

# 2015 PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REPORT

*REPORT TO THE MINNESOTA LEGISLATURE*



May 2016

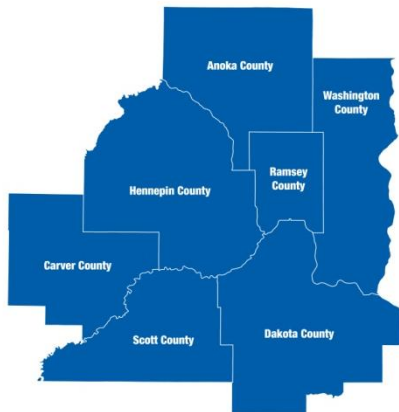
The Council's mission is to foster efficient and economic growth for a prosperous metropolitan region.

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The Metropolitan Council is the regional planning organization for the seven-county Twin Cities area. The Council operates the regional bus and rail system, collects and treats wastewater, coordinates regional water resources, plans and helps fund regional parks, and administers federal funds that provide housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income individuals and families. The 17-member Council board is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the governor.

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## About This Report

The Metropolitan Council recognizes performance evaluation as a key tool to ensure that its functions meet their objectives in a timely and cost-effective manner. The Council has implemented a number of methods to strengthen its performance evaluation process.

This report is required by Minnesota Statutes, Section 473.13, Subdivision 1a, which calls for the Council to submit annually to the Legislature a "...substantive assessment and evaluation of the effectiveness of each significant program of the Council, with, to the extent possible, quantitative information on the status, progress, costs, benefits and effects of each program."

The report provides a record of the services provided and service levels achieved by the Council in the context of historical trends, performance measures and budget compliance.

The report includes multi-year performance measures for all major operations and summarizes significant accomplishments by division.

The report is organized into six sections. The introduction describes the Council's authority, organization, and major functions. The overview summarizes the Council's major accomplishments in 2015. The next three sections discuss division results and the accomplishments of the individual units within each division. The last section is the appendix, which includes maps showing Council Districts, participating communities in the Council's Livable Communities program, the Metro HRA service area, Regional Parks and Trails, transit routes and service areas, the sewer service network and a 2015 Council budget summary.

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## Introduction

### The Twin Cities Region and the Metropolitan Council

The seven-county metropolitan area is a growing and economically vibrant region with a population of 3 million. The regional economy is supported by diverse industries and has an unemployment rate below the national average. The region’s population is projected to grow to more than 3.6 million people by 2040.

The Metropolitan Council was created by the Minnesota Legislature in 1967 to plan and coordinate the orderly growth and development of the seven-county area. It has authority to plan for regional systems that include transportation, aviation, water resources, and regional parks and open space. The Council’s core mission also includes the efficient operation of transit, wastewater collection and treatment, and housing assistance programs for households with low incomes.

The governor appoints a chair who serves at large and 16 Council members representing districts, who together govern the Council. To carry out its responsibilities, the Council established divisions for transportation, environment, and community development, along with standing committees to deal with each of these areas. The Council has approximately 4,200 employees and annual operating expenditures of approximately \$654 million, mostly for regional transit service and wastewater treatment.

#### Council Divisions Percent of Employees and Expenditures

Division	Employees	Expenditures
Environmental Services	15%	19%
Transportation	76%	72%
Community Development/Regional Administration	9%	9%
Total	100%	100%

### Major Functions

The **Community Development Division** includes the Council-related functions of the regional parks system and open space planning, regional policy and research, planning assistance to local communities, the Metropolitan Council’s Housing and Redevelopment Authority (Metro HRA) and administration of the Livable Communities programs.

The **Transportation Division** includes Metropolitan Transportation Services (MTS) and Metro Transit. The division is responsible for developing regional transportation policy for all means of transportation; allocating federal transportation funds to projects in the seven-county area; coordinating regional aviation planning; providing bus, light-rail and commuter-rail service, as well as transit service for people with disabilities and ride-sharing services.

The **Metropolitan Environmental Services Division** (MCES) operates and maintains approximately 600 miles of regional sewers and treats an average of 250 million gallons of wastewater daily at eight regional treatment plants. Serving more than 2.5 million residents of the seven-county area, MCES provides cost-effective wastewater service to 108

communities. The MCES mission is to provide wastewater services and integrated planning to ensure sustainable water quality and water supply for the region.

## Overview of the Council's Performance

### Updated Transportation Policy Plan adopted

The *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*, adopted by the Council in 2015, provides policy direction and investment priorities for the region's transportation system over the next 25 years, in line with the regional development plan – *Thrive MSP 2040*. The transportation plan details existing conditions and future needs for the region's system as a whole, as well as expected investments in the regional highway and transit systems.

For the first time, the plan identifies a Regional Bicycle Transportation Network. It also provides a stronger emphasis on the relationship between local development decisions and transportation investment, particularly for transit.

### Plan sets framework to strengthen, expand regional park system

The *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* advances the *Thrive MSP 2040* goals of stewardship, prosperity, equity, livability, and sustainability. The plan provides for expanding the Regional Parks System and providing regional park facilities that foster healthy living and enhances quality of life in the region. It supports expanding multimodal access to regional park facilities and strengthening equitable usage of regional parks and trails by all the region's residents, across age, race, ethnicity, income, national origin, and ability.

### Plan paves way for solutions to water resources management

Working with partner agencies and the region's communities, the Council updated and adopted the *2040 Water Resources Policy Plan*. The plan has two overarching themes – taking an integrated approach to water supply, water quality and wastewater collection and treatment, rather than addressing those issues separately; and doing so in collaboration with local government and other partners. The plan includes policies and strategies to treat wastewater to high water-quality standards, protect public health and the environment, and protect and improve the quality of surface waters.

### Council amends Housing Policy Plan

In 2015, the Council amended the *2040 Housing Policy Plan* that it adopted in 2014 to include an updated Allocation of Affordable Housing Need. The Allocation of Affordable Housing Need helps local governments plan for their respective share of allocated need as they amend and adopt their comprehensive plans. The Council also adopted a new set of guidelines for Housing Policy Performance.

### Ensuring the metro area has adequate water supplies

In 2015 the Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee and the Council approved an updated Metropolitan Area Master Water Supply Plan. The plan charts a path toward a future of affordable, safe and abundant water needed for a prosperous and equitable region. The plan stresses collaboration among communities and agencies, using data that helps map

out water supply trends, and options for action as keys to a successful “water future” for the metro area. The Council’s role includes providing information and planning tools to help communities secure safe and plentiful drinking water, while protecting the region’s water resources.

### **Seeking solutions to water supply issues**

Through partnerships with local communities and government agencies, the Council’s water supply studies and projects seek to ensure that regional water supplies can support current and future generations. These projects will support community efforts to protect and manage water supplies and prevent further degradation of water sources in the metropolitan area. The Council’s water supply efforts will help identify high-priority areas for protecting groundwater, will identify feasible options to address emerging water supply issues, and will support communities’ efforts to preserve groundwater recharge areas.

### **Sustainability efforts include solar development**

At the Blue Lake Wastewater Treatment Plant, a new public-private solar facility will provide 10% of the plant’s annual energy needs and reduce energy costs. The Council will pass on the savings to residents and businesses throughout the metro area who pay for wastewater treatment.

In addition, the Council approved a power-purchase agreement to bring rooftop solar panels to six Metro Transit facilities in 2016. The panels will provide the equivalent of half the energy used at their respective locations and are expected to save about \$4 million in energy costs over the next 25 years.

### **Savings achieved by Environmental Services in energy and money**

The Council’s Environmental Services division (MCES) saved \$4 million in 2015 energy purchases for wastewater treatment compared to 2006. The savings result in lower wastewater rates for city and industrial customers, as well as significant environmental benefits. MCES is continuing its energy conservation and renewable energy projects that generate energy to be used onsite. MCES made substantial progress toward its goal of reducing 25% of its purchased energy by 2015, having reduced purchased energy 23% by end of 2015.

### **Council ramps up workforce development**

The Council continues to support programs that prepare its future workforce and help employees gain the skills to support a changing customer base. Metro Transit launched a new training program that will put job seekers on a path toward full-time employment as mechanic-technicians. The program offers a combination of career and college readiness, support toward earning a technical degree, and a paid internship.

The Metro Transit Police Department reached a complement of 109 full-time officers. Many of the department’s newest members speak a second language, and among the new hires is the state’s first full-time female Somali police officer. Today the department is roughly 35% diverse, up from just 5% in 2012.

## **Livable Communities Act grants encourage development**

In the 2015 funding cycle, the Council awarded \$18.5 million in Livable Communities grants to support revitalization of brownfields for job creation, transit-oriented development, and affordable housing. Since 1995, the Council has awarded grants totaling \$325 million to build or rehabilitate nearly 21,500 affordable housing units; clean 2,200 acres of polluted land, creating or retaining 44,000 jobs; and support development of transit-oriented, connected land uses. The grants have helped leveraged billions of dollars in other public and private investments.

## **Park investments protect the environment, raise quality of life**

The Council's investment in our regional parks helps protect sensitive environmental areas, expands regional parkland and miles of trails, promotes outdoor and environmental learning, enhances park facilities, and creates jobs. In 2015, the Council approved approximately \$24.1 million in grants to the regional park implementing agencies to build, expand or improve planned park facilities; to acquire properties and trail easements within planned park and trail boundaries for expanding the regional parks system; and to conduct outdoor recreation and environmental education, recruit volunteer coordinators to organize outdoor activities, or provide wayfinding systems for trail users.

## **Metro HRA earns highest possible ranking, supports homeless veterans**

For the 11<sup>th</sup> straight year, the Council's Housing and Redevelopment Authority earned the highest ranking possible for program operation from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Through the federal Housing Choice Voucher program, Metro HRA works with landlords and program participants to provide rent assistance to the maximum number of households for the funds available.

## **Council creates mobility counseling program**

The Metro HRA established Community Choice, a mobility counseling program designed to assist families in finding housing in areas of opportunity. The program is based on a commitment to provide residents with access to opportunity and the choice of living in communities with possibilities for prosperity, quality of life, and success in new neighborhoods.

## **System Statements issued to local governments for their planning**

State law requires the Council to issue System Statements to local governments after it updates its regional development plan (*Thrive MSP 2040*) and accompanying system and policy plans. System statements explain the implications of the regional system plans for each community in the metropolitan area and include additional information specific to each community. Communities are obligated to review and, as necessary, amend their comprehensive plans by the end of 2018.

## **Planning guidance, resources made available to local governments**

To aid local governments in updating their local comprehensive plans, the Council prepared an updated, web-based Local Planning Handbook. The handbook provides direction on the required elements for local comprehensive plans; contains suggestions and resources to

move beyond minimum requirements; connects communities with resources, grants, and technical assistance; highlights local planning efforts across the region; and includes a new section with checklists, maps, and resources specific to each community. In addition, communities can submit their plans and plan amendments online.

### **Metro Mobility restructuring improves customer service and reduces costs**

Metro Mobility implemented a new service delivery model that provides better customer service, reduces duplication and improves efficiency. The new delivery model reflects a change from two core contracts and three small county contracts to three large service contracts. The service areas were designed to honor past travel patterns.

One of the key effects of the change is to eliminate ride transfers. Previously, customers traveling between a core contractor and a county contractor would likely have to transfer vehicles and contractors. Now, all customers receive a “single seat” ride. Restructuring Metro Mobility also saves the Metropolitan Council an estimated \$630,000 annually.

### **Transit rail ridership climbs, sets records**

The METRO Green Line enjoyed tremendous success in its first full-year of operation in 2015, with nearly 12.4 million rides. Average weekday ridership was just under the ridership forecast for 2030. More than 10.6 million rides were taken on the Blue Line, the highest annual ridership since it opened in mid-2004. The Blue Line also celebrated an important milestone in January, surpassing 100 million total rides since its 2004 opening. Northstar ridership increased slightly, as on-time performance improved to 95%.

### **Metro Transit initiates major bus stop improvements**

Efforts to improve the waiting experience at bus stops began taking shape across the region through the Better Bus Stops program. Metro Transit installed shelters at 51 locations where previously there were none. Many of these sites will include solar-powered lighting. Metro Transit replaced another 60 shelters in Minneapolis, where Metro Transit assumed responsibility for shelters previously under private management.

In addition, Metro Transit installed 2,300 new bus stop signs with route numbers, maps and instructions that help customers access real-time departure information using a mobile device. This was the first phase in a system-wide roll-out. Digital displays with real-time departure information were also added at 15 busy bus-boarding locations..

### **Arterial Bus "A" Line to start service June 2016**

Station construction began on the state's first arterial bus rapid transit line, the A Line. The A Line will provide an improved bus experience, with faster and more frequent service, specialized vehicles and train-like features, including off-board fare payment and stations with more amenities and security features. The line will operate between the Rosedale Transit Center in Roseville and the METRO Blue Line's 46th Street Station in Minneapolis, serving several employment, retail and residential destinations along Snelling Avenue, Ford Parkway and 46th Street. The line will also provide a connection to the METRO Green Line's Snelling Avenue Station.



## **Metro Transit improves fare payment**

More than half of transit customers pay their fares with a pre-paid Go-To Card or unlimited-ride pass, making boarding more efficient and more convenient for customers. Building on this trend, Metro Transit partnered with HOURCAR to give customers of the car-sharing service the ability to use their transit pass for vehicle entry. In addition, Go-To Card readers were added to Northstar Link buses that provide connecting express bus service between the Northstar Commuter Rail line's Big Lake Station and St. Cloud.

In December, Metro Transit launched a pilot program for low-income fares that provides households participating in the Council's rent assistance program with fare passes that automatically provide discounted \$1 fares. A Student Pass pilot was launched in Saint Paul, providing around 1,000 students with unlimited-ride transit passes.

## **Sewer rates kept competitive**

The Council's Environmental Services Division provides wastewater treatment services to 108 municipalities in the seven-county area at wholesale rates. In turn, those municipalities bill the households and businesses within their boundaries for the wastewater treatment services received, at an average annual rate of \$264. This retail sewer rate compares favorably to an average rate of \$415 reported by 24 similarly sized wastewater treatment "peer" agencies in the U.S., according to the most recent survey (2014) by the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA).

## **Wastewater treatment protects public health and the environment**

MCES collects and treats approximately 250 million gallons of wastewater from more than 2.5 million residents daily. This cleaned water is discharged to our rivers or used to recharge the groundwater. Six MCES wastewater treatment plants earned national awards for five years or more of perfect discharge permit compliance through 2014 and awarded in 2015: Hastings (24 years); St. Croix Valley (23 years); Seneca (14 years); Blue Lake (9 years); Eagles Point (9 years); and Empire (7 years). These compliance records are among the highest in the nation.

## **Partnership results in rainwater reuse at new ballpark**

When the City of Saint Paul and Saint Paul Saints opened the new CHS Field in May 2015, the facility incorporated a sustainability feature that captures rainwater from the rooftop of the adjacent Metro Transit operations and maintenance facility for the METRO Green Line. That rainwater is used to irrigate the ball field and grounds, and as water for some of the ballpark's toilets. The Environmental Services Division helped with the planning and implementation of the project, the first in Minnesota to recycle rainwater for human use indoors.

## **Council adopts Public Engagement Plan**

The Council finalized its plan for public engagement that enables individuals, communities, constituencies and organizations to help the Council generate ideas, better understand issues, identify concerns and considerations, and help solve problems. The plan establishes principles and processes for public engagement to inform Council decisions about the needs of community stakeholders and to engage people in decision-making. The plan was created collaboratively with members of a Community Engagement Steering Committee.

## **Council creates Equity Advisory Committee**

The Council created an Equity Advisory Committee that will advise the Council as it strives to advance equity throughout the region and implements the equity commitments in the region's long-range plan, *Thrive MSP 2040*. Members will influence Council decisions related to regional policies on transportation and transit, local planning, housing, environmental issues, and more. This committee will bring new and more diverse voices to Council decision-making.

## **Metro Transit ridership keeps growing**

Despite low gas prices, total annual Metro Transit ridership grew to 85.8 million in 2015, a 34-year high. Ridership has grown for 11 of the last 12 years and each of the last six. Ridership is at its highest level since 1981, when there were 90.5 million rides. Ridership in 2015 also marks the first time in a generation that ridership has grown steadily for more than a decade, with annual ridership up 23% since 2005.

## **Regional parks continue to be a top metro attraction**

Twin Cities metro area residents love their parks. The number of annual visits to regional parks grew 3.3% from 2013 to 2014 (the latest figure available), reaching 48.7 million. By comparison, the Mall of America receives about 40 million annual visits.

# **Community Development**

## **Overview**

The mission of Community Development is to:

- Understand current and future development patterns to inform local and regional policy development.
- Provide high-quality, coordinated planning, policy and program development to support regional growth and reinvestment.
- Identify and analyze regional issues.
- Facilitate community collaboration.
- Provide Livable Communities Act grants from three funding accounts to eligible communities to assist them with cleaning up polluted sites, expanding housing choices, and undertaking developments that use land and infrastructure more efficiently and connect housing, jobs and services.
- Deliver state and federally funded rent assistance to create and provide affordable housing for low-income households in the region.
- Partner with the 10 regional park implementing agencies (cities, counties, and park districts) and the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to manage the many regional parks, trails, and open spaces that make up the Twin Cities nationally renowned regional park system.

The Community Development Division includes:

UNIT	CORE ACTIVITIES
<b>Regional Parks and Natural Resources</b>	Develop and implement the Regional Parks Policy Plan through planning, research, and administration of the regional parks system grant programs. Support the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, which advises the Metropolitan Council on regional parks policy, master plan reviews and grant program coordination. Help coordinate the regional parks legislative requests. Ensure protection of the region's investment in the regional parks system through the review of local comprehensive plans and environmental studies.
<b>Local Planning Assistance</b>	Implement the Metropolitan Land Planning Act through <i>Thrive MSP 2040</i> and its policy plans. Provide planning and technical assistance and foster cooperative relationships with local governments and other organizations to achieve local and regional goals. Accomplish this responsibility through the Sector Representative Program: technical assistance: and review of local comprehensive plans, plan amendments, and environmental reviews; and coordination of policy outreach efforts through the Land Use Advisory Committee.
<b>Regional Policy and Research</b>	Manage large regional policy initiatives, such as <i>Thrive MSP 2040</i> and the <i>2040 Housing Policy Plan</i> , and collect and disseminate data and analysis about the demographics and development patterns on the Twin Cities.
<b>Livable Communities</b>	Implement the Livable Communities Act and its three funding accounts to provide grants to participating communities. Support the planning and development of affordable and lifecycle housing in the region. Help fund transit-oriented development.
<b>Metropolitan Council Housing and Redevelopment Authority (Metro HRA)</b>	Administer rent assistance programs for low-income seniors, families, individuals and households with disabilities. Manage the Family Affordable Housing Program.

## Regional Parks and Natural Resources

The Regional Parks and Natural Resources unit is responsible for developing and implementing the Regional Parks Policy Plan, with the advice of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. The Commission provides recommendations to the Metropolitan Council regarding its reviews of park master plans, the capital improvement program for the Regional Parks System, and the distribution of park grants.

The Regional Parks and Natural Resources unit also protects the Regional Parks System through the review of local comprehensive plans and environmental studies for consistency with the Regional Parks Policy Plan.

