



# **“3C” Transportation Planning and Programming Guide**

**December  
2011**

## Introduction

Both law and logic dictate that large, U.S. metropolitan areas must have well-designed, carefully maintained transportation systems that encompass travel by all modes including automobile, bus, rail, bicycle, foot and airplane.

In every metropolitan area, an interconnected web of people and organizations work to set priorities, make plans, and implement projects that affect the region's transportation infrastructure. In the Twin Cities, the transportation planning process involves an interconnected group of local transportation officials and transportation agencies, relying on plans made by the federal government, the state, counties, cities and other transportation partners. It is driven by national, state, district, metropolitan and local plans and priorities.

This guide outlines the **Continuing, Comprehensive and Cooperative (3C)** Transportation Planning Process for the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. The process provides a basis for decision making and ensures that transportation interests are balanced when public funds are spent. This guide describes the participants that create and maintain the

Twin Cities transportation system, how those participants work together, the primary products and processes that define their work and the process by which a recognized need becomes a funded program or project.

Finally, this guide offers a glossary. Many of the terms used in transportation planning are long and unwieldy, and so the field's professionals often substitute acronyms and abbreviations. The glossary demystifies this alphabet soup and offers a brief reminder of where each term belongs in the overall planning process.

## Part 1: The Participants

Participants in the transportation planning process include:

- The Metropolitan Council
- The Transportation Advisory Board and its Technical Advisory Committee
- The Minnesota Department of Transportation
- The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)
- The Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC)
- Transit Providers

- Counties and Municipalities
- Counties Transit Improvement Board
- County Regional Rail Authorities
- Private Citizens
- The U.S. Department of Transportation (US DOT)
- Other Agencies

With the exception of the Transportation Advisory Board and the Technical Advisory Committee, each of these entities has many roles and responsibilities. This guide will describe only their roles in the transportation planning process.

## Metropolitan Council

Federal law requires that federal transportation project and program funds are selected by the state or by state-designated **metropolitan planning organizations**. These organizations, known as **MPOs**, develop transportation plans and programs based on a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative ("3C") planning process carried out with state and local communities.

Created in 1967, the Metropolitan Council ("the Council") is the MPO for the seven-county Twin Cities area, which includes Anoka, Carver, Dakota,

Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington Counties. (It is also Minnesota's only Transportation Management Area, or TMA, a designation for MPOs) in areas with more than 200,000 residents.) The Council has 17 members, all appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state Senate. Sixteen members each represent individual geographic districts; the chairperson serves at large.

**Fig. 1** shows the Council's Policymaking Structure

In cooperation with local communities, the Council develops the Regional Development Framework of policies for shaping future growth. This framework gives direction to the four system policy plans: transportation, aviation, parks and water resources. The Council also operates the regional wastewater treatment system and the transit system.

The Council's role in transportation planning and programming is multifaceted. It includes:

- Conducting studies and preparing planning documents that guide agencies that plan for and operate highways, transit and airports.

These documents and studies include:

- The Transportation Policy Plan (TPP), which includes plans for the metropolitan highway, regional transit, and aviation systems;
  - The four-year, multi-modal Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), a program of highway, transit, bike, walking, and transportation enhancement initiatives proposed for Federal funding;
  - The congestion management system, a process for evaluating and developing strategies that manage existing and expected future traffic congestion.
- Deciding whether plans and programs conform to Clean Air Act requirements.
  - Classifying roadways as part of the metropolitan highway system and/or transit service before design and operational guidelines are implemented.
  - Reviewing and approving applications for federal and state funds and keeping these applications consistent with the stated goals and policies of the Regional Development

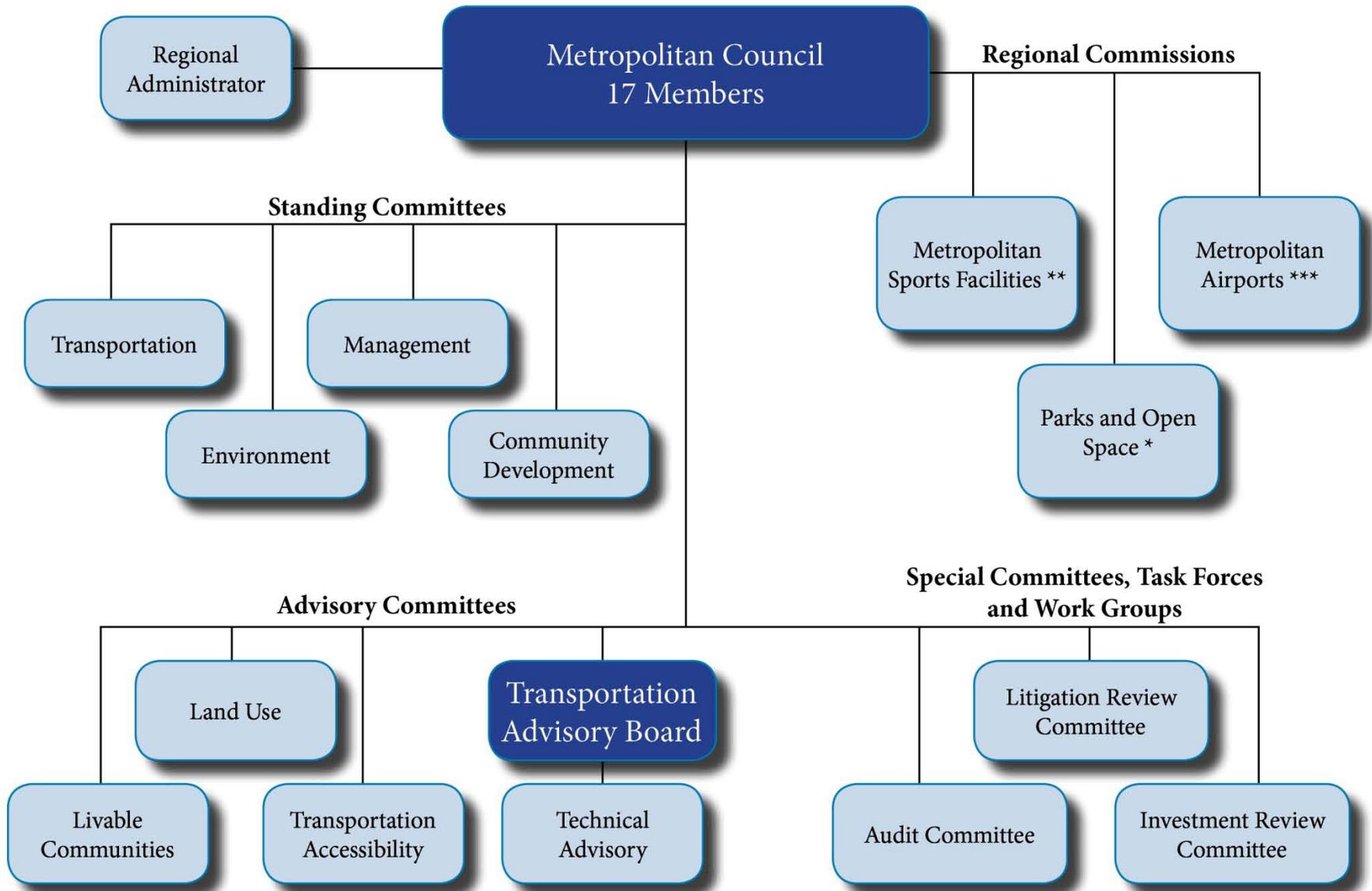
Framework and the Transportation Policy Plan.

- Reviewing local communities' long-range plans to make sure they are consistent with regional sewer, park, transit, airport, and transportation plans.

In addition to these planning roles, the Council also:

- Operates the public transit regular route system through Metro Transit and private contractors.
- Operates Metro Mobility ADA and Transit Link dial-a-ride through contracts.
- Administers transit project contracts.
- Coordinates with suburban transit authorities.
- Promotes ride sharing.
- Offers local governments, regional railroads, and other public agencies, transit providers, and developer's advice and technical help on transit service coordination.
- Administers state and metropolitan transit operating funds.
- Collects for and distributes from a revolving loan fund for buying highway rights of way.

Figure 1 - Metropolitan Council Policymaking Structure



\* Staff support provided to Commission by Metropolitan Council.  
 \*\* The Metropolitan Council has budget approval and issues bonds for the commission  
 \*\*\* The Metropolitan Council reviews the capital budget and approves certain projects.

