Business Item

T Transportation Committee

Item: 2010-366 **SW**
REVISED

Meeting date: November 8, 2010

Council meeting: November 10, 2010

ADVISORY INFORMATION	
Date:	November 2, 2010
Subject:	Adoption of *2030 Transportation Policy Plan Update*
District(s), Member(s):	All
Policy/Legal Reference:	MN Statutes Sec. 473.175 and 473.176; SAFETEA-LU
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Division/Department:	Metropolitan Transportation Services (MTS)

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council accept the attached Public Comment Report on the Draft *2030 Transportation Policy Plan* and adopt the revised final version of the *2030 Transportation Policy Plan*.

Background

The Council, as the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization, is required by both state and federal law to prepare and update a long-range transportation plan for the region every four years. The current Transportation Policy Plan was adopted in January 2009 to comply with the required four-year timeframe. The TPP guides investment in the regional transportation system for the seven-county metropolitan area. Under federal law, the plan must be fiscally constrained and can account only for revenues that can reasonably be expected over the 20-year period. However, the plan may set a policy direction and indicate how and where additional funds would be spent should they occur.

During the last plan update it became evident that the 12 major projects contained in the 2004 plan could not be carried into the new plan as their cost exceeded available funding by over $2.0 billion. The current 2009 plan removed these 12 projects and recommended that they be reassessed to determine if their cost and scope could be reduced. The Council committed to conducting several extensive highway studies to determine if the region could identify a different approach to highway investment that would be more compatible with expected funding levels. Because these major studies were needed to set a new policy direction, no major highway investments are identified or funded in the current 2030 TPP. As a result, in the 2009 plan the Council committed to updating the TPP in 2010 to reflect the results of the planned highway studies.

In addition to the highway studies, the 2009 plan committed to updating the aviation system plan as soon as technical studies, new forecasts and updated long-term comprehensive plans for MSP and three reliever airports were completed.

During 2009 and 2010 the following studies were conducted and completed by the Council and others:

- Metropolitan Highway System Investment Study (MHSIS)
- MnPASS II Analysis
- Major Projects Reassessments
- Congestion Management Safety Plan (CMSP)
- Travel Demand Management Study
- 2030 Aviation System Plan Update

- MSP 2020 Long-term Comprehensive Plan Update
- Long-term Comprehensive Plan Updates for Flying Cloud, Anoka and St Paul airports

Staff incorporated the recommendations and results of these studies into a draft 2030 Transportation Policy Plan. In June and July of 2010 the draft plan was brought before the TAC Planning Committee, TAC, TAB Policy Committee and full TAB for advice, review and comment. The TAB and TAC comments were addressed through draft plan revisions and the Council released the Draft *2030 Transportation Policy Plan* for public review and comment in mid August. The public comment period closed on October 7th, with a public hearing held before the Council's Transportation Committee on September 27th. In addition, four Open Houses were held in various locations around the region during the public comment period. The comments received were sorted and compiled together with proposed staff responses into the attached Public Comment Report.

Comments were received from nearly 220 different individuals and organizations, and they cited approximately 300 specific issues. Some of the comments are proposed to be addressed through recommended text changes to the draft plan. The key text changes recommended to the Draft *2030 Transportation Policy Plan* are highlighted in Attachment A. The Public Comment Report contains all proposed changes with the exception of minor grammatical and wording changes. The Transportation Committee reviewed the Public Comment Report on October 25th and the full Council reviewed it on October 27th. Based on the discussions of the Transportation Committee and Council, additional TPP text changes are suggested to address some of the comments. These new text changes are shown in both Attachment A and the Public Comment Report as shaded text.

The proposed final *2030 Transportation Policy Plan*, incorporating these changes can be found at http://www.metrocouncil.org/planning/transportation/TPP/2010/indexPROP.htm .

Rationale

The adoption of the final *2030 Transportation Policy Plan* will meet the federal and state requirements for the region to have a 20-year fiscally constrained long range transportation plan, will allow for federal funding of planned transportation projects to continue and will provide a policy direction and vision for the spending of additional or unanticipated funds.

Funding

None required.

Known Support / Opposition

Contained in the Public Comment Report.