In 2015, the Regional Parks and Natural Resources unit:

- Developed the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* in collaboration with the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, regional park implementing agencies, and other partners and stakeholders. This process included conducting community engagement activities throughout the region to inform the development of the plan.
- Reviewed and evaluated local comprehensive plans for conformance to the Regional Parks Policy Plan and worked with local communities to ensure that their local planning efforts protect the integrity of the existing and planned Regional Parks System.
- Estimated the annual visitation to the Regional Parks System and individual regional park and trail facilities to produce the report *Annual Use Estimate of the Metropolitan Regional Parks System*. The Regional Parks System draws more than 48 million annual visits.
- Reviewed master plans or master plan amendments for the following regional parks and trails:
  - Above the Falls Regional Park (Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board)
  - Baker-Carver Regional Trail (Three Rivers Park District)
  - Coon Creek Regional Trail (Anoka County)
  - East Anoka County Regional Trail (Anoka County)
  - Highway 96 Regional Trail (Ramsey County)
  - Lebanon Hills Regional Park (Dakota County)
  - Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park (Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board)
  - Theodore Wirth Regional Park (Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board)
- Awarded grants to the 10 regional park implementing agencies for program and development projects that distributed the FY 2016 Parks and Trails Legacy Fund appropriation totaling \$17,237,000. The Legacy appropriation is intended to supplement traditional sources of funding, and in 2015 it initiated new program and development projects.
  - Ninety percent of the funds authorized 33 projects such as trail improvements, natural resources restoration and management, volunteer programs, new trail and trailhead construction, wayfinding, parking and park improvements at more than 15 regional park and park reserve locations. A few of these locations include Anoka County Riverfront Regional Park (Anoka County), Hyland Bush Anderson Lakes Regional Park Reserve (Bloomington), Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail (Carver County), North Urban Regional Trail (Dakota County), Phalen Keller Regional Park (Saint Paul) and Lake Elmo Park Reserve (Washington County).
  - Ten percent of these funds created park acquisition opportunities through the park acquisition grant program. The Council matches every \$3 of Legacy acquisition funds with \$2 of Metropolitan Council Bonds to acquire lands programmed for future acquisition in Council-approved master plans.
- Distributed state-appropriation of \$8,540,000 for parks operations and maintenance funding to the Metropolitan Regional Parks System for State Fiscal Year 2016 (July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016).

## Local Planning Assistance

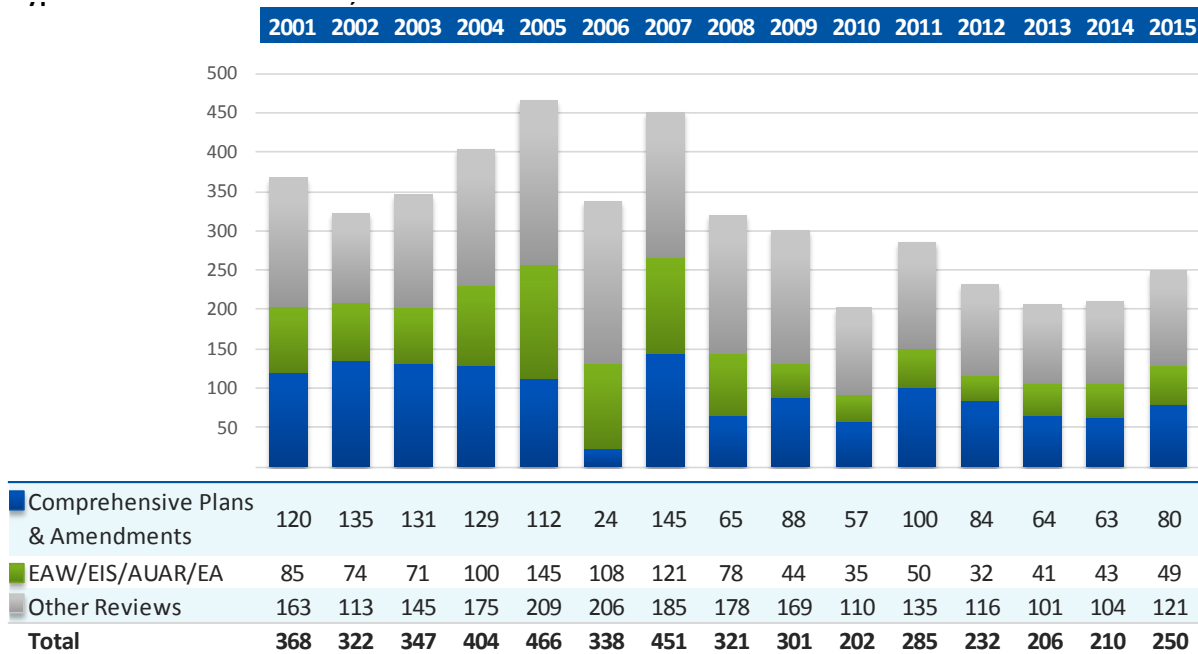
In 2015, the Local Planning Assistance unit:

- Coordinated 250 reviews to determine their conformance to the regional systems, consistency with Council policy, and compatibility with adjacent community plans, including:
  - 80 reviews of comprehensive plans including amendments, and 49 environmental reviews such as environmental assessment worksheets (EAWs), environmental impact statements (EIS), environmental assessments (EAs), and alternative urban area-wide reviews (AUARs).
  - Continued work with the small staff in the one remaining community needing to complete their 2030 comprehensive plan update.
  - 121 reviews of NPDES Permits, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers #404 Permits, wastewater and surface water discharge permits, and other types of reviews.
- Launched a significantly updated Local Planning Handbook, which guides local governments regarding local comprehensive planning requirements and connects them to additional resources. The Handbook is fully housed on a new online platform and includes a new tool for submitting plans online, community-specific data and information needed for planning, a new individualized online mapping tool, and an extensive resource library to assist local governments in updating their comprehensive plans.
- Issued decennial System Statements to all the communities in the Council's jurisdiction. As required by the Metropolitan Land Planning Act, the Council issues System Statements after updating the plans for regional systems. Each System Statement is individualized to show how each community is impacted by the regional plan. Issuing these System Statements triggers an obligation for local communities to review and update their local comprehensive plans in response to the new regional plan. Local comprehensive plans are due to the Council for review by December 31, 2018.
- Provided technical planning assistance and resources to local elected and appointed officials and local planning staff through the Council's Sector Representative Program.
- Provided analysis and updated information on fiscal disparities, including tax-base values and impacts of the tax-base sharing program, for the public and policymakers. Also used this analysis to meet a statutory requirement to determine which communities are not eligible to participate in the Twin Cities Fiscal Disparities program.
- Planned and coordinated bimonthly meetings of the Land Use Advisory Committee, which advised the Council on the development of planning-assistance grant criteria and assisted in shaping new technical resources for the updated Local Planning Handbook and the Transit-Oriented Development Guide.
- Launched a new Reviews Database system that is integrated with the staff-workload management software and online submittal tool for plan reviews that is available with the Local Planning Handbook.
- Reviewed and provided internal comments to Livable Communities unit staff in coordinating grant requests for the Council's Tax Base Revitalization Account and for the Livable Communities Demonstration Account, including the LCA-TOD grant program.
- Prepared an annual Plat Monitoring Report for 45 developing communities.
- Prepared a report on the Metropolitan Agricultural Preserves program monitoring enrollments in the region.

- Coordinated with Minnesota Department of Natural Resources staff on streamlining shared review of Critical Area plans as part of the Critical Area rulemaking process.

The chart and accompanying table show the number and type of planning assistance reviews and referrals administered by the Council from 2001 through 2015.

**Type and Number of Reviews, 2001-2015**



## Regional Policy and Research

In 2015, the Regional Policy and Research team:

- Revised regional and local forecasts to provide local governments the freshest possible forecasts of households, population, and jobs prior to beginning comprehensive planning.
- Amended the *2040 Housing Policy Plan* to include housing-related requirements for the 2040 comprehensive plan updates and an updated methodology for the Allocation of Affordable Housing Need for 2021-2030.
- Revised the Guidelines for Housing Policy Performance to introduce a new approach to developing Housing Performance Scores and deployed a completely new survey to collect data for the 2015 Scores.
- Followed up on the adoption of *Thrive MSP 2040* with an initiative of *Thrive* in-reach to expand Council staff’s understanding of the *Thrive* outcomes and principles.
- Revised forecasts of population, households and employment for transportation analysis zones within cities and worked with Metro Transit project offices to invite comments from local government officials.
- Produced annual city and township estimates of populations and households per Minn. Stat. 473.24 and developed 2014 estimates of populations and households for both transportation analysis zones and census tracts.
- Released 12 issues of MetroStats, Internet-based publications that incorporate enhanced graphics and focused analysis to disseminate Research unit data.

- Disseminated data from two American Community Survey releases, including consistently posting data on the Council's website within 12 hours of new data availability and providing a number of public presentations.
- Provided analysis of or assistance with U.S. Census Bureau data to local government, nonprofit partners, the media, and the public.
- Conducted annual surveys on building permits (96% response rate), affordable housing production (71% response rate), group quarters (77% response rate), and manufactured home parks (80% response rate).
- Maintained up-to-date data in the Council's Data+Maps website, including tabular geospatial data.
- Provided extensive data to inform the Green Line Extension and Blue Line Extension applications to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for New Starts funding and initiated a project to institutionalize the collection, maintenance, and dissemination of data to both monitor development and disseminate demographic data on station areas along transitways to inform future applications to FTA for New Starts and Small Starts funding.

## **Livable Communities**

In 2015, 95 metropolitan area communities participated in the Livable Communities program (Minn. Stat. 473.25) to help expand and preserve affordable housing opportunities, recycle polluted sites, revitalize older cities and suburbs, and create new neighborhoods in growing communities.

Communities voluntarily participate in the program and negotiate housing goals with the Council. They are then eligible to compete for funding from the three accounts in the Livable Communities Fund, as well as pollution cleanup funds available from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.

The Livable Communities Fund includes grants from the following accounts:

- Tax-Base Revitalization Account (TBRA) helps cities to pay for cleanup of polluted land and buildings, facilitating redevelopment activities and thus restoring tax base, jobs and housing in urban areas.
- Livable Communities Demonstration Account (LCDA) funds development and redevelopment projects that achieve connected development patterns linking housing, jobs and services, and maximize the development potential of existing or planned infrastructure and regional facilities.
- Local Housing Incentives Account (LHIA) preserves and expands housing opportunities through grants to eligible communities to meet negotiated affordable and lifecycle housing goals.

In 2015, the Livable Communities Program unit:

- Awarded 28 TBRA grants totaling over \$6.9 million to help clean up polluted land in eight communities: Brooklyn Center, Edina, Fridley, Hastings, Minneapolis, St. Louis Park, Saint Paul, and White Bear Lake.
- Awarded six LCDA grants totaling nearly \$5 million to help projects in four communities: Hastings, Minneapolis, St. Louis Park and Saint Paul. The funded projects will help acquire and prepare sites for redevelopment that include a mix of housing, commercial, and other

uses that support daily needs and community activities. Projects will also assist with the construction of innovative storm water management solutions.

- Awarded eight LHIA grants totaling \$2.2 million to help preserve or build affordable housing in seven cities: Blaine, Edina, Minneapolis, Minnetonka, Mound, Saint Paul, and Woodbury.
- Awarded six Transit Oriented Development grants totaling nearly \$4.4 million in four communities, through the LCDA program: Edina, Minneapolis, St. Louis Park, and Saint Paul. The funded projects will help promote higher-density projects within easy walking distance of a major transit stop that will typically include a mix of uses oriented to the transit stop.
- Collectively, the 2015 Livable Communities grants are expected to:
  - Create or retain 3,200 jobs
  - Leverage nearly \$320 million in private funds and over \$55 million in other public funds
  - Add or preserve more than 2,600 housing units, over 1,500 of which will be affordable at 80% of Area Median Income
  - Clean up 64 acres of polluted property to prepare it for redevelopment
- Reviewed 28 proposals for local housing revenue bond dollars to support affordable, market-rate and senior housing.
- Determined housing performance scores for cities and counties pursuant to the Council's Guidelines for Priority Funding for Housing Performance.

### **Metropolitan Council Housing and Redevelopment Authority**

In 2015, about 7,000 low-income households in the metropolitan area benefited from rent assistance through one of 10 programs administered by the Metro HRA unit. The rental assistance programs, funded through federal and state funds, include the Housing Choice Voucher, Project Based Voucher, Non-Elderly Disabled, Family Unification, Veteran's Affairs Supportive Housing, Bridges, Continuum of Care, Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS, Rental Assistance for Anoka County, and Family Affordable Housing programs.

In 2015, the HRA unit:

- Provided Housing Choice Vouchers to 6,490 very low income seniors, families, individuals and households with disabilities, enabling households to rent private rental units affordable to each household's income.
- Provided rent assistance to approximately 640 additional households through programs designed to assist households meeting specific eligibility criteria, such as being disabled, homeless, or working toward self-sufficiency.
- Issued over \$52 million in direct rent payments to private landlords.
- Maximized use of Housing Choice Voucher funds by ensuring 98% of the available funding was utilized.
- Maintained the HUD ranking of High Performer in the Section Eight Management Assessment Program (SEMAP).
- Owned and managed 150 scattered-site Project Based Voucher units (Family Affordable Housing Program), comprising single-family houses, duplexes and town homes located in 11 suburban communities.



- Implemented Community Choice, a mobility counseling program to assist families who hold Housing Choice Vouchers to find housing in areas of opportunity. The program encourages self-sufficiency and success in their new neighborhood.
- Increased rental assistance opportunities available to homeless veterans through the Veteran's Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program.
- Continued support to HousingLink for information and referral services to housing seekers and landlords about affordable housing programs and housing vacancies.

## Transportation Division

### Overview

The Metropolitan Council adopts regional transportation policies and plans and coordinates all transportation planning in the Twin Cities area. This includes highways, transit, airports, waterways and rail, as well as travel-demand forecasting and air quality planning. In addition, the Council administers and operates transit services in the Twin Cities through directly provided services and contracted transit providers.

These programs are delivered by two divisions – Metropolitan Transportation Services (MTS) and Metro Transit – based on the Council's *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*.

### Transportation Policy Plan Focus and Implementation

The philosophy and focus of the Council's Transportation Policy Plan is to implement the legislatively mandated regional development framework called *Thrive MSP 2040*. Specifically:

- Plan and invest in multi-modal transportation choices.
- Focus highway investments on preserving, operating and managing the existing system, and on slowing the growth of congestion.
- Encourage growth and density along transitway corridors.
- Encourage travel-demand management strategies.
- Encourage local communities in the urbanized area to implement a system of fully interconnected arterial and local streets, pedestrian pathways, and bikeways.
- Promote the development and preservation of various freight modes.
- Support investments in airport facilities.
- Serve the region's economic prosperity through investments that attract and retain successful businesses and a talented workforce.
- Connect residents of all races, ethnicities, income and abilities to opportunities.

To carry out these overall policies, the Metropolitan Council:

- Develops and maintains transportation policy for the metropolitan area, which is documented in the long-range Transportation Policy Plan.
- Develops and updates the metropolitan area federal Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the short-range capital improvement program for all projects using federal transportation funds.

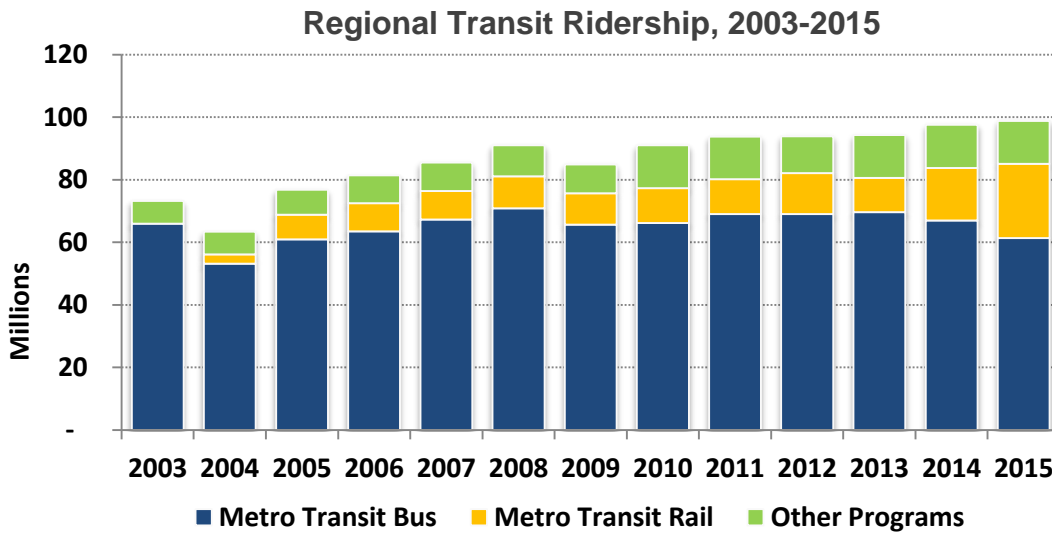
- Carries out the region's transportation planning program, the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).
- Implements transportation policy through the allocation of federal funds through implementation of its own programs and through coordination with the federal, state, and local governments.
- Acts as the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization.
- Provides or coordinates with transit programs throughout the region.
- Operates Metro Transit, the region's largest provider of large-bus, regular-route transit service, light-rail transit service, and commuter-rail transit service.
- Operates Metro Mobility, the region's ADA transit service. This program provides group-transit services (demand-response and arranged) as a legally mandated complement to the regular-route system for persons with disabilities who are unable to use regular-route transit service.
- Operates contracted regular-route transit services, a network of routes operated by private contractors. These routes comprise approximately 10% of regular-route transit in the Twin Cities.
- Operates Transit Link dial-a-ride, a shared-ride, curb-to-curb small bus service for the general public operating in the seven counties for trips not available using regular-route bus and rail transit. Transit Link connects riders to the regular-route system and to Metro Mobility.
- Partners with Suburban Transit Providers. Twelve communities, also known as "opt outs," have chosen to provide their own transit service. They provide service through contracts primarily with private companies, although they also contract with nonprofit and other governmental entities. Operating funding flows from the state to the STPs through the Council. The Council coordinates regional support for fares, capital programs and other activities with opt-out authorities.
- Provides vanpools through Metro Vanpool. Started in 2001, Metro Vanpool subsidizes commuter vanpools that serve work locations and times not effectively served by the regular-route bus and rail network.

The region also has transit programs not affiliated with the Metropolitan Council. The University of Minnesota operates all-day intercampus transit service for students, faculty, employees, and the general public. The system is integrated with the regional regular-route network and interchanges passengers with other transit programs.

### **Regional Transit Ridership**

Regional transit ridership in 2015 was up 1.2% over the year before in the seven-county metro area. Total transit ridership in the region in 2015 was 98.8 million rides. The region's largest provider, Metro Transit, experienced a 1.3% increase while Metro Mobility continued its trend of the past several years with a 7% increase.

A variety of factors will affect future ridership growth, including funding levels, fuel prices, the economy, employment levels, development patterns, income levels, service improvements, and highway congestion levels.



## Metropolitan Transportation Services

Metropolitan Transportation Services has two major functions:

- Conduct transportation planning for the metropolitan area as the region’s federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization.
- Provide direct transit service contracts or partnerships with counties to deliver four major programs: Metro Mobility/ADA, Transit Link dial-a-ride, contracted regular-route, and Metro Vanpool.

## Transportation Planning Activities

As the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Twin Cities metropolitan area, the Council is federally required to provide a continuing, coordinated, comprehensive transportation planning process that includes state and local units of government. In return, the metropolitan region is eligible for federal transportation funds.

## Transportation Policy Plan

Federal regulations require the Council to prepare a long-range transportation plan, which must be updated every four years. The *2040 Transportation Policy Plan* was prepared in 2013-14 and adopted in January 2015. After adoption, the Council prepared a Systems Statement for every municipality and county in the region, detailing how the plan should be reflected in each of their local plan updates by 2018. A transportation section of the Local Plan Handbook was also written to provide planning technical assistance to communities.

Under MAP-21 and FAST Act federal guidelines, MPOs are required to have a performance-based long-range transportation plan. Since the federal rulemaking for required measures was not finalized when the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan* was being completed, the policy plan includes preliminary performance measures. In 2015, a more robust list of performance measures was being identified. Five working groups, composed of transportation stakeholders, identified proposed highest-priority measures for the respective transportation

modes. After further input from policy makers and the public, the final measures will be used to evaluate investments to be included in the next policy plan.

