

Executive Summary

Transportation's challenge is to support regional livability, economic competitiveness and Smart Growth.

Transportation – the link to countless destinations within our metro area and beyond – is a vital tool for keeping our region competitive in the world economy and improving our quality of life. Together with wise land use decisions, transportation helps support attractive, livable communities with thriving businesses, affordable housing and viable neighborhoods.

To keep the region strong and vital, the Metropolitan Council's *Transportation Policy Plan* aims to:

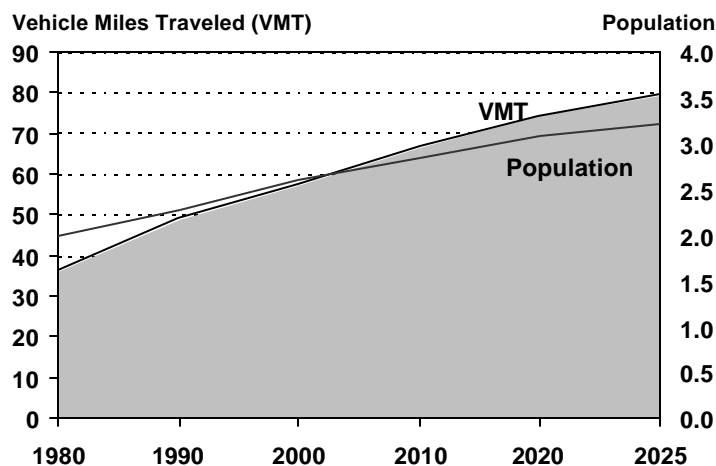
- **Sharpen the regions' economic competitiveness** by ensuring the convenient, affordable movement of people and the timely efficient movement of goods.
- **Enhance community and neighborhood livability** with connected streets, sidewalks and bikeways and convenient development that incorporates offices, homes and retail in ways that are conducive to transit services.
- **Expand mobility options** besides the car to connect jobs, services and housing.
- **Improve environmental quality** of the region's air and water.
- **Promote savings** through cost-effective use of regional and local infrastructure.

Congestion problems will mount in future years.

Keeping the region mobile and livable will become more difficult. According to Metropolitan forecasts, between the years 2000 and 2025 the region will gain approximately 635,000 more people, 320,000 more households and 312,000 more jobs.

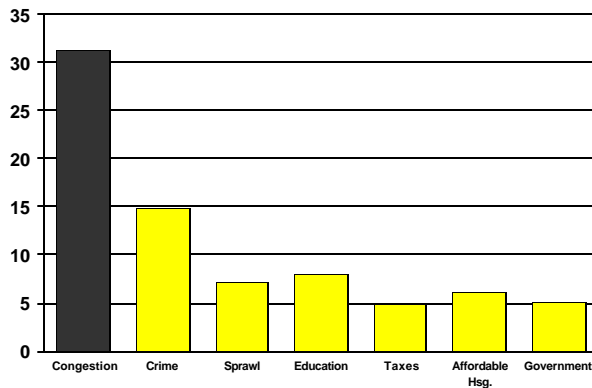
A trip during the morning rush-hour is estimated to take 26 percent longer than the same trip taken in off-peak times. (*Texas Transportation Institute, 1997 data –the most recent available*) And congestion is worsening at a faster rate than in the past. The amount of travel – measured as vehicle miles traveled – is expected to increase faster (+38%) than the population (+28%) over the next 25 years. The result will be an even bigger congestion problem.

Daily Vehicle Miles Traveled, 1980 - 2025

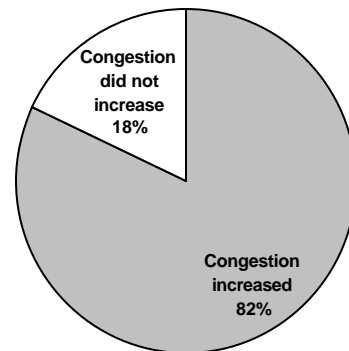


Twin Cities residents are already feeling the effects. Traffic congestion is now the top metro concern (31%). (*Metro State University 2000 Civic Confidence Survey*) Eighty-two percent of Twin Cities area residents think traffic congestion has increased in the last year. (*1999 Twin Cities Area Survey*)

**What is the chief problem facing the region?
Metro State University Poll, 2000**



**Did congestion increase over past year?
Twin Cities Area Survey, 1999**



Smart Growth – with transportation and wise land use decisions – can help keep the region livable and mobile.