11/3/2010

Attachment A - Revised
Key Text Changes Proposed to the Draft *2030 Transportation Policy Plan*

1. **Issue: Plan should provide a highway vision beyond fiscally constrained plan.**

Response: Federal law requires the Council to prepare a fiscally constrained long range transportation plan that includes only specific transportation investments that can reasonably expect to be funded over the 20-year plan. While the investments specified in the plan must be fiscally constrained, the vision and policy direction for expenditures articulated in the plan are not fiscally constrained. The highway vision calls for expending available mobility/expansions funds in four key areas; active traffic management and technology investments, lower cost/high benefit projects, managed lane vision and on strategic capacity enhancements. Fully funding these types of highway expenditures would require $3.0 - $4.0 billion, while only $900 million in mobility funds will be available through 2030. As increased or unanticipated funding becomes available it should be directed towards funding this vision.

Text in the plan will be revised in various places as shown below:
Insert on page 103 of the draft plan as the first paragraph of highway chapter section titled "Fiscally Constrained Mobility/Congestion Mitigation Priorities"
This plan provides a highway vision and identifies an investment need that greatly exceeds the revenues reasonably expected to be received over the next 20 years. The cost of implementing the Managed Lane System Vision shown in Figure 6-34 is estimated to cost up to $1.5 billion. An early stage of the Congestion Mitigation Safety Plan (CMSP) led by Mn/DOT identified more than 184 potential lower cost /high benefit CMSP projects totaling over $1.5 billion. Mn/DOT continues to work on identifying these potential projects and anticipates the list and cost to grow. The cost to provide Active Traffic Management (ATM) technology improvements on all Principal and "A" minor arterials as called for in this plan will require an investment in the range of hundreds of millions of dollars, while the fiscally constrained plan is able to fund only $5 million in ATM investments annually. The plan's highway vision also supports implementation of strategic capacity enhancements such as the completion of TH 610 or other capacity additions in strategic locations that are scoped and designed under the lower cost/high benefit philosophy. Fully funding the highway mobility and congestion mitigation investments supported by the policy direction of this plan will require funding in the range of $3.0- $4.0 billion.

As demonstrated earlier, the fiscally constrained state road construction budget is estimated to provide $3.8 billion through 2030 (see figure 6-21 and 6-24), with only $900 million (23%) available for mobility and congestion mitigation in the 2015-2030 time period. This plan calls for the $900 million to be sub-allocated into three categories: ATM investments, lower cost/high benefit projects and ~~Fiscally constrained funding priorities must be consistent with the projected regional transportation revenues for the State Road Construction Program shown in Table 6-21. About $900 or about 23 percent of those funds are projected to be available for mobility and congestion mitigation in the 2015-2030 time period. The $900M available for congestion mitigation/mobility investments shown in Table 6-39 are further sub-allocated to three categories, ATM management, lower-cost / high-benefit projects and~~ managed lanes/strategic capacity projects ~~in Table 6-29~~ as shown in Table 6-39. The allocation of these funds assumes the implementation of projects that meet multiple objectives, such as preservation and congestion mitigation within one project. Should any project increase in cost above that shown in Table 6-39, adjustments will be needed within the investment category or other projects will be delayed. The region, working with Mn/DOT, will continue to seek additional revenues to ensure that these projects

and possibly more can be advanced to actual implementation. As additional revenues are secured through increased funding levels or competitive grants the funds should be used to increase the spending levels for the investment categories shown in Table 6-39 and bring the region closer to fully funding the investment needs identified in this plan.

Table 6-39 allocates only a portion of the 2015-2020 funds ~~have been allocated~~ to specific projects, ~~shown in Table 6-39~~. The rest of the funds have been set aside for broad project categories pending further analysis of costs and benefits. The intent is to continue to monitor, as part of the Congestion Management Process, the performance of the MnPASS lanes on I-394 and I-35W, the I-94 ATM project and the new projects proposed in Table 6-39 and to verify their costs and impacts on the system. This analysis will be used in the 2014 update of this plan, or sooner if warranted, to adjust investment priorities and include new investments that are deemed to be most beneficial to the region. Also based on this analysis, some of the 2021-2030 funds may be committed to advance MnPASS and CMSP projects through an amendment to this plan.

