



Transportation Planning and Programming Guide

**for the Twin Cities
metropolitan area**

**June
2012**

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Introduction

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 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.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Federal regulations require that the mutual transportation planning responsibilities of the **Metropolitan**

Planning Organization (MPO), the state, and the public transportation operator be incorporated into a written agreement—a Memorandum of Understanding. The MOU is signed by the Council and MnDOT and is reviewed at least once every four years. The MOU may also be modified by mutual agreement at any time.

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

<http://www.metrocouncil.org/planning/transportation/2008MOUBetweenMnDOTandMC.pdf>

This guide explains in more detail than the MOU the transportation planning and programming process for the Twin Cities metropolitan area. National policy is that the MPO designated for each urbanized area must carry out a **continuing, comprehensive and cooperative (3C)** multi-modal transportation planning process. The 3C process provides a basis for decision-making and ensures that transportation interests are balanced when public funds are spent.

Finally, this Transportation Planning and Programming 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, the sources and allocation of funds to transportation projects, how plans become programmed projects and the activities that support planning and programming.

A glossary of frequently used transportation planning terms can be found in the Appendix of the Transportation Policy Plan:

http://www.metrocouncil.org/planning/transportation/TPP/2010/Oct21/Appendix/A_LandTransGloss.pdf

Part 1: The Participants

Participants in the transportation planning process include:

- The Metropolitan Council (the Council)
- The Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) and its Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
- The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)
- The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)
- The Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC)
- Transit Providers
- Counties and Cities
- Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB)
- County Regional Railroad Authorities
- Private Citizens
- The U.S. Department of Transportation (US DOT)
- Other Agencies

With the exception of the TAB and TAC, each of these entities has roles and responsibilities in addition to transportation planning. This guide describes their roles only in the context of transportation planning.

Metropolitan Council

Federal law requires that federal transportation project and program funds are selected by the state or by state-designated **metropolitan planning organizations**, which represent areas with a population of 50,000 or more. These organizations, known as **MPOs**, develop transportation plans and programs based on the “3C” planning process carried out with state and local communities.

Created in 1967, the Metropolitan Council (“the Council”), is the designated MPO (in conjunction with its Transportation Advisory Board as further detailed below) for the seven-county Twin Cities area, which includes Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington Counties.

The Council 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.

Figure 1 shows the Council’s Policymaking Structure

The Council develops the **Regional Development Framework (RDF)** that includes policies for shaping future growth and provides direction to the four system policy plans: transportation, aviation, parks and water resources.

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 assuring these applications are consistent with the stated goals and policies of the RDF and the Transportation Policy Plan.
- Reviewing local communities' long-range plans to make sure they are consistent with regional system plans.

In addition to its transportation planning roles, the Council also:

- Operates much of the public transit regular route system through Metro Transit and private contractors.
- Operates Metro Mobility ADA, Transit Link dial-a-ride and Metro Vanpool through contracts.
- Administers transit contracts.
- Coordinates with suburban transit authorities.
- Administers state and metropolitan transit operating funds.
- Promotes ride sharing and contracts for Metro Vanpool.
- Offers local governments, regional railroad authorities, other public agencies and transit providers, advice and technical help on transit service coordination.

- Collects for and distributes from a revolving loan fund for buying highway rights of way.

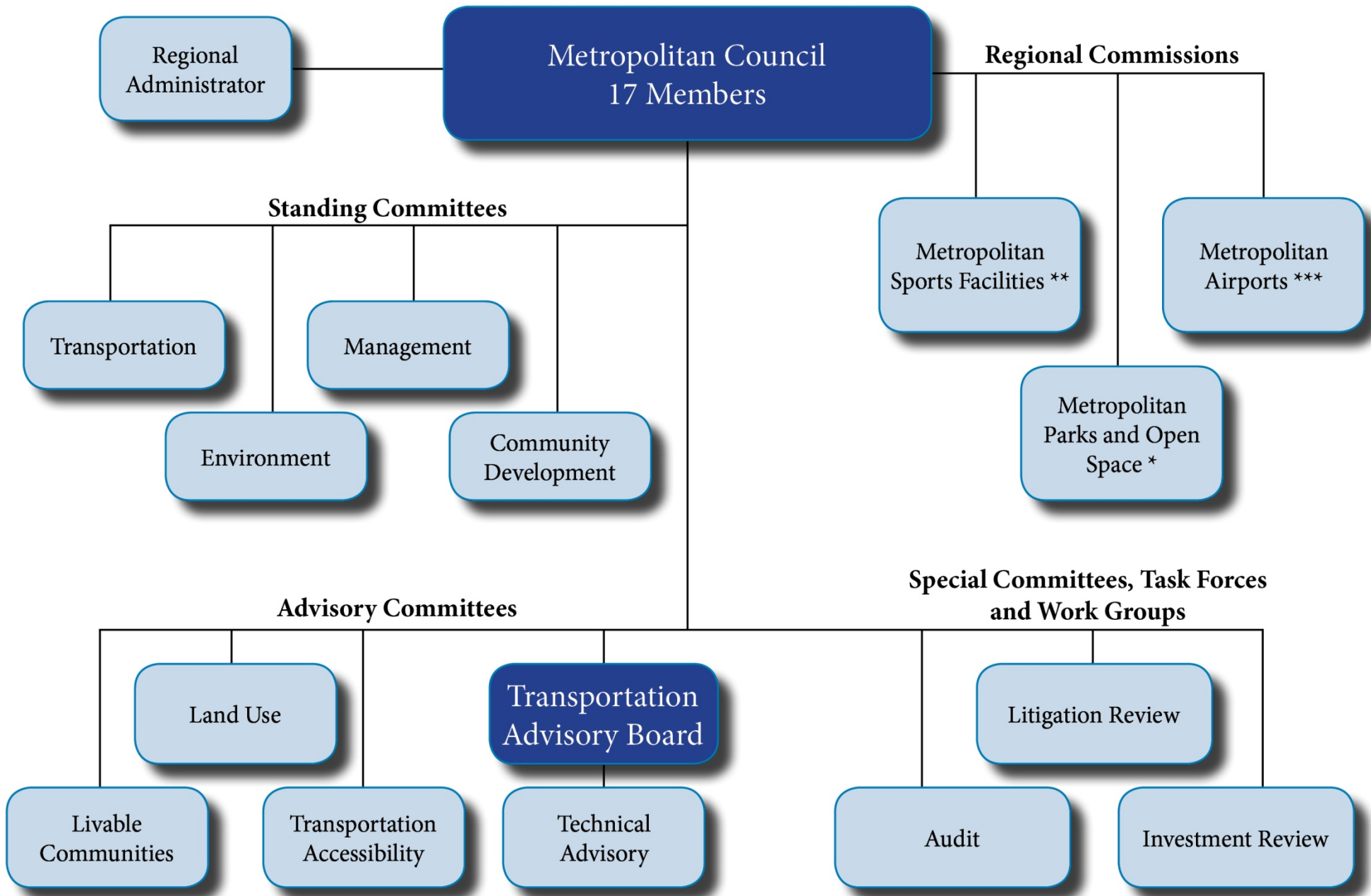
See more about the Council:

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

Transportation Advisory Board (TAB)

Among the Council's advisory committees, the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) has a very special role. The Council, made up of members appointed by the Governor, was the regional transportation planning agency in 1974 when federal law was changed to require that governing bodies of all MPOs include local elected officials as part of the decision making process. The TAB was established at that time to include local elected officials in the process, allowing the Council to continue as the designated MPO and to receive federal transportation funding. TAB membership is now spelled out in state law, and the majority of TAB members must be city and county elected officials from the seven-county area. The TAB, in conjunction with the Council, satisfies the federal requirement that

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.

a designated MPO include local elected officials in the decision making process and plays a major role in the development of transportation policy for the seven-county area.

The TAB consists of 33 members: ten elected city officials; one member from each county board in the metropolitan area; the Commissioner of the Department 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 Council district (for a total of eight); and one Council member. The TAB chair is appointed by the Council from among the 33 members.

The TAB works closely with the Council, reviewing, commenting on and coordinating transportation planning and programming activities. 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 **Figure 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:

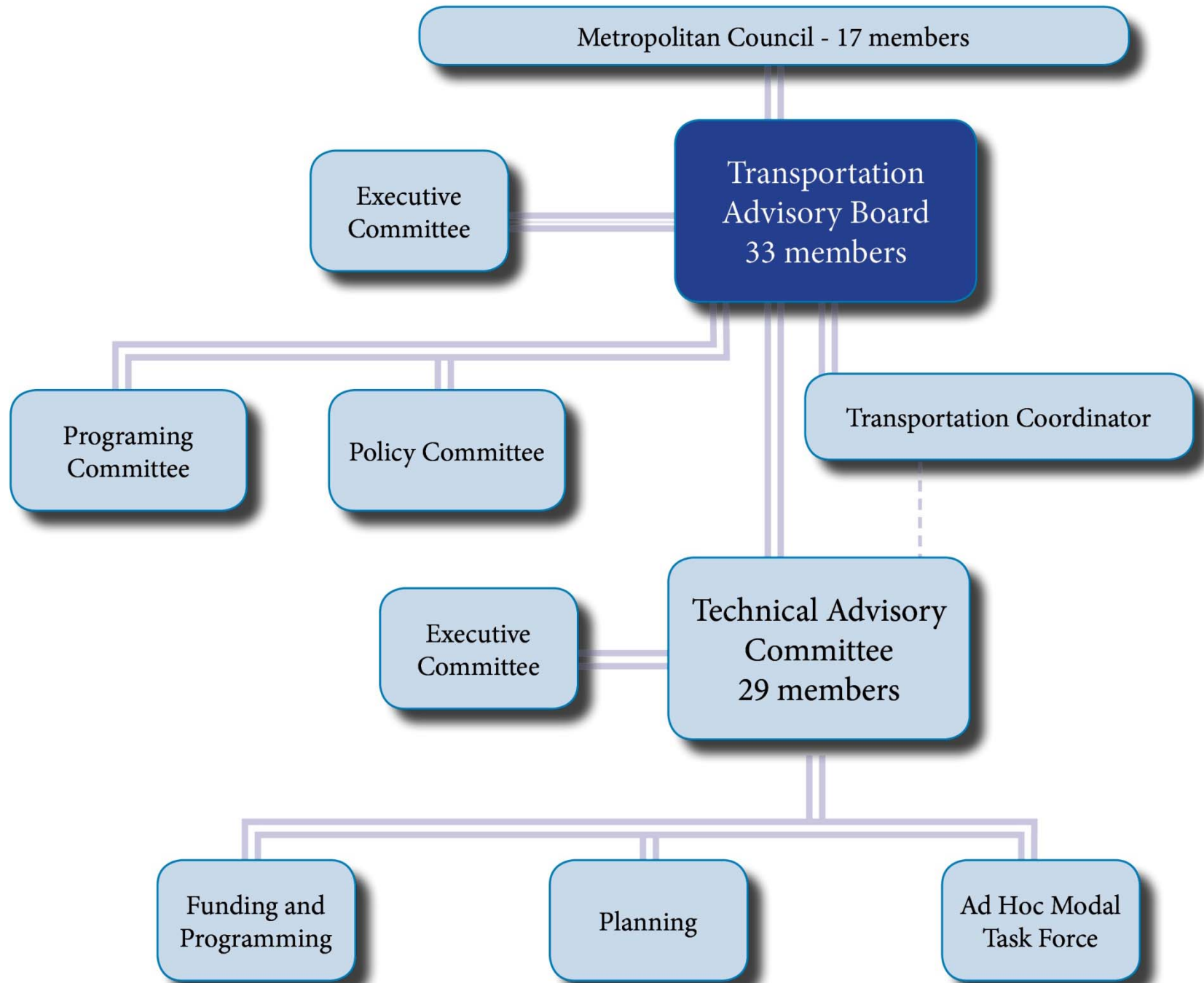
<http://councilmeetings.metc.state.mn.us/TABTechAdvCmte/index.htm>

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 modal plans, and allocates funding to various projects.

MnDOT also develops the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) which incorporates the Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) from the various metropolitan areas within the state and all other federally funded transportation projects in the state. MnDOT requests joint approval of the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

Figure 2 - Transportation Advisory Board



MnDOT's Statewide Transportation Plan and its Highway System Investment Plan guide the MnDOT district plans. MnDOT Metro District's plan addresses performance needs in the metropolitan area and reflects the policies and incorporates the plans made by the metropolitan planning organization. These plans address preservation, safety, management of the existing system, and other capital improvements that increase system capacity.

MnDOT plays an integral part in the Twin Cities metropolitan planning process, serves as the liaison between the Council and the FHWA and FTA, and participates in the Air Quality Conformity Process.

See more about MnDOT's 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 regulations.

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 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 Council plans and policies. Moreover, specific airport development projects of \$5

million or more at the Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport and \$2 million or more 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 that currently includes the Blue Line (Hiawatha) and in the future, the Red Line (Cedar Ave BRT), the Orange Line (I-35W South), the Green Line (Central Corridor) and the Green Line Extension (Southwest) light rail transit lines.