The issue facing the Twin Cities area is how to grow in ways that make this region more economically competitive and maintain our high quality of life. The Metropolitan Council's response to this challenge is the regional Smart Growth strategy – a pro-growth approach to guiding development into more convenient patterns and into areas where infrastructure allows growth to be sustained over the long term.

Smart Growth envisions developments of complementary land uses, including affordable and lifecycle housing, retail and offices, on interconnected streets amenable to walking, bicycling, or using transit or car to destinations.

The region needs a variety of transportation modes working together, with a stronger role for transit.

Transportation is the business of moving people and freight. Various forms of transportation are necessary to strengthen the region's economy and quality of life – cars on highways, buses on local streets, express buses on bus-only highway shoulders, light rail transit, exclusive busways, commuter rail, truck transport, air freight and water, bikeways and pedestrian facilities.

At the same time, the future transportation system will need to rely more on innovative transit solutions to slow the growth of congestion and support attractive, convenient neighborhoods with a diversity of complementary land uses – housing, retail, business offices and professional services.

High-quality transit service planned for the region will offer new technologies, special transitways, faster express service, more routes, new buses and customer incentives, providing superior transit service to more people. Transit will link development along major transportation corridors, including the downtowns. The building block of Smart Growth neighborhoods will be a network of interconnected streets that promote walking, bicycle use and transit.

Exclusive transitways will provide alternatives to congested highway lanes. Bus-only shoulders on highways, high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, exclusive busways, LRT and commuter rail will offer a transit-time advantage over single-occupant autos, improve transit service reliability and boost the potential for transit-oriented development.

The regional highway system will see some expansion in capacity but few additional freeway lanes over the next 25 years. The focus will be on maintaining and managing existing highways in ways that move more people without many more vehicles.

Funding, ridership and coordination with land use are the crucial issues confronting transit over the next 25 years.

Transit needs adequate and stable funding sources. The level of funding support from local and state governments is a critical factor in the performance of public transportation. Per capita spending for operating transit in the Twin Cities area (1998) ranks second to last among its 10 peer regions. Most cities with higher spending have a state or local revenue source dedicated to transit. An adequate and dedicated funding source allows lower fares, thus maximizing ridership. The Twin Cities area receives funds from property taxes and state general funds. This arrangement creates pressure to shift more costs to fares, depressing ridership. Without an adequate funding source, the region will not be able to meet its mobility needs and achieve its Smart Growth goals.

Ridership will need to grow enough over the next 25 years to make an impact on highway congestion and provide attractive alternatives to the single-occupant automobile. Expanding ridership will require providing the appropriate type of transit service in terms of location, quality and frequency, within increasingly tight financial constraints. Transit has the greatest long-term potential for ridership in major transportation corridors with concentrations of compact, mixed-use development.

To fully promote Smart Growth, transit decisions will need to be closely tied to questions of land use. This will require close coordination among transit providers, local government, development interests and others. The challenge will be to develop solutions that reconcile diverse needs and viewpoints.

The plan for transit is to greatly expand the bus system, develop exclusive transitways and foster Smart Growth in transit corridors.

The goal over the next 25 years is to develop a regional transit system that:

- More than doubles the capacity of the bus system by 2025 – the backbone of the transit system;
- Includes a network of dedicated transit corridors; and
- Supports Smart Growth by fostering more efficient use of land and public infrastructure.

The 2025 transit system will be capable of carrying more than twice the current number of riders, providing high quality, easy-to-use service. This is the equivalent of capturing 10% of the travel-demand growth in the region over the next 20 years.

The bus system will remain the foundation of future transit services.

- Service will be greatly expanded and reorganized to better meet customer needs and promote more efficient use of public facilities consistent with Smart Growth principles. The

Metro Transit vehicle fleet and related public and support facilities – including garages, transit stations and park-and-rides – will be doubled.

- Local routes will benefit from increased frequency, greater coverage and restructuring using a grid-style network, rather than the current radial pattern oriented to the downtowns.
- “Arterial corridors” – selected high-traffic urban and suburban streets – will receive the highest level of local bus service – very frequent, 7-day, up-to-24-hour service, with highly visible facilities at major stops.

A network of dedicated transit corridors will be developed.