Other text additions:
On page 3 of the Highway Vision section of the Plan Overview add:
Fully funding these investment strategies is beyond the fiscal constraint of this plan. As additional funds are sought and become available, they should be used to more fully implement the highway investment vision articulated in this plan.

On page 32 in the Finance Chapter add the following after the first opening paragraph:
Under federal law, the region is required to develop a fiscally constrained long-range plan. This requires developing an estimate of the highway and transit revenues that ~~will~~ can reasonably be expected to be available to the region over the next 20 years. All revenue estimates are uncertain and in the end will prove to be off by some degree. This plan uses estimates of revenue based on known state and federal allocation formulas, current state revenue forecasts and also based upon past experience with receiving federal, state and other competitive or discretionary revenues. This plan contains an investment vision for highways that cannot be fully funded with reasonably assumed revenues. In addition, the transit revenues assume a high level of competitive funds that may not materialize. As additional revenues are sought and become available they should be used to more fully implement the highway and transit investment visions in this plan.

On Page 78 under the list of bullets for what the highway strategy in this plan will do add:

- Provide policy direction for the use of additional or unanticipated funds.

On page 79 under the section on ATM add:
An annual budget of $5.0 million has been allocated to ATM investments. The needs on the Principal and "A" minor arterials greatly exceed this investment level.

On page 79 under the Lower- Cost/High Benefit Improvements section add:
In an early phase of the CMSP analysis 184 projects were identified with a cost estimate of more than $1.5 billion. This greatly exceeds the $320 million allocated ($20 million annually) for lower-cost/high benefit projects in this plan.

On page 80 under the Managed Lane section add:

The managed lane vision (Figure 6-34) is estimated to cost up to $1.5 billion. This estimate assumes most projects can be built with little or no new right-of-way. The 16-year estimate of funds available for managed lane implementation is less than $500 million.

2. **Issue: Interchange criteria in the plan are too restrictive, particularly outside the I-494/I-694 ring.**

Response: The interchange criteria contained both in the Highway chapter and Appendix E were developed by the TAB and the Council in 1979 and have been part of the regional plan for many years. This plan made some adjustments to the criteria to encourage two mile spacing in less developed areas and to indicate that conversions of interchanges should occur from the developed area outward, without leaving intermediate intersections which can create safety issues when signals are interspersed with interchanges. The draft plan text will be revised as shown below to give more flexibility to Mn/DOT and the Council when using these criteria and to focus on the safety and mobility of the mainline operations.

Text on page 80 and 81 of the draft plan will be revised to read as follows:
"Conversion of at-grade intersections to grade-separated interchanges and other mobility and safety/capacity projects on non-freeway trunk highways should only occur after a Mn/DOT and Council ~~reassessment~~ assessment to determine if the proposed project is consistent with existing plans and policies. ~~of existing and proposed plans and projects in those corridors. Reassessments can be initiated by Mn/DOT, or conducted at the request of the appropriate local government(s).~~ The main purpose of the ~~re~~assessment will be to identify cost-effective projects that can be supported by the Council and Mn/DOT for local and regional funding. Completion of this ~~re~~assessment and explicit support from Mn/DOT will continue to be necessary to obtain Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds through the Regional Solicitation process for non-freeway trunk highway improvements.
Appendices D and E reinforce the effectiveness of improvements on non-freeway trunk highways in providing benefits for regional travel. As local units of government work with Mn/DOT to improve and convert non-freeway trunk highways to freeways, the following requirements are particularly important to achieve regional objectives:
The appropriate local units of government exercising land use authority along the trunk highways will be expected to incorporate access standards into their subdivision and zoning ordinances and apply ~~them~~ the standards during their development review process;
Conversion of an at-grade intersection to an interchange ~~must~~ should only occur in the urban area or in the planned MUSA (see Figure E-1 in Appendix E);
Conversion of an at-grade intersection to an interchange must provide safety and mobility improvements to both the mainline and cross-street. The new interchange should be adjacent to an existing interchange unless MN/DOT and the Council determine through the assessment that the intermediate access points can be ~~in the urban area or in the planned MUSA~~ modified or managed to address safety concerns;
Principal arterials ~~can only intersect~~ should only have interchanges with other principal ~~arterial~~ or "A" minor arterials. Exceptions to this criteria will be allowed only under extraordinary circumstances and with the approval of Mn/DOT, the Council and the local road authorities; and
Interchange spacing outside the I-494 / I-694 ring ~~must~~ should be 2 miles or more unless physical constraints or density of existing or planned development require closer spacing.