See more about the Metropolitan Council:

<http://www.metrocouncil.org/index.htm>

### **Transportation Advisory Board (TAB)**

A number of boards are advisory to the Metropolitan Council. The Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) is one of these. Federal law requires that in order for a region to receive Federal transportation funding, elected officials must serve on a metropolitan planning organization. Minnesota's governor appoints Metropolitan Council members. TAB members, by contrast, include city and county *elected* officials within the seven- county area. Combining the Council and the TAB into a single certified metropolitan planning organization allows for a broader discussion of transportation issues, while also fulfilling federal law and allowing for receipt of federal transportation dollars.

The TAB consists of 33 members: ten elected city officials; one member from the board of each county in the metropolitan area; the commissioner of transportation; the commissioner of the

Pollution Control Agency; one member of the Metropolitan Airports Commission; one person appointed by the Council to represent non-motorized transportation; one member representing the freight transportation industry; two members representing public transit; one "citizen" representative from each Metropolitan Council district (for a total of eight); and one Metropolitan Council member.

The TAB works closely with the Council, reviewing, commenting on and coordinating transportation planning and programming. A key responsibility of the Council's TAB is to solicit and evaluate project applications for funding from four federal programs.

See more about the TAB:

<http://www.metrocouncil.org/about/TAB.htm>

The TAB operates with three standing sub-committees: executive, policy, and programming. The TAB receives technical input from its Technical Advisory Committee. The relationship of these committees is shown in **Fig. 2**.

### **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to the TAB**

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) also works closely with the TAB and the Council. Composed of 29 professional staff from city and county governments and the agencies involved in transportation in the seven- county region, the TAC provides technical expertise to the TAB. The TAC has two standing committees, the Funding and Programming Committee and the Planning Committee as well as *ad hoc* multimodal task forces.

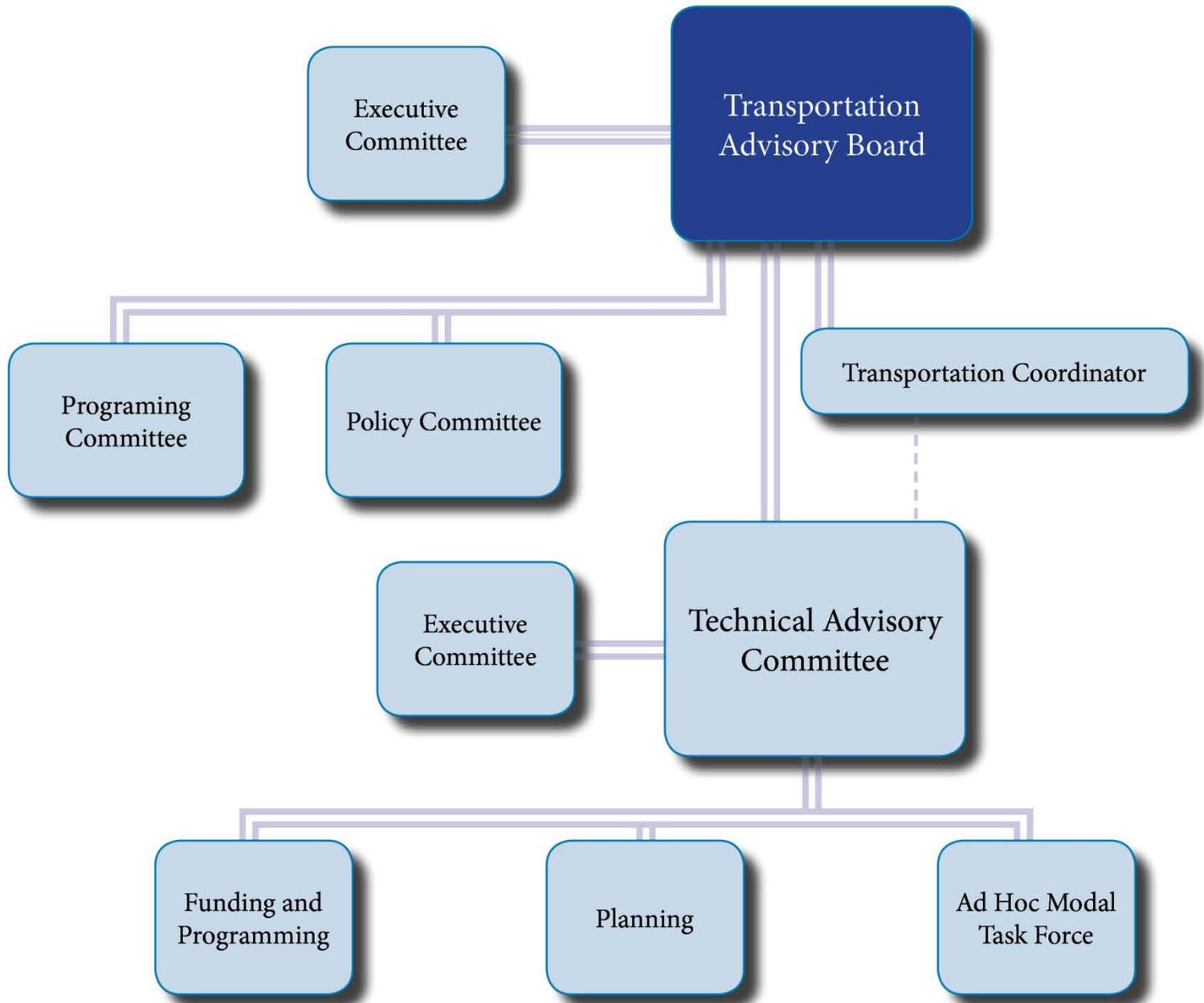
See more about the TAC:

[CREATE](#) and [link to WEBPAGE](#)

### **Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)**

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) is the state's principal agency for developing and implementing state transportation plans and programs. MnDOT builds and maintains state and interstate highways, conducts statewide multimodal transportation planning, and allocates funding to various projects. MnDOT also approves the State Transportation Improvement program (STIP) which incorporates the Transportation Improvement Programs from the various metropolitan areas within the state.

Figure 2 - Transportation Advisory Board



MnDOT's statewide transportation plan guides the MnDOT District plans. MnDOT Metro District's plan addresses performance needs in the metropolitan area and is done in conjunction with plans made by the metropolitan planning organization. These plans address preservation, safety, and management of the existing system as well as other capital improvements that increase system capacity.

MnDOT also plays an integral part in the Twin Cities metropolitan planning process, serves as the liaison between the metropolitan planning organization and the U.S. Department of Transportation, and participates in the Air Quality Conformity Process.

[See more about MnDOT' transportation planning responsibilities:](#)  
[Need link from MnDOT](#)

### **Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)**

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) helps Minnesotans protect, conserve, and improve the state's environment. The agency proposes a variety of plans and measurements to monitor pollution and keep it within Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

limits. It also guides the MPO in fulfilling environmental requirements and advises on how transportation and transit projects will affect Minnesota's compliance with environmental regulators.

[See more about the MPCA](#)  
<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/air/index.html>

### **Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC)**

The Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) is a special-purpose agency with broad powers to acquire, develop, and operate airports within a district that approximates the seven-county metropolitan area. It owns and operates seven metropolitan, public-use airports, and can raise money to finance airport development and operations. MAC answers directly to the state legislature, but its long-range plans must be consistent with Metropolitan Council plans and policies. Moreover, specific airport development projects of \$5 million or more at the Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport and \$1 million at other airports must have Council approval.

[See more about the Metropolitan Airports Commission:](#)

<http://www.metroairports.org/mac/default.aspx>

### **Transit Providers**

The Council operates **Metro Transit**, the largest transit system in the state. In addition to the largest bus system, the Council operates **METRO**, an expanding network of transitways which includes the Blue Line (Hiawatha), the Green Line (Central Corridor) and the Green Line Extension (Southwest) Light Rail lines and the Red Line (Cedar Avenue) and the Orange Line (I-35W Bus Rapid Transit). Northstar Commuter Rail is also part of the expanding transitway system but offers a limited number of trips and operates only during the morning and afternoon rush hours weekday and on weekends.

The Council also administers a number of specialized transit services: **Metro Mobility**, a transportation service for those unable to use regular fixed-route service due to a disability or health condition; **Transit Link**, a transportation service for those traveling to places in the region where regular fixed-route service is not provided and **Metro Vanpool**, a subsidized vanpool program for

commuters not served by regular fixed-route service.

**Suburban Transit Providers** operate in about a dozen cities within the Council's transit taxing district and also operate their own regular-route bus services. These public transit operators give their input to the transportation planning process through the TAB's TAC. They are also involved with the Council through contracts for bus storage facilities, bus shelters, University of Minnesota services, and regular-route transit services. Transit providers participate in the development of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

### **Counties and Municipalities**

Metropolitan area counties and municipalities participate in the transportation planning at two levels. At the policy level, elected county and municipal officers serve on the TAB. At the technical level, professional staff from area governments serve on the TAC.

