

Chapter 1 – Introduction and Purpose

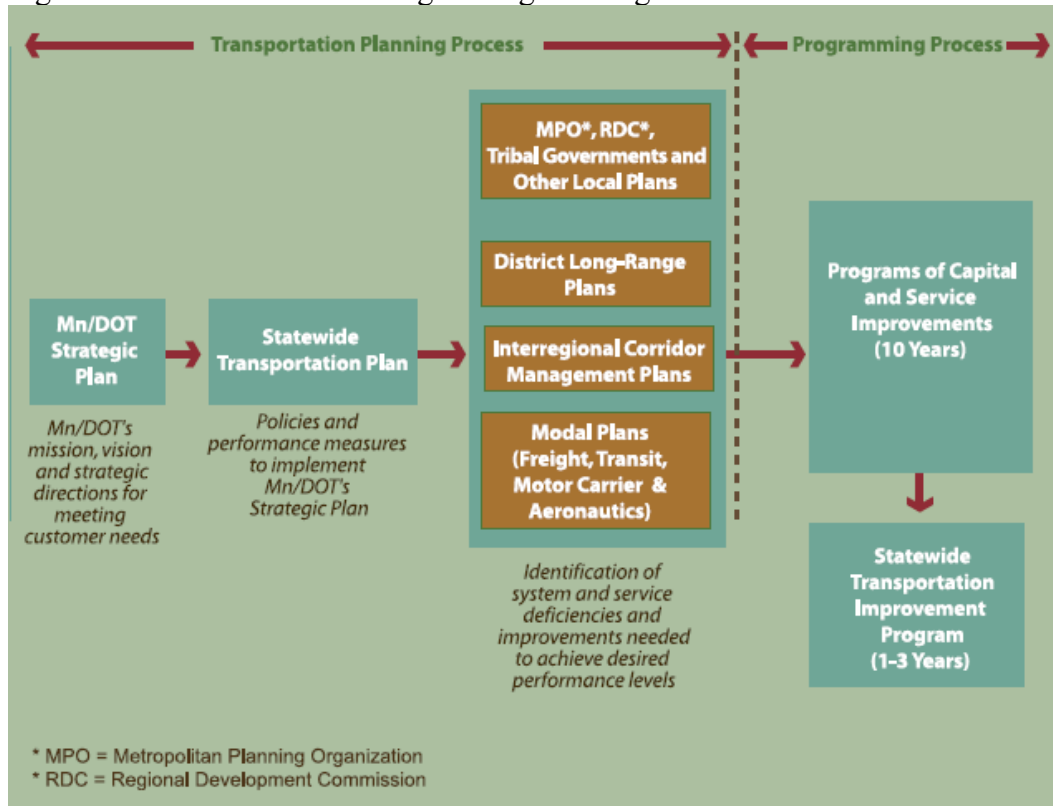
Introduction

The 2008-2030 Transportation System Plan (TSP) has been prepared by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) Metro District as a guide for future investments to the state trunk highway system within the eight-county metropolitan area. The Metro TSP provides a critical link in the transportation planning and investment programming process. It identifies the long-term system and corridor improvements required to achieve and maintain established performance targets. It also sets forth a general investment plan for the next 20+ years based on projected availability of future federal and state funding and the priorities identified through comprehensive analysis, cooperation, and consultation among the Department, the Metropolitan Council, and other stakeholders.

Role of TSP in the Transportation Planning and Programming Process

Figure 1-1 illustrates Mn/DOT’s Planning and Programming Process. This process begins with Mn/DOT’s Strategic Plan, extends through a series of linked plans at the statewide, district, corridor, and project levels, and culminates in system capital and operating improvements.

Figure 1-1 - Mn/DOT’s Planning & Programming Process



Mn/DOT’s Strategic Plan outlines the Department’s Vision and Mission. It was first developed in 1997 and last updated in 2003 and provides the basic principles that shape the Statewide Transportation Plan.

Mn/DOT developed its first statewide transportation plan in 1997 to comply with federal planning requirements (TEA-21, PL 105-178) as well as state planning requirements (MN Statutes Chapter 174) that Mn/DOT’s commissioner “develop, adopt, revise, and monitor a statewide transportation plan.” In August 2003, Mn/DOT updated and published the *Minnesota Statewide Transportation Plan, Moving People and Freight from 2003 to 2023*. The *Statewide Transportation Plan* establishes 10 major policies to implement the vision and mission of the Strategic Plan (Figure 1-2). Each policy is further defined by a series of performance measures and targets for evaluating and recommending investments to achieve the policies and strategic objectives.