Text in Appendix E relating to the interchange criteria 1, 3, and 6 will be revised as follows:

1. Additional interchange capacity should be considered only when it supports the Metropolitan Council's Regional Development Framework and the Transportation Policy Plan, and local comprehensive plans approved by the Metropolitan Council.

   Discussion: This is a critical objective. In addition to solving highway capacity deficiencies, new interchanges or major interchange modifications should be consistent with regional plans and regionally approved local plans, and should support development in desirable locations. In most cases, a new interchange should be in the Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA) (see Figure E-1) or census urbanized area ~~and be adjacent to another interchange rather than an intersection.~~ New interchanges should be adjacent to an existing interchange unless Mn/DOT determines that the intermediate access can be modified or managed to address safety concerns.

   3. Metropolitan Highway System interchanges ~~may~~ should only connect Metropolitan Highways (Principal Arterials) to other Metropolitan Highways or to an "A" minor arterial as defined in the functional classification system adopted by the Transportation Advisory Board and approved by the Metropolitan Council. Exceptions to this criteria will be allowed only under extraordinary circumstances and with the approval of Mn/DOT, the Council and the local road authorities.

   Discussion: The intent of this criterion is to ensure that Metropolitan Highways connect to adequate arterials in the state and local road system. These roads should be continuous and connect to other principal or "A" minor arterials ~~or connectors.~~

6. Generally, interchanges on the Metropolitan Highway System on the I-494/I-694 ring or inside should be spaced at a minimum of one mile (center to center). Interchanges outside the ring should be spaced at a minimum of 2 miles (center to center) unless physical constraints or the density of existing or planned development requires closer spacing. If it is determined appropriate to locate an interchange at less than one or 2 miles apart or modify an existing interchange, the safe operation of the main roadway must be maintained.

   Discussion: Experience has shown that interchanges spaced less than one mile apart have inadequate weaving distance and require special design features such as auxiliary lanes to maintain safety. Outside of the I-494/I-694 ring, other Metropolitan Highways or "A" minor arterials are typically not needed closer than 2 miles due to the lack of intense development.

3. Issue: Update New Starts funding information to reflect new federal interpretation of the Cost-Effectiveness Index (CEI).

Response: This is correct and the existing funding language on page 37 of the draft plan regarding federal New Starts funding will be deleted and replaced with the following: "Federal New Starts funding is the source used to fund major rail and dedicated busway projects. New Starts funding is awarded nationally on a competitive basis through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Projects must apply and receive approval to enter preliminary engineering and must also apply again to enter final design and construction. New Starts projects are currently evaluated by the FTA based upon "Project Justification" and "Financial" ratings; both of these ratings, and the overall project rating for a project, must be medium or better to receive FTA New Starts funding. FTA considers six project justification factors: Economic Development Benefits; Transit-Supportive Land Use; Mobility Improvements; Cost-Effectiveness; and Environmental Benefits. The financial rating is based upon the project sponsor's ability to support the operations and maintenance of the transit system, the amount

and proportion of the local funding match commitment, and the stability and dependability of that match. Historically, those projects that have been competitive for federal funds commit at least a 50 percent local match (beyond the required 20 percent minimum)."

4. **Issue: Confusion over 12 major projects from the 2004 plan and the proposed improvement now proposed under the project reassessment.**

Response: Table 6-36 on page 99 and Figure 6-37 on page 100 of the draft plan which describe the project scope and map the original expansion projects from the 2004 plan will be removed.

5. **Issue: Expand list of non-Mn/DOT principal arterials to include Dakota County highways 23 and 32 and Scott County highway 18.**

Response: The text on page 104 will be changed as follows: "At present, there are ~~three~~ six principal arterials in the metropolitan area that are not under Mn/DOT jurisdiction: Dakota/Scott CSAH 42, Dakota CSAH 23 (138th St. to CR 42), Dakota CSAH 32 (TH 13 to I-35E), Anoka CSAH 14, Scott CR 18 (CSAH 42 to TH 169), and Shepard Road. Given their regional importance these metropolitan highways should be under Mn/DOT jurisdiction."