### **Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB)**

The vision of CTIB is "a network of interconnected transitways that allows

users to move efficiently and safely, while mitigating congestion, enhancing economic development and improving environmental stability for the region." CTIB operates under a Joint Powers Agreement of five counties and the Council as allowed by the Minnesota Legislature in 2008. Since then, the five counties – Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey and Washington – have utilized a quarter-cent sales tax and a \$20 motor vehicle sales tax to invest in and advance transit projects by awarding annual capital and operating grants. CTIB works in collaboration with the Council. Carver and Scott counties are *ex officio* members of CTIB.

See more about CTIB:  
<http://www.mnrider.org/about>

### **County Regional Rail Authorities**

A 1980 State law allows Minnesota counties to form Regional Rail Authorities to preserve and improve local rail service and provide for the preservation of abandoned rail right-of-way for future transportation functions. Each of the seven counties in the metropolitan area has formed its own Regional Rail Authority.

### **Private Citizens**

Twin Cities' residents are encouraged to participate in the transportation planning process. Advisory committees, boards, and commissions associated with the Council's planning responsibilities have an open appointment policy, and meetings are open to anyone. Informational meetings, workshops, and public hearings are open to the public; and all policy documents are posted on the Council's website.

### **U.S. Department of Transportation (US DOT)**

The U.S. Department of Transportation (US DOT) includes the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), which maintains a local office and actively participates in regional planning, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

Both FHWA and FTA establish the regulations that govern the development of an urban area's transportation plans and programs. Together, these two organizations have final approval over the Council's Transportation Policy Plan (TPP), MnDOT's State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), and the Council's Unified Planning Work

Program (UPWP). The two administrations also certify the 3-C metropolitan transportation planning process. The US DOT is the primary funding source for metropolitan transportation planning.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) develops the National Plan for an Integrated Airport System, approves and funds planning and development projects, operates and maintains the national air traffic control system, certifies aircraft and pilots, and establishes and enforces flight operation rules. Metropolitan Airport Commission policies must be in keeping with both Metropolitan Council plans and those of the FAA.

### **Other Agencies**

The Minnesota Department of National Resources, the State Historic Preservation Office, and tribal governments also participate in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

## **Part 2: Transportation Planning Documents**

The agencies discussed above work together to create planning documents. Major transportation planning documents include:

- The Regional Development Framework
- Transportation Policy Plan (including Aviation Plan)
- The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
- The Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan.
- Metro District 20 year Plan

**Figure 3** shows which agencies and organizations create each individual plan or program, and describe their respective roles in the process.

### **Regional Development Framework**

The Council is responsible for preparing the Regional Development Framework. The Framework sets out the regional forecast data and development plan assumptions. It also provides the regional physical and policy framework, which forms the basis for the type, location, investment priorities, and general implementation and review procedures for metropolitan transportation systems.

See more about the **Regional Development Framework**:

<http://www.metrocouncil.org/planning/framework/documents.htm>

### **Transportation Policy Plan (TPP)**

Prepared and regularly updated by the Council with participation from every agency in the metropolitan planning process, the TPP describes the region's approach to metropolitan transportation investments for at least the next 20 years. The TPP is one chapter of the Council's Development Framework. The TPP also addresses federal transportation planning requirements and Clean Air Act concerns, major studies conducted since the last update, and the funds available to maintain or replace highways and other transit infrastructure. The plan must balance planned investments against reasonably expected resources; it must also produce cleaner air or meet the emission budget.

**Figure 4** illustrates how the TPP develops from initiation to adoption.

See the **Transportation Policy Plan**:  
<http://www.metrocouncil.org/planning/transportation/TPP/2010/index.htm>

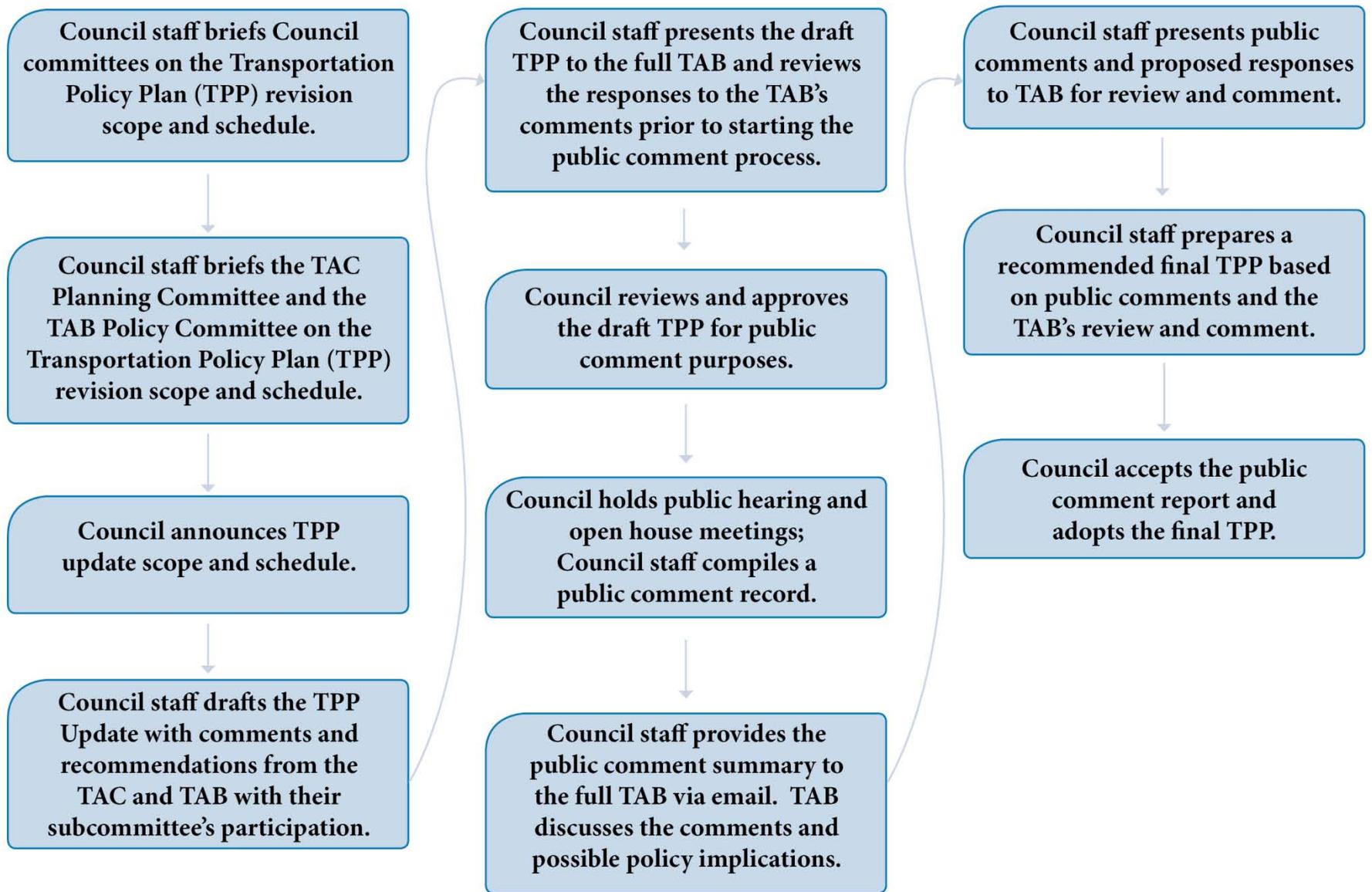
**Figure 3 - Federally Mandated Transportation Plan Interagency Participation Chart**