- These transitways – consisting of bus-only shoulders, high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, exclusive busways, LRT and commuter rail – will provide a transit-time advantage over single-occupant autos, improve transit service reliability and boost the potential for transit-oriented development.
- By 2010, these transitways would include 2 LRT lines (Hiawatha and a second line to downtown Saint Paul), at least 1 commuter rail line coming from outside the region, and 2 exclusive busways to Minneapolis and Saint Paul.
- In addition, the current network of bus-only shoulders will be significantly expanded in congested highway corridors and upgraded to improved standards, including wider lanes. Supporting these corridors will be extensive park-and-ride facilities, ramp meter bypasses and transfer points.

Smart Growth development will be fostered along dedicated transit corridors.

- Linked to high-quality transit service, development following Smart Growth principles will include a mix of housing, retail, offices and open space in a pedestrian-friendly environment.
- Transit’s support of Smart Growth will strengthen the region’s economic competitiveness by maintaining mobility within the area, crucial for commuter travel and goods movement. It will also give people more choices in the way they travel around the region and in their communities.

Other bus services will also be expanded, including the suburban opt-out systems, Metro Mobility and the small urban-rural systems, along with related support facilities.

The future transit system will save public facility costs and reduce auto trips, congestion and land consumption.

Savings in local roads and utilities are estimated at \$2 billion.

- \$1.48 billion will be saved because of the reduced need for water lines, sewer lines and storm water facilities from concentrating development along transit corridors.
- \$538 million in savings will result from the reduced need for local roads because of more compact development patterns.

The savings in congestion costs will total \$2 billion.

- More compact development patterns along transit corridors with enhanced transit services will slow the growth in vehicle-miles traveled and congestion on roadways by at least 10%,

resulting in an annual average saving of \$50 million and a 20-year total saving of \$1 billion. Congestion costs an estimated \$1 billion now and is estimated to double by 2020.

- It would cost an estimated \$1 billion to build highway improvements to relieve unacceptable congestion in the 6 proposed major transit corridors. The transit improvements proposed by this plan will lessen the need for these highway investments.

Travel, fuel consumption and pollution will be reduced.

- 245,000 daily auto trips will be eliminated through expanded transit service and changes in development densities along transit corridors. Transit improvements will be responsible for more than 80% of this reduction – the equivalent of one or two lanes of traffic in each congested corridor.
- 550 million miles in travel per year will be cut.
- 27 million gallons of fuel will be saved annually.
- 6,600 tons of carbon monoxide will be eliminated per year.
- The region’s dependency on sometimes volatile energy supplies will be reduced, and greenhouse effects will diminish.

More compact development will reduce auto trips per person by an estimated 30% and produce 100% more transit trips. If just 10% (27,000 units) of the households the region gains between 2000 and 2020 develop at higher densities, it will result in an estimated 45,000 fewer daily auto trips and 17,000 more transit trips.