Figure 1-2

Statewide Transportation Plan Policy Overview

Strategic Direction	Safeguard What Exists	Make the Transportation Network Operate Better	Make Mn/DOT Work Better
Plan Policies	<p>1 Preserve Essential Elements of Existing Transportation Systems. (DP)</p> <p>2 Support Land Use Decisions that Preserve Mobility and Enhance the Safety of Transportation Systems.</p> <p>3 Effectively Manage the Operation of Existing Transportation Systems to Provide Maximum Service to Customers. (HSOP)</p>	<p>4 Provide Cost-effective Transportation Options for People and Freight. (DP)</p> <p>5 Enhance Mobility in Interregional Transportation Corridors Linking Regional Trade Centers. (DP)</p> <p>6 Enhance Mobility Within Major Regional Trade Centers. (DP)</p> <p>7 Ensure the Safety and Security of the Transportation Systems and Their Users. (DP / CHSP)</p>	<p>8 Continually Improve Mn/DOT’s Internal Management and Program Delivery.</p> <p>9 Inform, Involve and Educate All Potentially Affected Stakeholders in Transportation Plans and Investment Decision Processes.</p> <p>10 Protect the Environment and Respect Community Values.</p>

The TSP serves as the critical planning link between the Statewide Transportation Plan and the actual physical improvements to the trunk highway system in the Metro Area. The TSP identifies investment needs and priorities that are further refined through corridor studies and project development plans. Annually, investment priorities identified in the TSP are selected for funding and included in the 10-Year Work Program, Area Transportation Improvement Program (ATIP) and State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

Transportation Planning Roles and Responsibilities in the Twin Cities Metro Area

Mn/DOT is responsible for operating and maintaining the interstate and trunk highway systems for the entire state and is also charged with coordinating the planning for aeronautics, railways, waterways, bikeways, and transit activities. The Minnesota Legislature created the Metropolitan Council in 1967 to conduct regional planning for the seven-county Metropolitan Area. The Council's responsibilities include development of a comprehensive development guide, the Development Framework, as well as policy planning for major metropolitan infrastructure systems such as transportation (airports, transit, and highways), wastewater treatment, and open space.

The Metropolitan Council together with its Transportation Advisory Board also serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for transportation consistent with Federal Planning Requirements. The Metropolitan Council's Transportation Policy Plan is developed to comply with federal transportation planning requirements and ensures that the regional transportation system improvements conform to the requirements of the federal Clean Air Act.

Within metropolitan areas, federal transportation planning requirements call for consultation and coordination between agencies in the development of state and regional transportation plans. Consistent with this direction, the Metro District TSP reflects the goals and policies of not only the Statewide Transportation Plan, but also the Metropolitan Council's Development Framework and its Transportation Policy Plan.

Plan Development Process

This is the third edition of the Metro District's Transportation System Plan (TSP). The first Metro TSP was adopted in 1997 as a long range, fiscally constrained plan for investment priorities over a 20-year time period (2001-2020). It was updated in 2001 to set investment priorities for the next 20 years (2005-25) that reflected the State's "Smart Growth" principles and Moving Minnesota vision emphasizing Advantages for Transit, Bottleneck Removal, and Corridor Connections. Completion of the Statewide Transportation Plan in 2003 marked the beginning of the process for updating Mn/DOT's eight individual district long-range transportation plans.

This *TSP 2008-2030* along with the other 7 District Plans represent Mn/DOT's first attempt at performance-based district planning on a statewide basis. To promote consistency among Districts in approach and methodology, the planners from each District and the Office of Investment Management developed guidelines and conferred monthly to assess progress and address issues. During the plan development process, three "check in" meetings were held for District Area Engineers and Planners to meet with Commissioner's staff, discuss issues, and refine policies and approach. The result is a set of eight district plans that provide an objective, consistent statewide estimate of the investments needed to provide critical transportation services in Minnesota. Taken together, these plans represent the district investment priorities for project available funding as well the performance needs that would also be addressed if additional funds were available.