### **Transportation Improvement Program**

The Council is responsible for preparing a short-range Transportation Improvement Program and selecting projects for federal funding. This work is conducted through the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) and its Technical Advisory Committees, and includes broad citizen and interest-group input.

In 2015, the 2016-2019 TIP was prepared and adopted by TAB and the Council. As required by federal law, the TIP includes all federally funded surface transportation projects.

### **Highway Planning**

The Council participates with MnDOT, cities and counties in highway planning activities to ensure implementation of the policy direction established by the Council in its *Thrive MSP 2040* and the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*.

- During 2015, the Council coordinated with MnDOT's Metro District on a number of highway planning studies, especially several ongoing interagency corridor studies, including I- 494/TH 62 Congestion Relief Study, Principal Arterial Intersection Conversion Study, TH 169 Managed Lane and Transitway Study, I-94 Project, TH 65 Access Study, I- 35W North MnPASS, I-35E North MnPASS extension, and I-35W/Lake Street Access Project.
- The Council administers the Right-of-Way Acquisition Loan Fund (RALF), which gives communities no-interest loans to purchase right-of-way for principal arterials and other trunk highways in advance of the time that MnDOT would be in a position to make the purchase. In 2015 several RALF loans were repaid by Maple Grove after MnDOT purchased land from the city for TH 610, which is now under construction.

### **Transit Planning Activities**

The Council performs long-range transit planning activities to implement the policy direction established in its *Thrive MSP 2040* and the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*.

- The Council began work on the transit work program items of the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan* related to regional streetcar policies and setting regional transitway priorities. A consultant was hired to develop a series of memos related to these tasks, the first of which was released in 2015. The Council also developed transit planning resources for local communities in support of upcoming comprehensive plan updates.
- The Council continued to participate with MnDOT, transit providers, cities, and county regional railroad authorities during 2015 to conduct feasibility, alternatives analysis, environmental, and engineering studies and implementation plans for several transitway corridors. Cedar Avenue Bus Rapid Transit Implementation Plan Update and Robert Street studies were completed in 2015, while Green Line Extension (Southwest) Light Rail Transit (LRT), Blue Line Extension (Bottineau LRT), Red Rock Corridor, Gold Line (Gateway Corridor), Orange Line (I-35W South), Nicollet-Central, Rush Line, Riverview, and West Broadway are ongoing. New studies begun in 2015 include the TH 169 Managed Lane and Transitway Study and the Dakota County East-West Transit Study.

- The Council also participated in intercity passenger rail studies, including Zip Rail, the Minneapolis/Saint Paul–Milwaukee High-Speed Rail, and the Northern Lights Express (NLX) – Duluth to Twin Cities.

### **Air Quality Planning**

The Council conducts long-term planning required by federal law to ensure that planning for congestion management, transportation, land use and air quality conforms to the requirements of the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendment. In 2015, conformity analysis for the 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) was completed to ensure the construction of policy plan and TIP projects would not violate federal air quality standards.

In 2015:

- Work continued to implement the 2010 Limited Maintenance Plan for Carbon Monoxide and to finalize a Transportation Conformity State Implementation Plan for air quality with MPCA and MnDOT.
- Work continued with MnDOT and MPCA on responding to more stringent proposed federal ozone standards. The Council participated in the state Climate Strategies and Economic Opportunities work group and the *Thrive* work group on climate change and began work to integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation planning into transportation planning.

### **Project Selection for Federal Funding**

In its role as the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the region, the Council concurs with the biennial selection of projects selected by its Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) for federal transportation funding through adoption of the TIP. This includes three programs: Surface Transportation Program (STP), Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program.

A solicitation for projects was released in fall of 2014. In 2015, the Council's TAB selected projects to be funded with STP, CMAQ, and TAP money in 2018-2019. It also selected projects to be funded with remaining 2017 STP and CMAQ funds. The selected projects were then incorporated into the 2016-2019 TIP. At the conclusion of project selection, the TAB and its technical committees began an evaluation of the solicitation process to determine any changes needed prior to soliciting projects in 2016 for funding in 2020-2021.

### **Travel Forecasting**

As the regional planning agency, the Council is charged with maintaining and applying travel forecast models to support planning for the orderly development and operation of transportation facilities. The Council maintains socioeconomic data and obtains traffic data from MnDOT to monitor, revise, and update travel forecasts. Federal regulations require the Council to provide projections of traffic demand and related air quality emissions. These projections are used to evaluate regional transportation investments proposed in the short-range TIP and the long-range Transportation Policy Plan.

In 2015:

- Work continued on responding to requests for forecast travel-demand data and providing assistance and model review to consultants, agencies and local governments. Council staff also worked with consultants on several regional-scale highway and transit projects that required forecasts, including the Blue Line Extension, Green Line Extension, Rush Line,

Riverview, Red Line, Orange Line, Red Rock, and Gateway transitway corridors and the I-94, I-35W, I-494/TH 62, and TH 169 MnPASS highway corridors.

- 2010 Travel Behavior Inventory (TBI) data and findings were presented to various audiences. Data from the TBI was also used in developing and implementing a next-generation activity-based travel demand model, which was released in late 2015. Work will continue on refining the new model and providing technical assistance in its application.
- Work continued on planning for the next Travel Behavior Inventory. A 10-year 2018-2027 TBI program has been developed that will involve more frequent and regular data collection and model improvements. This program will be refined and funding identified in 2016. Work on the 2016 transit on-board study began in 2015 with data collection and analysis to occur in 2016 and early 2017.

### **Aviation Planning Activities**

The Council prepares and maintains a plan for the regional aviation system. The Council works closely with MnDOT Aeronautics, the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC), and other airport owners to ensure that the region's airports provide state-of-the-art, secure and affordable services for business and leisure travelers, freight transport and general aviation activities. The Council coordinates aviation planning and community development with local, state and federal governmental units, airport users and citizens.

2015 highlights include the following activities:

- Coordination with the MAC on aviation issues, including environmental documentation for proposed improvement projects at Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport (MSP), long-term comprehensive plan updates for MAC airports, and noise and airspace issues, including new Area Navigation (RNAV) airspace procedures proposed for MSP by the Federal Aviation Administration.
- Conducted presentations on aviation system planning and comprehensive planning to the MAC's Noise Oversight Committee.
- Reviewed and approved the 2016-2022 Capital Improvement Program for MSP and MAC's reliever airports.
- Participated in the advisory group for the Lake Elmo Regional Airport Master Plan Update, which is expected to be adopted in 2016.

### **Transit Programs**

The Contracted Transit Services unit provides transit service through service contracts for Metro Mobility, Transit Link dial-a-ride, regular-route transit and Metro Vanpool.

#### **Suburban Transit Providers**

Twelve suburban communities manage their own transit services. Two of these – Plymouth and Maple Grove – operate their own municipal programs.

Apple Valley, Burnsville, Eagan, Prior Lake, Savage. Shakopee and Rosemount created an intergovernmental entity called Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA) to provide transit in their communities. Chaska, Chanhassen and Eden Prairie created another intergovernmental entity, Southwest Metro Transit.

These communities contract with a variety of providers to deliver service. They also select their own routes and levels of services. A significant share of the service provided by suburban providers meets the needs of commuters traveling to and from downtown Saint Paul and Minneapolis.

### **Contracted Regular Routes**

Contracting regular-route service is most beneficial in situations where a smaller bus is appropriate due to ridership, operational constraints, and neighborhood perception: where performance does not meet regional standards when directly operated; and in certain specially funded service arrangements. Metropolitan Transportation Services manages contracts for approximately 10% of the region's regular-route bus service.

### **Dial-a-Ride Service**

Dial-a-ride service provides a public transit option in areas not served by the regular-route transit network. The Metropolitan Council contracts with local governments and private companies to provide general-public dial-a-ride service in these areas, called Transit Link. Although Transit Link is available to the general public, typical users are the elderly, people who do not own a car, people too young to drive, and persons with disabilities traveling outside the Metro Mobility service area. Growth or reduction in these services will be addressed as a consideration of the overall transit system and as demand warrants. The expansion of the regular-route bus system may result in reduced demand for Transit Link as more people have access to regular-route service.

### **Metro Vanpool**

Commuter vanpools are made up of five or more people, including a volunteer driver, commuting to and from work at destinations throughout the region on a regular basis. The Metro Vanpool program provides financial assistance for vans serving locations or times not well served by the regular-route transit network.

## **Metro Mobility Program Evaluation**

This section responds to Minn. Stat. 473.13, which requires the Council's program evaluation report to include "an assessment of progress towards meeting transit goals for people with disabilities... with required elements including, but not limited to: (1) a description of proposed program enhancements; (2) an assessment of progress; (3) identification of the estimated total number of potential and actual riders who are disabled; (4) an assessment of the level and type of service required to meet unmet ridership needs; and (5) an analysis of costs and revenue options, including a calculation of the amounts of surplus or insufficient funds available for achieving paratransit needs."

### **Metro Mobility**

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) every public entity operating a regular-route system must provide complementary paratransit service to individuals with disabilities who are unable to use the regular-route system. Federal law requires this paratransit service be delivered at levels comparable to the regular-route system. This service must be provided within three-quarters of a mile of any all-day, local regular route in the Twin Cities. In addition

Minnesota statute requires the Metropolitan Council to provide door-through-door transportation service within the Transit Taxing District as it existed on March 1, 2006.

Under the ADA there are a number of key provisions governing service delivery in the federally mandated service area. Some of these provisions include:

- No trip limits, restrictions or capacity constraints.
- There can be no denials of service.
- Service must be guaranteed at the time of the call.
- Service must be provided during all hours when regular-route service is available.
- Trips must be scheduled within one hour of the requested time.
- There may not be a pattern or practice of limiting availability. This includes long telephone hold times, substantial number of late pickups, missed trips, or excessively long trips.
- The fare cannot exceed twice the non-discounted fare for a trip of similar length, at a similar time on the regular-route system.
- Eligibility determinations must be made within 21 days of receiving a complete application for service.

The state further requires that the service must be provided from door through first door.

Metro Mobility serves as the complementary paratransit service in the seven-county metro area. Metro Mobility is a service of the Metropolitan Council, managed by the Metro Mobility Service Center and delivered by several contractors.

The 2015 Metro Mobility ridership was 2,109,392, a 6.8% increase with an additional 130,000 rides compared to 2014. Metro Mobility ridership continues to increase significantly each year and has increased more than 67% in the past nine years. Efforts to manage the ADA budget have been somewhat successful while ensuring that service is readily available as required by both state and federal law and maintaining service quality.

### **Program Enhancements**

To maintain high-quality service and improve efficiency, Metro Mobility implemented an aggressive plan to upgrade the communications infrastructure. In 2015 Metro Mobility finalized work on Phase III of the project to improve real-time communication for both drivers and riders and offer electronic (Go-To) fare payment to customers.

Phase I of the project implemented mobile data computers (MDC) and automatic vehicle location (AVL) on all Metro Mobility vehicles. The system provides real-time information to dispatchers and managers, allowing staff to actively monitor and adjust routes as the day progresses. This allows drivers to stay on schedule and improves service dependability. As a result of this program, Metro Mobility saw improvements in on-time performance and productivity. This phase was completed in 2013.

The AVL technology offers drivers turn-by-turn directions to each location. This improvement has led to better retention of new drivers who may be unfamiliar with hard-to-find addresses and locations. It also provides management staff a powerful tool in resolving both motorist and passenger complaints.



In 2014 Metro Mobility implemented Phase II of the project. In Phase II, real-time schedule information became available to riders. An interactive voice response (IVR) system sends riders reminder messages about trips scheduled for the following day, as well as imminent arrival messages to alert riders when the vehicle is 10 minutes away from picking them up. In addition, customers are able to get an email confirmation when their trips are scheduled or cancelled. This program began on a voluntary basis in July 2014.

Phase III of the project implements the regional Go-To electronic fare-payment system. The Go-To system allows Metro Mobility riders to move seamlessly between service modes within the region and take advantage of the many fare features currently available to fixed-route riders. The electronic fare readers were installed on all Metro Mobility vehicles. The system will begin operation in January 2016 with a limited number of passengers. By March 2016 it will be available to all Metro Mobility riders.

### **Program Redesign**

In 2015 Metro Mobility implemented a new service delivery model. Since 1993 Metro Mobility had used two large “core contractors” and smaller county-based programs to deliver rides around the perimeter of the service area. The two “core” contracts were competitively procured while the smaller “county” contracts were either sole source or intergovernmental agreements. In 2014 there were five different providers of Metro Mobility Service. This included Anoka County Traveler (contracting with a private provider), SmartLink in Scott and Carver Counties and DARTS in Dakota County. These three “county” contracts accounted for approximately 10% of the Metro Mobility service.

The new service delivery model provides better customer service, reduces duplication and improves efficiency. In mid-2015 Metro Mobility transitioned from two core contracts and three small county contracts to three large service contracts. The service areas are designed to be roughly the same geographic size and to honor past travel patterns. All three contracts were competitively procured for implementation between June and August, 2015.

One of the key components of the new service model is the elimination of rides with a transfer. Under the previous model, a customer traveling between a core contractor and a county contractor would likely have to transfer vehicles and contractors to complete their trip. Under the new model, all customers receive a single-seat ride.

### **Assessment of Progress**

#### ***Premium Same-Day Service***

In 2004 Metro Mobility began offering Premium Same Day (PSD) service to customers who want a same-day ride but are not able or chose not to place a ride with Metro Mobility. (ADA regulations do not require same-day service availability.) In 2013 Metro Mobility expanded the Premium Same Day program to include all same-day trip requests. The change was made to ensure that drivers and dispatchers stay focused on delivering quality service to pre-scheduled riders on Metro Mobility. In addition to expanding the Premium Same Day program, the cost structure was altered slightly to provide a more cost-effective alternative for customers. The Council changed the maximum subsidy for a taxi trip from \$13 to \$15. In addition, the Council lowered the threshold at which the Council contributes to the ride. Previously the passenger paid the first \$7.00 in costs plus the cab fare charges above \$20. Now the passenger must pay the first \$5.00 plus all costs over \$20.

Premium Same Day ridership continues to increase as customers demand flexibility of same-day rides combined with the convenience of a single-seat ride. One of the advantages of the Premium Same Day service is the relatively low cost per ride to the Council. Because the customer and the Council share the cost of the ride, Premium Same Day Service is provided at a low cost when compared to the Metro Mobility service. The average cost for each Premium Same Day ride remains approximately \$9.00 for each ride.

**Premium Same-Day Ridership**

Year	Ridership
2012	9,916
2013	17,005
2014	27,790
2015	38,380

***Metro Mobility Ridership Growth***

The demand for Metro Mobility service has increased dramatically over the past decade. Although age in and of itself is not a determining factor for Metro Mobility demand, there is a strong correlation between age-related mobility limitations and eligibility for Metro Mobility. In 2015, 68% of the active riders were over the age of 55 and took approximately 50% of the Metro Mobility trips. Given the strong correlation between age-related mobility limitations and Metro Mobility eligibility, the aging of the baby-boomer population may present a unique challenge for the Metro Mobility service in the next decade.

One of the primary factors for the increase in Metro Mobility ridership is the increase in certified riders. Since 2012 Metro Mobility has seen a 19% increase in the number of people applying for the service. In 2012 Metro Mobility had 8,136 applications compared to 9,964 applications in 2015. Nearly half of all applications are new customers who have not previously used Metro Mobility. There has also been a corresponding increase in the number of people who use Metro Mobility each year.

**Active Metro Mobility Riders by Year**

Year	Active Riders
2012	15,321
2013	17,138
2014	18,973
2015	19,983

In 2005, the Metropolitan Council updated a 1999 study which projected ridership growth through 2020. Through 2011 the study fairly accurately estimated the high ridership. Beyond 2012 the Council has exceeded even the high-end estimates of this study. Given the aging population, it is probable that the growth in ridership could accelerate in the next 5 to 10

years. As a result, the Metropolitan Council will be conducting a new study in 2016. Rather than updating the results of the original study, the Council is seeking a consultant to develop a predictive model based on current demographics and ridership trends that can predict the level of service that may be needed.

**Metro Mobility Ridership Analysis and Projections**

Year	Metro Mobility Actual Ridership	Actual Ridership % Change	2005 Analysis Projection		Actual Ridership vs. Projected High Ridership
			LOW Ridership Growth	HIGH Ridership Growth	
2004	1,336,167	-	1,326,246	1,326,246	9,921
2005	1,275,267	- 4.78%	1,352,771	1,352,771	-77,504
2006	1,293,894	1.44%	1,384,585	1,393,273	-99,379
2007	1,366,002	5.28%	1,414,253	1,440,800	-74,798
2008	1,435,951	4.87%	1,444,557	1,489,948	-53,997
2009	1,449,548	0.94%	1,475,510	1,540,773	-91,225
2010	1,494,877	3.1%	1,507,127	1,593,331	-98,454
2011	1,594,808	6.68%	1,531,053	1,640,670	-45,862
2012	1,737,753	8.96%	1,547,036	1,682,432	55,321
2013	1,842,358	4.67%	1,563,186	1,725,258	117,100
2014	1,977,205	8.67%	1,579,505	1,769,173	208,032
2015	2,109,392	6.70%	1,595,994	1,814,207	295,185

**Options for Managing Costs and Increasing Revenue**

As ridership demand increases so do operational and capital costs. Over the past several years the Council has continued to look for new and innovative ways to reduce the cost of the service being provided without changing the operating parameters of the service. These solutions include:

- **Mobile Data Computers / Automatic Vehicle Location:** This technology has allowed Metro Mobility contractors to increase productivity 3% from 2012 to 2015. This translates to a savings of 26,675 hours or approximately \$1.2 million per year.
- **Service Restructuring:** The 2015 service restructuring created economies of scale for all contractors. The average rate per hour actually decreased from the 2014 contract rates.
- **Bulk Fuel Purchasing:** The restructuring allowed the Council to expand its bulk fuel purchasing to include all contracts. The Council has negotiated a lower-than-pump rate for all fuel, translating into significant savings each year.

Over the next two years the Council will look at how other operational efficiencies may be gained to provide better customer service as well as reduce the cost of the service. Unfortunately there are a limited number of operational efficiencies left to be gained that do not fundamentally alter the nature of the service as it is provided today.

Currently Metro Mobility’s revenue comes from a variety of sources, but the majority of revenue consists of legislative appropriations from the state General Fund. In 2015 the

Council included Metro Mobility vehicles in our advertising contract. The vendor that sells advertising for our Metro Transit buses and trains was invited to sell advertising on Metro Mobility vehicles as well. To date that revenue is extremely small and there has been little interest in advertising. In 2015 the Council generated \$15,652 in advertising revenue on Metro Mobility.

Listed below are Metro Mobility’s revenue sources.

**Metro Mobility Budgeted Sources of Revenue, 2015**

<b>State General Fund Appropriation</b>	87.9%
<b>Passenger Fares</b>	12.1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	100.0%

The table below outlines four years of historic costs and the current-year budgeted costs for the Metro Mobility service. To address ridership growth, additional revenue will be necessary to maintain the high level of service that is currently provided. However, the implementation of different service delivery strategies and new technology could increase service productivity, slowing the rate of operational cost increases.