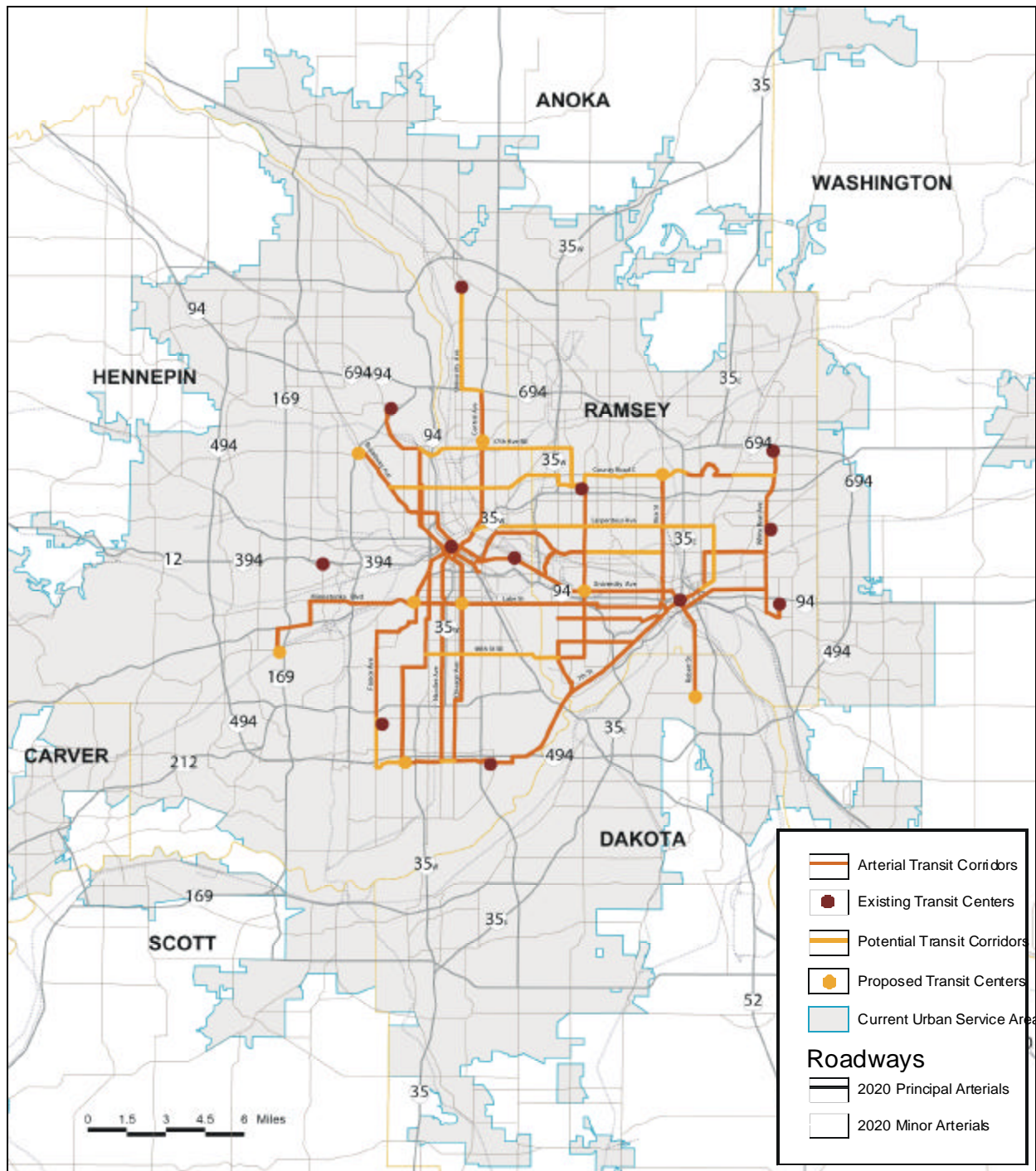
Affordable housing will increase and land consumption will slow.

- 7,500 additional affordable housing units will be built in transit corridors by 2020.
- 110,500 acres (173 square miles) of rural land will be saved through more compact development patterns along transit corridors.