This TSP update also reflects the first time effort of the Metro District and Metropolitan Council to move above and beyond simply coordinating their plans towards updating the TSP and the Metro Transportation Policy Plan in a concurrent manner. Staff teams from both agencies met on a regular basis for over a year to share data, analysis and work assignments and coordinate planning scope, approach, and methodology. For example, Metropolitan Council provided the District with traffic forecasts from the regional model with inputs from the District on planned highway improvements. This coordinated effort between agencies was efficient and resulted in the TSP and TPP being consistent documents.

Stakeholder Involvement

The *2008-2030 TSP* was developed through extensive discussion over an 18-month period with Mn/DOT's stakeholders, including cities, counties, tribal government, the private sector, adjoining Mn/DOT districts and the general public. As part of this process, the Metro District held several meetings with and made presentations to stakeholders who helped identify important transportation issues and strategies. The following stakeholders were involved:

- Federal Agencies (e.g., U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development)
- State Agencies (e.g., Department of Natural Resources)
- Regional Agencies including the Metropolitan Council Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) and Transportation Advisory Commission (TAC)
- Local Units of Government
- Tribal Government
- Private Organizations
- General Public including outreach to traditionally underrepresented groups
- Mn/DOT
 - Metro Program Committee (MPC) and Metro Management Team (MMT)
 - Capital Improvement Committee (CIC) which includes representatives from Mn/DOT, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Metropolitan Council, and local units of government
 - Meetings with individuals from various Mn/DOT functional areas

Stakeholder involvement for the TSP was done in conjunction with the Metropolitan Council's Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) public involvement process. The TPP public involvement process included outreach to traditionally underrepresented groups. The TPP addresses environmental justice by providing a location analysis of low-income and minority populations in relation to the planned investments in the metropolitan transportation system.

Cost and Funding Assumptions

Because of the long-term nature of this plan, it is important to emphasize that both the costs of system improvements and availability of future funding included in this document reflect a series of general assumptions. Even though detailed information was required for performance-based planning, involving computer models and other analytical techniques, and specific project improvements are identified, cost estimates are only estimates. Actual improvement projects will require significant further planning, design, and environmental analysis before they are programmed for construction.

Some of the investments associated with the earlier years of this plan have undergone significant scoping and analysis, and their associated cost estimate reflects a higher level of project discovery. However, cost estimates for many of the improvements identified as needed to meet performance targets reflect system wide, not site specific, improvement assumptions, and are therefore only general in nature. This plan also reflects data, analysis, and policy decisions that are current at this point in time. Changes in conditions ranging from the price of steel to the availability of federal funding may occur and therefore the investment plan presented should be considered as a statement of general policy direction and priorities.

Organization of the Plan

There are six chapters to this plan plus an executive summary and appendices.

- Chapter 1 describes the role and purpose for the plan.
- Chapter 2 discusses major trends effecting transportation in the Twin Cities Metropolitan area. This chapter explains that transportation in the region is multi-modal but that the focus of this plan is on highways.
- Chapter 3 explains the district planning direction. This chapter describes how the planning direction reflects Mn/DOT's strategic objectives contained in its *Mn/DOT's Strategic Plan* and the *Statewide Transportation Plan*.
- Chapter 4 contains the Performance-Based investment plan. It describes how Metro District's long-range plan (i.e., TSP) carries out the policy direction set by the Statewide Transportation Plan. This chapter provides information on five specific policy areas with performance measures and targets:

Policy 1: Preservation (Pavement, Bridge, Rest Areas and Others)

Policy 4: Transit and Freight

Policy 5: Interregional Corridors (IRC's) and Regional Corridors

Policy 6: Trade Center Mobility

Policy 7: Safety

This chapter documents the performance needs analysis and the process by which investments to meet performance were determined for each policy area. It also describes how cost estimates were developed using risk factors as well as key assumptions that were used to assess Performance-Based investment needs.

- Chapter 5 is the fiscally constrained investment plan. This chapter details investments to meet performance targets over the 23-year planning horizon. It explains how Federal requirements and prudent planning require the development of a fiscally constrained plan. This chapter also describes the District's funding sources, revenue projections, investment philosophy and resulting fiscally constrained investment plan.

- Chapter 6 provides information on the work program and implementation of this plan. It summarizes issues that could not be fully addressed within this update of the *TSP* and prescribes a work program to resolve these issues. It also identifies the process which some elements of this plan will be implemented. This chapter notes that District programming includes the development of the district's three-year construction program and 10-Year Plan. This chapter provides guidance on how the district should proceed in advancing and implementing projects in the 2030 Plan. It also identifies a mechanism to evaluate the success and progress toward reaching the plan's goals and objectives.