**Metro Mobility Cost, 2012-2016**

	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015 Unaudited</b>	<b>2016 Budgeted</b>
<b>Revenue Hours</b>	774,146	852,466	935,929	1,045,894	1,133,845
<b>Average Hourly Rate</b>	\$49.68	\$49.56	\$50.30	\$47.66	\$45.69
<b>Fuel Cost / Hour</b>	\$6.85	\$6.96	\$6.26	\$4.60	\$5.57
<b>Total Service Cost</b>	\$43.8 M	48.2 M	\$52.9 M	\$54.7 M	\$58.1 M

**Metro Transit – A Service of the Metropolitan Council**

Based on ridership, Metro Transit, an operating division of the Metropolitan Council, is the largest transit agency in Minnesota and provides about 90% of regular-route service in Minneapolis/Saint Paul area. About 80% of rides are taken on the agency’s buses and 20% on trains.

Its 3,134 employees transport customers more than 289,000 times each weekday with service on 132 local, express and contract bus routes, as well as the METRO Blue Line, METRO Green Line and the Northstar Commuter Rail Line.

Metro Transit’s fleet includes 907 buses, 86 light-rail rail cars, 18 commuter rail cars and six locomotives.

Metro Transit expects to achieve this goals set in the Council’s *2040 Transportation Policy Plan* by tailoring cost-effective service to diverse markets with an integrated system of core routes focusing on transit centers, an array of express bus services using park-and-ride facilities, and transit advantages on freeways and highways.

Significant ridership growth is expected through the thoughtful planning and implementation of an expanded network of transitways. Metro Transit has aligned its business plans to coincide with the growth objectives of the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*.

## Mission

To implement the *Transportation Policy Plan*, Metro Transit is committed to the following mission: Metro Transit delivers environmentally sustainable transportation choices that link people, jobs and community conveniently, consistently and safely.

In pursuit of its mission, Metro Transit embraces to these guiding principles:

- **Service Excellence.** We go beyond the expectations of our customers to deliver convenient, comfortable and reliable service; we don't accept today's best as tomorrow's limitations.
- **Environmental Responsibility.** We promote public transportation as an environmentally friendly service and conduct our business in an environmentally responsible manner.
- **Innovation.** We regularly question the status quo; we encourage creativity and innovation in all things.
- **Safety.** We provide a safe and secure environment for our customers, community and employees through consistent training, enforcement and allocation of resources.
- **Teamwork.** As employees, we seek shared success, treat one another with respect and consider each other as customers.
- **Financial Responsibility.** We continuously improve the cost-efficiency of our services; we approach our financial relationships with integrity and transparency.
- **Community Orientation.** We are an important part of the Twin Cities region. We engage the community in our decision-making provide well-crafted communication and offer opportunities for public involvement.

## Ridership

Bolstered by the highly successful opening of the METRO Green Line along the University Avenue Corridor, Metro Transit closed 2015 with more than 85.8 million rides, which represents the highest number of rides given in more than three decades. It also represents the sixth straight year of ridership growth.

Ridership highlights from 2015 include:

- Metro Transit provided 85.8 million total rides in 2015, the highest total since 1981. There were 62.1 million total bus rides, 23 million total light-rail rides and 722,637 total commuter rail rides.
- Metro Transit provided 276,408 on the average weekday in 2015.
- Ridership growth can be attributed largely to the opening of the METRO Green Line, connecting downtown Minneapolis and Saint Paul with service to the University of Minnesota and the State Capitol.
  - Average weekday ridership on the METRO Green Line was 37,548. Projected ridership for 2030 is nearly 41,000.

- Ridership on the METRO Green Line and the reduced-service local and express routes along the Central Corridor increased by about 30% from 2014 to 2015, and has nearly doubled since the corridor was served by buses alone.

Overall ridership also benefited from several large events, including a season of CHS Field baseball games during the team's inaugural season at its new home in downtown Saint Paul, a concert at TCF Bank Stadium by the Rolling Stones and a National Football League playoff game between the Minnesota Vikings and the Seattle Seahawks. In all, about 16% of those heading to Target Field to see the Minnesota Twins play and 28% of fans took transit to TCF Bank Stadium to see the Minnesota Vikings play.

### **The METRO Green Line**

The 11-mile line that runs along University and Washington avenues between downtown Saint Paul and downtown Minneapolis via the East and West Bank campuses of the University of Minnesota opened to service on June 14, 2014. The METRO Green Line and its operators provided more than 37,584 rides on the average weekday. That figure is just 3,400 rides shy of projected weekday ridership of nearly 41,000 by 2030.

The METRO Green Line has 23 stations, including five shared with the METRO Blue Line in downtown Minneapolis. While ridership remained strong all along the METRO Green Line, it was particularly robust on the University of Minnesota campus. East Bank Station, at the heart of the U of M's main campus, had 690,169 total boarding and an average of 3,871 boardings per weekday.

Not only were more people moving along the University Avenue Corridor, they did so more efficiently. Previously, buses made 519 trips daily on routes 16, 50 and 94. Now with the Green Line in service, there are fewer than about 230 daily Green Line trips and 220 bus trips along routes 16 and 94 (bus route 50 was eliminated).

On the week of June 15, Metro Transit and the communities surrounding the METRO Green Line came together to celebrate the transitway's popularity. Riders wore commemorative buttons, which also entitled them to promotions from several businesses along the corridor.

The line also continued a string of recognition, garnering awards including Top Project and Progress Minnesota awards from *Finance & Commerce* and the Engineering Excellence Award for ingenuity and sustainable design.

### **The METRO Blue Line**

Formerly the Hiawatha Line, the region's first light rail line was renamed METRO Blue Line in May of 2013 with the rollout of the METRO system of light-rail and Bus Rapid Transit lines. Ridership in 2015 hit a record high with more the 10.6 million rides given, topping the 2014 figure by more than a million rides and eclipsing the previous record set in 2010. Additionally, for an eight-month stretch, more than 30,000 rides were given on the average weekday, far exceeding ridership expectations more than five years out.

The light-rail system includes a fleet of 86 vehicles that are powered by an overhead catenary system. When the trains are coupled three-in-a-row during especially busy times or during special events, they have the ability to carry 600 passengers. They can operate on either the Green or Blue Lines, but in general there are 39 trains in service on the Green Line and 33 on

the Blue Line. The trains generally run on 10-minute schedules throughout most of the service day.

Along the 12-miles that make up the Blue Line, there are 2,800 park-and-ride spaces and 19 stations, including the five shared with the Green Line. Blue Line service connects downtown Minneapolis with the Mall of America in Bloomington and the two terminals at the Minneapolis/Saint Paul International Airport.

### **Northstar Commuter Rail Line**

The Northstar commuter rail line, which inaugurated service on Nov. 16, 2009, had a successful fifth year, with riders boarding 722,637 times, an incremental gain from 2014. The increase reversed a downward trend mainly due to on-time performance challenges related to historically severe cold weather in the 2013-2014 winter and large-scale track maintenance to address those challenges.

A Customer Service Guarantee program put in place in January and February worked to prove to riders that any continued on-time performance issues from months past were history. Meant to entice riders who had left to return and to bring the option to new potential riders, the program proved successful with ridership numbers continuing to increase into 2016.

Northstar service to Twins and Vikings games downtown and other special events continued to be well received by riders. Using a combination of regular-service and special-event trains, Northstar served all home games.

Using existing freight tracks of BNSF Railways, the Northstar Line offers five morning trips from Big Lake, Minn., to downtown Minneapolis and five return trips in the afternoon along a 40-mile corridor adjacent to congested Highways 10 and 47. Two reverse-commute roundtrips are available on weekdays, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Additionally, three weekend roundtrips are offered on Saturdays and Sundays.

Each of six suburban stations – Big Lake, Elk River, Ramsey, Anoka, Coon Rapids/Riverdale and Fridley – has adjacent park-and-ride facilities, and platforms are equipped with cameras, emergency telephones, enclosed shelters, heating and other amenities. There are more than 3,000 free park-and-ride spaces at these lots. Connecting bus service is available at four suburban stations, including Northstar Link coach buses, which provide service to commuters between St. Cloud and the Northstar train station at Big Lake. Northstar Link also provides service during Twins and Vikings home games.

Base weekday fares for Northstar commuter rail service range from \$3 to \$6 each way, depending on the distance traveled. Fares are lower on weekends. Fares include free transfers to the METRO Blue line, METRO Green line, and regional buses. The \$317 million Northstar rail project was delivered ahead of schedule and under budget through collaborative efforts of the Metropolitan Council/Metro Transit, Northstar Corridor Development Authority and Minnesota Department of Transportation. The Counties Transit Improvement Board and Sherburne County assist with operating funds

### **METRO Green Line Extension (Southwest Light Rail Project)**

The Southwest Corridor is an estimated \$1.79 billion light-rail project that will serve the communities of Minneapolis, St. Louis Park, Hopkins, Minnetonka and Eden Prairie. The

planned METRO Green Line Extension will operate on a 14.5-mile route with 15 new stations. The line would begin revenue service in 2020 and is expected to have 34,000 average weekday by 2035.

Once trains reach Target Field Station in downtown Minneapolis, they will continue on METRO Green Line light-rail tracks to downtown Saint Paul, providing continuous light-rail service to the University of Minnesota, State Capitol and downtown Saint Paul.

Project accomplishment in 2015 included:

- **February:** President Obama's 2016 budget request included \$150 million to start construction, and gave the project a medium-high rating.
- **May:** The SWLRT's Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement was published on May 22, examining potential impacts on three segments of the route and stations in Eden Prairie, the operations and maintenance facility in Hopkins, and co-locations of light rail and freight in the Kenilworth Corridor in Minneapolis. Residents commented on the document at public hearings and through written and electronic submissions.
- The Metropolitan Council worked collaboratively with its project partners to revise the scope for the line, leading to support from the Corridor Management Committee and the Metropolitan Council. Favorable municipal consent votes were received from all five cities along the line and Hennepin County.
- **May-July:** The project office and Corridor Management Committee worked to trim the project's scope and adjust the cost estimate. This work was accomplished without any change to CTIB's funding commitment of \$496 million.
- **August:** The project office submitted an updated New Starts application to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).
- **October:** A mixer and open house for construction contractors interested in the SWLRT project was held in Minnetonka on Oct. 21, drawing a crowd of almost 200, including subcontractors and participants in the state's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program. The project office completed 60% design plans in October for civil construction, the OMF and systems. Also, the project office submitted a Notice of Intent to apply for entry into the engineering phase to the FTA.

### **Blue Line Extension (Bottineau light rail transit project)**

The METRO Blue Line Extension is an estimated \$1.496 billion light rail line that will serve the communities of Minneapolis, Golden Valley, Robbinsdale, Crystal and Brooklyn Park. The planned METRO Blue Line Extension will operate on a 13-mile route with 11 new stations. The line would begin revenue service in 2021 and is expected to have 27,000 average weekday riders by 2040. When complete, the Blue Line extension would offer a single-seat ride from the Target North Campus in Brooklyn Park to the Mall of America.

Project highlights in 2015 included:

- In January, the Metropolitan Council opened the Project Office in Crystal and formed Issue Resolution teams made up of staff from the project office, Metro Transit, Hennepin County and the five cities along the line. The Project Office started holding regular meetings with project partners to discuss and resolve technical issues.



- The Blue Line Extension project staff and Hennepin County held more than 160 outreach-related meetings with the public, including open houses and community meetings. Some of the meetings drew up to 200 people each. The meetings provided opportunities to learn about the project and provide input.
- The Blue Line Extension Project Office formed advisory committees including the Project Technical Advisory Committee, Business Advisory Committee, Community Advisory Committee, and the Communication Steering Committee.
- In late October, project staff presented a more refined scope and cost estimate for the project. The \$1.496 billion cost estimate includes stations at both Golden Valley Road and Plymouth Avenue, and a proposed surface parking lot at the Golden Valley Road site. The revised cost estimate followed extensive engineering work. New scope items include the reconstruction of Hwy. 55 in Minneapolis; a station at Plymouth Avenue; a park-and-ride facility at the Golden Valley Road station and reconstruction of a nearby intersection, and improved trail connections; new LRT bridge structures in Robbinsdale to cross a pond; a park-and-ride facility in downtown Robbinsdale; a park-and-ride lot at the Bass Lake Road station in Crystal; an LRT bridge crossing above Bottineau Boulevard at 73rd Avenue North, and a pedestrian bridge across freight rail at the 63rd Avenue station is planned.
- In December, initiated the municipal review and consent process that will conclude in early March 2016.

## **Bus Service**

Metro Transit bus ridership remained the pillar of transit with more than 62.1 million rides and a weekday average of 204,986 rides given in 2015. With growing popularity of rail service, bus route schedules allow riders to time their transfers so the different modes can work closely and seamlessly. In fact, about 40% of METRO Blue Line and 30% of METRO Green Line customers transfer to or from a bus during their trip.

Bus service in 2015 offered riders a respite from driving in one of the busiest construction seasons in recent memory. Street Operations coordinated more than 1,800 detours, including an ongoing closure of Nicollet Mall in downtown Minneapolis that forced several routes to move to Hennepin Avenue in downtown Minneapolis. Schedules of more than 170 routes were adjusted during the year due to the detours. Despite the service disruptions, buses operated within five minutes of their schedule more than 87% of the time.

2015 also brought continued focus on what has been called Metro Transit's "front porch," the waiting areas for bus service. New shelters were installed at 51 locations and another 60 shelters were replaced in Minneapolis, where Metro Transit assumed responsibility for shelters that had previously been under private ownership. Installed were 2,300 new bus stop signs with route numbers, maps, and instruction that help customer access real-time NexTrip departure information using a mobile device. Digital displays with real-time NexTrip signs were installed at 16 high-traffic bus boarding locations in 2015.

Work continued in 2015 to bring the A Line (Snelling Avenue Bus Rapid Transit) to fruition, with service set to begin on June 11, 2016. The route includes 20 planned stations connecting the METRO Green and Blue line light rail trains with the Snelling Avenue commercial corridor and popular destinations, including Hamline University, Macalester College, Highland Village, Rosedale Shopping Center, Minnehaha Park and Midway Shopping Center.

The A Line will bring bus service every 10 minutes, supplementing local service that will continue every 30 minutes. It is expected that the A Line will provide an average of 8,700 weekday rides, allowing riders to reach destinations up to 25% faster. Riders' experience waiting for a bus is enhanced with heaters, NexTrip information and ticket machines that enable riders to pay for rides before they board, increasing efficiency along the A Line system. Finally, the A Line will provide Wi-Fi while riders are aboard the buses.

The Orange Line Bus Rapid Transit project moved forward in 2015, with design work continuing along its 17-mile highway route that includes 12 stations. Planners are currently working on a new at-grade transitway under Interstate Hwy. 494 that would connect the American Boulevard and 76<sup>th</sup> Street Stations and a transit-only ramp into and out of downtown Minneapolis. The project is scheduled to open in 2019, with an average weekday ridership of 14,000.

### **Customer Service Technology**

The demand for transit information continued to grow in 2015, with customers requesting real-time departure information using NexTrip more than 84 million times – more than double the number of requests made in 2012. Another 18,000 NexTrip requests were made through a service that provides this information by text message. Around 6.3 million trips also were planned using Metro Transit's online Trip Planner.

In addition, approximately 8,500 people had signed up to receive text or e-mail Rider Alerts about scheduled service disruptions by the end of 2015. While customers adapted to new technologies, the Transit Information Center remained a vital resource, with TIC representatives helping riders plan 1.2 million trips and answering calls with a record-low hold time of 43 seconds.

Finally, Metro Transit neared completion of development of its own smart phone app, scheduled to be released in 2016.

### **Transit Security**

The Metro Transit Police Department continued its growth, swearing in 25 new officers in 2015. By year's end, the department had 109 full-time officers and 89 part-time officers. The department's newest officers completed an expanded academy that includes community outreach and cultural awareness training. Many of the department's newest hires speak a second language, and Spanish language courses were offered to help officers communicate with non-English speakers. Transit Police also established new beats in North Minneapolis and Saint Paul's East Side, while continuing to concentrate on both downtown Saint Paul and Minneapolis. In addition, a new juvenile unit was created to assist with cases involving first-time youth offenders.

Transit Police responded to more than 46,000 calls for service – three times the number from 2013. There were an additional 34 requests for mutual aid or "Rescue Buses" that provide shelter to emergency responders and residents during emergencies. Felony assaults on operators reached an all-time low, while property crime decreased. Officers completed more than 2.6 million fare inspections on light rail and Northstar.

Chief John Harrington was named the Minnesota Public Transit Association's Transit Professional of the Year. In 2015, Harrington traveled to Mogadishu to assist with police training and later hosted law enforcement officials from that country. The department also hired the country's first Somali-born female officer.

In 2015, Metro Transit also advanced plans to expand its Heywood Campus, including the construction of a new headquarters for the Metro Transit Police Department.

### **Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)**

The Metro Council has long supported TOD through Livable Communities grants, growth and transportation policies, *Regional Transitway Guidelines* and the *Guide for Transit Oriented Development*. The Council and Metro Transit are being proactive and prioritizing TOD in transit service decisions, regional planning, grant making, data collection, and technical assistance.

In 2015, the TOD office served as a lead in pursuing private and public partnerships to accelerate transit-oriented development. One of the more high-profile examples of this work sits near the intersection of Saint Paul's Snelling and University Avenues, one of the state's busiest intersections. In 2015, negotiations began in earnest on a proposed Major League Soccer stadium and surrounding "Super Block," including the Metro Council's Snelling and University property.

The TOD office is advised by developers, local government representatives and other partners. It also convenes an internal working group on a regular basis to share information and resources about TOD-related activities. Cross-departmental conversations foster collaborative efforts that allow staff to work with a unified purpose and language regarding TOD.

Finally, developments that either opened or continued development near transitways include CHS Field in Saint Paul and Be The Match organization, which brought 900 employees in a new seven-story, \$60 million building across from Target Field Station.

### **Commitment to Equity**

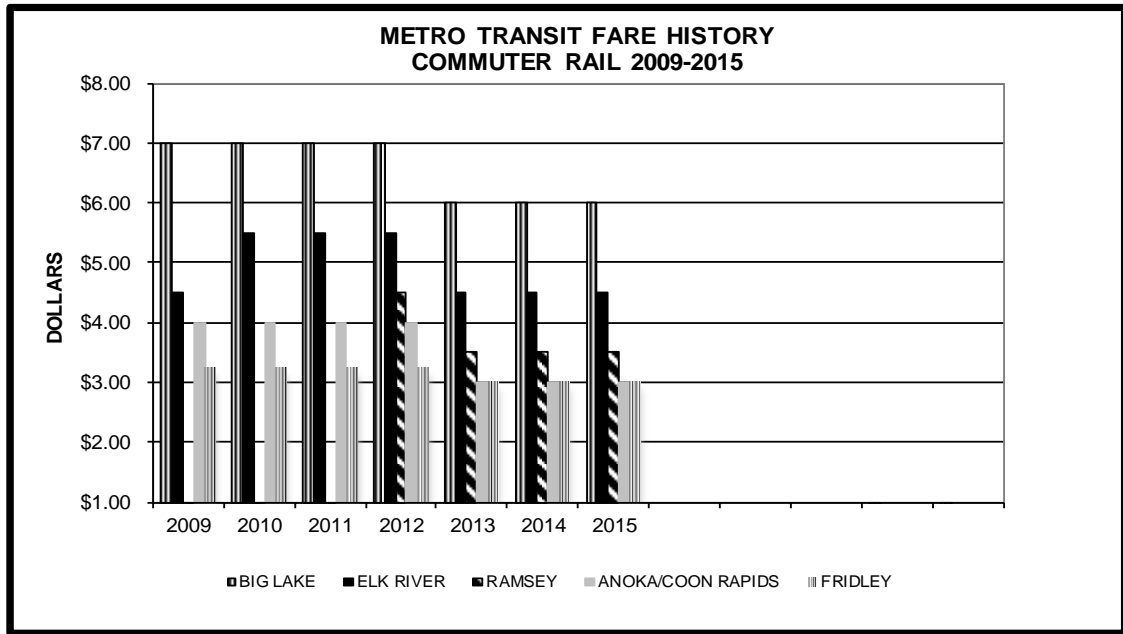
Metro Transit's commitment to equity for the communities it serves was evidenced in 2015 by creating and developing the Community Outreach and Engagement Team. The team focuses on building a community-centered, transparent process to achieve equitable outcomes. The process will entail developing sustained relationships with transit riders, people of color, low-income communities, people with disabilities, and other historically underrepresented groups to strengthen their participation in decision-making.