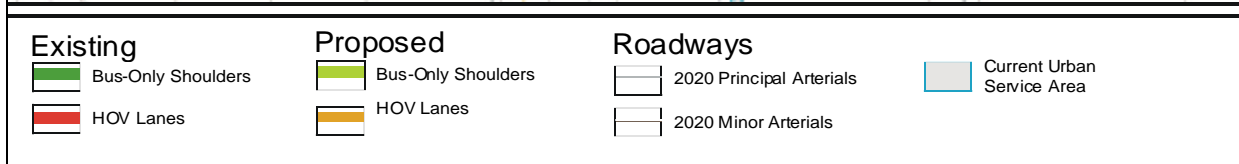
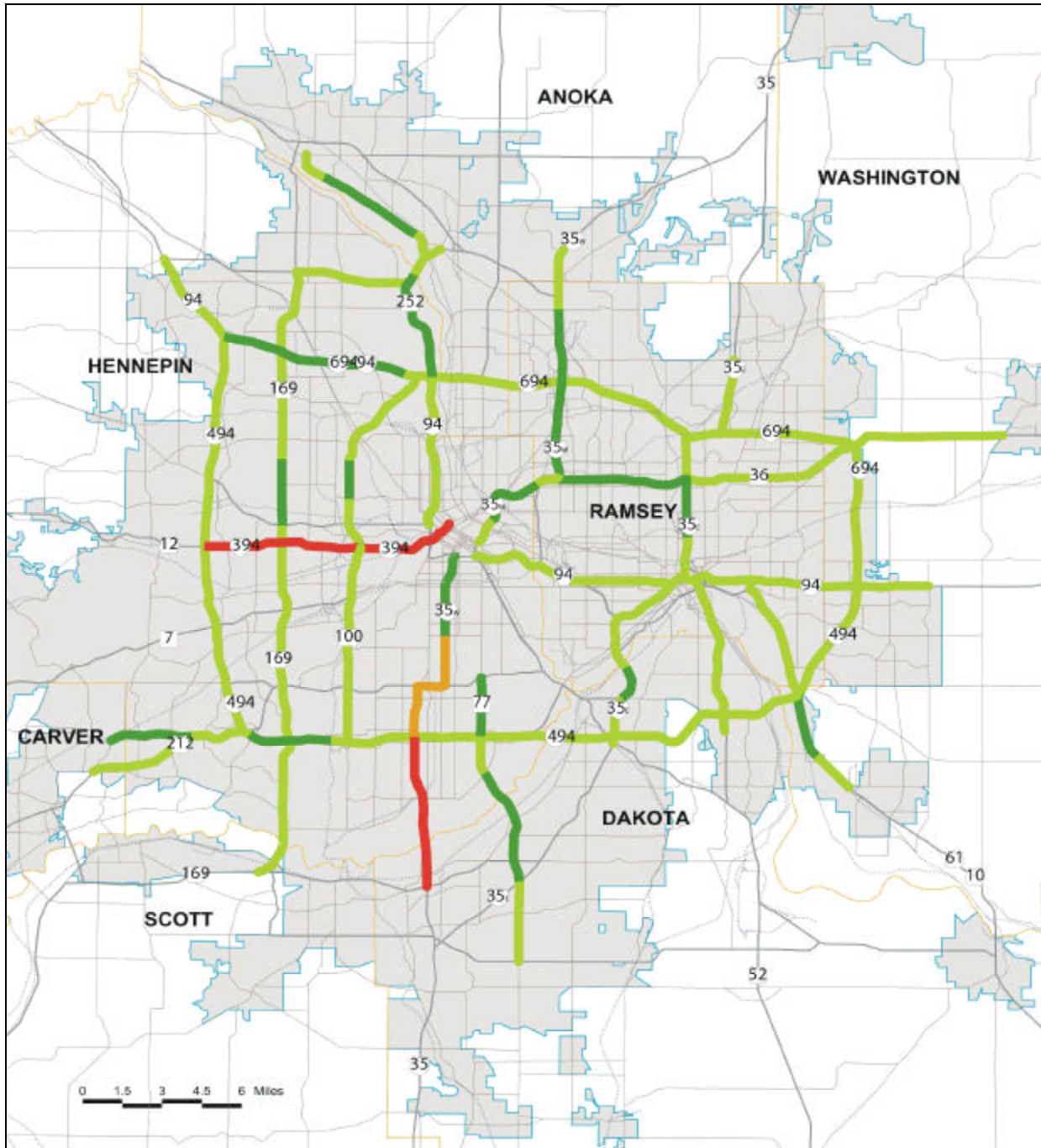
Transit improvements will be phased over the next 25 years.

- The lower-investment corridors will be constructed early on (2000–2005) to produce the greatest possible benefits as quickly as possible. This will involve enhancing service along major urban/suburban arterial streets, providing bus-only shoulders along major highways, expanding park-and-ride capacity, developing transfer points, and expanding and enhancing high-occupancy vehicle lanes.
- The bus fleet, garages and support facilities will be vigorously expanded and bus service improved year by year so that, by 2020, the system can carry twice the ridership it does today and three times the ridership by 2040.
- Two busways would be constructed in the next 10 years and three more busways between 2010 and 2025 to complete the regional transit plan.
- After completion of the Hiawatha line in 2004, a second LRT line would be built by 2010. Between 2010 and 2025, a third would be completed and a fourth would start construction.
- The non-transitway corridors could be upgraded to busways or busways to LRT after 2010, as appropriate, based on updated ridership forecasts and travel demand.