6. **Issue: The TPP should recognize the determination by Anoka Co. that Viking Boulevard will be a future east-west Principal Arterial and the determination by Scott Co. that CR 17 and TH 13 will become a future north-south Principal Arterial and the future east-west PA should be CR 8.**

Response: Recommended new text on page 104 of the draft plan as follows: "New Principal Arterials on "A" minor arterials to support Expanding Urban Development. The need for new principal or "A" minor arterials in developing areas where the arterial grid is not adequate to serve future growth is well documented. Principal arterials are the most efficient and safe way to accommodate longer and faster regional vehicle trips. The 2004 Transportation Policy Plan already Identified needs for future principal arterials in Anoka County (east-west), Dakota County (east-west and north-south), and Washington County (north-south), and Scott County (east-west, north-south). Anoka County has determined that CSAH 22/Viking Boulevard from Sherburne County on the west to Chisago and Washington counties on the east, is the preferred location for the potential future east-west principal arterial. Scott County has determined that the future potential north-south principal arterial should be CSAH 17 and TH 13 from TH 169 to TH 19 and the future east-west PA should be CR 8 from I-35W to TH 169. Since principal arterials should end with a connection to another principal arterial, actual endpoints can be determined in the future. These proposed principal arterials will be considered further in the 2014 update of the TPP when new regional forecasts based on the 2010 census have been developed.

7. **Issue: The results of the MnPASS 2 Study should be incorporated into the plan.**

Response: Text will be added to page 92 of the draft plan as follows: "Mn/DOT, working with the Council, during 2010 completed the MnPASS 2 Study. The objective of that work was to analyze and make recommendations for the next generation of MnPASS managed lane projects for implementation in the Twin Cities metropolitan region. In the study, Mn/DOT assessed its priorities for short term (2 to 10 years) MnPASS lane implementation in light of evolving federal policies, actual experience with two operating MnPASS lanes, and in close coordination with the Managed Lane Vision developed as part of

the MHSIS. An important aspect of identifying shorter term MnPASS 2 projects for implementation was the desire to avoid costly road widening and right-of-way takings. The study compared different managed lane options, but did not analyze other types of transportation investments.
The recommendations of the MnPASS 2 study for short term priority investments are as follows:
Tier 1 Investments: I-35E (I-94 to Little Canada Road, Little Canada Road to Co. Rd. E)
A great opportunity exists to build this lane coincident with the replacement of the Cayuga Bridges, a Chapter 152 funded project which is moving forward now. This corridor has moderately high transit service, directly serves downtown St. Paul, can be built in two phases without major challenges, and extends MnPASS to the northeastern sector of the metro region. The benefits to users will increase with a direct connection provided to downtown St. Paul via the 10th Street/Wacouta Avenue exit. Tier 2 Investments: TH 36 Eastbound from I-35W to I-35E, I-35W from downtown Minneapolis to TH 36, I-35W from TH 36 to Blaine, and I-94 between the downtowns. TH 36 is also an opportunistic project in that it can be easily and inexpensively built coincident with the replacement of the Lexington Avenue Bridge at TH 36. Combined with the I-35W project serving downtown Minneapolis it will ultimately become part of a viable northern metro MnPASS system. I-94 can provide direct connections to both Minneapolis and St. Paul and eventually connect to the existing MnPASS system. All of these corridors provide direct service to the downtown cores have high transit service levels and should be studied further. As financing and approvals are obtained, engineering challenges resolved, and opportunities arise to combine implementation of the MnPASS lane with other preservation projects, these projects should be built. All MnPASS 2, Tier 3 recommended project investments are contained in the Managed Lane Vision shown in Figure 6-34 along with other longer term implementation opportunities."

8. **Issue: Need a regional bike and pedestrian plan.**

Response: Chapter 12, Work Plan will include a new item Regional Bicycle System Inventory and Regional Bicycle System Master Study. This project includes an inventory of existing and currently planned bicycle facilities in the 7-county Twin Cities metropolitan area, followed by a Regional Bicycle System Master Study that will include an analysis of existing conditions, connectivity and levels of use of the bikeway system with a special emphasis on connectivity to regional transitways and major travel generators.

