycle/pedestrian-oriented. Land use policies and urban design practices, higher numbers of housing units per acre, mixed land uses, and

transit- and pedestrian-oriented residential and commercial development are encouraged to be located at transit stops along such corridors within the metropolitan urban service area.

These mixed-use centers should result in a number of benefits over the long term. These include development and redevelopment that consume less land, generate less traffic per person, reduce the need for and lower the cost of urban services, consume less energy and generate less air pollution. Better linkages between housing and jobs can be achieved with mixing uses in nodes and along corridors.

Although frequent fixed-route transit is most productive and effective in reducing automobile trips when there are at least seven households per acre, a minimum of 10 to 12 households per acre is preferred within transit corridors. Around mixed-use nodes, there should be at least 50 employees or students per acre with a minimum total 10,000 jobs/students in at least one concentrated area along a corridor.

Strategy 18h: Transportation Corridor or Sub-area Studies

The Metropolitan Council regularly participates with other agencies and jurisdictions in metropolitan transit and highway corridor studies. These studies typically examine concerns about land use, access, capacity, level of service, geometrics and safety. Recommendations for improvements should be incorporated into the local comprehensive plans of the participating cities and used by implementing agencies as improvements are made in the corridor.

This plan incorporates recommendations from adopted corridor studies that are found to be consistent with the RDF. The Council will use these recommendations in establishing priorities for regional highway and transit improvements.

If funding has not been identified for investments, the recommendations may not be included in the TPP. However, until funding is secured, local and county plans may be modified to recognize changes envisioned for the corridor that resulted from the studies if they acknowledge regional funding is not available. Corridor studies remain in effect until all the recommendations are implemented or until the concerned parties agree the plan is out of date and needs to be revised.

Corridor study recommendations are shown in Appendix G.