Northstar Commuter Rail is also part of the expanding transitway system offering 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**, dial-a-ride type 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 their own regular-route bus services in about a dozen cities. 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 the region-wide fare collection system, bus lease agreements, and grant agreements for bus storage facilities, bus shelters, and regular-route transit services. Transit providers participate in the development of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), development of the regional fare structure and the Regional Service Improvement Plan.

Counties and Municipalities

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

Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB)

CTIB operates under a Joint Powers Agreement of five counties and the Council as authorized in state legislation 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.mnrides.org/about>

County Regional Railroad Authorities

A 1980 state law allows Minnesota counties to form Regional Railroad Authorities (RRAs) 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 Railroad Authority.

Private Citizens

Residents of the Twin Cities 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.

See more about public involvement in transportation planning at the Council:
<http://www.metrocouncil.org/transit/index.htm>

U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT)

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) is a federal agency that funds, sets policy for safety, and provides other guidance for transportation by air, highways, rail, transit, and water. The USDOT 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 review 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 (MAC policies must be in keeping with both Council plans and those of the FAA.)

Other Agencies

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

Part 2: Transportation-related Planning Documents

Major transportation-related planning documents include:

- The Regional Development Framework
- Transportation Policy Plan, (TPP), which includes the Aviation Plan

- The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
- The Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan
- Metro District 20-year Highway Investment Plan

Figure 3 describes the roles of the various agencies in the preparation of the three federally mandated plans and programs.

Regional Development Framework

The Council is required by state statute to prepare the Regional Development Framework. The Framework sets out the regional forecasts for population, households and employment. It 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. The Framework is the first chapter of the Comprehensive Development Guide, which includes the Transportation

Figure 3 – Federally Mandated Transportation Plan and Program Interagency Participation Chart

	Transportation Policy Plan	Transportation Improvement Program	Unified Planning Work Program
Metropolitan Council	Prepares and approves TPP.	Lead agency in preparing TIP. Forwards document to MnDOT for inclusion in STIP.	Prepares and approves UPWP. Submits UPWP to MnDOT to forward to US DOT.
Transportation Advisory Board	Participates in plan development; reviews and comments on documents.	Conducts regional project solicitation for incorporation into TIP. Adopts TIP. Approves TIP and forwards to Council for concurrence.	Reviews and comments on UPWP to Council.
Technical Advisory Committee	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.
MnDOT	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; may comment directly to Council.
MPCA	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.
MAC	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.
Local Governments	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.
Transit Providers	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.
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 air quality SIP and that priority given to timely implementation control measures contained in SIP.	Reviews and approves UPWP.

Policy Plan, the Water Resources Management Plan and the Regional Parks and Open Space Plan.

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

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

Transportation Policy Plan (TPP)

The TPP is a federally required plan that is prepared and updated on a four- year cycle by the Council. The TPP describes the region’s approach to metropolitan transportation investments for at least the next 20 years. The transportation plan is one chapter of the Council’s Regional 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 transportation infrastructure. The plan must balance planned investments against reasonably expected resources; it must also produce cleaner air or meet the emission budget.

The TPP can be amended as needed. The process to amend the TPP is similar to the process to adopt a revised plan.

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>

From time to time the Council produces studies that include information and analysis to inform future revisions of the TPP, including future transportation system investment decisions. These studies are prepared with stakeholder involvement, including review, comment, and as appropriate-- recommendations from the TAB. Studies conducted by other agencies are often presented to the TAB for information or comment.

Aviation Plan

The Council, working with MAC, 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:**

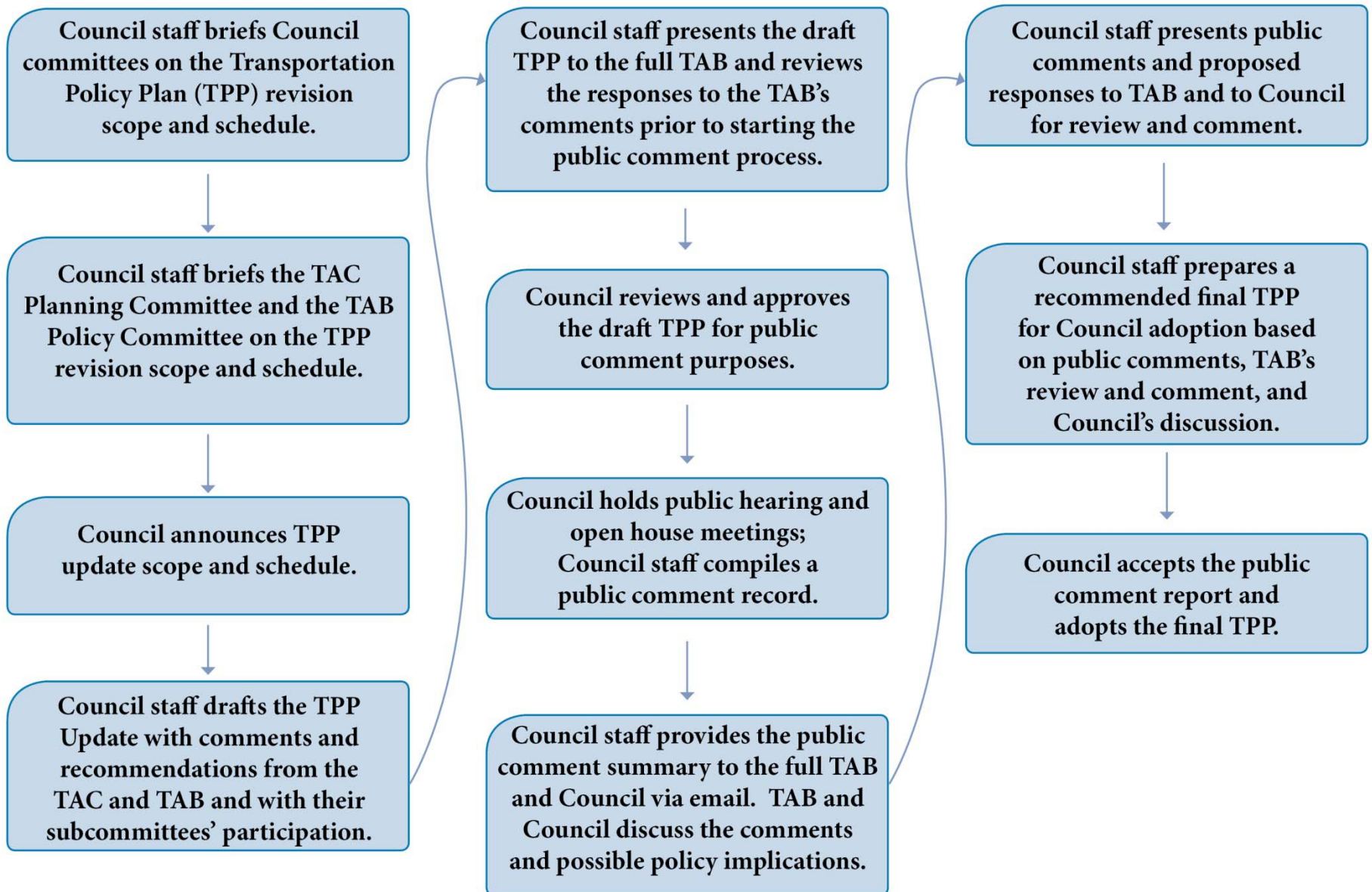
http://www.metrocouncil.org/planning/transportation/TPP/2010/10_Aviation.pdf