### **Other Metro Transit 2014 Achievements**

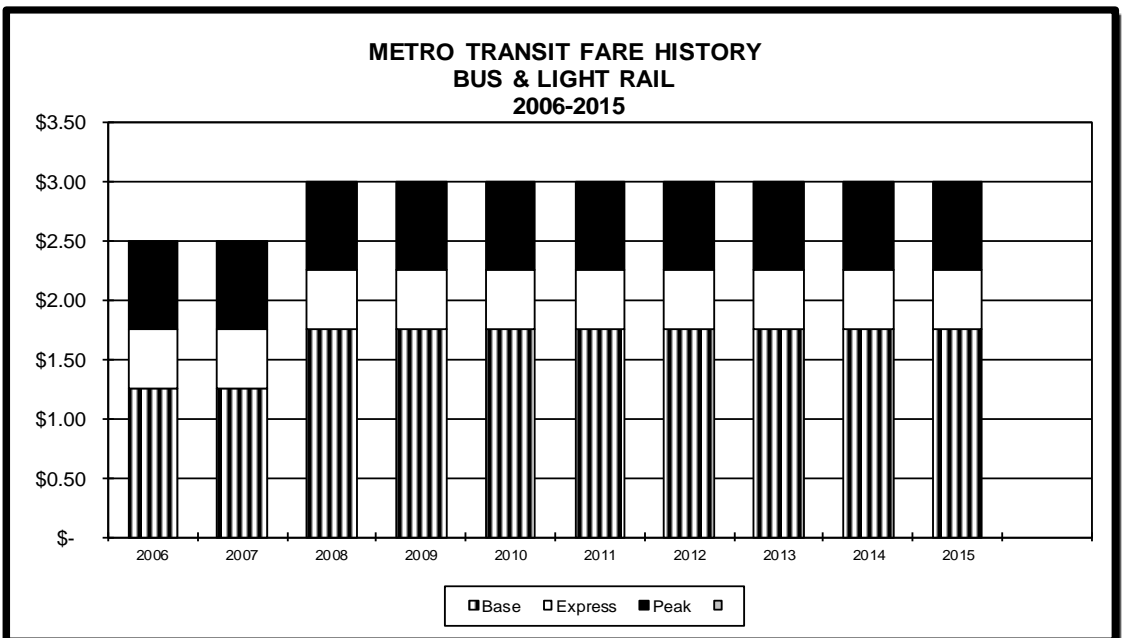
- Metro Transit provided more than 575,000 rides to and from the 2015 Minnesota State Fair, the highest express and regular-route ridership in the event's history.
- With fans traveling to the new CHS Field, TCF Bank Stadium and Target Field, single-day light-rail ridership topped 100,000 for the first time ever on Thursday, Sept. 3.
- Metro Transit's Student Pass program grew with the addition of a Summer Student Pass and a school-year pilot at Saint Paul's Johnson High School. Student Pass ridership

increased 12.5% from 2014, to almost 4 million rides. The program was also recognized by the Minnesota Public Transit Association in earning the Management Innovation Award.

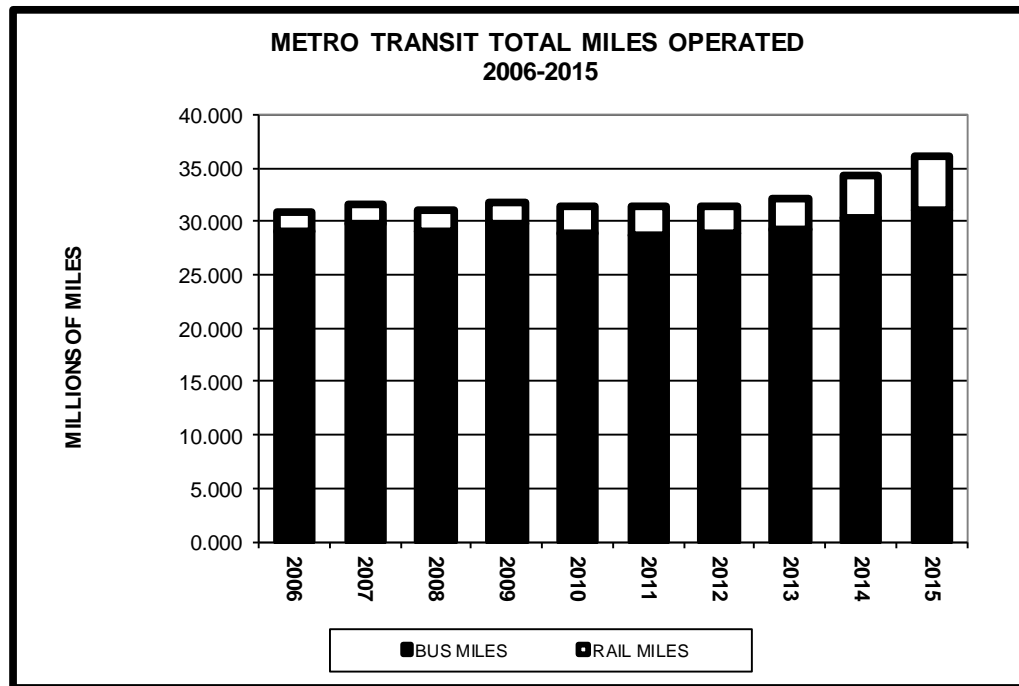
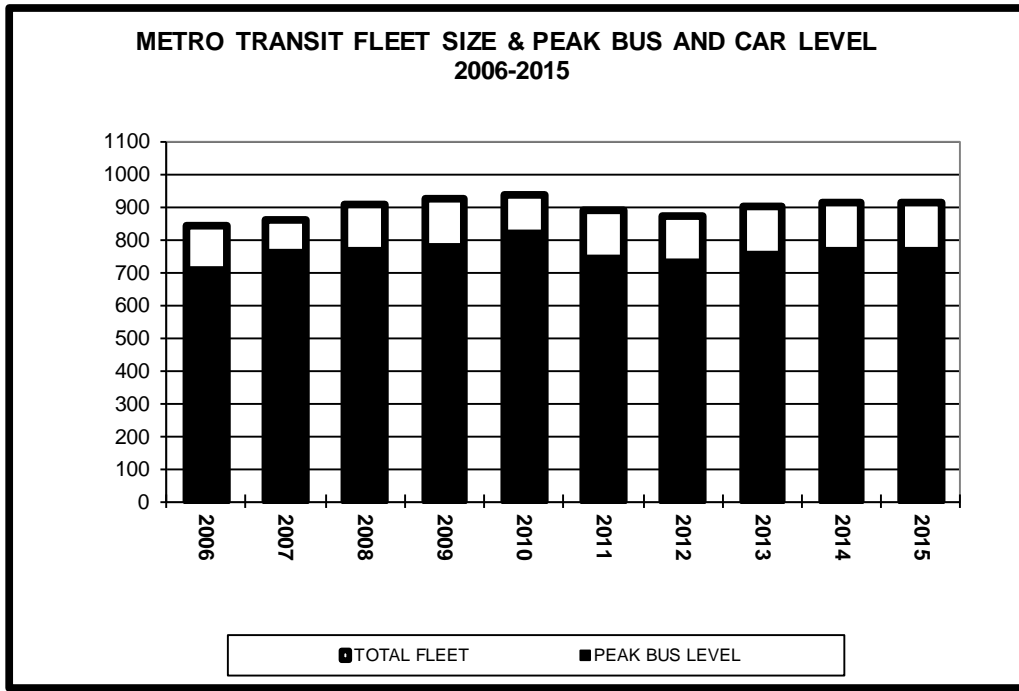
- Among recognitions received:
  - **Gold Award**, APTA AdWheel Awards, Special Events: Green Line opening day campaign
  - **Award of Excellence**, Minnesota Association of Government Communicators: “Switch My Trip” Campaign.
  - Award of Excellence, Minnesota Association of Government Communicators: State Fair Campaign.
  - **Partner of the Year**, “Visit Saint Paul”: For efforts to support and enhance the tourism industry in Saint Paul.
  - **Employer of the Year**, WTS Minnesota: For efforts to hire and promote women at Metro Transit and the Metropolitan Council.
  - **Innovation in Tourism**, “Meet Minneapolis”: For efforts to support and enhance the tourism industry in Minneapolis.



Stations	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
BIG LAKE	\$7.00	\$7.00	\$7.00	\$7.00	\$6.00	\$6.00	\$6.00
ELK RIVER	\$4.50	\$5.50	\$5.50	\$5.50	\$4.50	\$4.50	\$4.50
RAMSEY	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$4.50	\$3.50	\$3.50	\$3.50
ANOKA/COON RAPIDS	\$4.00	\$4.00	\$4.00	\$4.00	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00
FRIDLEY	\$3.25	\$3.25	\$3.25	\$3.25	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00



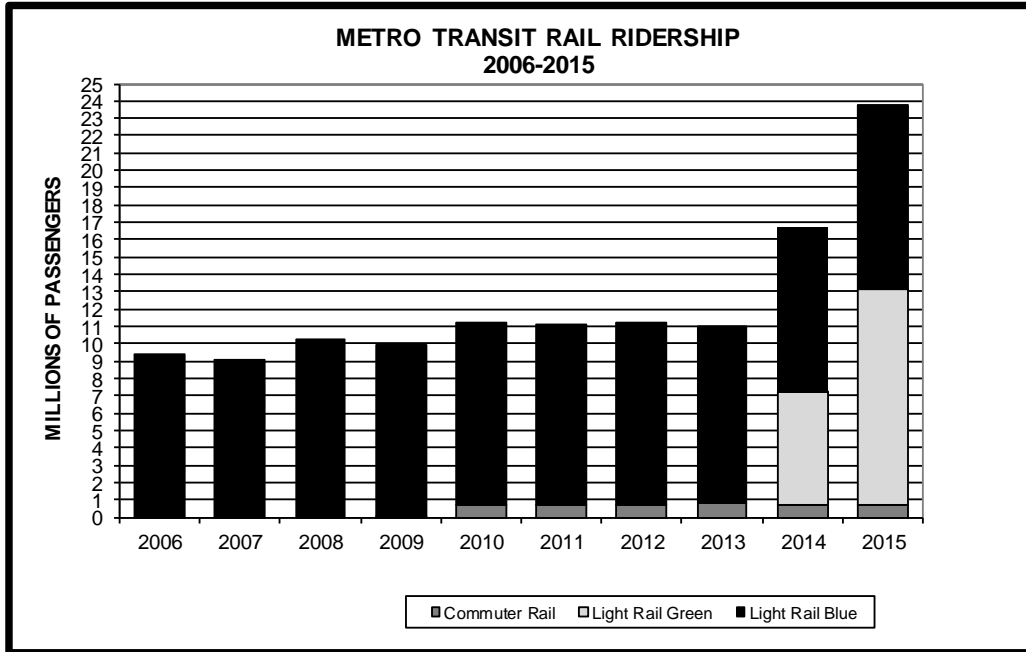
Regular fare	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Base	\$1.25	\$1.25	\$1.75	\$1.75	\$1.75	\$1.75	\$1.75	\$1.75	\$1.75	\$1.75
Express	\$0.50	\$0.50	\$0.50	\$0.50	\$0.50	\$0.50	\$0.50	\$0.50	\$0.50	\$0.50
Peak	\$0.75	\$0.75	\$0.75	\$0.75	\$0.75	\$0.75	\$0.75	\$0.75	\$0.75	\$0.75



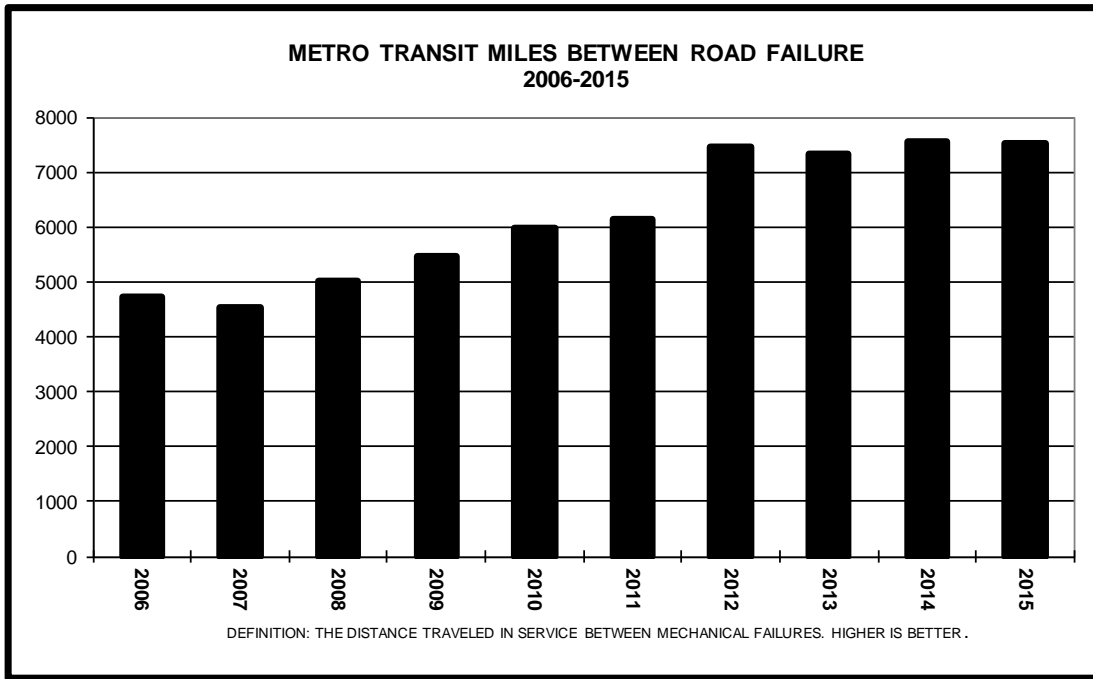
Transportation Division



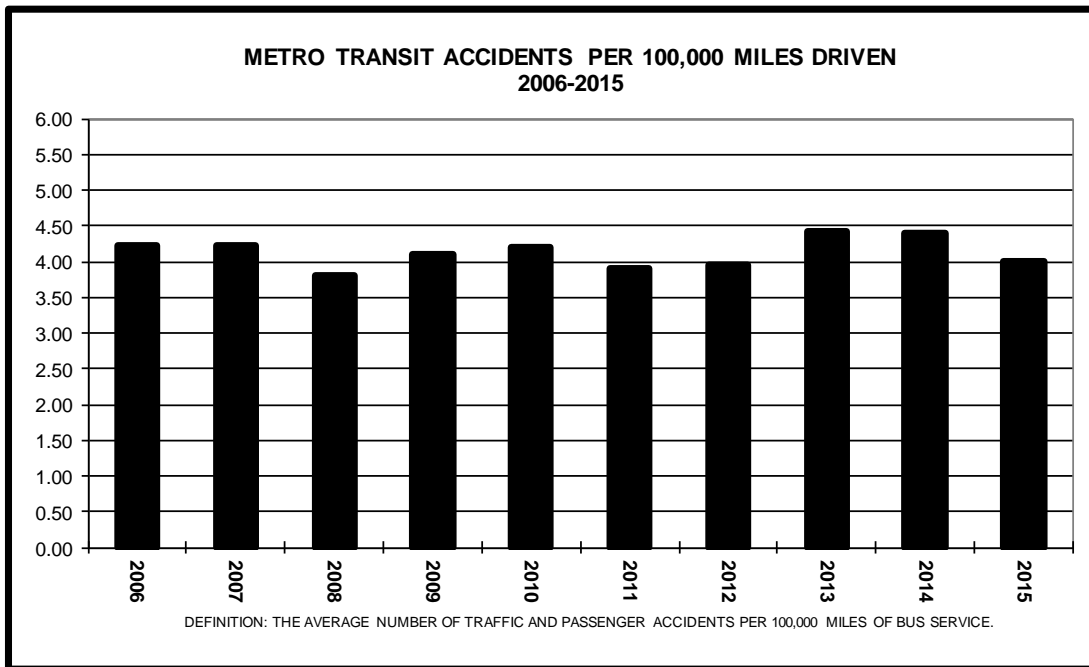
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
BUS	64.399	67.866	74.656	66.401	66.882	69.783	69.855	70.419	67.814	62.106



	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Commuter Rail				0.082	0.710	0.703	0.700	0.787	0.721	0.722
Light Rail Green									6.507	12.383
Light Rail Blue	9.357	9.101	10.222	9.863	10.456	10.401	10.498	10.163	9.493	10.620



	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>MECHANICAL FAILURES</b>	4720	4536	5003	5468	5988	6128	7456	7310	7549	7510
<b>ACCIDENTS</b>	4.21	4.22	3.80	4.09	4.19	3.91	3.95	4.42	4.40	4.00



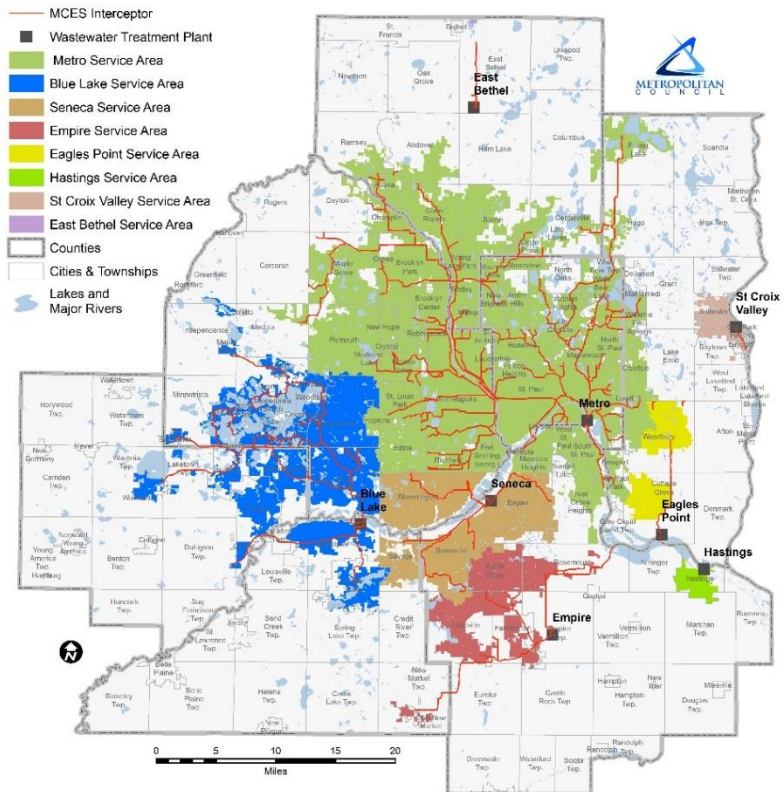


## Environmental Services Division

### Overview

Guided by the Metropolitan Council's long-range plan, *Thrive MSP 2040*, and the *MCES 2040 Water Resources Policy Plan*, MCES:

- Operates and maintains approximately 600 miles of regional sewers that collect flows from more than 5,000 miles of sewers owned by 108 communities in the seven-county Twin Cities Region.
- Collects and treats approximately 250 million gallons of wastewater a day.
- Runs eight regional wastewater treatment plants: Seneca, St. Croix Valley, Hastings, Metropolitan, Eagles Point, Empire, Blue Lake and East Bethel.
- Continues to achieve near-perfect compliance with federal and state clean water discharge standards.
- Works collaboratively with state and federal agencies, local and county government, watershed management organizations, interest groups and the public to protect the region's rich water resources as the region continues to grow.
- Establishes user fees that pay 100% of wastewater operations and debt service costs, which are below national averages.
- Works with approximately 800 industrial permit holders to substantially reduce the amount of pollution entering the wastewater collection system.
- Ensures sufficient sewer capacity to serve planned development.
- Makes capital investments to support growth, maintain infrastructure and improve water quality.



