

**City of Minneapolis**  
**Comments for Metropolitan Council on**  
**Draft 2030 Transportation Policy Plan Update**  
**DRAFT 9/8/2010**

The City of Minneapolis appreciates the efforts of Metropolitan Council staff and committees that went in to preparation of the 2030 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP). The City of Minneapolis supports the general direction of the TPP.

**Chapter 3: Regional Transportation Finance**

The City of Minneapolis has the following comments on Chapter 3:

- P. 25. In the “Recent Funding Developments” section that discusses ARRA, TIGER I & II, and other one-time federal funding opportunities, it is stated that, “The region should seek to obtain these competitive funds for projects consistent with the priorities and policy direction of this plan.” For the above mentioned federal programs, individual local agencies must compete against each other in addition to competing against other states’ applications. Perhaps there should be a TPP regional policy regarding the pursuit of these funds and a methodology for determining regional priorities.
- P. 37. In the discussion of federal New Starts funding, it is stated that, “The current federal process requires the projects to meet a specified cost effectiveness index (CEI) at each point before the project can proceed.” This is no longer the case, the CEI is now only one factor used to evaluate New Starts projects but it is no longer used as a pass-fail criteria.

**Chapters 5 and 6: Regional Mobility and Highways**

The City of Minneapolis strongly supports the system-management approach for investments in the region’s roadway system, prioritizing system preservation, person throughput, travel demand management, transit use, managed lanes, and low cost-high benefit investments over major capacity expansion of the highway system.

The City encourages the region to consider this change in policy when setting up future regional solicitations for federal funding which currently focuses on expansion of the system. It will be even more important for A-Minor arterials to continue in their role of relieving the Principal Arterial routes. However those in the urban areas are at or near the end of their life cycles and funding their replacement is beyond the capabilities of local funding alone. The current criteria for STP funds is geared more toward capacity expansion and, thus, urban replacement projects do not score well as they often cannot add capacity without purchasing significant expensive right-of-way which is mostly not feasible or desirable. There should be consideration for funding the critical reliever

segments that are part of the A-Minor system (for example – Hennepin and Lyndale, which is the regionally designated bypass for the I-94 tunnel, especially for trucks carrying hazardous material).

The Transit/Access project at 35W and Lake Street is shown in the “reassessment” list. It is clear that the braid and flyover bridges are still programmed per the Chapter 152 requirement; however, the current proposed language is silent with respect to the remainder of the proposed project including the future BRT transit station. Hennepin County, the City of Minneapolis, Mn/DOT and Metro Transit are currently partnering to develop plans for a BRT transit station and new access to a 30% design level; the City supports this current effort. This BRT transit station is a regionally important element of the I-35W BRT corridor and coordinating the replacement of the braid and flyover bridges with the implementation of this transit station and possibly new access at this location introduces advantages for both transit and freeway traffic flow. These additional needs and associated costs should also be reflected.

Specific changes recommended:

- The TPP should include an explanation of how the TAB will apply the system management policy changes to the regional solicitation process.
- Table 6-38 should reference recommended transit improvements in the corridors for which major highway expansion projects have been reassessed. For instance, it should reference the planned future BRT transit station on I-35W at Lake Street and the associated mainline modifications needed to accommodate an online BRT station.

## **Chapter 7: Transit**

Significant progress has been made in the development of the regional transit system since the last TPP update, and the City of Minneapolis appreciates the efforts of the Metropolitan Council and all of its partners in advancing these projects: the opening of Northstar Commuter Rail service, the expansion of Hiawatha LRT platforms for 3 car trains, the advancement of the Central Corridor LRT into final engineering and construction, the selection of a locally-preferred alternative for the Southwest LRT, and the completion of the Urban Partnership Agreement transit improvements on I-35W, Cedar Avenue, and Marquette and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenues downtown.