	Transportation Policy Plan	Transportation Improvement Program	Unified Planning Work Program	Regional Service Improvement Program	Other Documents
<b>Metropolitan Council</b>	Prepares and approves TPP	Lead agency in preparing and approving TIP. Forwards document to MnDOT for inclusion in STIP	Prepares and approves UPWP. Submits UPWP to MnDOT to forward to US DOT		
<b>Transportation Advisory Board</b>	Actively participates in plan development. Reviews and comments on documents	Conducts regional project solicitation for incorporation into TIP. Adopts TIP	Reviews and comments on UPWP to Council.		
<b>Technical Advisory Committee</b>	Actively participates in plan development. Reviews and comments on document to TAB	Facilitates regional solicitation process for TAB. Recommends Projects for inclusion in TIP and recommends TIP to TAB for adoption.	Reviews and comments on UPWP to TAB.		
<b>MnDOT</b>	Participates in TAC/TAB review and comments. May comment directly to Council.	Provides region with federal funding target; facilitates minor changes in TIP/STIP; Metro District assists Council in TIP development. Participates in TIP review and adoption through TAC/TAB; Central Office incorporates the TIP into STIP; and approves the STIP as governor's designee. Then submits to US DOT for approval	Prepares agency work program components for inclusion in UPWP; participates in TAC/TAB review; Submits UPWP to US DOT for approval; Can comment directly to Council		
<b>MPCA</b>	Participates in TAC/TAB review and comment. May comment directly to Council.	Participates in TIP review/adoption process through TAC/TAB; reviews and comments to TAB and/or Council	Prepares agency work program component for inclusion in UPWP; participates in TAC/TAB review; May comment directly to Council.		
<b>MAC</b>	Participates in TAC/TAB review and comment. May comment directly to Council.	Review and comments through TAC/TAB; may comment directly to TAB or Council	Prepares agency work program component for inclusion in UPWP; participates in TAC/TAB review; May comment directly to Council.		
<b>Local Governments</b>	Reviews and comments through TAC/TAB. May comment directly to Council	Review and comments through TAC/TAB; may comment directly to TAB or Council	Reviews and comments through TAC/TAB		
<b>Transit Providers</b>	Review and comment through TAC subcommittee. May comment directly to Council.	Review and comments through TAC/TAB; may comment directly to TAB or Council	Comments directly to Council		

**Figure 3 - Federally Mandated Transportation Plan Interagency Participation Chart**

	Transportation Policy Plan	Transportation Improvement Program	Unified Planning Work Program	Regional Service Improvement Program	Other Documents
CTIB	Provide review and comment directly to Council				
Regional Railroad Authorities	Provide review and comment directly to Council				
US DOT	Participates as non-voting member in TAC review and comment to TAB. FHWA and FTA must make conformity determination that plan is in accordance with Clean Air Act and EPA regulations	Participates as non-voting member in TAC review and comment to TAB. FHWA and FTA must make conformity determination that plan is in accordance with Clean Air Act and EPA regulations; must find TIP is based on 3C process carried out with state, MPO and transit operations; FHWA and FTA must jointly find that TIP conforms with adopted SIP and that priority given to timely implementation control measures contained in SIP.	Reviews and approves UPWP		

**Figure 4: Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) Update Process**



## Aviation Plan

The Council, working with airport users, owners, affected communities, and MnDOT, writes the aviation plan element of the Transportation Policy Plan. It includes goals, policies, review criteria, guidelines, coordination, and implementation procedures, as well as an airports system plan.

See the Aviation Plan:

[http://www.metrocouncil.org/planning/transportation/TPP/2010/10\\_Aviation.pdf](http://www.metrocouncil.org/planning/transportation/TPP/2010/10_Aviation.pdf)

## Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The UPWP is a federally required description and documentation of proposed transportation and transportation-related planning activities in the metropolitan area. The UPWP also serves as the Council's application for US DOT transportation planning funds.

The UPWP is prepared annually and describes metropolitan-area transportation planning activities being undertaken by four agencies: the Metropolitan Council, MnDOT MPCA and MAC

Figure 5 illustrates how the UPWP develops from initiation to adoption.

See the Unified Planning Work Program: <http://www.metrocouncil.org/planning/transportation/UnifiedPlanningWorkProgram.pdf>

## Minnesota Go Vision

The Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan serves as the framework plan for MnDOT's family of plans, or the modal plans. This multimodal plan establishes guidance and priorities for state transportation decisions, which filter down into specific plans for each mode, and into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) which identifies priority projects and how money will be spent. To keep pace with changing priorities, opportunities, and challenges, the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan and the different modal plans are updated every 4 to 6 years.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation completed the **Minnesota GO visioning process** in 2011 to better align the transportation system with what Minnesotans expect for their quality of life, economy and

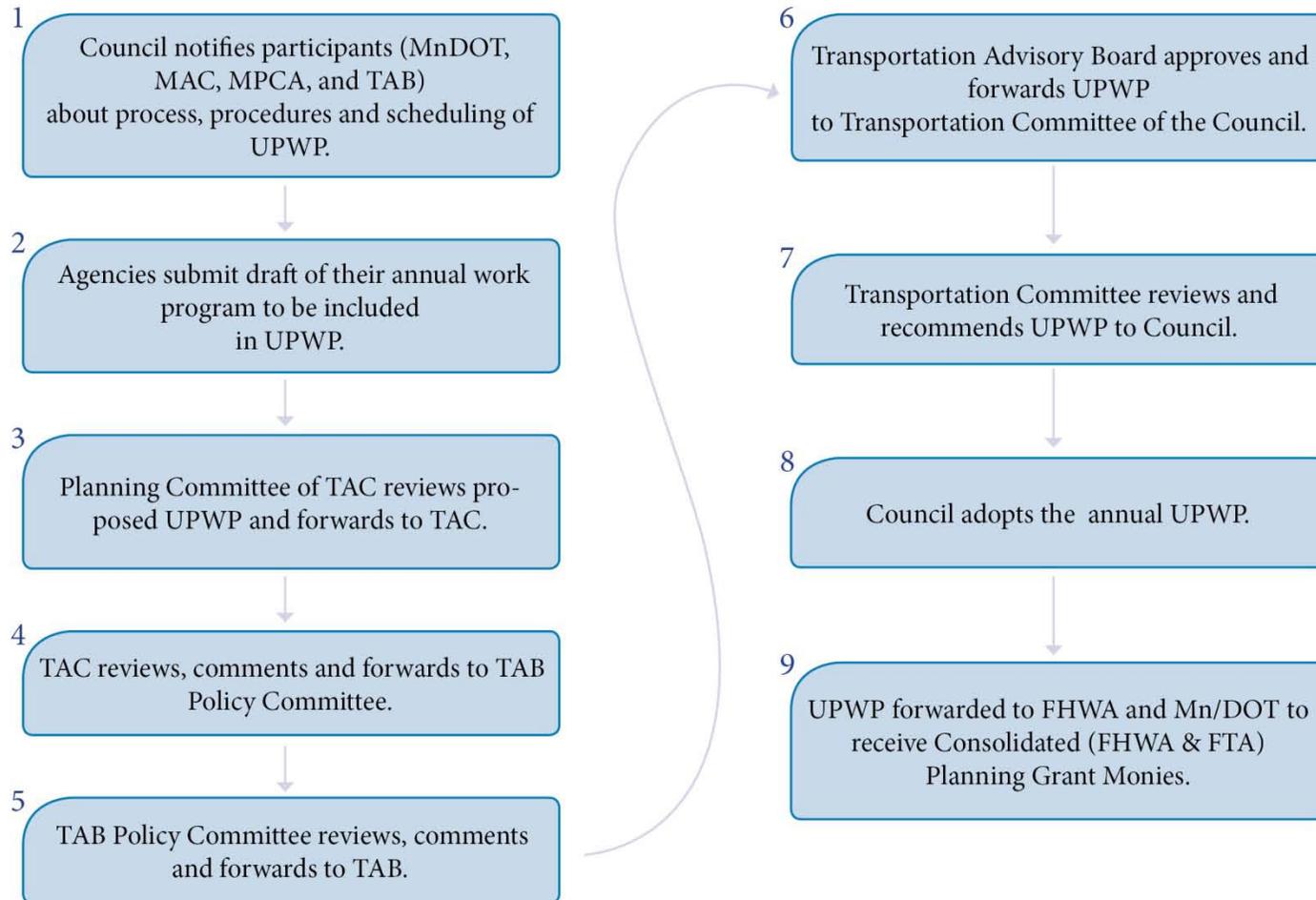
natural environment. The Vision is a description of a desired future. It answers the question "what are we trying to achieve?" It does not answer the question "how will we do it?"—this latter question is addressed in subsequent statewide, modal and regional planning efforts.

The Statewide Multimodal Plan and MnDOT's Metro District 20-Year Highway Investment Plan are discussed in more detail below.

## Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan

Development of a Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan per Minnesota Statute 174.03 is an integral element in the overall MnDOT planning process. The statewide plan must be updated every four years. The plan establishes overarching guidance and priorities for making state transportation decisions across all modes—from roadways, to railroads, to bikeways, and beyond. The plan focuses on activities over a 20-year timeframe. The plan is intended for use as a guidance document for local and regional planning efforts, and the input of these groups is important. Within MnDOT, the plan guides future modal system and investment plans, such as the

**Figure 5- Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Process**



Highway Investment Plan and the State Aviation System Plan.

