

Introduction

The *Metro Transit 2015-2030 Service Improvement Plan* (2015-2030 SIP) identifies needed bus service improvements within the Metro Transit service area through 2030. Improvements are evaluated and prioritized based on a comprehensive set of scoring criteria. The 2015-2030 SIP provides a high-level overview of improvements identified, as well as the additional resources required to implement the proposed vision, satisfying the requirement in the regional Transportation Policy Plan that all transit service providers maintain a long-range improvement plan.

This update modifies the 2015-2030 SIP in the following ways:

- Provides a status report on proposed improvements implemented to-date and updates the resources required to implement the vision identified in the SIP.
- Updates resource requirements and scores for planned improvements where the baseline levels of service have changed significantly since the spring of 2015.
- Updates planned improvements providing connections to transitways where more detail is known about the proposed transitway alignment.
- Updates targeted implementation periods for all planned improvements.

Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria used in the 2015-2030 Service Improvement Plan are retained in the 2017 update. Any projects rescored based on a change to the baseline level of service or a change to the proposed improvement are evaluated using the same scoring criteria and data as in the previous SIP. The upcoming major Service Improvement Plan release in 2020 will reevaluate and reconsider the scoring criteria used in the current SIP.

Outreach and Engagement

This update occurs approximately halfway between the release of the 2015-2030 Service Improvement Plan in spring of 2015 and the next major release planned for spring of 2020. As noted above, it is intended as a status report and minor update of existing proposed improvements. This update did not solicit new ideas to consider for implementation. As with the evaluation criteria, the next major Service Improvement Plan release in 2020 will include an extensive public outreach and review process, with a full reassessment of planned improvements.

Summary of Implemented and Updated Projects

Improvements Implemented

Since the spring of 2015, Metro Transit has implemented 17¹ improvements identified in the 2015-2030 Service Improvement Plan. See Table 1 below for a summary of the implemented improvements and Appendix A for a more detailed list and description. See Appendix B for a map of implemented projects.

Improvements selected were prioritized for implementation based on their score in the 2015-2030 Service Improvement Plan, their projected ridership impact and competitiveness for federal grant

¹ One improvement included, extending Route 54 from downtown St. Paul to Maplewood, will be implemented June 2018.

funding. The funding for these improvements has largely come from temporary federal operating grants and resources made available for reinvestment by reductions on lower-ridership service. These funding sources are not a sustainable solution to the growing regional need for transit improvements.

Table 1: Summary of Implemented Improvements

Improvement Type	Routes Improved	Service Hours Added to Improved Routes (from 2015 SIP)
Increase Frequency	5	36,027
Longer Service Hours	5	4,488
New Weekend Service	4	10,188
Extend Route	2	40,516
New Route	-	-
Simplify or Restructure	1	9,142
TOTAL	17	100,361

Improvements Updated

There are 21 proposed improvements updated in this document. See Appendix C for more detailed information on updates to specific improvements. See Appendix D for a map of the updated improvements. Proposed improvements are updated for two primary reasons:

1. *Change to the baseline level of service:* The ridership and resource impacts for improvements included in the SIP are based on the change from the existing baseline of service in the spring of 2015. In some cases, service has been cut on routes with proposed improvements, making it more resource intensive to improve service to the level described in the SIP. For improvements where this change is significant, new ridership and resource impacts are calculated and the improvement is re-scored.
2. *Change to the improvement proposed in the SIP:* in some cases, the context driving a proposed service improvement has changed requiring an update to the improvement. Specifically, updates were made to the proposed connecting routes to the Gold Line and Blue Line Extension transitway projects as more information became known about those projects. In these cases, the new routings required updated ridership and resource calculations and re-scoring.

Additionally, the proposed implementation date has been updated for every improvement in the SIP to reflect a 2017 base year.

Updated 2017 Service Improvement Plan

The 2017 Service Improvement Plan, taking into account the implemented and updated improvements, includes 181 improvements across 137 different existing and new routes. See Table 2 below for a summary of the proposed improvements by improvement type. See Appendix E for a detailed description, including implementation phase and score, for each proposed improvement.

Table 2: Summary of Proposed Improvements by Type

Route Type	Increase Frequency	Longer Service Hours	Extend Route	New Weekend Service	New Route	Simplify or Restructure
Express	9	8	2	3	15	1
Local	47	18	12	13	42	10
Total	56	26	14	16	57	11

Of those 181 evaluated improvements, 128 scored either a ‘High’ or ‘Medium’ in the evaluation criteria and are prioritized for implementation. Items scoring a ‘Low’ in the evaluation criteria are not discarded, but are not ready for implementation at this time. These improvements will be reevaluated and/or updated in future Service Improvement Plans.

See Table 3 below for a summary of the estimated resource and ridership impact of the improvements prioritized for implementation by phase (items scoring at least a ‘Medium’). This table includes proposed rapid bus corridors that do not have construction and operating funding identified. Appendix F contains detailed ridership and resource impacts for each proposed improvement. See Appendix G for a map of all proposed improvements by rank.

Table 3: Summary of Ridership and Resource Impact by Phase

Phase	New Annual Rides	New Buses	Added Annual Service Hours	Added Annual Operating Cost (\$2015)	Added Annual Subsidy (\$2015)
2018-2020	7,915,080	62	305,264	\$34,491,987	\$25,942,448
2021-2023	8,320,319	78	245,887	\$27,782,787	\$20,272,298
2024-2030	7,797,710	14	43,742	\$4,942,457	\$4,094,478
Total	24,033,109	154	594,893	\$67,217,231	\$50,309,224

Next Steps

This update to the SIP refines the proposed improvements to reflect implemented projects, projects with changes to the baseline level of service and proposed changes to existing improvements. It is not intended to be a full reconsideration of Metro Transit’s priorities for service improvement. The next major Service Improvement Plan release in 2020 will include an extensive public outreach and review process, with a full reassessment of planned improvements.

The next step towards the implementation of the projects included in the Service Improvement Plan is to secure the additional funds needed to operate the increased service on the existing and new routes proposed.

The projects in the SIP are intended to be a starting point for the discussion of how to grow the regional local and express route network. However, assuming operating funds are identified there are also other factors that need to be taken into consideration before the decision to implement a particular service improvement is made:

- Geographic balance – consider the location of other recent and planned service improvements throughout the region, including opening dates for transitways
- Project readiness – has the area developed as anticipated, land-use densities increased as projected, are projects that were expected to be developed underway or complete
- Route planning details – develop a schedule, review route planning and operating logistics, routing and bus stops have been vetted with stakeholders
- Title VI review – per federal law, a service equity analysis will be done for all changes considered to be a major service change