In addition, other changes in the development of the regional transit system have occurred since the last TPP update and should be reflected in this version:

- 1. Metro Transit High-Frequency Network** – The TPP does not mention the High-Frequency Network that Metro Transit implemented in 2008 on eleven of the busiest arterial bus routes in the region. These routes are part of the arterial bus network identified in Figure 7-21 of the draft TPP; however, the minimum service levels for the High-Frequency Network are much higher

than those for the arterial bus network described in the TPP. (On the High-Frequency Network, service is guaranteed to operate at least every 15 minutes from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. on weekdays and from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays, whereas the minimum service level for the arterial bus network shown is every 15 minutes in the peak period only.) The eleven bus routes on this High-Frequency Network comprise a significant share of regional transit ridership, carrying approximately 100,000 average weekday riders (October 2008). The TPP should describe the High-Frequency Network and acknowledge the need to provide improved transit facilities and operations in these very important high ridership corridors. The City is coordinating transit and land use development in these corridors to foster synergies among density, transit ridership, and quality of transit service. The City's comprehensive plan concentrates future development in these and other arterial bus network corridors, and the City's Access Minneapolis Transportation Action Plan recommends improved transit service, operations, and facilities in these corridors through coordinated actions by the City and Metro Transit.

Specific changes recommended:

- The TPP should describe the Metropolitan Council's objectives and plans for expanding and improving the High-Frequency Network, including additional corridors, minimum service levels and facility improvements.
- The TPP should acknowledge local governments' policies for directing growth and density to these corridors.
- The TPP should reference the existing High-Frequency Network under "Existing Services" (page 1).
- Under "arterial bus network" (page 23), the TPP should explain how the arterial bus network and its standards for minimum 15 minute peak hour frequency standard relate to the hi-frequency network and its 15 minute all day frequency standard.
- The TPP should include a map of the High-Frequency Network.
- The TPP could include a photo of the High-Frequency Network branding.

2. **Arterial Transitways** - The "arterial BRT network" described in Figure 7-39 and page 44 should be redefined as an "arterial transitway" network, consistent with Metro Transit's Arterial Transitway Study currently underway. It has not been determined that arterial BRT is the appropriate transit solution for these corridors; multiple transit solutions are currently under study for these corridors by both the Metropolitan Council and local governments. The Metropolitan Council's Arterial Transitway Study is evaluating local bus, streetcar, and arterial BRT alternatives in these corridors. In addition, the City of Minneapolis has completed a feasibility study and adopted a long-term streetcar network for four of these corridors (Central Avenue, Chicago Avenue, Nicollet Avenue, and West Broadway Avenue), in addition to three other corridors (Hennepin Avenue, University/4<sup>th</sup> Avenues and Midtown Greenway). The City of Minneapolis has prioritized implementation of the

long-term streetcar network on two of these corridors (Nicollet and Central Avenues) and is preparing to complete an Alternatives Analysis for an urban circulator service (including streetcar and enhanced bus alternatives) in the Nicollet-Central corridor. It is also our understanding that the City of St. Paul is preparing to complete a feasibility study for a long-term streetcar network, including some of the arterial BRT corridors.

Specific changes recommended:

- The term “arterial BRT” should be changed to “arterial transitway”.
- There should be a discussion of the modes and service improvements options to be evaluated for these corridors: (1) arterial BRT, (2) streetcar, (3) service and facility improvements to existing local bus service (for instance, many of the improvements envisioned for arterial BRT could be implemented for existing local bus service without overlaying an additional limited stop bus service).
- There should be a discussion of the transit studies completed, underway, and planned in these corridors, including: (1) Metro Transit’s Arterial Transitway Study, (2) the Access Minneapolis Citywide Transportation Action Plan (which includes a lengthy discussion of the Primary Transit Network and associated facility and service operations needs), (3) the Minneapolis Streetcar Feasibility Study and adopted long-term streetcar network, (4) Minneapolis’s planned Nicollet-Central Urban Circulator Alternatives Analysis, and (5) St. Paul’s planned streetcar feasibility study.
- The description of the streetcar mode should be moved to the discussion of arterial transitways.
- There should be a discussion of not only the physical constraints for LRT or dedicated busway in these corridors, but also the land use and development potential in these corridors (many of them have the transit-supportive land use patterns, density, and redevelopment potential needed to support existing and future transit ridership, as discussed in the land use chapter). The City’s comprehensive plan targets many of these corridors for future development, and the TPP should acknowledge the synergy between development density and transit ridership and the value of these corridors in growing future transit ridership.

- 3. Express Bus vs. Local/Arterial Transit Emphasis** - Consistent with the above recent changes, arterial transit corridors and local bus service in general should be given equal emphasis to express bus service and facilities. The City of Minneapolis strongly supports investments in express bus service and facilities; however, the volume of content in the draft TPP on the local bus system and arterial bus corridors is dwarfed by the content on express bus service. For instance, there are twice as many figures relevant primarily to express bus service - Figures 7-10 (current passenger infrastructure), 7-22 (2030 express bus), 7-23 (2030 park-and-rides), 7-29 (existing transit advantages), 7-30 (2030 bus shoulders), and 7-42 (2030 express bus corridors) – compared with local and arterial transit service – Figure 7-20

(2030 local bus routes), Figure 7-21 (2030 arterial network), Figure 7-39 (2030 arterial BRT routes).