See more about Minnesota GO and the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan: [www.minnesotagoplan.org](http://www.minnesotagoplan.org)

### **Metropolitan District 20-Year Highway Investment Plan**

MnDOT's Metro District created the 20-Year Highway Investment Plan as a guide to future investments in the state trunk highway system within the Metro District's eight-county metropolitan area. The document reflects Federal, state, and regional policies as well as priorities and projected funding availability as it identifies the long-term system and corridor improvements necessary to achieve and maintain established performance targets. The 20-Year Highway Investment Plan also reflects the goals and policies of the Metropolitan Council's Development Framework and its TPP.

See more about the investment and policy guidance used to develop the 20-year investment plan: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/programmanagement/>

## **Part 3: The Programming Process**

Every year Minnesota receives Federal aid money to spend on transportation needs. Like other states, Minnesota may also receive congressionally designated high-priority or earmarked project funding.

More detail to be provided by MnDOT.

### **Regional Solicitation for Federal funding of transportation projects**

The regional solicitation for federal transportation project funding is a key biennial responsibility of the Council's TAB. Through this process federal funds can be directed to a variety of locally-initiated projects that address transportation problems and help implement regional transportation and development policies.

Federal funds are available for roadway, bridge, transit capital and operating, and bike and pedestrian projects. The Council, MnDOT, other transit providers, local governments and other agencies such as the MPCA may all submit project proposals.

The criteria for evaluating project applications and the solicitation process itself are updated biennially through the 3C process and are adopted by the TAB. Projects are solicited, reviewed, scored and ranked through this process. The TAB directs staff to include the selected projects in the next draft of the Transportation Improvement Program.

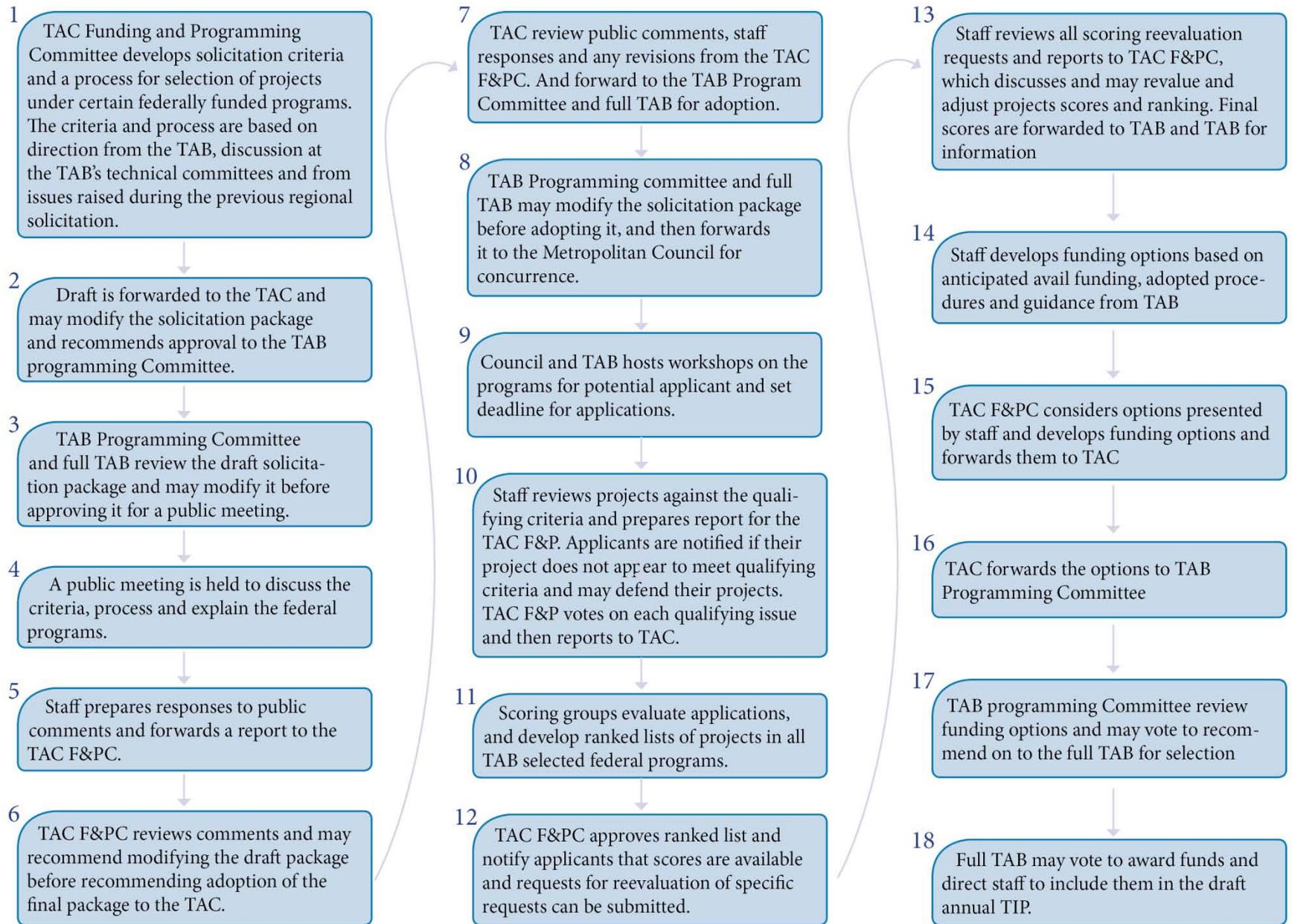
Figure 6 illustrates the Regional Solicitation project.

See more about the Solicitation Process: <http://www.metrocouncil.org/planning/transportation/regsollicit.htm>.

### **The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

The TIP is a four year, multimodal program of highway, transit, bicycle, pedestrian and transportation enhancement projects and programs proposed for federal funding throughout the seven county metropolitan area. The TIP is prepared by the Council in cooperation with MnDOT. The projects contained in the TIP must be consistent with and implement the region's transportation plan and priorities as well as the State Implementation Plan for air quality.

**Figure 6 - Regional Solicitation Process**



**Fig. 7** illustrates the development of the TIP from initiation to federal approval.

### **State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)**

TIP projects are incorporated into the STIP, Minnesota's four year transportation improvement program. The STIP identifies the schedule and funding of transportation projects by state fiscal year (July 1 through June 30). It includes all state and local transportation projects with federal highway and/or federal transit funding along with 100% state funded transportation projects. Rail, port, and aeronautic projects are included for information purposes. The STIP is developed and updated on an annual basis and must be approved by FHWA and FTA.

See more about the current STIP:  
<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/planning/program/stip.html>

### **Part 4: Activities that support planning and programming**

A number of federal and state requirements and procedures support

transportation planning and programming activities. As with the major planning documents, various agencies and individuals participate in these required supportive activities.

*Federal requirements include:*

- The Congestion Management Process
- The Air Quality Conformity Determination Process
- Functional Highway Classification Process
- The Travel Forecasting Process
- The Public Participation Plan
- Memorandum of Understanding

### **Congestion Management Process (CMP)**

Under Federal law, metropolitan planning organizations in areas with populations over 200,000 must develop a CMP that manages traffic congestion and provides information on transportation system performance. A CMP must: measure multi-modal transportation system performance, identify the causes of congestion; assess alternative actions; implement cost-effect actions and evaluate the effectiveness of those actions.

The CMP incorporates and coordinates the various activities of the Council, MnDOT, transit providers, counties, cities and Transportation Management organizations to increase the efficiency of the multimodal transportation system, reduce vehicle use and provide lower-cost safety and mobility projects where feasible.