Bike and Pedestrian Planning

Most pedestrian and bicycle planning is done at the municipal level due to the relatively short length of trips. The Council and TAB encourage local governmental units to plan for these modes through incentives found in criteria used to select projects for federal funding. The Council’s TPP includes a chapter on bike and pedestrian planning to give guidance to local units. The Council and MnDOT also promote development of “Complete Streets” to encourage safe facilities for these modes.

MnDOT is updating the statewide bicycling plan, using its State Bicycle Advisory Committee as a sounding board. While there is no ongoing

Figure 4 – Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) Update Process



regional committee on bicycling and pedestrian planning, the TAC bylaws allow for establishment of a modal task force when needed and the Council will use that task force to conduct its Regional Bicycle System Master Study.

See more about Bike and Pedestrian Planning:

http://www.metrocouncil.org/planning/transportation/tpp/2010/9_Bike&Ped.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 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 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. Minnesota Go Vision describes a desired future fifty years hence. 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.

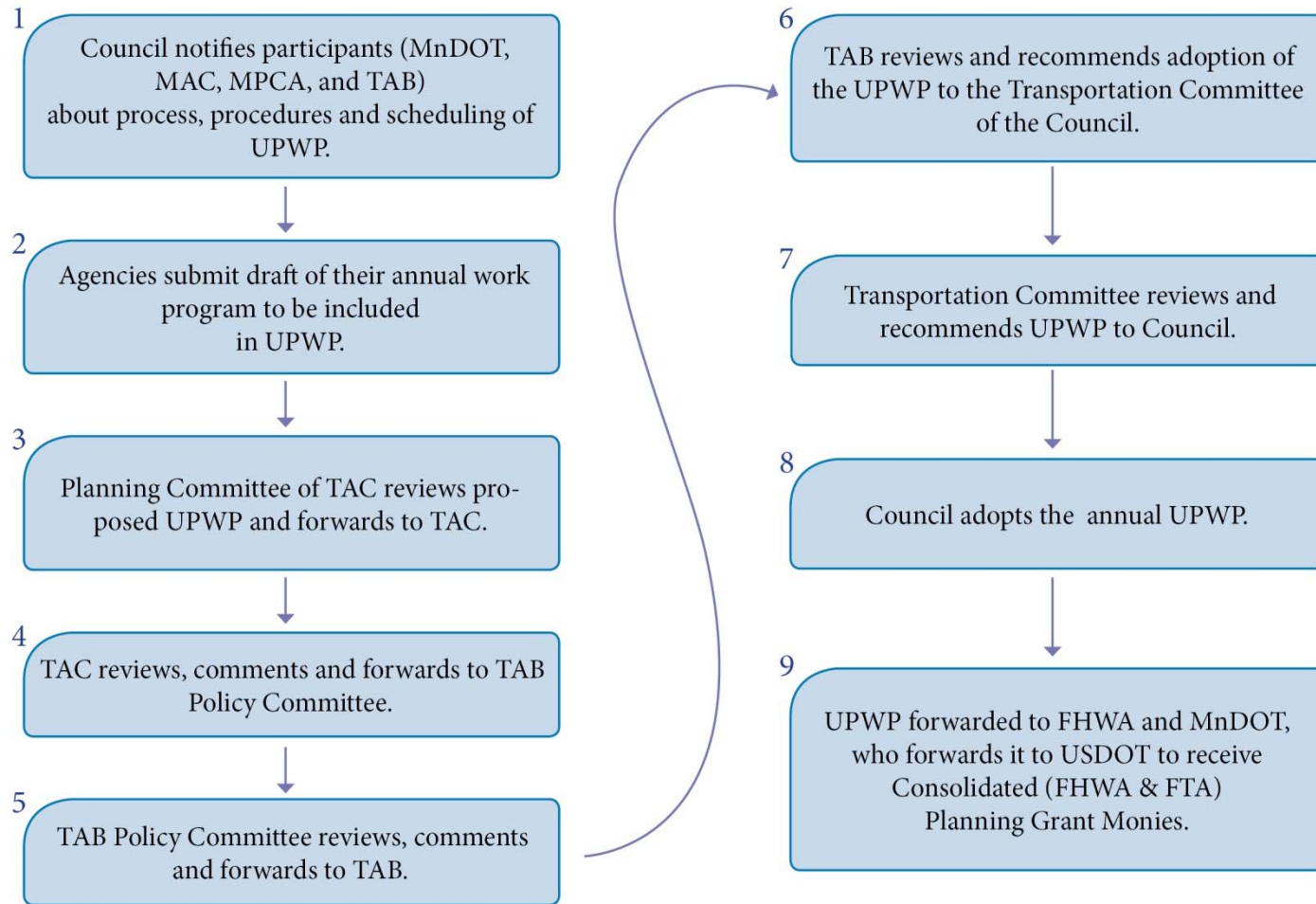
Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan

The Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan serves as the

statewide policy framework for all transportation partners as well as MnDOT's family of modal system investment 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.

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 time frame. The plan is intended for

Figure 5 – Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Process



use as a guidance document for local and regional planning efforts so the input of these groups is important. Within MnDOT, the plan guides future modal system and investment decisions, such as the State Aviation System Plan and the Highway - Investment Plan.

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

policies of the 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: Funding and the Programming Process

Programming is the process of selecting projects and investments to be made over a period of time and identifying and committing funds to those projects.

MnDOT and the Council develop long-range policy plans typically done over a period of twenty years. Consistent with the long-range policy plans, MnDOT develops statewide and district specific investment plans. Cities, counties and transit providers also develop their own capital investment plans.