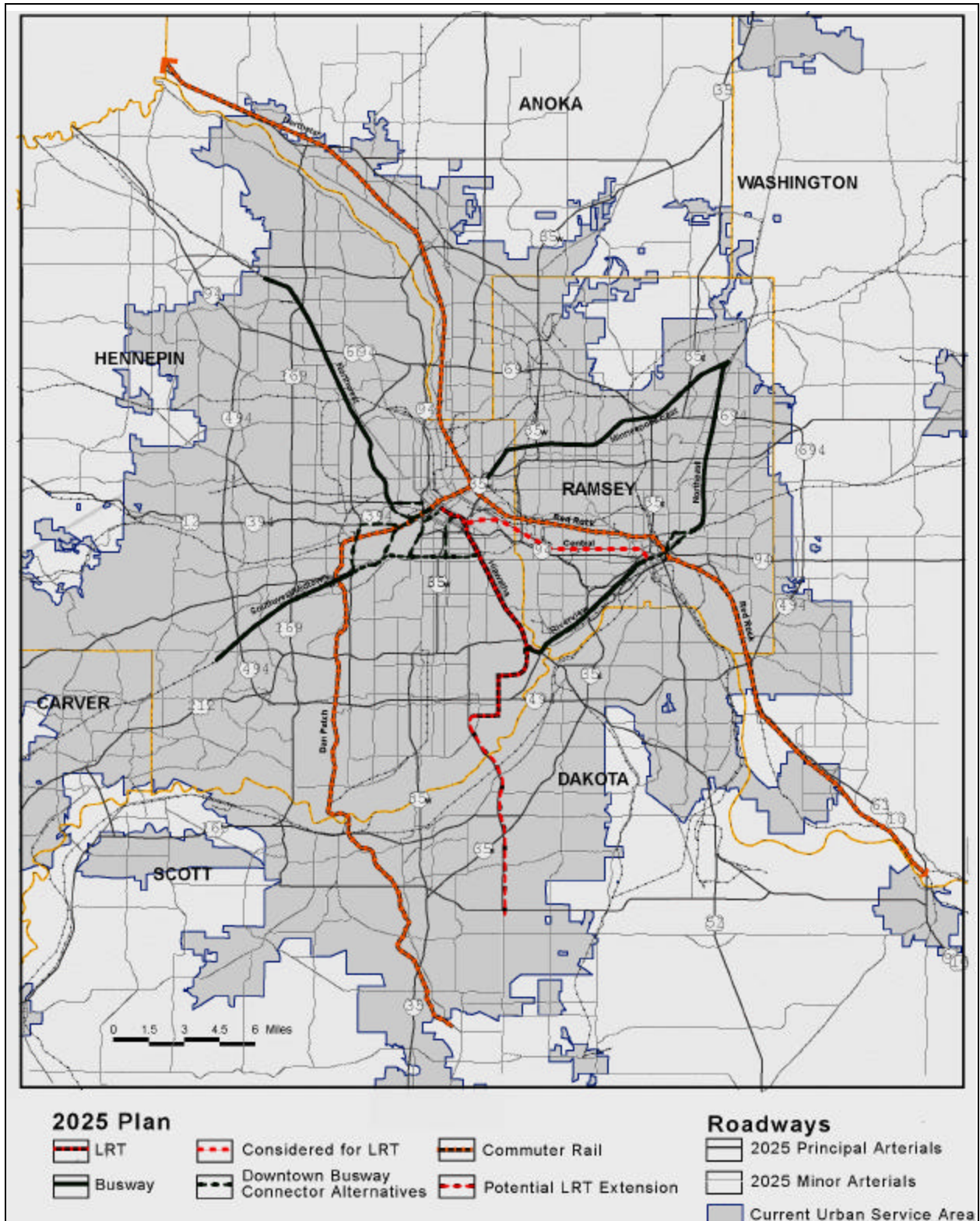
Arterial Transit Corridors



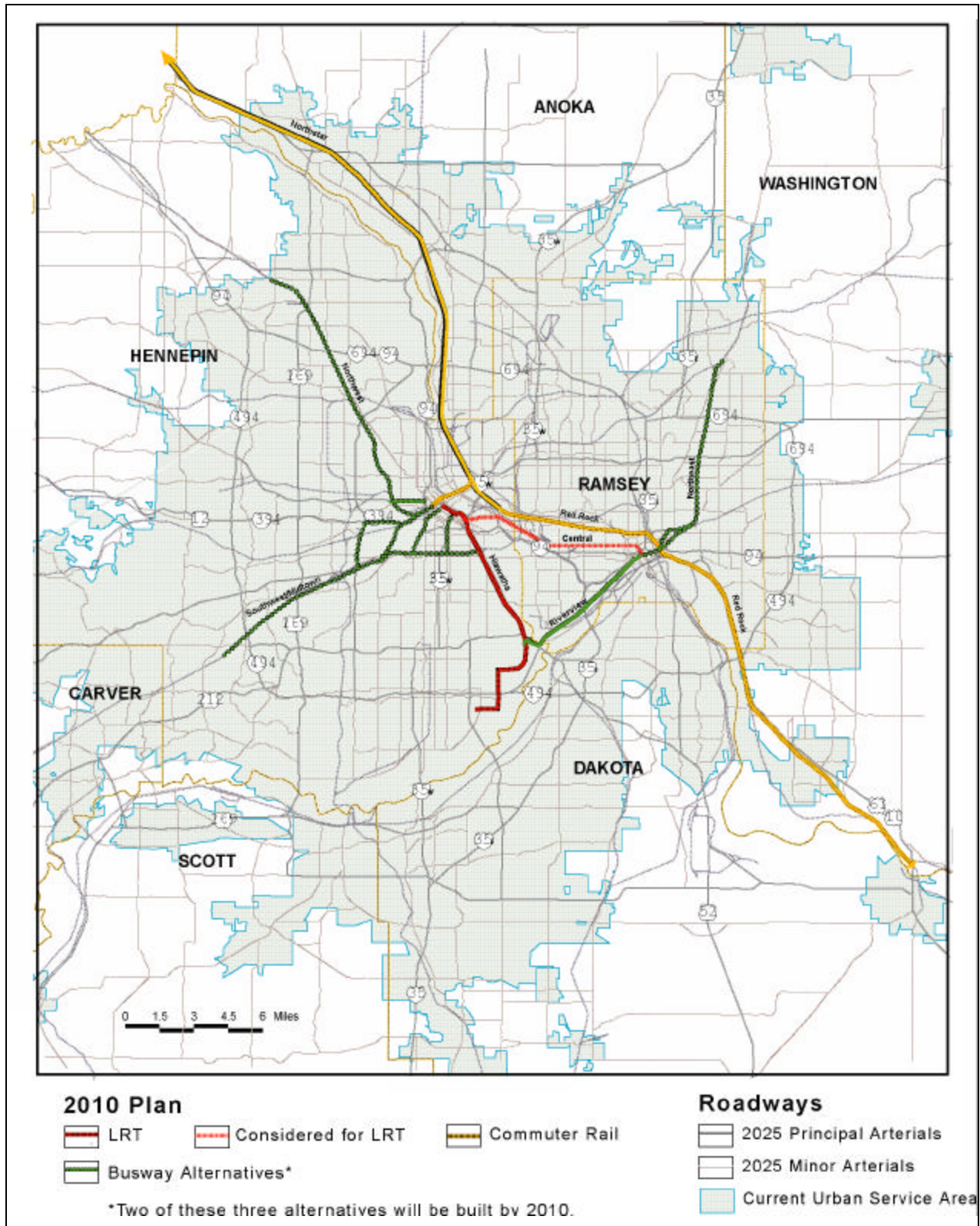
Existing and Proposed Freeway Transit Corridors



Transitways on Dedicated Rights-of-Way 2025 Plan



Transitways on Dedicated Rights-of-Way 2010 Plan



Timing of Major Transit Improvements

2000 – 2010

2010 – 2025

Bus System

- Expansion of bus system by 50%

- Continued expansion of bus system to double size by 2020; continued expansion after 2020 by 3.5% per year

Arterial Corridors

- Arterial transit corridor improvements

Freeway Corridors

- Bus-only shoulders with improved standards
- Extension of HOV lane on I-35W from I-494 to 46th Street

Dedicated Transitways

Busways

- Two exclusive busways, with corridor candidates that include:
 - Riverview
 - St. Paul Northeast
 - Mpls. Southwest/Midtown Greenway
 - Mpls. Northwest

- Three additional busways to complete 2025 transit plan (the other two candidate corridors plus Minneapolis East)

Light Rail Transit

- Second LRT line will be built along the Central Corridor.

- Extension of Hiawatha into Dakota County and possible conversion of a busway to LRT if ridership is sufficiently high

Commuter Rail

- At least one commuter rail line, with candidates in order of priority:
 - Northstar Corridor
 - Red Rock Corridor to Minneapolis

- Completion of two additional commuter rail lines to include:
 - The corridor not developed by 2010;
 - Dan Patch Corridor (after completion of Red Rock)

Two-thirds (66%) of 25-year transit capital costs (\$5,814 million) would be spent on maintaining and expanding the regional bus system, constructing dedicated busways and building bus-only shoulders. Another 22% would be spent on LRT and 12% on commuter rail.

Bus System Expansion

The total cost of this program is \$1,415 million from 2000 to 2025. This figure includes the cost of new buses, replacement of these new buses after 2012, new garages to house the buses, new public facilities (such as park-and-rides and transit stations), radios, computers, and capital equipment.

These figures also include the capital needs of all providers in the region – Metro Transit, contracted transit services, opt-out communities, rural/small urban programs and Metro Mobility.

Approximately 45% of the cost of expanding the bus system is projected to come from federal sources, 6% from state sources and 14% from Metropolitan Council-issued bonds. The balance of this program – 33% – requires a new funding source.