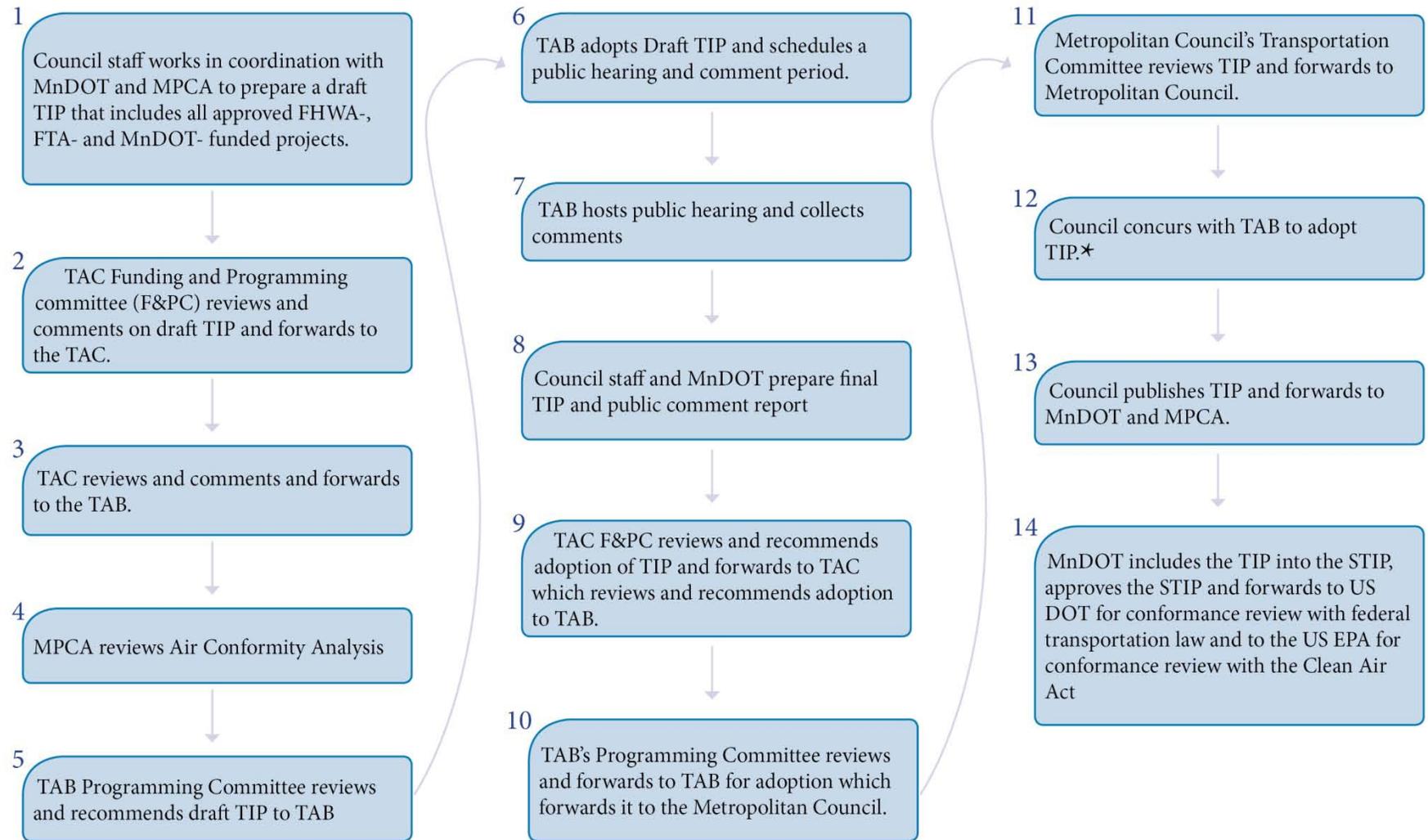
The CMP is incorporated into Chapter 5 of the TPP. The CMP emphasizes four approaches to address regional congestions: highway system management; travel demand management; transit opportunities and land use policy.

See more about the Congestion Management Process:  
[http://www.metrocouncil.org/planning/transportation/TPP/2010/5\\_RegMobility.pdf](http://www.metrocouncil.org/planning/transportation/TPP/2010/5_RegMobility.pdf)

### **Air Quality Conformity Determination**

The Federal Clean Air Act Amendments passed in 1990 stipulate that transportation plans, programs, and projects in non-attainment and maintenance areas must undergo an air quality conformity analysis. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency designates the seven county

**Figure 7 - Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Process**



\* Although final approval rests with the Metropolitan Council, the TAB's action will be changed only if the Council finds the TIP inconsistent with Council policy.

metropolitan area and a portion of Wright County adjacent to the metropolitan area, as a maintenance area for carbon monoxide emissions, so transportation plans, projects, and programs are subject to that air quality analysis.

An interagency committee involving the Council, MnDOT, the EPA, and the MPCA, plus (sometimes) local transportation agencies, work together to ensure that Minnesota's transportation plans conform to air quality standards. The Council, however, also makes its own assessment, using technical data, assumptions based on such things as transportation modeling and emissions analysis, and transportation control measures to show whether or not its transportation plans will conform to air quality standards.

Conformity determinations are subject to public review and comment before agencies take any formal action. Members of the public have access to information, emissions data, analyses, models and modeling assumptions used to determine conformity.

**Figure 8** illustrates the Air Quality Conformity Determination Process

### **Functional Highway Classification Process**

Roadways are classified according to their primary function—mobility for through trips or access to adjacent lands. A Federal requirement, the Functional Highway Classification Process, relies on functional classification to determine which roads will be part of the metropolitan highway system. Functional classification is also used to determine if federal highway funds can be spent on the highway or road and helps establish priorities for Federal funding allocated through the Council and the TAB.

This process takes place under the authority of the TAB and its associated committees. The TAB works within federally suggested limits on principal arterial, minor arterial, and collector road mileage; it also takes into account local city and county functional classification systems.

In classifying highway functions, the Council decides what function a roadway should perform before determining its width, speed limits, intersection controls, or other design features. The results help classify roads into one of four categories:

principal arterials (which include interstate freeways), minor arterials, collector streets, and local streets.

**Figure 9** illustrates the Functional Highway Classification Process for Minor Arterials and Collectors.

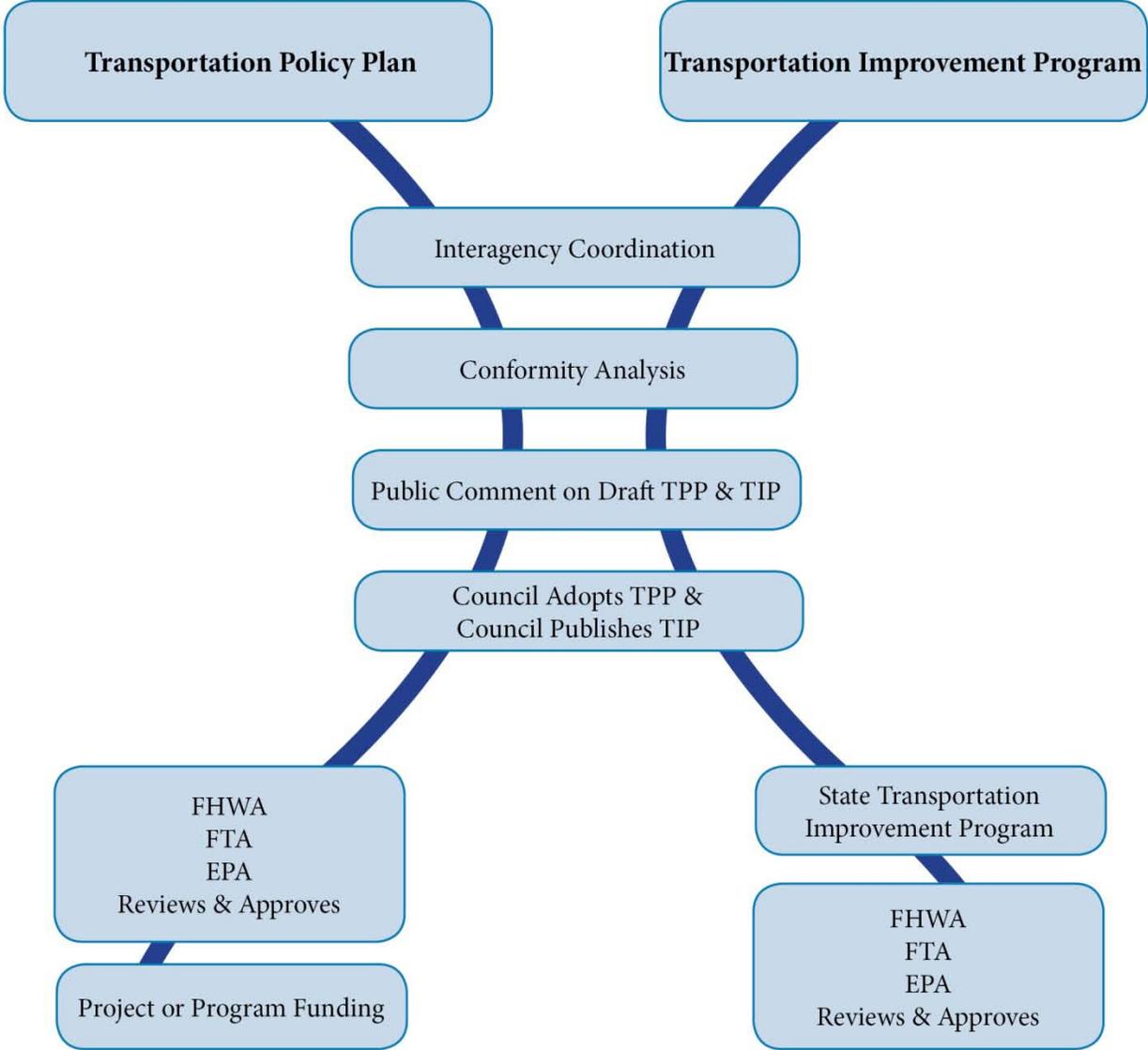
See more about the **Functional Highway Classification Process**:  
<http://www.metrocouncil.org/planning/transportation/FuncRdwyClass/index.htm>