## **MCES Mission**

Provide wastewater services and integrated planning to ensure sustainable water quality and water supply for the region.

## **MCES Vision**

Be a valued leader and partner in water sustainability.

## **Strategic Vision Process**

MCES continued its strategic planning process that began in 2013, rolling out its new Outcomes, Strategies and Goals. Strategic planning efforts will continue in 2016 to identify additional goals which will be integrated into 2016 performance measurements.

MCES's Strategic Outcomes for 2015 are divided into three categories:

1. Sustainable Communities
2. Sustainable Services
3. Sustainable Infrastructure

## **Sustainable Communities**

MCES seeks to improve customer service, lead by example in environmental sustainability, and partner with customers and stakeholders to achieve regional goals.

## **Wastewater Treatment**

MCES treatment plants continued to perform at a high level in complying with clean water discharge permits. System-wide, wastewater was treated to 100% NPDES compliance and all air emissions permits and stack tests were successfully passed. The interceptor system had no Notices of Violations.

Seven treatment plants earned Peak Performance Awards from the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA). Six of the plants earned NACWA's Platinum Award for five or more consecutive years of perfect NPDES permit compliance through 2014 and awarded in 2015: Hastings (24 years), St. Croix Valley (23 years), Seneca (14 years), Blue Lake (9 years), Eagles Point (9 years), and Empire (7 years).

## **Customer Service**

MCES reaches out to new customers and works to maintain good relations with current customers. In planning for the 2016 budget, MCES held meetings for customer communities and industrial permit holders in late May and early June, 2015. The meetings included information on proposed 2016 budget and rates and an opportunity for customer input and questions.

## **Energy Reduction, Recovery, and Conservation**

MCES's energy goal is to reduce purchased fossil fuel energy by 10% by 2020, using 2015 as the base year. By the end of 2020, MCES shall have advanced clean energy within the state of Minnesota by participating in projects that support the expansion of renewable energy in an

amount equivalent to at least 10% of MCES's 2015 energy usage. MCES set a new goal of reducing its fossil fuel-based energy purchases by 10% of its 2015 figure by 2020.

In addition to reducing its fossil fuel energy purchases, MCES also constructed a 1.25 MW solar facility in 2015 at its Blue Lake Wastewater Treatment Plant, which will provide up to 10% of the plant's energy needs. MCES has committed to advancing renewable energy in the amount equivalent to at least 10% of its 2015 energy use.

Eagles Point Plant staff implemented projects that switched from using groundwater to treatment plant effluent for some of their processes, resulting in an 80% reduction in the use of groundwater. This represents over 4 million gallons of groundwater saved annually.

The Metro Plant Water Use Team has developed a plan to eliminate plant use of Prairie du Chien groundwater (1 billion gallons annually) by 2020.

## **Water Resources Management**

The Council's *2040 Water Resources Policy Plan* integrates water resources management and protection with planning for the region's growth. The policy plan, which was updated in 2014-2015, contains guidelines for developing and maintaining service systems that support development and for which the Council has some statutory responsibility, including wastewater service, surface water management, and regional water supply.

Among the initiatives being implemented under the Water Resources Policy Plan are the following:

1. Chartered an Integrated Water Planning Team and Comprehensive Planning Sub-Team.
2. The Integrated Water Planning Team met monthly to discuss meetings, projects, and plan reviews that cross MCES departments. The team completed an internal review and development of input for the Water Resources Policy Plan, the Master Water Supply Plan, and the Wastewater System Plan; the coordinated development of the local planning handbook; and the coordinated approach to the water resources part of the system statements.
3. Collaborated with the City of Eagan to evaluate potential reuse of treated wastewater and tank underdrainage water. The latter appears technically feasible.
4. Developed preliminary wastewater reuse cost estimates for southeast and northeast subregions.
5. Updated the region's Master Water Supply Plan in collaboration with local stakeholders, agencies and input from the Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee and Community Technical Work Group. The final plan was adopted by the Metropolitan Council in 2015.
6. Continued collaboration with southeast and northeast subregions and Washington County water coalition to investigate the feasibility of potential water supply alternatives available for communities.
7. Collaborated with stakeholders to develop a water conservation grant program. Grants were awarded to 19 communities, totaling \$558,000.
8. Continued collaboration with the U.S. Geological Survey and local stakeholders to study groundwater and surface water interaction in the northeast Twin Cities metro area.

9. Established a Community Technical Work Group in response to requests from the American Public Works Association and City Engineers Association of Minnesota to provide input to MCES on technical, financial, and operational issues related to regional water supply planning from the perspective of water supply providers. The group met five times throughout the summer of 2015, resulting in the work group's endorsement of the draft plan released for public review.
10. Collaborated with Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to provide three training workshops for local water suppliers to support the update of their local water supply plans.
11. Awarded targeted stormwater grants to the cities of Waconia and Hugo for reuse projects. Both projects reuse stormwater for irrigation, reducing the need to pump groundwater for that purpose. A grant was awarded to the Vermillion River Joint Powers Board to assist in installing several stormwater practices at the Minnesota Zoo, and \$1 million will be available in 2016 to expand this program.

## **Sustainable Services**

MCES seeks to manage and reward performances linked to mission, vision, values, strategies and goals; recruit, develop and retain a high-performance workforce that has full opportunity for engagement; and utilize technology and best practices to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

## **Employees in the Workplace**

The MCES workforce, 672 full-time equivalents (FTEs), meets the needs of a high-tech and capital-intensive industry that operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Employees work at multiple wastewater collection and treatment facilities throughout the Twin Cities metro area. Positions include engineers, environmental scientists, machinists, electricians, pipefitters, painters, plant operators, technicians, interceptor service workers and administrative support personnel.

## **MCES Workforce Plan**

More than 25% of MCES employees are currently eligible or will be eligible for retirement within the next five years. Building on previous plans, the 2016-2020 Workforce Plan was created to help address the challenges of succession planning and recruiting diverse candidates.

Additionally:

- MCES created a Workforce Planning Team that met throughout 2015 to develop and begin implementation of the 2016-2020 Workforce Plan. At year-end, teams were formed to address the seven strategic initiatives listed below. Three of the teams started work in 2015, and the remaining teams plan to begin in the first half of 2016.
  1. Performance Management Tools/Leadership Development: To ensure that performance management tools and resources are in place for all employees.
  2. Behavioral Expectations: To support and enhance a positive work culture that builds respect and a secure and civil work environment.

3. Recognize/Celebrate Employees: To establish/enhance programs that recognize and celebrate ES employees.
  4. Build Diversity/Networking & Collaboration: To build diversity in MCES that more clearly reflects the region.
  5. Mentoring: To increase employee engagement, retention, and professional growth through the use of mentoring.
  6. Onboarding: To welcome and integrate new MCES employees through inclusive and informative onboarding programs.
  7. Defining Career Opportunities/Networking & Collaboration: To create a work culture that allows for career opportunities to increase retention.
- MCES strengthened its employee wellness programs. 2015 initiatives included:
    1. Hiring a summer intern to expand stretching programs for treatment plant/interceptor system employees and conducting an employee survey to provide a framework for worksite wellness initiatives going forward. After the intern left, the stretching programs continued with the assistance of the HealthPartners wellness coach.
    2. Other initiatives in development include: onsite fitness rooms, a program to support healthy sleep habits, and a “trade time for fitness” benefit.
  - To build diversity, MCES requested and received a Metropolitan Council Equity Grant to hire a Changing Workforce Specialist. The specialist started in November 2015, and is working on creating interest in water careers in economically disadvantaged schools in the Twin Cities region, and will assist hiring managers with outreach efforts to increase the diversity within their candidate pools.

## Safety

Each of the 17 MCES work areas/safety committees worked to maintain and/or improve upon their safety goals and leading-edge indicators in 2015:

- MCES reduced the number of workplace accidents from 25 in 2014 to 23 in 2015.
- All employees completed quarterly safety training via online or classroom, and all employees completed fatigue-risk management training online.
- 11 work areas began completing job hazard analyses.
- All 17 work areas completed monthly safety audits and have safety committees that meet monthly.
- The *Weekly Safety Talk* newsletter featuring workplace safety tips was emailed to all MCES employees, every week (52 weeks).
- All MCES facilities have safety posters and banners displayed in prominent locations. Posters are updated monthly; banners are updated annually.
- MCES started arc-flash analysis upgrades to comply with NFPA 70E 2015 requirements. This was done in all eight applicable facilities in Technical Services and Interceptor Operations.

## **Sustainable Infrastructure**

MCES seeks to improve asset management practices to increase value to our customers, preserve sound financial practices for wastewater services and secure funding for our other water services, and utilize infrastructure efficiently by addressing system inputs at the source.

### **Asset Management**

Improvements in the asset management area included chartering an Asset Management Steering Team, developing asset management principles, and developing a criticality (risk) analysis plan for 2016 implementation.

### **Preserving and Building Infrastructure**

MCES is preserving and building infrastructure to meet the wastewater collection and treatment needs for the region using asset management principles. Approximately \$133 million was spent on capital improvements in 2015.

Growth-related projects in 2015 included:

- Adding regional sewer capacity to serve redevelopment in Golden Valley and St. Louis Park (completion anticipated in mid-2016).
- Construction of a lift station to serve northeast Woodbury and east and central Lake Elmo (startup is planned for 2016).
- Construction of a lift station to serve Chaska and Carver (completion anticipated in November 2016).
- Construction of the Elm Creek Interceptor extension to Corcoran and Rogers (completion anticipated in July 2016).

Asset preservation projects in 2015 included:

- The first phase of an arc-flash mitigation project (completion anticipated in spring 2016).
- Rehabilitation of gravity sewers, based on condition assessment, with a long-term goal of seven miles per year. Projects were completed in 2015 in Burnsville, Bloomington, Eagan, Brooklyn Park, Blaine, Chanhassen, White Bear Lake, Newport, St. Paul Park, New Brighton, Minneapolis, and Saint Paul. Projects were under construction in 2015 in Burnsville, Fridley, Coon Rapids, Brooklyn Park, Champlin, Mounds View, Minneapolis, Saint Paul, and Richfield.
- Rehabilitation of force main sewers, based on risk assessment, with a long-term goal of four miles per year. Projects were completed in 2015 in Excelsior, Wayzata, St. Louis Park, Minneapolis, and Golden Valley. Projects were under construction in 2015 in Waconia and Mound.
- Lift station rehabilitation projects in Eagan and Mound (completion anticipated in December 2016).
- Ongoing meter station rehabilitation; 10 planning meters have been installed in Saint Paul.
- Treatment plant construction projects completed in 2015 include Metropolitan Plant fluid-bed incinerators, F&I Building No. 1 demolition, and improvements to sludge pumps, water

systems, HVAC systems, and the double-barrel interceptor sewer, as well as small projects at the Blue Lake, Empire, Eagles Point, and St. Croix Valley Plants.

- Treatment plant projects under construction include Metro Plant east pretreatment and flotation thickening (completion anticipated in December 2016).

## **Finance**

MCES management keeps the organization competitive as compared to other similarly sized wastewater utilities across the country. Additionally, wastewater service charges (approximately \$22 per month) are lower than most other metro-area utility charges, such as gas, electric and high-speed Internet. A process improvement team was formed and revised the financial forecast tracking tool and process, with a goal of increased engagement and accuracy of the forecast.

## **Budget**

MCES staff completed 2015 operations and routine maintenance activities within the Annual Operating Budget limits.

## **Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) Reduction Program**

MCES set a goal of reducing excessive inflow and infiltration of clear water into the sanitary sewers by 40% by 2020, in an effort to recover reserve capacity in the wastewater system to serve growth. (June 29, 2014, is being used as the base wet-weather event.)

I&I outreach meetings were held with many cities to discuss specific community concerns, the Municipal Wastewater Charge, water reuse, and capital projects. In 2015, MCES met with the cities of Saint Paul, Mounds View, Mound, Hugo, Burnsville, Eagan, St. Anthony, Rosemount, Apple Valley, and Robbinsdale.

## **Industrial Pretreatment Incentive Program**

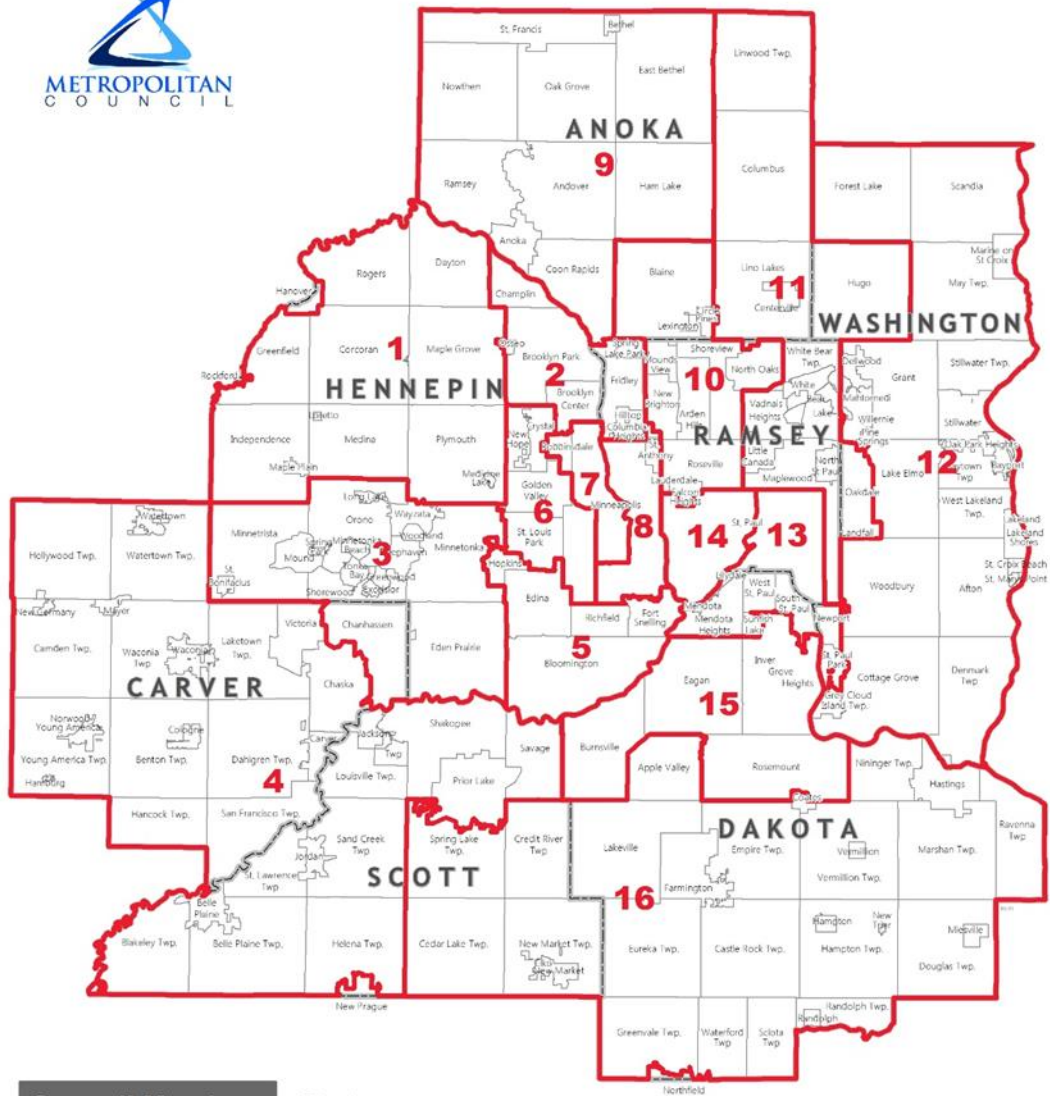
MCES is working to recover process capacity for wastewater treatment at the Metro, Blue Lake, and Empire Plants by reducing high-strength waste loads from existing industrial customers. Through the Industrial Pretreatment Incentive Program (IPIP) instituted in 2015, MCES is encouraging high-strength industrial dischargers to reduce their chemical oxygen demand (COD) by installing pretreatment equipment at their facilities.

MCES Industrial Waste and Pollution Prevention staff and Finance staff visited several industries and held several meetings to explain this new program to potential applicants. Five applications have been received. They are from diverse industries representing some of MCES's highest industrial discharge customers, including two food processors, a dairy, and two tanneries. Technical and financial review of the applications will continue into 2016.

## Appendix: Maps and Budget Summary

### Metropolitan Council Districts and Members

January 2016



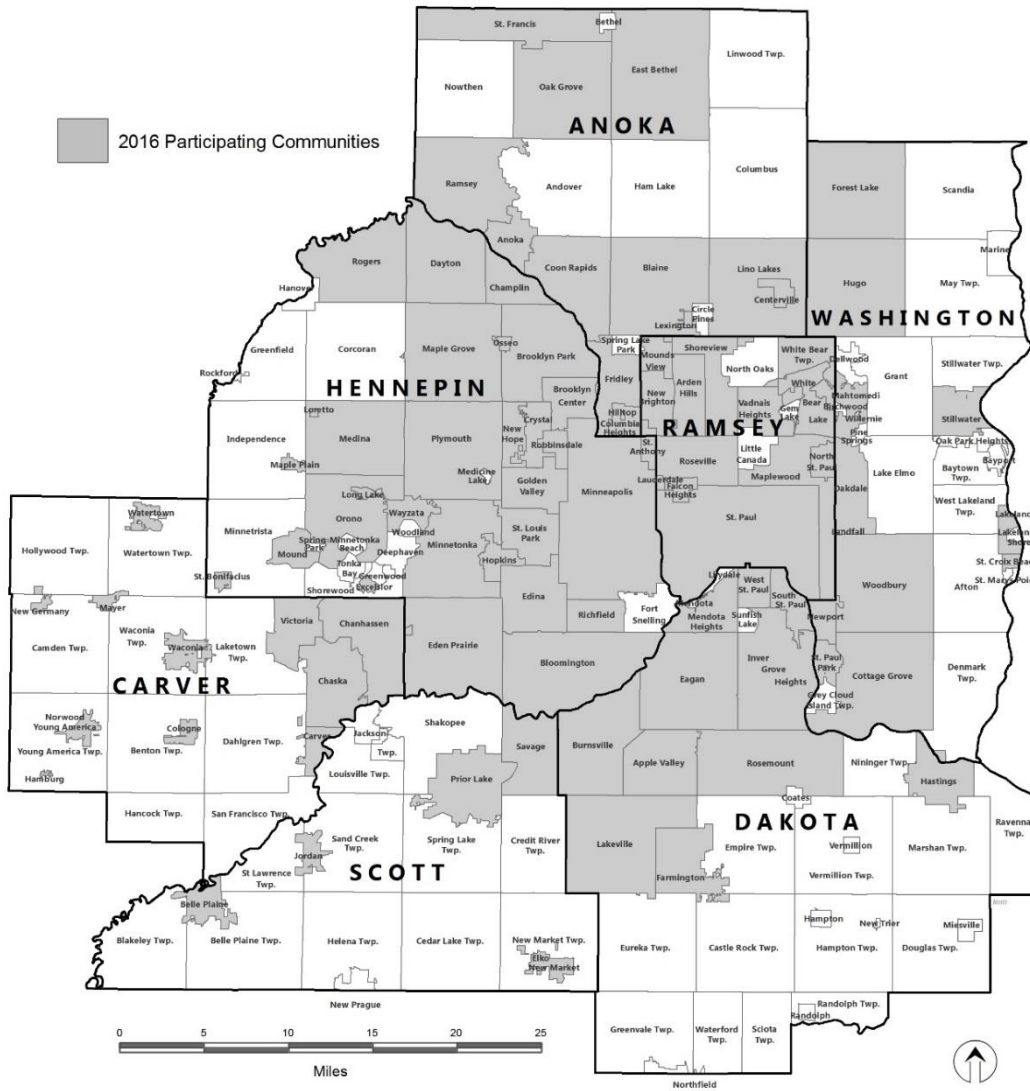
#### Council Members Chair-- Adam Duinick