Federal Funding Overview

Figure 6 is a simplified illustration of how federal funds for highways and

transit are distributed in the Twin Cities area. (*Will provide a link to more detailed transportation funding information.*)

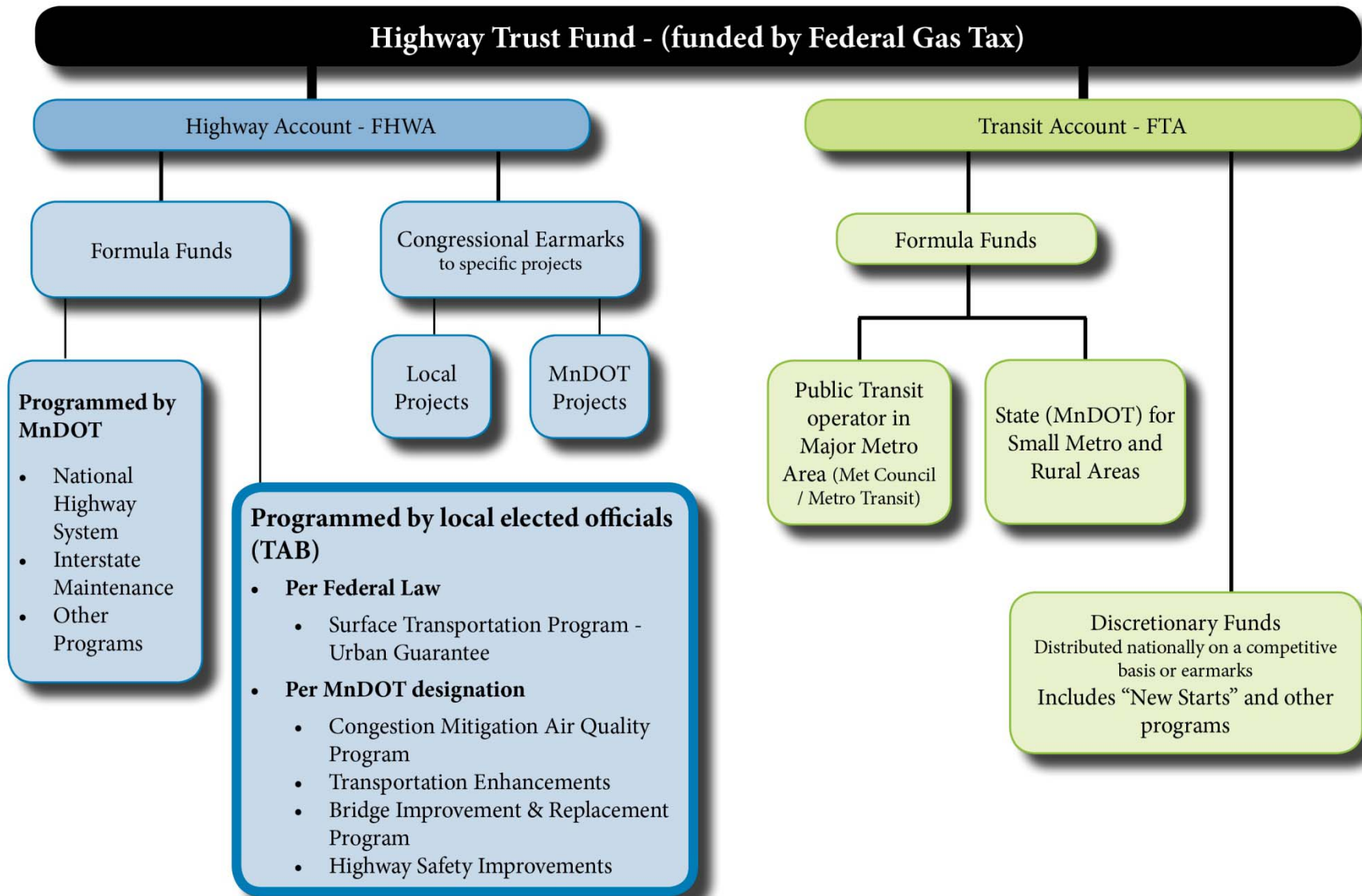
Minnesota receives federal aid money from the Highway Trust Fund-- which is funded by the federal gas tax-- to spend on highways and transit. In 2009 approximately \$186 million of federal funds were made available for the biennial solicitation of regional transportation projects.

Federal highway funds are distributed as either formula funds or congressional earmarks.

Highway Formula Funds

The majority of the funds that are distributed by federal formula to the state of Minnesota are spent by MnDOT on more than 60 programs including the National Highway System, and the Interstate Maintenance Program.

Figure 6 - Simplified Federal Highway Trust Fund Distribution in Twin Cities



In Minnesota, selecting projects for funding occurs both centrally at the statewide level and through the **Area Transportation Partnerships (ATPs)**. ATPs were established at the MnDOT district level to create a more collaborative decision making process between the Districts and stakeholders such as the MPOs, Cities and Counties, and Tribal Governments for the selection of roadway projects receiving federal funds. The Council and its TAB serve as the ATP in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

These funds are distributed through MnDOT to the ATPs according to performance based variables and target formulas, based on MnDOT's priorities of preservation, mobility and safety.

The federal aid programs for which TAB allocates funds are determined by agreement between MnDOT and the TAB/Council. These include the **Surface Transportation Program-Urban Guarantee (STP-UG)** federal formula funds that are allocated directly from FHWA to the MPO. In addition to the STP-UG funds, MnDOT has designated four other

formula-funded programs to TAB for allocation and programming— Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ); Transportation Enhancements (TE); Bridge Improvement and Replacement (BIR), and Highway Safety Improvements (HSIP).

TAB allocates these federal transportation funds through the regional solicitation process and reviews, amends and adopts the region's four-year transportation program

MnDOT's Metro District selects projects for specific federal programs and state trunk highway funds in a manner consistent with established investment strategies, the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan and the Regional TPP. These projects are then incorporated into the TIP along with projects selected by TAB.

Congressional Earmarks

Like other states, Minnesota may receive congressionally designated high-priority or earmarked project funding. These funds are designated for specific local or MnDOT projects.

The Council and the TAB are not directly involved in the allocation of congressional earmark funds.

Transit Formula Funds

As shown in Figure 6, **federal transit funds** are distributed through the FTA as either formula or discretionary funds. Formula transit funds are allocated to the Public Transit Operator in the major metropolitan areas (in this MPO it is the Council/Metro Transit) and to MnDOT for small metropolitan and rural areas. The TAB does not participate in the allocation of federal transit funds.

Discretionary Transit Funds

Discretionary transit funds are distributed nationally on a competitive basis and as earmarks for specific projects or programs. The Council and the TAB are not directly involved in the allocation of discretionary transit funds.