### **The Travel Forecasting Process**

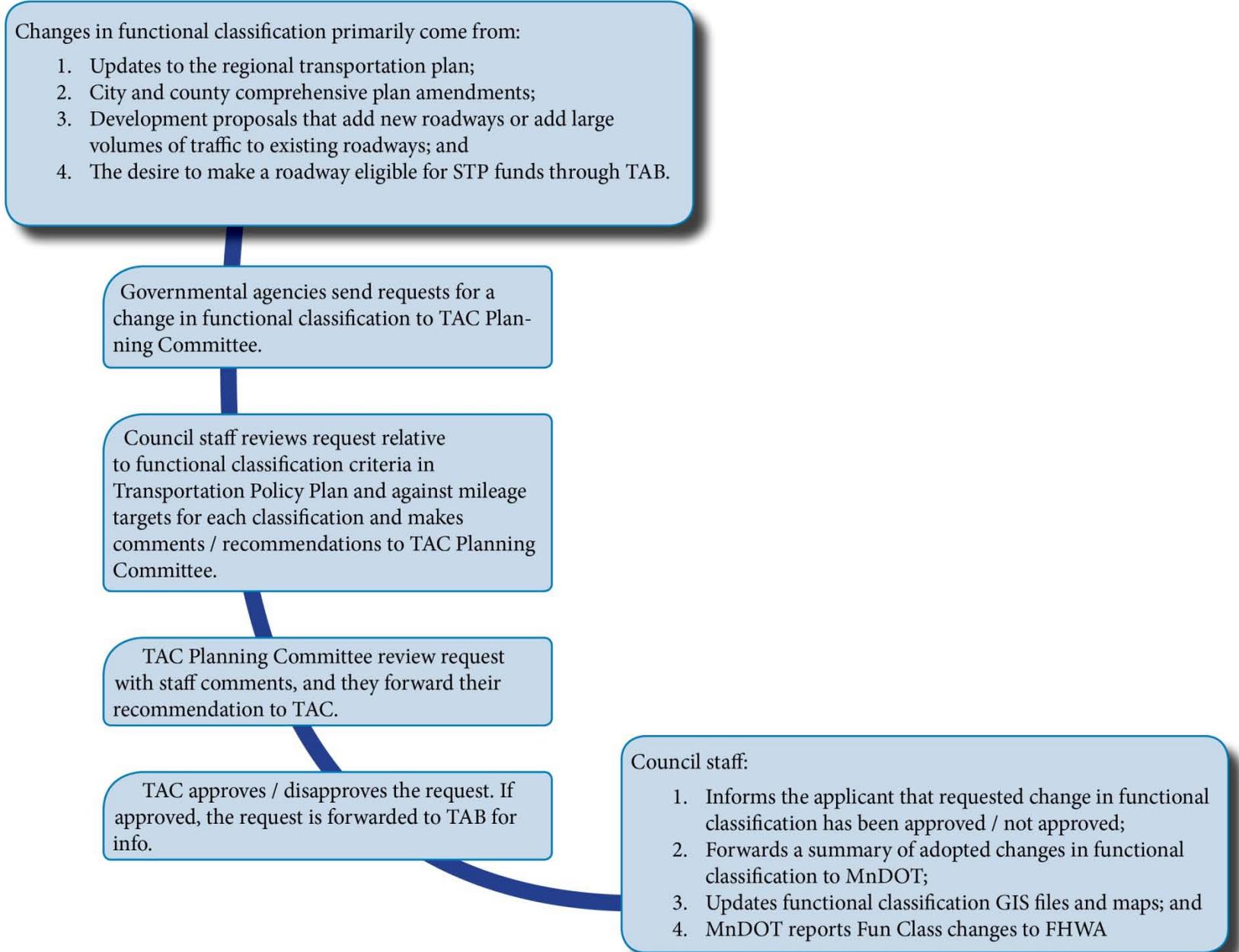
The Council, acting in its role as the federally recognized MPO, is responsible for ensuring that high quality, consistent and defensible travel forecasts are completed for all transportation projects in the Twin Cities region, including transitway projects. Travel forecasts are also used in the Air Quality Conformity Determination Process.

The Council maintains a multi-modal transportation forecasting model that uses a classic, four-step travel demand modeling process. Every 10 years a regional **Travel Behavior Inventory (TBI)** is conducted and the wealth of information collected from the TBI is

Figure 8 - Air Quality Conformity Determination



**Figure 9 - Functional Classification Process for Minor Arterials and Collectors**



(Draft) Transportation Planning Guide, December 15, 2011

used to update the regional travel forecasts.

See more about [Travel Forecasting and the TBI](#):  
[Need Link](#)

### **The Public Participation Plan (PPP)**

The Council's transportation planning efforts include a proactive public involvement process and comply with federal public participation plan requirements. This PPP can be found as an appendix to the Council's TPP.

See more about the [Public Participation Plan](#):  
[http://www.metrocouncil.org/planning/transportation/TPP/2010/Oct21/Appendix/C\\_PPP.pdf](http://www.metrocouncil.org/planning/transportation/TPP/2010/Oct21/Appendix/C_PPP.pdf)

### **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**

Federal regulations require that the mutual metropolitan transportation planning responsibilities of the MPO, the state and public transportation operators be incorporated into a written agreement. The MOU is signed by the Council and MnDOT and is updated at least once every four years.

The MOU between the Council and MnDOT can be found at:

[\(Need link to the MOU\)](#)

*State requirements include:*

- The Controlled Access Approval Process;
- The Land Planning Act
- The Right of Way Acquisition Loan Fund Program (RALF)

### **Controlled Access Approval**

Minnesota state law (Mn. 473.166) requires the Council to approve any controlled access highway or transit fixed-guideway in the metropolitan area before construction or right-of-way acquisition begins. Requests for approval come from the constructing agency—typically MnDOT. The Council has 60 days to review the request.

### **The Land Planning Act**

The Metropolitan Land Planning Act requires local governments to update their comprehensive plans every ten years. It also mandates the Council to create a Metropolitan Development Framework and specific plans for managing the region's transportation,

aviation, water resources, and regional parks and open space systems.

The Land Planning Act requires the Council to review local comprehensive plans to ensure that they conform to these regional system plans. The Council's review is designed to determine how a community's planned actions relate to the interests of the whole region over the long term. It helps ensure that costly public infrastructure, like roads and sewers, are built in an economical and timely fashion, so that public resources are used wisely.

Once a city adopts its plan and the Council finds the plan in conformance with regional plans, a city may change, or amend, a portion of its plan at any time. The Council must also review these comprehensive plan amendments.

See more about the [Metropolitan Land Planning Act](#):  
<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=473.859>

### **Right-of-Way Acquisition Loan Fund Program (RALF)**

State law allows the Council to levy a regional property tax for advance acquisition of highway rights of way

threatened by imminent development. The funds are used by the Council to make loans to counties, cities and towns, which in turn buy property within the officially mapped right of way of state trunk highways or metropolitan highways. The loans are repaid before highway construction takes place.

See more about the [Right-of-Way Acquisition Loan Fund Program](http://www.metrocouncil.org/services/ralf.htm).

<http://www.metrocouncil.org/services/ralf.htm>

*Transit plans and studies include:*

In addition to the federal and state requirements, a number of transit studies are required from time to time:

- The Regional Service Improvement Plan for Transit
- Transit Alternative Analyses
- The Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Coordination Action Plan.

### **Regional Service Improvement Plan (RSIP) for Transit**

The Regional Service Improvement Plan (RSIP) is required by strategy 14c of the 2020 TPP. The RSIP identifies all regional opportunities to increase transit

service to maintain service quality on existing routes and to expand frequency, span and coverage to develop new transit markets. The RSIP guides allocation of the Regionally Allocated Motor Vehicle Sales Tax (MVST) for transit expansion and is used as input into the Regional Travel Demand Forecast Model.

**Fig. 10** shows development of the RSIP Report

### **Transit Alternative Analysis (AA)**

An AA is a study of a corridor or travel shed to determine viable transit alternatives and is required in order to receive federal funds for project construction. These studies examine potential alignments and modes, including both bus and rail options. Land use and zoning needs are also evaluated. The AA program is funded 80 percent federal and 20 percent local. Funds for the analyses are available to public agencies including states and municipalities.