- |                   |                      |                   |                     |
|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Katie Rodriguez | 5 Steve Elkins       | 9 Edward Reynoso  | 13 Richard Kramer   |
| 2 Lona Schreiber  | 6 Gail Dorfman       | 10 Marie McCarthy | 14 Jon Commers      |
| 3 Jennifer Munt   | 7 Gary L. Cunningham | 11 Sandy Rummel   | 15 Steven T. Chávez |
| 4 Deb Barber      | 8 Cara Letofsky      | 12 Harry Melander | 16 Wendy Wulff      |



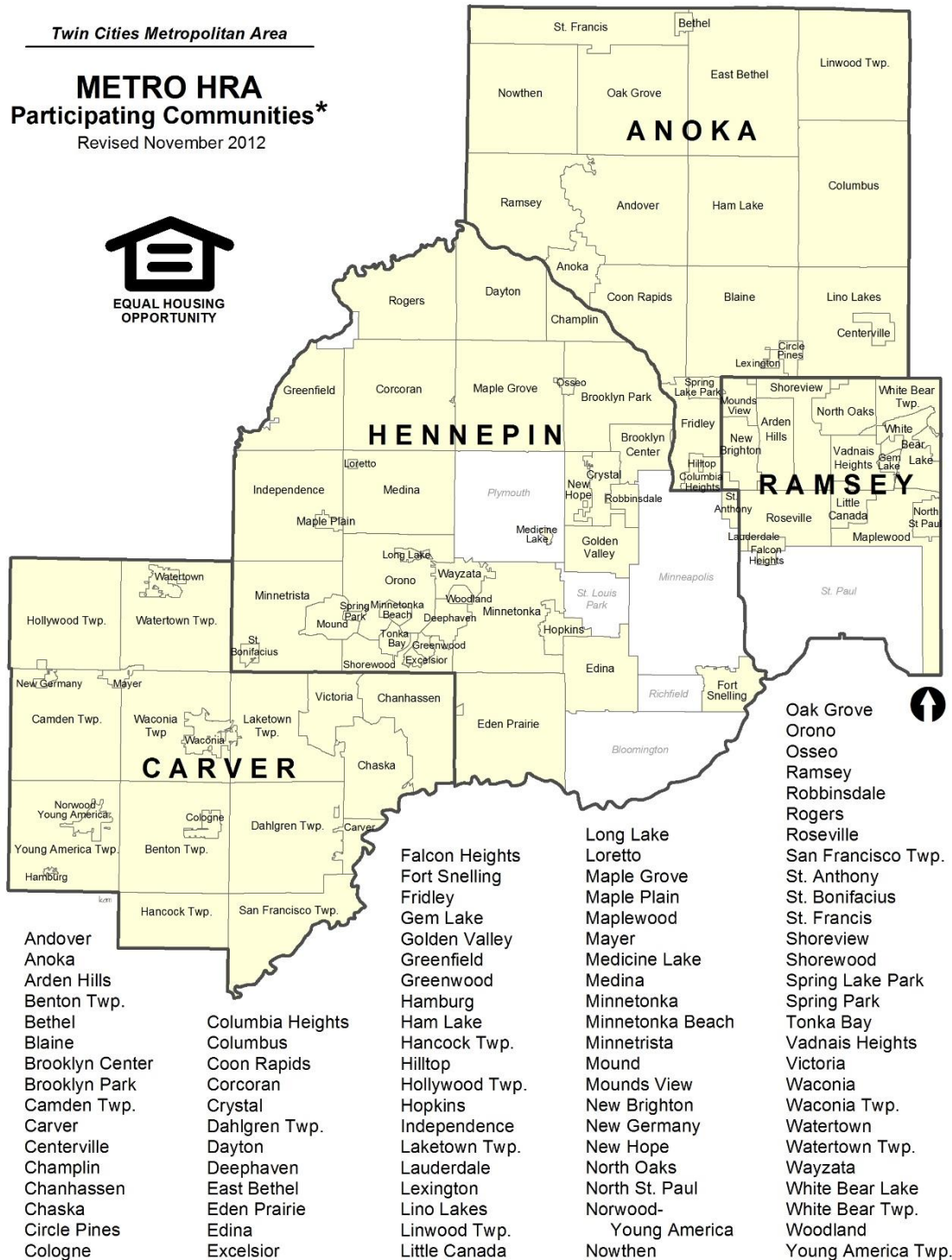
Twin Cities Metropolitan Area

Livable Communities Act Participants, 2016



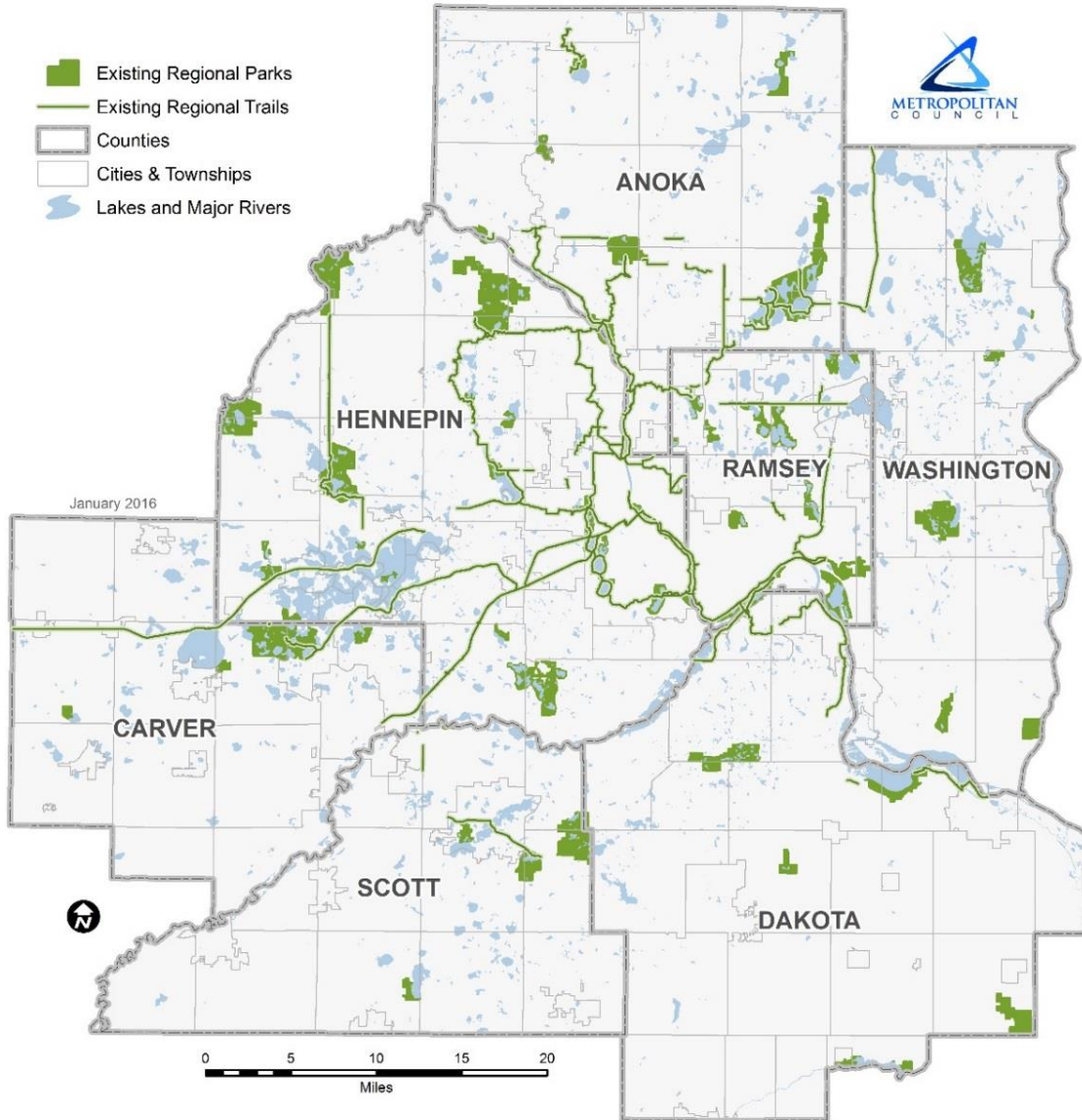
Twin Cities Metropolitan Area

**METRO HRA  
Participating Communities\***  
Revised November 2012

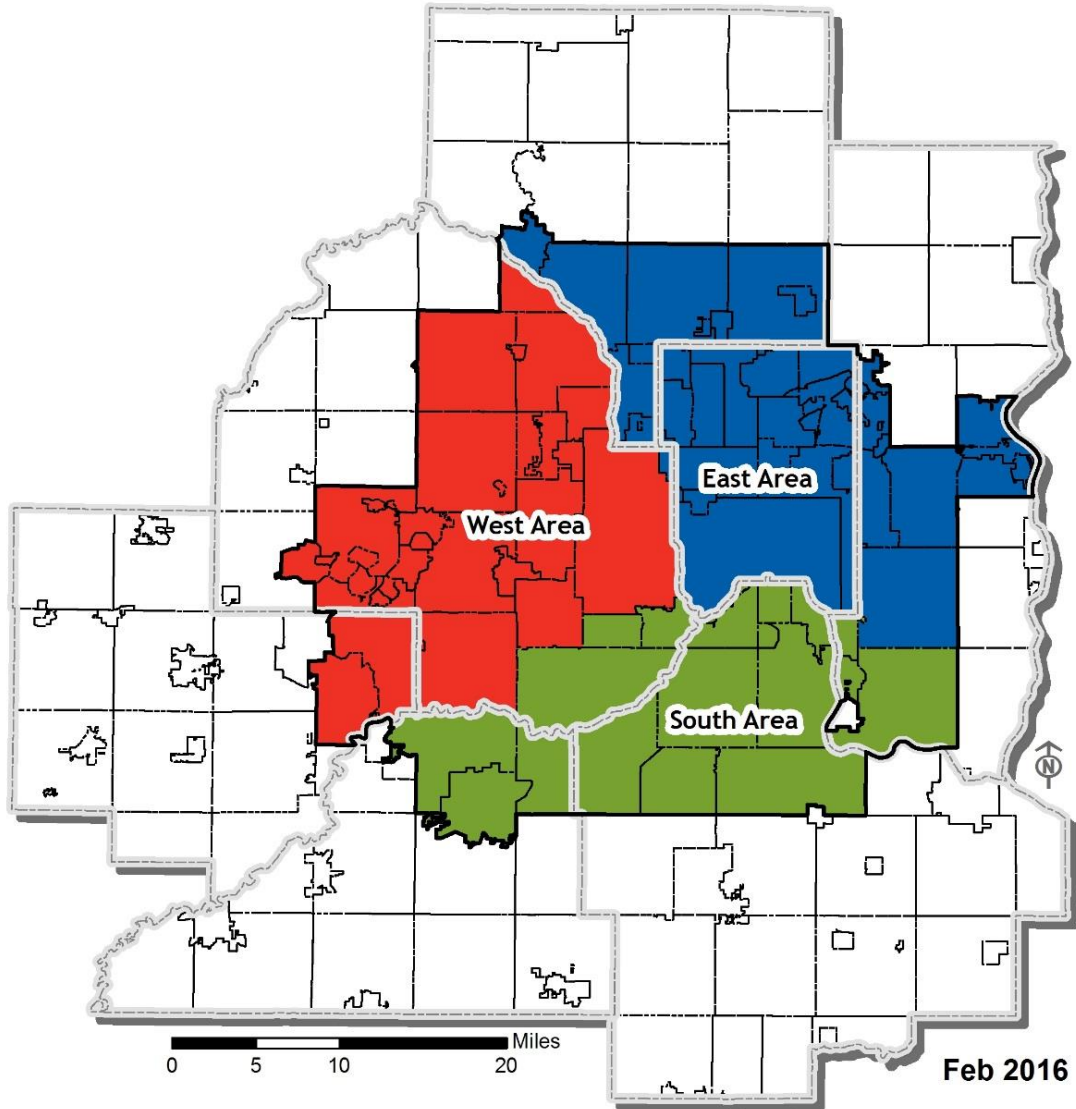


**\* For some programs, the Metro HRA service jurisdiction is expanded.**

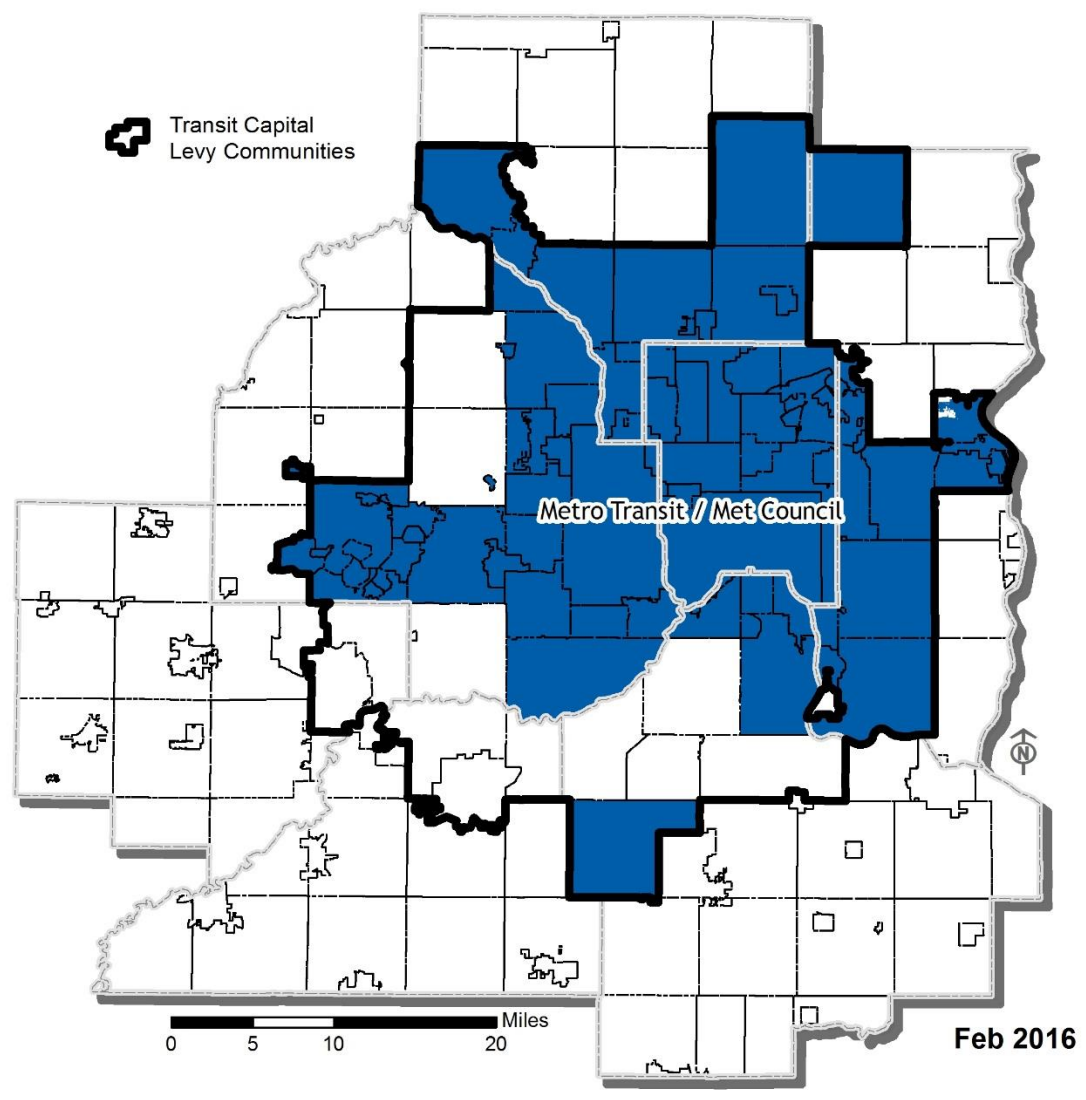
## Regional Parks and Trails



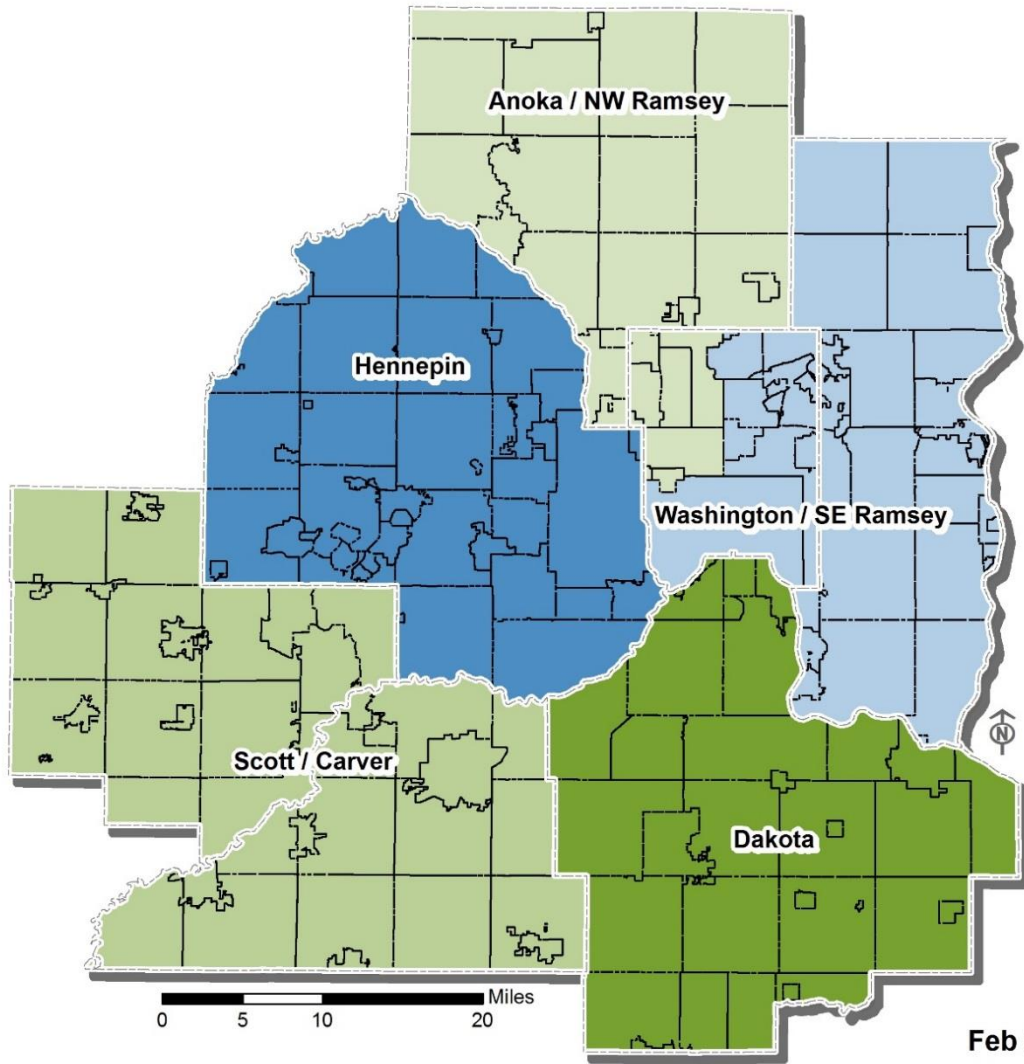
## Metro Mobility ADA Services



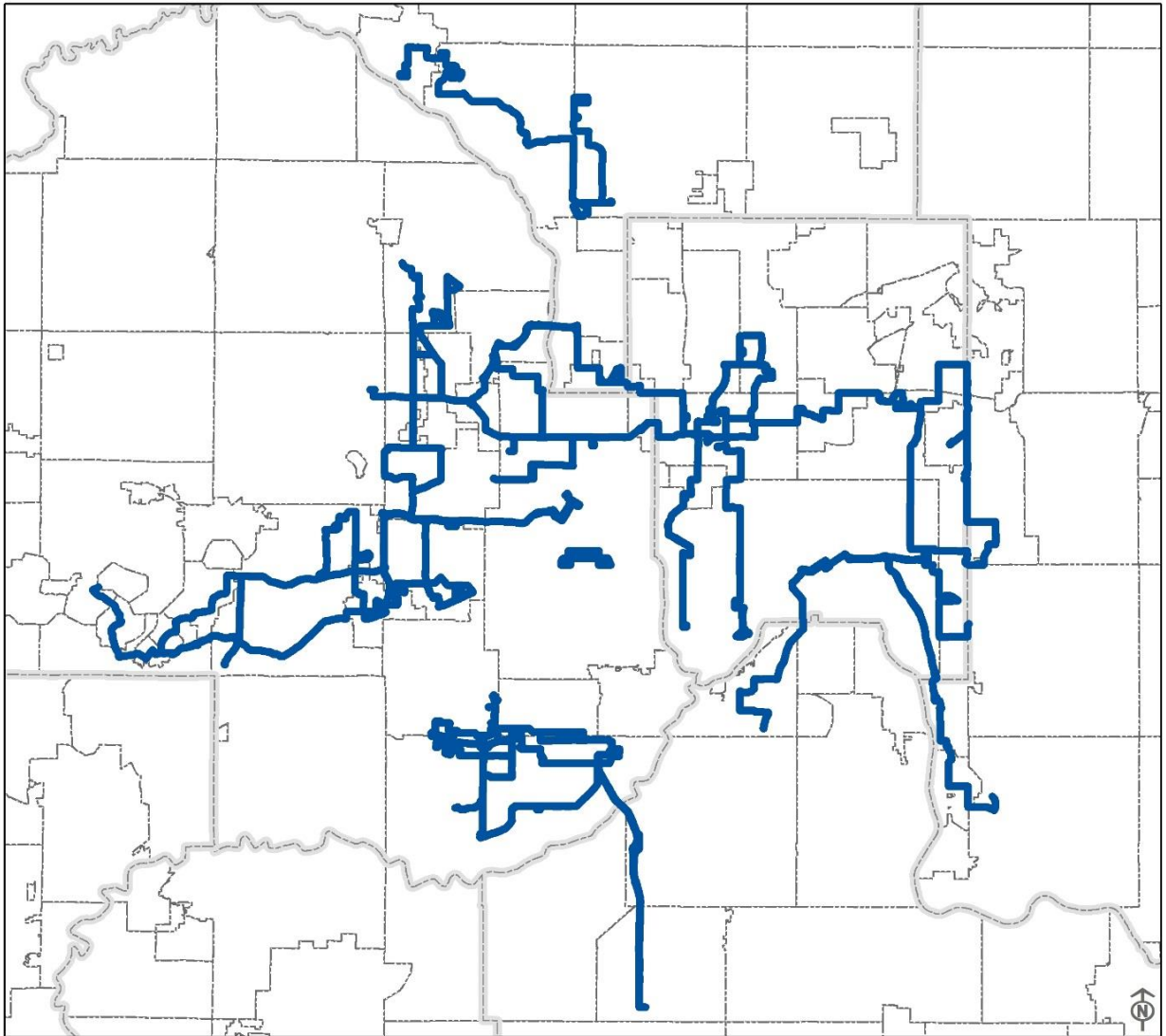
## Metro Transit / Met Council Service Area



## Transit Link Dial-a-Ride Service Areas



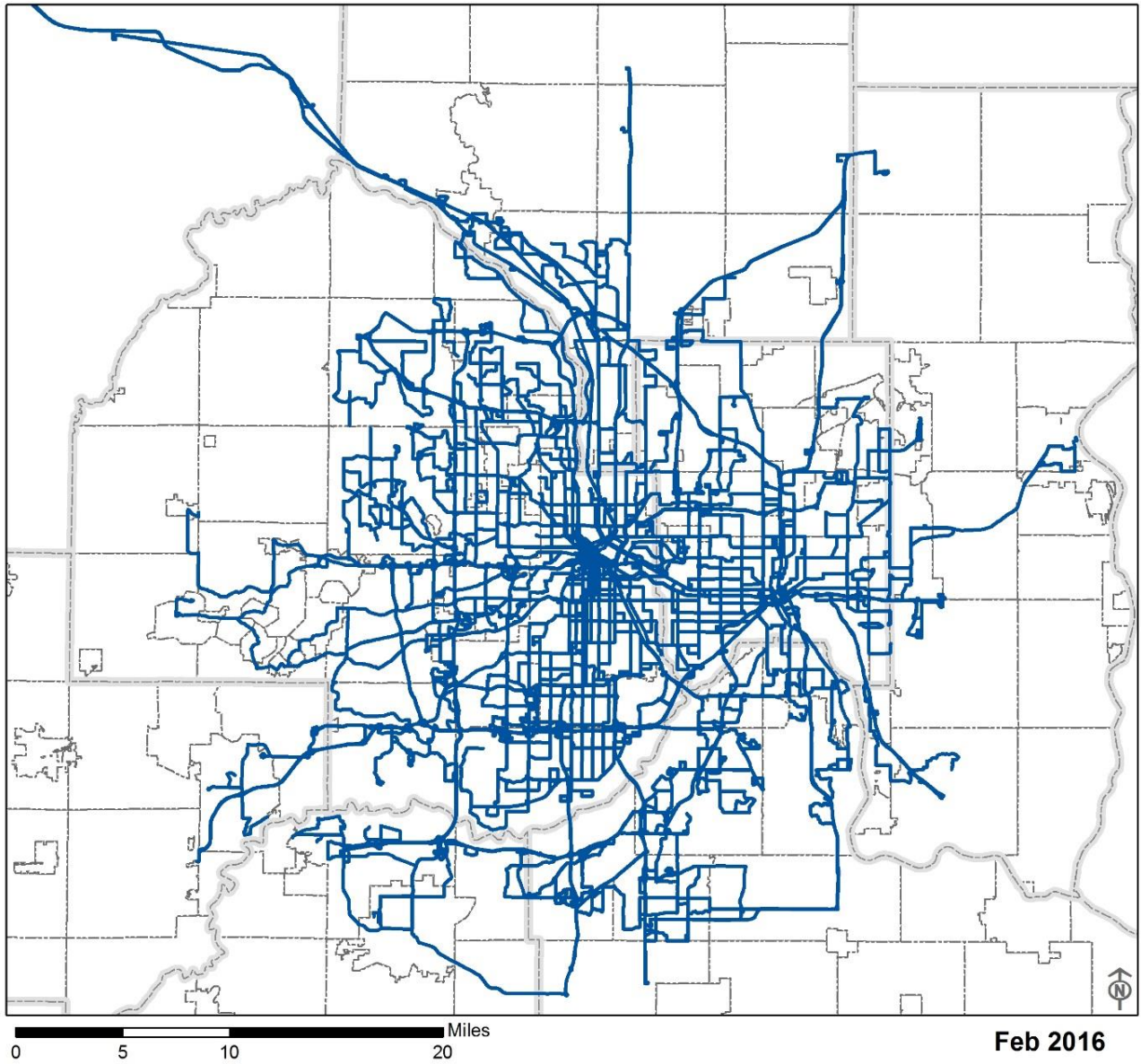
## Privately Contracted Regular Route Transit



0 2.5 5 10 Miles

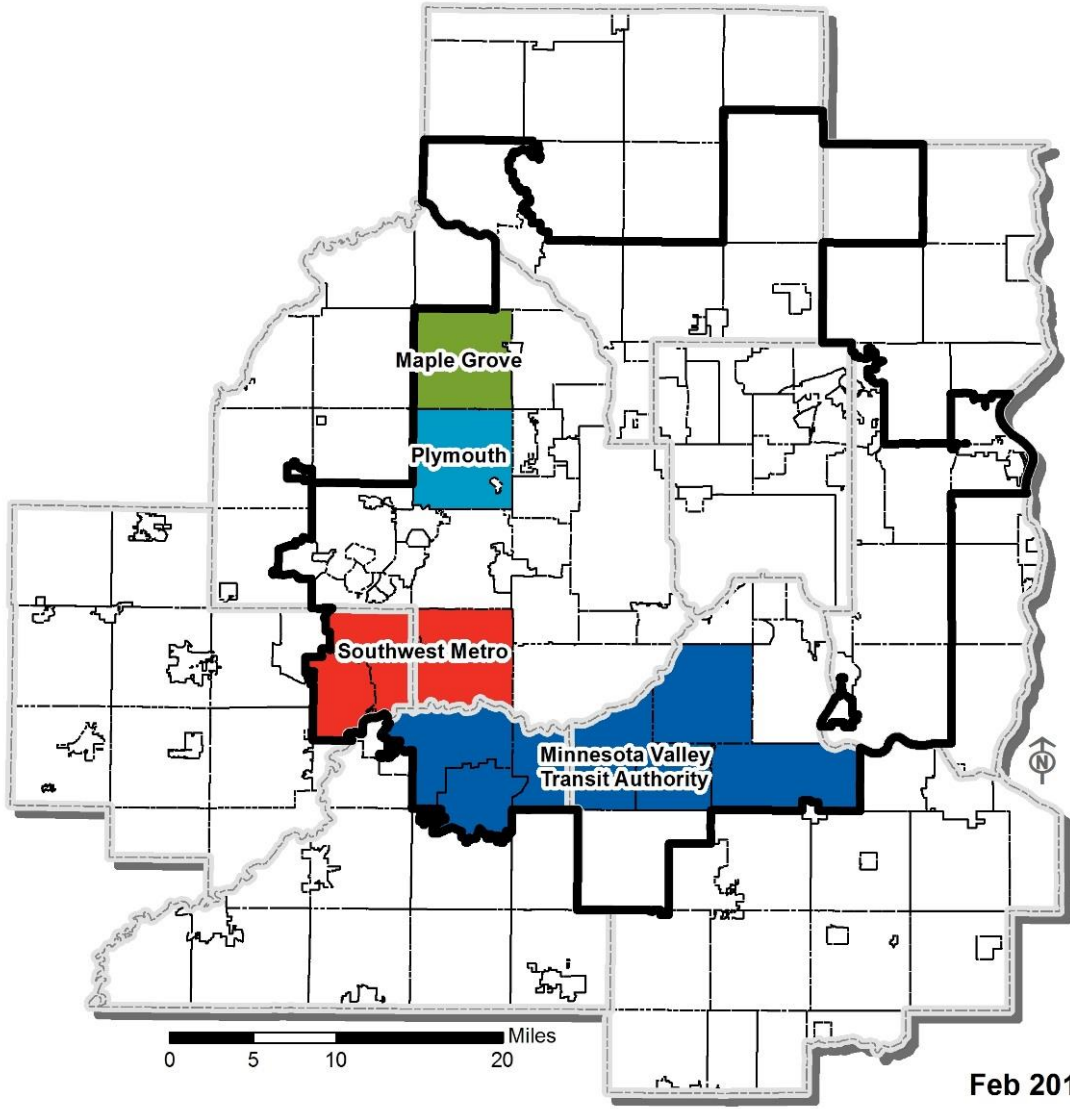
Feb 2016

## Metropolitan Area Regular Route Transit Service

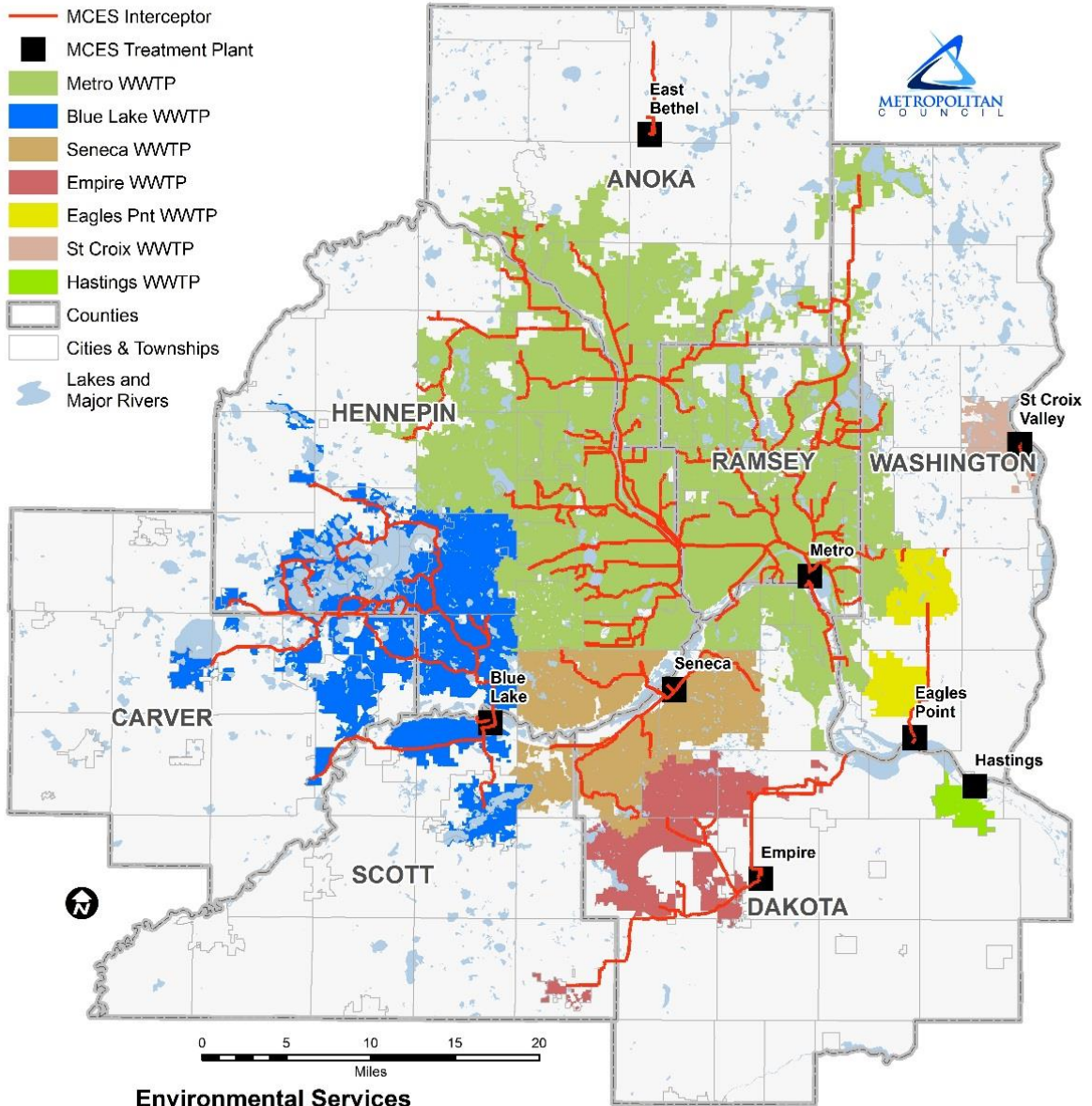




## Suburban Transit Providers



Feb 2016



**Environmental Services  
Wastewater Treatment Plants and Interceptors**

**Metropolitan Council  
2015 Budget Summary (\$ in 000s)**

	REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND HRA OPERATING ONLY			ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DIVISION INCLUDING DEBT SERVICE			TRANSPORTATION DIVISION OPERATING ONLY		
	BUDGET	(Unaudited) Actual Ledger Year-to-Date	Favorable (Unfavorable) VARIANCE	BUDGET	(Unaudited) Actual Ledger Year-to-Date	Favorable (Unfavorable) VARIANCE	BUDGET	(Unaudited) Actual Ledger Year-to-Date	Favorable (Unfavorable) VARIANCE
<b>Revenues:</b>									
Property Taxes.....	\$ 11,579	\$ 11,862	\$ 273	\$ 800	\$ 800	\$ -	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ -
Federal Revenue.....	4,165	4,983	818	-	-	-	24,306	22,503	(1,803)