Regional Solicitation for federal funding of transportation projects

The regional solicitation of project applications for a share of federal

transportation 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 7 illustrates the Regional Solicitation project selection process.

See more about the Solicitation Process:

<http://www.metrocouncil.org/planning/transportation/regsolicit.htm>.

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The TIP is a staged, 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 a federally-required document that must be fiscally constrained. The MPO is required to prepare the TIP as a short-range programming document that complements its long-range transportation plan.

The Council prepares the TIP in cooperation with MnDOT. The TIP includes federal funds allocated through the regional solicitation process, and federal formula funds programmed by MnDOT, the Council and transit providers.

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.

The TIP and TIP amendments (other than sunset date extensions) are adopted by the TAB and sent to the Council for concurrence. The TAB's action is returned for revision only if the Council finds the TIP to be inconsistent with Council policy.

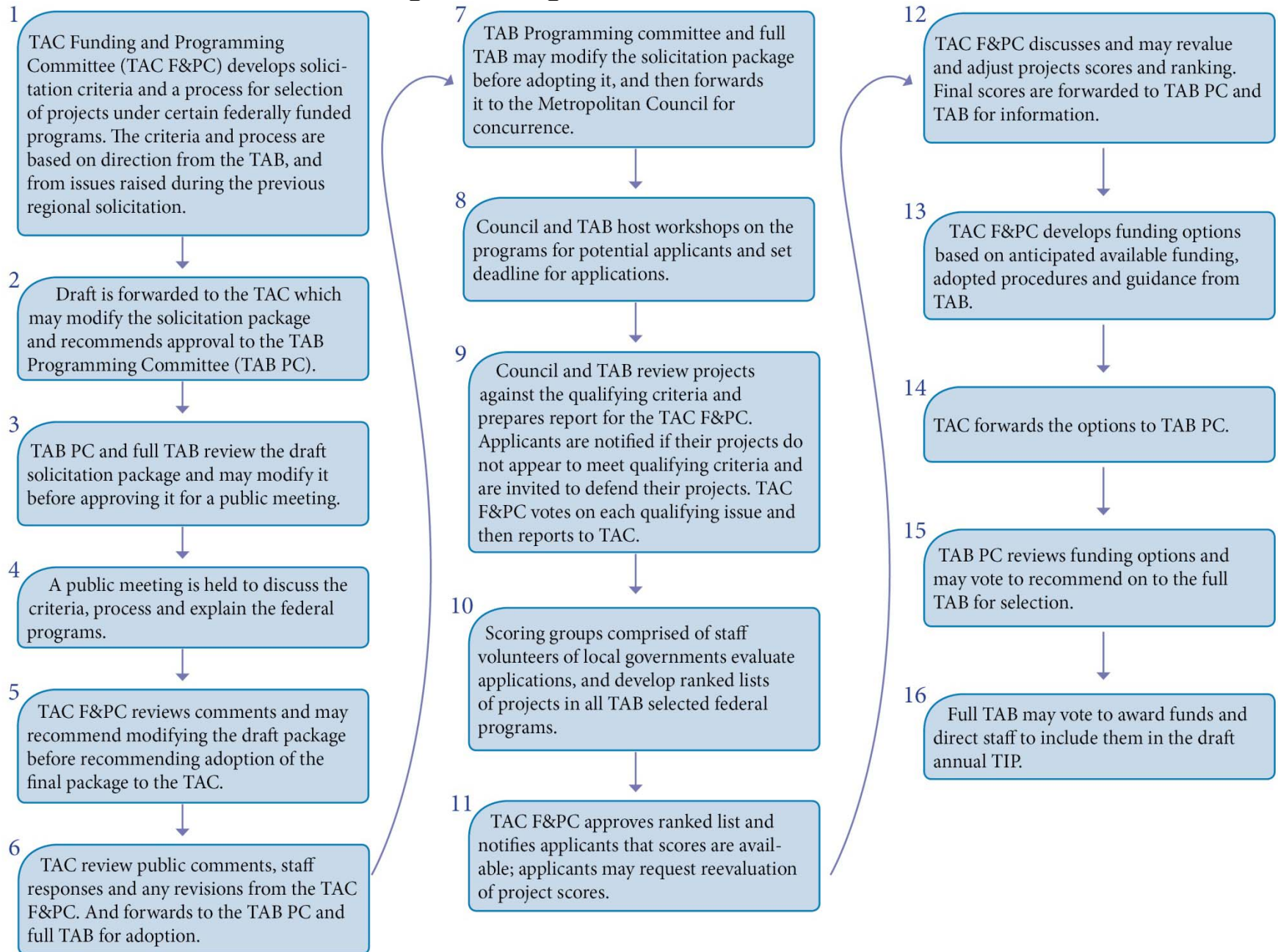
TIP Management

The TIP is adopted annually, generally in the fall of each year. Occasionally it may be necessary to make TIP project changes that cannot be deferred to the following adoption cycle. Changes in project scope and changes to the project's sunset date are the two most common reasons requiring a TIP amendment.

- *Scope Changes*

Projects that receive funding through the regional solicitation process are subject to a regionally adopted scope change policy. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the project is designed and

Figure 7 – Regional Solicitation Process



constructed according to the plans and intent described in the original application. Additionally federal rules require that any federally funded project scope must go through a formal review and TIP amendment process if the project description or total project cost change substantially. The scope change policy and process allows project sponsors to make adjustments to their project as needed while still providing substantially the same benefits described in the original application.

A change in project scope and its related TIP amendment must be approved by the TAB and sent to the Council for concurrence. [See the Scope Change Policy: Need Link](#)

- *Sunset Date Extensions*

Projects awarded federal transportation funds through the regional solicitation process have a sunset date of March 31 of the year following the original program year. The sunset date is the date when the federal funds are no longer available

to the project sponsor. The sunset date is a regional policy intended to be an incentive for project sponsors to get their projects ready for authorization in a timely manner. Adopted policy allows project sponsors to extend the sunset date due to unforeseen circumstances, provided the sponsor has been working on project development. Sunset date extensions are approved by the TAB but are not forwarded to the Council for concurrence.

[See the Sunset Date Extension policy: Need link.](#)

Other TIP Amendments

In addition to scope changes and sunset date extensions, the TIP is also amended at the request of a project sponsor when projects receive new funding from earmarks or competitive funding sources that were not anticipated when the fiscally constrained TIP was adopted. MnDOT may also request a TIP amendment to reflect changes in project development progress.