9. **Issue: Lack of discussion of ADA impacts and role of Metropolitan Council in regional pedestrian accessibility.**

Response: Chapter 12 , the Federal Requirements Chapter will include a paragraph on the role of the Metropolitan Council in fulfilling the requirements of the Americans With Disabilities Act, as follows:
"ADA: The Americans With Disabilities Act requires that all pedestrian facilities and transit facilities that are constructed be accessible to users with all levels of functional ability. Policy 16 of the Transportation Policy Plan assures that this goal is pursued for the entire transit system including pedestrian access to that system. Chapter 9 also includes a discussion of the requirement that all owners of pedestrian facilities should strive to make them accessible and that all public entities with 50 or more employees are required by law to develop an ADA Transition Plan that will detail steps to make their public rights of way accessible."

10. **Issue: Plan is inconsistent in encouraging major transit projects while discouraging highway projects. Plan is fiscally constrained for highways but not transit.**

Response: The Finance chapter on page 37 of the draft plan will include a statement regarding the uncertainty of Federal New Starts funding as follows: "In light of current and future federal transportation funding shortfalls, there is no assurance that historic levels of New Starts funding will be available. The Transit chapter text on page 149 and 153 of the draft plan will also be revised to reflect the uncertainty of the funding for projects listed as possibly being accomplished between by 2030 as follows:

Page 149: As corridors move towards implementation, the ~~cost~~ revenue estimates in this plan would allow for the following transitways to be implemented:
• Three corridors ~~will~~ could be built as LRT or dedicated busways, one to be completed by 2020, one possibly begun before 2020 and completed soon after, and a third possibly completed by 2030;
• Four BRT corridors ~~will~~ could be built on highway alignments, two ~~will be built~~ by 2020 and two additional BRT corridors on highway alignment ~~will be built~~ by 2030; and
• One additional commuter rail corridor ~~will~~ could be built by 2030.
However, it should be noted that based on current data, no commuter rail line other than the Northstar corridor appears to generate enough ridership to justify this kind of large capital investment.

Page 153: It is projected that the following projects ~~will~~ may be completed between 2011 and 2020:
• Expansion of Hiawatha LRT fleet to three-car trains
• Completion of Central Corridor Light Rail
• A third light rail transit line completed and a fourth possibly begun by 2020
• Additional investments in the Cedar BRT
• Additional investments in the I-35W BRT
• Possible investments in two additional Highway BRTs by 2020
• New facilities and increased express bus service in corridors with transit advantages
• Possible investments in six Arterial BRT lines
• Expanded local bus service.

It is projected that, from 2021 to 2030, the following projects ~~will~~ could possibly be completed:
• ~~Completion of the fourth LRT (begun before 2020) and a fifth LRT~~ A fourth and fifth LRT line could possibly be completed by 2030 if viable projects are identified.
• One additional commuter rail line may be completed by 2030 if a viable project with reasonable operating subsidies can be achieved.
• Three additional Arterial BRT lines
• Two additional Highway BRT lines.

11. **Issue: The plan should recognize the large unfunded needs that exist**.

Response: The plan Overview on page 3 of the draft plan will be revised to include language recognizing that Mn/DOT's Statewide Transportation Plan identified $40 billion in unmet mobility needs. The language will also recognize that achieving the level of funding to meet this need is not fiscally realistic. Text to be added includes:

Mn/DOT's 2009 Statewide Transportation Plan estimates that statewide trunk highway investment needs exceed $65 billion over the next 20 years, while projected revenues total only about $15 billion – resulting in a gap of about $50 billion statewide. About $40 billion of this funding gap is for mobility needs in the metro area and on interregional corridors in Greater Minnesota. As the Mn/DOT plan

acknowledges, it is unrealistic to expect that future transportation funding will increase to meet the $50 billion "unmet need." In fact, that plan estimates that meeting just 5 percent of this $50 billion gap – or $2.5 billion – over the next 10 years would require the equivalent of a 12.5-cent per gallon increase in the motor vehicle fuel tax.

The statewide transportation plan's policies and strategies, therefore, emphasize a new approach to meeting system improvement needs. This is especially evident in the plan's vision for mobility in the metro area, which calls for "a more comprehensive and fiscally realistic approach to congestion mitigation."