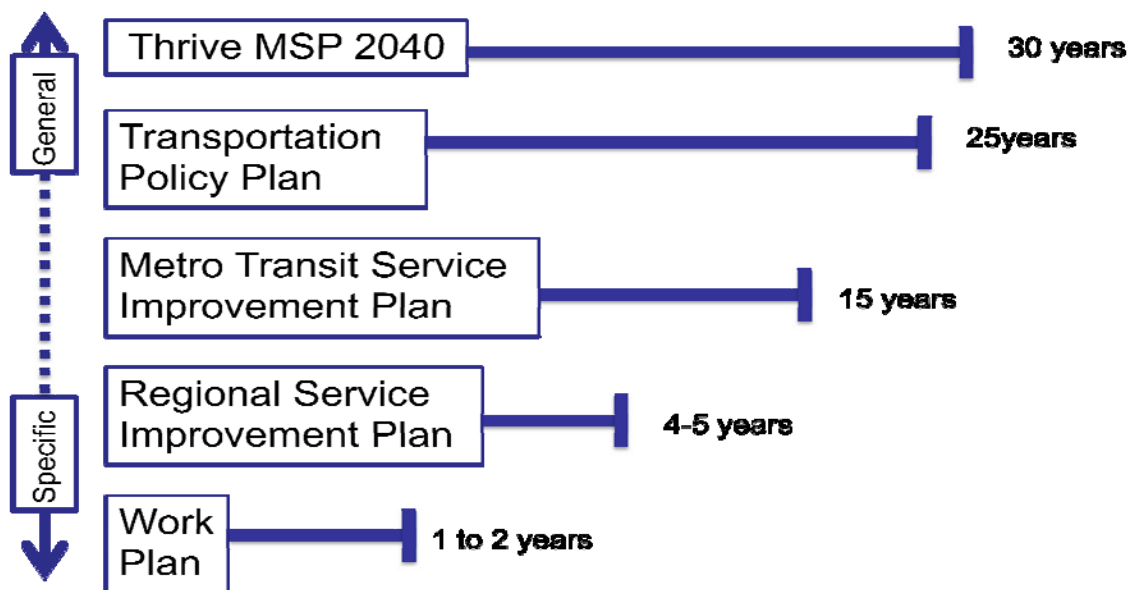


CHAPTER 2: PLAN CONTEXT

The SIP and RSIP are new pieces in the regional transportation planning process. The SIP and RSIP form a bridge between the region's long-range policy and investment plans and regional transit operators' short-range work plans. Each transit operator will complete a service improvement plan that will inform the Regional Service Improvement Plan.

Figure 1 shows the documents and plans involved in regional transportation planning. A detailed discussion of each document and its role in the process can be found below.

Figure 1: Regional Transportation Planning Documents



A. Thrive MSP 2040

Thrive MSP 2040 is the region's vision for the next 30 years. It reflects our region's concerns and aspirations, anticipates future needs and addresses our responsibility to future generations. State law requires the preparation of a metropolitan development guide at least every 10 years. As the updated guide adopted by the Metropolitan Council in May 2014, Thrive MSP 2040 establishes a policy foundation for other planning in the region including transportation, wastewater treatment, regional parks and local comprehensive plans and zoning. Thrive MSP 2040 addresses issues that transcend any one neighborhood, city or county.

Thrive MSP 2040 identifies five key outcomes that define the shared regional vision: Stewardship, Prosperity, Equity, Livability and Sustainability. These five outcomes reinforce and support one another to produce greater benefits than any single outcome alone. Stewardship leads to decisions that advance prosperity, equity, livability, and sustainability. Prosperity provides more resources to support

stewardship, equity, livability and sustainability. Equity is crucial to creating greater prosperity and livability in the region.

The five outcomes describe the “what” of Thrive MSP 2040. Just as important is the “how” – the principles that guide how the Metropolitan Council carries out its policies, both internally and externally, to advance those outcomes. The Council has identified three principles to carry out its work: Integration, Collaboration and Accountability. These principles govern how the Council will advance these outcomes, both individually and collectively.

These outcomes from the Thrive MSP 2040 planning process shaped the SIP:

- Prioritize investment where infrastructure exists or is planned
- Expand coverage in areas with a local commitment to transit
- Expand options to connect workers and jobs
- Create and preserve racially integrated, mixed income areas

B. Transportation Policy Plan

The Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) is the region’s long-range transportation policy and investment plan. It addresses transit, highways and other surface transportation, and aviation for at least a 20-year planning horizon. It defines the transit system as not only fixed-route local and express bus services but also dial-a-ride (both Americans with Disabilities Act-related services and general public services) and transitways (light rail, commuter rail, bus rapid transit). The TPP includes some detail about how the region’s transitway network will grow and be funded, but outlines only a general plan for potential local and express route service improvements.

The SIP was informed by both the 2030 and 2040 TPP. Both plans clearly state that the region’s first priority is to preserve, maintain and operate the existing transportation network. In addition, both plans note that preservation will not support the region’s anticipated growth, and call for each transit provider to develop and regularly update a SIP that covers at least the next two to four years (*2030 TPP adopted November 2010, Strategy 14c; 2040 TPP adopted January 2015, Chapter 6*). Transit expansion projects, including those in the SIP, are considered only after the needs of the existing network are met.

The 2040 TPP also establishes a framework from which to evaluate potential transportation investments. It identifies six goal areas with supporting objectives: Transportation System Stewardship, Safety and Security, Access to Destinations, Competitive Economy, Healthy Environment and Leveraging Transportation Investments to Guide Land Use. Objectives and investment factors from the 2040 TPP that influenced the SIP include:

- Operate the regional transportation system to efficiently and cost-effectively connect people to destinations
- Increase the availability of multimodal travel options, especially in congested highway corridors
- Increase transit travel time reliability and predictability
- Improve multimodal travel options to jobs and other opportunities

- Provide equitable access to opportunity for people of all ages, abilities, races, and socio-economic groups

C. Metro Transit Service Improvement Plan (SIP)

The SIP builds on the TPP by identifying and prioritizing specific local and express bus route improvements. It is intended to guide how Metro Transit allocates any additional operating resources dedicated to the regular-route bus system over the next 15 years. It will be updated every four to five years and amended as needed.

The SIP conforms to both the 2030 and the 2040 policy plans. The TPP requires each of the region's five transit providers to prepare a SIP.

D. Regional Service Improvement Plan (RSIP)

The TPP also requires transit providers to work together to combine projects into a Regional Service Improvement Plan (RSIP). The RSIP is a four- to five-year plan that guides bus service improvements for all regional transit providers, and will be updated in 2015. All service providers must submit proposals for improvements in order to be considered for expansion funding for transit.

This SIP builds on the work completed in 2011 and 2012 for the Regional Service Improvement Plan. Items that are ranked Medium or High in Metro Transit's SIP and fall within the designated implementation period will be submitted for prioritization in the updated RSIP.

E. Metro Transit Work Plan

The work plan is the most specific and near-term of all these plans, covering the next one to two years. It is an internal working document rather than a formal plan that is reviewed by Council members. Projects are added to the work plan once operating funds have been identified and an improvement is ready for implementation.