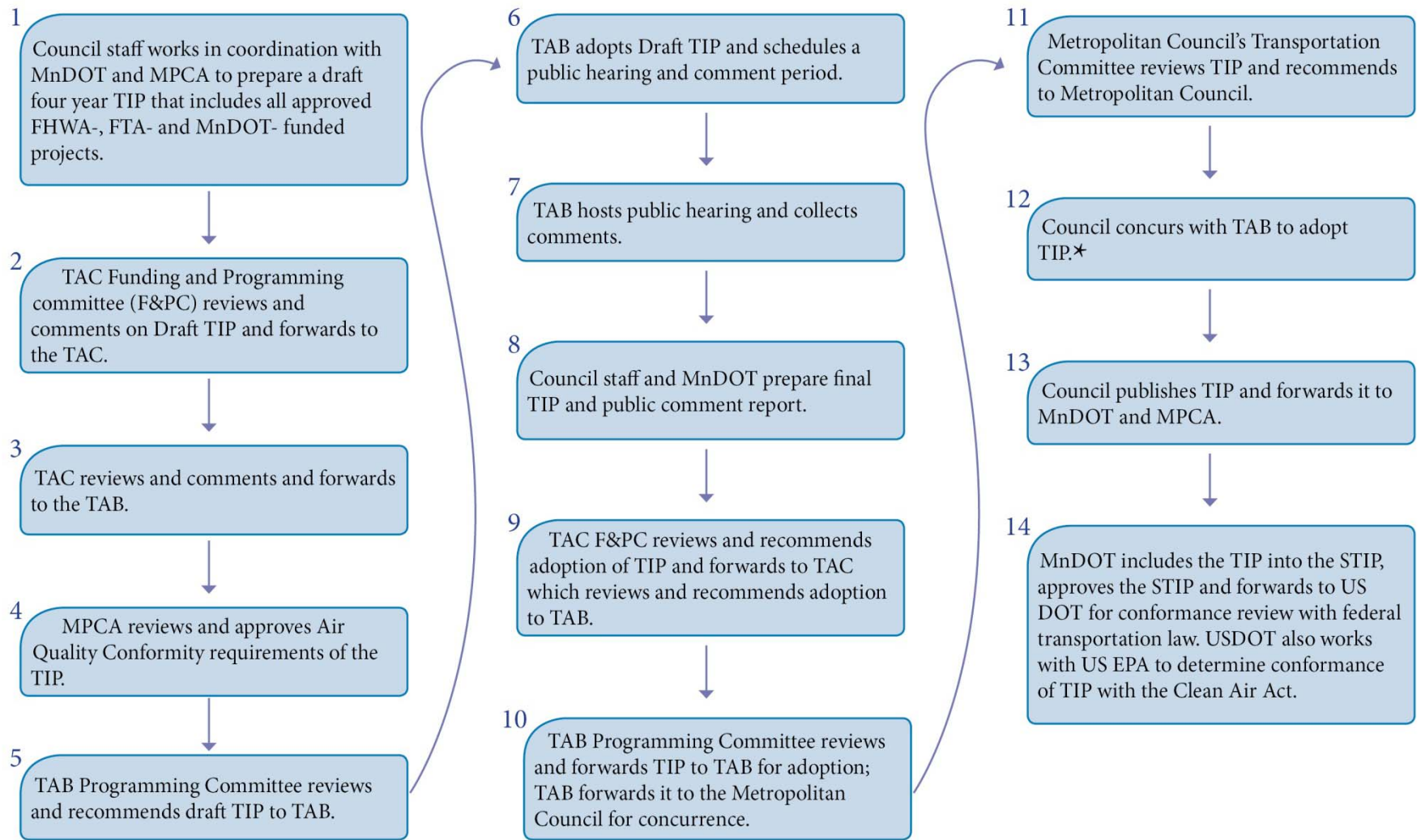
Figure 8 illustrates the development of the TIP from initiation to federal approval.

State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

TIP projects are incorporated into the STIP, Minnesota's statewide 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. 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](http://www.dot.state.mn.us/planning/program/stip.html)

Figure 8 – Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Process



* The TAB's action is returned for revision only if the Council finds the TIP inconsistent with Council policy.

Part 4: Activities that support planning and programming

A number of federal and state requirements and procedures support transportation planning and programming activities. 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

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 multimodal transportation system performance, identify the causes of congestion; assess alternative actions; implement cost-effective 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 to 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 congestion: freeway 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

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

The Minnesota Interagency Air Quality and Transportation Planning Committee--involving the Council, MnDOT, FHWA, the EPA, the MPCA, and (sometimes) local transportation agencies-- works to ensure that Minnesota's transportation plans conform to air quality standards. The Council, in conjunction with this interagency committee, evaluates whether or not its transportation plans will conform to air quality standards, using technical data, assumptions based on such things as

transportation modeling and emissions analysis, and transportation control measures. The Council makes a conformity determination after interagency consultation as part of its adoption of the TIP or TPP.

Conformity determinations are subject to public review and comment before agencies take any formal action. The information, emissions data, analyses, models and modeling assumptions used to determine conformity is public information available from the Council.

Figure 9 illustrates the Air Quality Conformity Determination Process

Functional Highway Classification Modification Process

The federal government requires that states and regions cooperatively develop a roadway classification system to designate roads according to their primary function. Some roads exist primarily to provide mobility for longer through trips; others, like local streets, primarily provide access to land. Appropriate

roadway width, speed limits, intersection controls, and other design features vary depending on the function and context of the road. Functional classification is also used to determine if federal highway funds can be spent on the road.

The Council has adopted criteria for classifying roads into one of four federally-defined categories: principal arterials (which include interstate freeways), minor arterials, collector streets, and local streets. The minor arterial category in this region is further categorized into “A” and “B” minor arterials. “A” minors are intended to provide more mobility than “B”s. The “A” minors are subdivided into four groups; the types of “A” and “B” minor arterials were defined by the TAC/TAB process in 1990 and help establish priorities for federal funding allocated through the Council and the TAB.

The actual function of a road within the regional network of streets and roads is fairly stable over time. Occasionally a change in the overall network or adjacent land use will cause a shift in function and the

government with jurisdiction over the road may request that this change be reflected in the official functional classification designation.

Principal arterials make up the metropolitan highway system and as such are designated in the TPP. Their functional classification can be changed only through a TPP update or amendment. Changing the functional classification of other roads is under the authority of the TAB and its committees. The TAB works within federal guidelines on principal arterial, minor arterial, and collector road mileage and also takes into account local city and county functional classification desires.