Specific changes recommended:

- The “Metro Transit Bus” ridership figures in Figure 7-13 represent the vast majority of transit rides in the region, and this line item could be broken out to distinguish express bus, suburban local bus, urban local bus, and the High-Frequency Network urban local routes. It is our understanding that urban local bus routes comprise over 3/4 of ridership on Metro Transit bus routes, and bus routes serving the High-Frequency Network comprise over 1/3 of ridership on Metro Transit bus routes.
- Figure 7-10 (Current Transit Passenger Infrastructure) shows park-and-rides, bus lanes, bus shoulders, LRT, and Commuter Rail. It should be modified to include transit centers that do not have park-and-rides (such as Uptown Transit Center and Chicago-Lake Transit Center).
- A map of bus stops and bus shelters should be incorporated into Figure 7-10 or another map. On-street bus stops and bus shelters are an essential component of the regional transit system and serve more daily passengers than park-and-rides. The text should also be modified to describe the significance and extent of these facilities and the need for improved facilities and services on the local system.
- A map of the High-Frequency Network should be added (as referenced above).
- Maps of express bus service and facilities should be consolidated where possible.

The plan should clarify when the I35W and Cedar Ave BRT corridors will be completed.

### **Chapter 9: Pedestrians and Bicyclists**

The City recommends that Met Council undertake an effort to complete a regional bicycle plan. While bicycle trips may be short in length, bicycling as a mode is on the rise, and trips may cross jurisdictional boundaries and connect with the regional transit system. The City also recommends that the TAB consider in developing the regional solicitation criteria how proposed bicycle facilities fit within local and regional plans and how bicycle facilities connect to transit.

### **Chapter 10: Aviation**

The City of Minneapolis has the following comments on Chapter 10:

- There is a discrepancy between the number of based aircraft at MSP on Tables 10-31 (p. 210) and 10-39 (p 217). Table 10-31 indicates 134 based aircraft while Table 10-39 indicates 24.

- P 218. 2<sup>nd</sup> Paragraph.- As can be seen in Figure-10-42, product liability suits decimated manufacturing from about 1982 until the mid 1990's..." While this statement is true, Figure 10-42 illustrates the Age of Aircraft vs Average Annual Hours Flown.
- p.224 - The cost estimate does not include the cost of a noise mitigation program within the MSP environs for an expanded airport. True development costs are thus understated and should be noted as such.
- Appendix I, p. I-3 - Compatibility with Metropolitan and Local Plans - Aside from the infrastructure issues raised under this heading, reference should be made that the largest compatibility issue with local plans revolves around land use compatibility and noise impacts on neighboring communities. This should be reiterated under this heading and the reader should be referenced to appendix M.
- Appendix M, p. M-2 - Table M-2 depicts the current land use measures adopted as part of the MSP Part 150 noise compatibility program for 2007 that are being implemented through 2014." There is no 2007 MSP Part 150 noise compatibility program that has received approval by FAA. Neither fair property disclosure nor dedication of aviation easements have been approved and certainly are not being entertained or promoted by the City of Minneapolis or to our knowledge any other community. The sound insulation program currently underway through 2014 is in accord with the 2008 Consent decree and is not a Part 150 program.
- Appendix M, p. M-6 and M-7 - We continue to believe that the Land Use Compatibility Guidelines for Aircraft Noise and the Structure Performance Standards are inconsistent. On one hand new residential development within the 60-64 DNL is incompatible and infill or redevelopment should be conditionally approved only with additional attenuation above normal construction standards in order to meet the structural performance standards of 45 dba in Table M-3. It is well documented that the average noise level reduction of homes that have been in the mitigation program (including thousands constructed in the early 1900's) is 27-29 dba. Thus, without any particular additional noise attenuation virtually all homes located in the 74 DNL and lower contours would already meet a 45 dba interior noise level. The 45 interior noise level is not an ideal environment and thus should be revised to reflect a more valid standard such as the World Health Organization standard of 35/30 in bedrooms if there is to be any validity to noise attenuation.