State Revenue.....	149	162	13	2,862	167	(2,695)	283,689	286,461	1,762
Local Revenue/Other Gov't Revenue.....	-	193	193	-	-	-	32,136	29,668	(2,468)
ES Fees.....	-	-	-	204,976	204,544	(432)	-	-	-
Fares & Related Revenue.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	108,394	111,291	2,897
Interest.....	580	789	209	500	857	357	774	1,485	711
Other Revenue.....	4,517	4,895	378	2,475	916	(1,559)	2,138	614	(1,524)
Total Revenues.....	\$ 20,990	\$ 22,874	\$ 1,884	\$ 211,603	\$ 207,284	\$ (4,319)	\$ 453,447	\$ 453,022	\$ (425)
<b>Expenditures:</b>									
Salaries, Wages, & Fringes.....	\$ 40,269	\$ 40,487	\$ (218)	\$ 64,511	\$ 61,984	\$ 2,527	\$ 274,385	\$ 274,387	\$ (2)
Consulting & Contractual.....	15,639	13,396	2,243	16,511	15,048	1,463	16,626	15,772	854
Materials & Supplies.....	1,242	1,413	(171)	9,016	10,112	(1,096)	61,171	47,313	13,858
Chemicals.....	-	-	-	7,305	8,084	(779)	-	-	-
Rent & Utilities.....	3,284	3,062	222	17,704	16,912	792	13,155	10,511	2,644
Printing.....	294	90	204	30	54	(24)	505	498	7
Travel.....	581	618	(37)	381	235	146	752	515	237
Insurance.....	130	91	39	3,010	1,170	1,840	5,959	5,748	211
Operating Capital.....	1,710	1,073	637	4,135	2,939	1,196	98	97	1
Debt Service Expense.....	-	-	-	109,000	109,000	-	-	-	-
Other Expense.....	6,602	3,244	3,358	3,117	1,204	1,913	-	-	-
Transit Programs.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	10,769	9,486	1,283
Total Expenditures.....	\$ 69,751	\$ 63,474	\$ 6,277	\$ 234,720	\$ 226,742	\$ 7,978	\$ 458,631	\$ 456,600	\$ 2,031
Operating Income(Loss).....	\$ (48,761)	\$ (40,600)	\$ 8,161	\$ (23,117)	\$ (19,458)	\$ 3,659	\$ (5,184)	\$ 17,422	\$ 22,606
<b>Other Financing Sources (Uses):</b>									
Transfers from.....	\$ 47,938	\$ 48,689	\$ 731	\$ 39,888	\$ 36,278	\$ (3,620)	\$ 16,759	\$ 14,759	\$ (2,000)
Transfers To.....	(5,111)	(4,389)	743	(17,741)	(14,407)	3,334	(31,901)	(32,979)	(1,678)
Total Other Financing Sources (Uses).....	\$ 42,827	\$ 44,301	\$ 1,474	\$ 22,157	\$ 21,871	\$ (286)	\$ (14,542)	\$ (18,220)	\$ (3,678)
Surplus/(Deficit).....	\$ (5,934)	\$ 3,701	\$ 9,635	\$ (960)	\$ 2,413	\$ 3,373	\$ (19,726)	\$ (798)	\$ 18,928



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