### **Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Coordination Action Plan**

The 2005 requirements of the reauthorized federal transportation act required the creation of coordinated action plans for public transit and human services transportation at the state, regional and local levels. These plans establish goals, criteria and strategies for delivering efficient, coordinated services to elderly, underemployed or otherwise financially disadvantaged persons and persons with disabilities.

See more about the [Coordinated Action Plan](#):

[NEED LINK](#)

In summary, the relationship between the 3C Planning Process Documents and the Supportive Processes are illustrated in **Figure 11**.

**Figure 12** shows the relationship of the MnDOT documents and processes with required 3C documents.

## **Part 5: Glossary**

See

[http://www.metrocouncil.org/planning/transportation/TPP/2010/Oct21/Appendix/A\\_LandTransGloss.pdf](http://www.metrocouncil.org/planning/transportation/TPP/2010/Oct21/Appendix/A_LandTransGloss.pdf)

Figure 10 - Development of RSIP Report

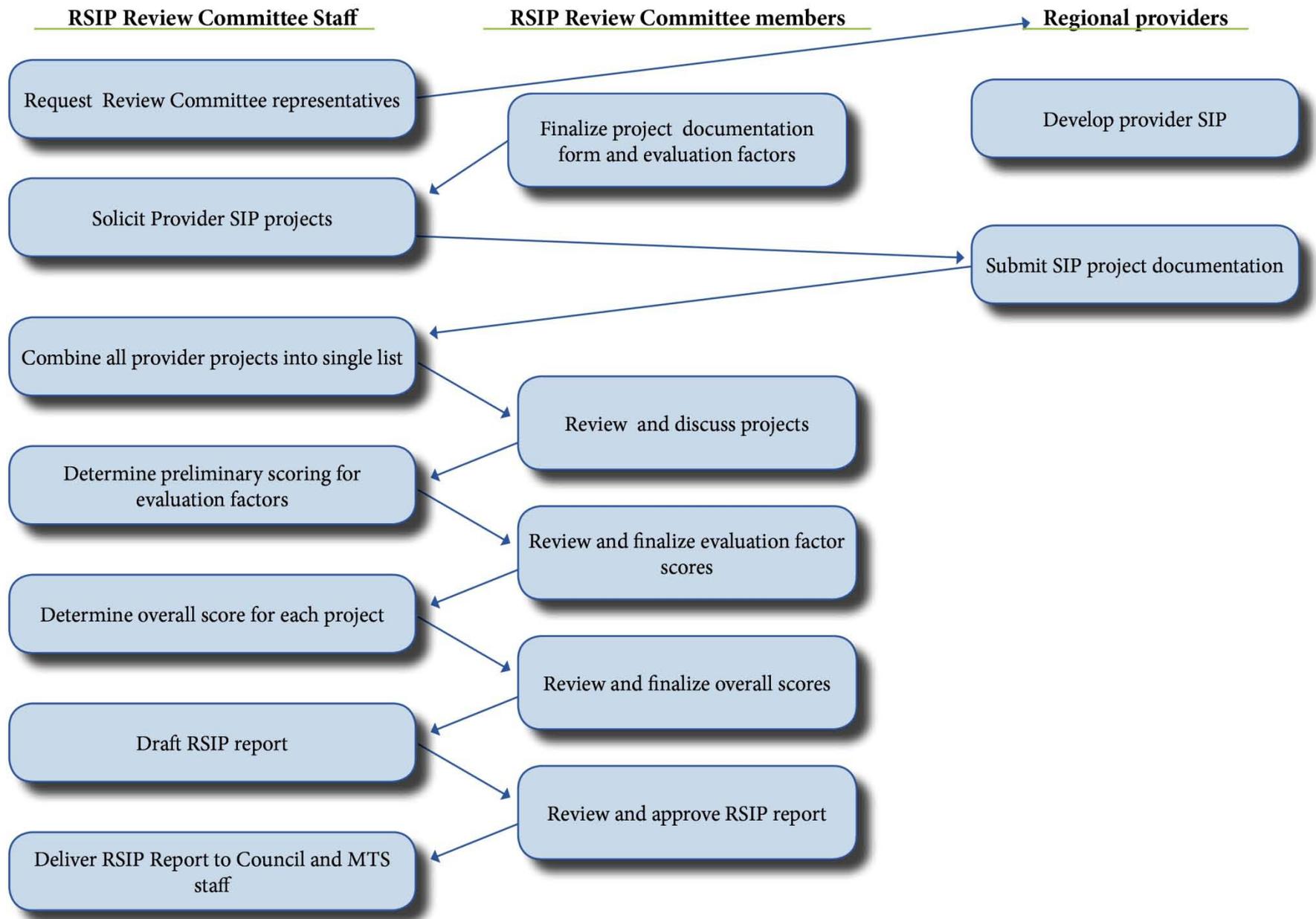


Figure 11 - Relationship Between 3C Planning Process Documents & Supporting Processes

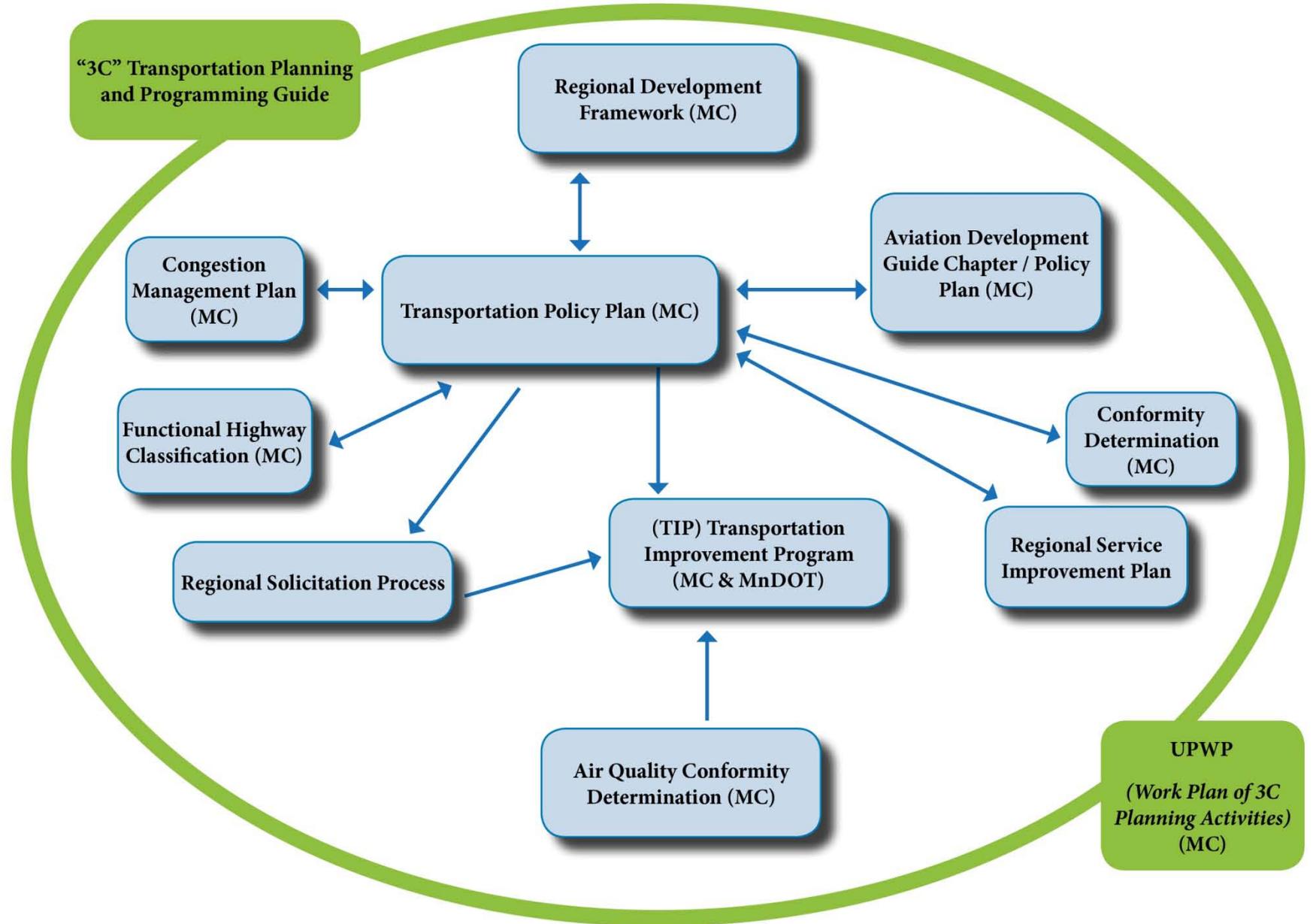


Figure 12 - Interaction of MnDOT Documents / Processes with Required 3C Documents