Figure 10 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>

Figure 9 - Air Quality Conformity Determination

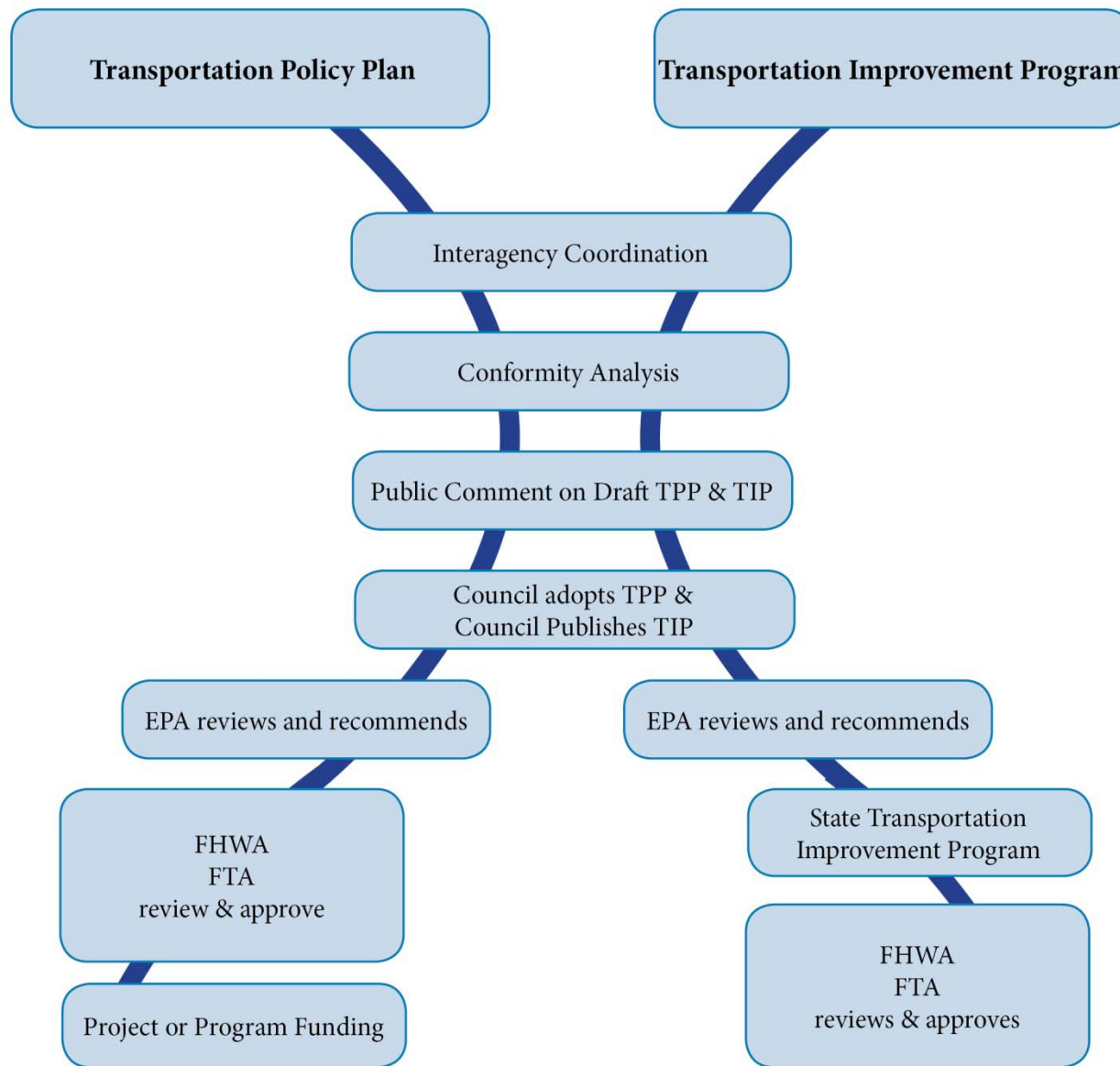


Figure 10 – Functional Classification Process for Minor Arterials and Collectors

Changes in functional classification primarily come from:

1. Updates to the regional transportation policy plan;
2. City and county comprehensive plan amendments;
3. Development proposals that add new roadways or add large volumes of traffic to existing roadways; and
4. The desire to make a roadway eligible for STP funds through TAB.

Governmental agencies send requests for a change in functional classification to TAC Planning Committee.

Council staff reviews request relative to functional classification criteria in Transportation Policy Plan and against mileage targets for each classification and makes comments / recommendations to TAC Planning Committee.

TAC Planning Committee reviews request with staff comments, and forward recommendation to TAC.

TAC approves / disapproves the request. If approved, the request is forwarded to TAB for information.

Council staff:

1. Informs the applicant that requested change in functional classification has been approved / not approved;
2. Forwards a summary of adopted changes in functional classification to MnDOT;
3. Updates functional classification GIS files and maps; and
4. MnDOT reports Functional Class changes to FHWA.

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 multimodal 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 used to update the regional travel forecast model.

See more about the TBI:
<http://www.metrocouncil.org/TBI>

Public Participation Process

The Council's transportation planning efforts include a proactive public involvement process and comply with federal public participation plan requirements. The

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

A number of state requirements and procedures also support transportation planning activities:

State requirements include:

- The Controlled Access Approval Process;
- The Metropolitan 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 projects in the metropolitan area before construction or right-of-way acquisition begins. Requests for

approval come from the constructing agency—typically MnDOT.

Under this statute, the Council approval of a fixed guideway occurs at the time it adopts a locally preferred transit guideway alternative.

The Metropolitan Land Planning Act

The Metropolitan Land Planning Act requires local governments in the seven- county Twin Cities region 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 Metropolitan 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.

After a city adopts its plan and the Council finds it to be 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 to determine their conformance with regional plans.

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>

Transit plans and studies include:

In addition to the federal metropolitan planning requirements, a number of transit studies are prepared from time to time:

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

Regional Service Improvement Plan (RSIP) for Transit

The Regional Service Improvement Plan (RSIP) is called for by strategy 14c of the 2030 TPP. The RSIP is prepared by the Council as the region's major public transit operator. 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.

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 New Starts funding for project construction. These studies examine potential alignments and modes, including both bus and rail options. Land use and zoning needs are also evaluated. In the Twin Cities region, these studies are typically prepared by a county railroad authority.

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:

<http://www.metrocouncil.org/planning/transportation/CoordinationPlan.pdf>

Transitway Guidelines

The Council created and adopted the Regional Transitway Guidelines in cooperation with its partner transitway planning and development agencies in the region. The Transitway Guidelines are technical guidelines based in best practice for the development of corridors where intensive transit investment is planned, as identified in the TPP. The Guidelines provide consistent practices for project partners to use in developing, operating, and maintaining

commuter rail, light rail, and bus rapid transit.

See the Transitway Guidelines:

<http://www.metrocouncil.org/planning/transportation/transitways/index.htm>