Existing Bus System

The region's existing bus system – which includes vehicles and extensive support and public facilities – will need to be replaced or rebuilt as equipment and facilities age. Over the next 25 years, these costs are estimated at \$1,750 million.

Of this total, approximately 60% can be funded from federal sources and 40% from bonds.

Dedicated Busways

Five busways would be built in the next 25 years – two by 2010 and three more by 2025. Costs through 2025 are projected to be \$540 million dollars. Corridors initially identified include Riverview, Midtown Greenway/Southwest, Minneapolis Northwest, St. Paul Northeast, and Minneapolis Northeast.

Half of this program is projected to come from federal sources, 40% from state sources and 10% from local sources.

Light Rail Transit

By 2025, two lines in addition to the Hiawatha corridor would be completed and another would be under construction. The total cost to 2025 would be \$1,250 million. Potential corridors include Central, an extension of Hiawatha or any busway that has high enough ridership to justify conversion to LRT.

Fifty percent of the capital cost is projected to come from federal sources, 40% from state sources and 10% from local sources.

Commuter Rail

By 2025, three commuter rail lines would be completed and a fourth under construction, at an estimated cost of \$725 million. Potential corridors include Northstar, Red Rock, Dan Patch and Central, which would connect the Northstar and Red Rock lines.

Half of the capital cost is projected to come from federal sources, 40% from state sources and 10% from local sources.

Bus-Only Shoulders

A total of 125 miles of bus-only shoulders would be built by 2010. Construction and reconstruction costs would bring the total to \$134 million by 2025. All the capital funding is projected to come from Trunk Highway funds.

Summary of Transit Capital Costs by 2025

Existing Bus System	Expand Bus System	Busway	LRT	Commuter Rail	Bus-Only Shoulders	TOTAL
\$1,750	\$1,415	\$540	\$1,250	\$725	\$134	\$5,814

Added Revenue Needed

The implementation of the Council's transit plan will require more capital and operating funds than are now available. The capital cost for transit improvements will be approximately \$5.8 billion. Capital funds estimated to be available for the 21 years 2005 to 2025 are approximately \$2 billion. The annual operating cost for the 2025 transit system will be \$262 million more than they are now. Assuming fares will make up thirty percent (30%) of the operative cost approximately \$180 million annually will need to be attained from other sources. Many highway needs will go unmet over this time period given the funding available.

ADA Plan

- The disabled population is forecasted to increase by 48% from 1990 to 2010 and 70% by 2020.
- The region will need to expand service to accommodate about a 30% increase in ridership by 2010 and about 50% by 2020.
- If Metro Transit extends 24 hour service to first ring suburbs, then Metro Mobility will be required to make a comparable adjustment, thus resulting in the purchase of additional service hours.

The metropolitan highway system faces more travel demand but insufficient funding.

The metropolitan highway system of freeways and expressways carries the majority of vehicle travel in this region and the longest trips at the highest speeds. It faces a number of major problems over the next 25 years:

- Significant increases in travel demand;
- Inefficient use of the highway system by vehicles with only one person;
- Increasing maintenance costs for an aging system of highways;
- Insufficient funding;
- Funding sources that return too little of the revenues to the areas in which they are collected; and
- Funding sources that do not provide incentives to improve the efficiency of the transportation system.

The strategy for metropolitan highways is to focus expansions generally on or inside the I-494/694 ring, increase the efficiency of the highway system and better coordinate highway investments with development.

The goal between now and 2025 is to:

- Focus highway expansions on removing bottlenecks and modest increases in existing capacity, but not major expansions in freeway capacity that could promote the outward spread of unplanned development.
- Make highways operate more efficiently so they carry more people without a lot more cars. This goal includes:
 - Pursuing the use of tolls, value pricing and new parking policies; and
 - Providing incentives for people and businesses to share rides, schedule commuting time outside the peak periods and to use arterial streets for shorter trips.
- Coordinate highway investments with development decisions in major travel corridors to:
 - Foster Smart Growth projects that include a variety of complementary land uses;
 - Concentrate job locations within and adjacent to the I-494/I-694 ring; and
 - Encourage more compact, convenient development within the urban service area, where regional services are already planned or available.
- Maintain the existing highway system to serve existing and planned development.

A number of freeways and expressways would be expanded to complete the metropolitan highway system. **Expansion** means the addition of one or more through lanes (for high-occupancy vehicles or mixed traffic), expressways rebuilt to freeway design, new principal arterials in new alignments or the construction or substantial increase of transit services. Studies are under way to identify the appropriate type of expansion project.

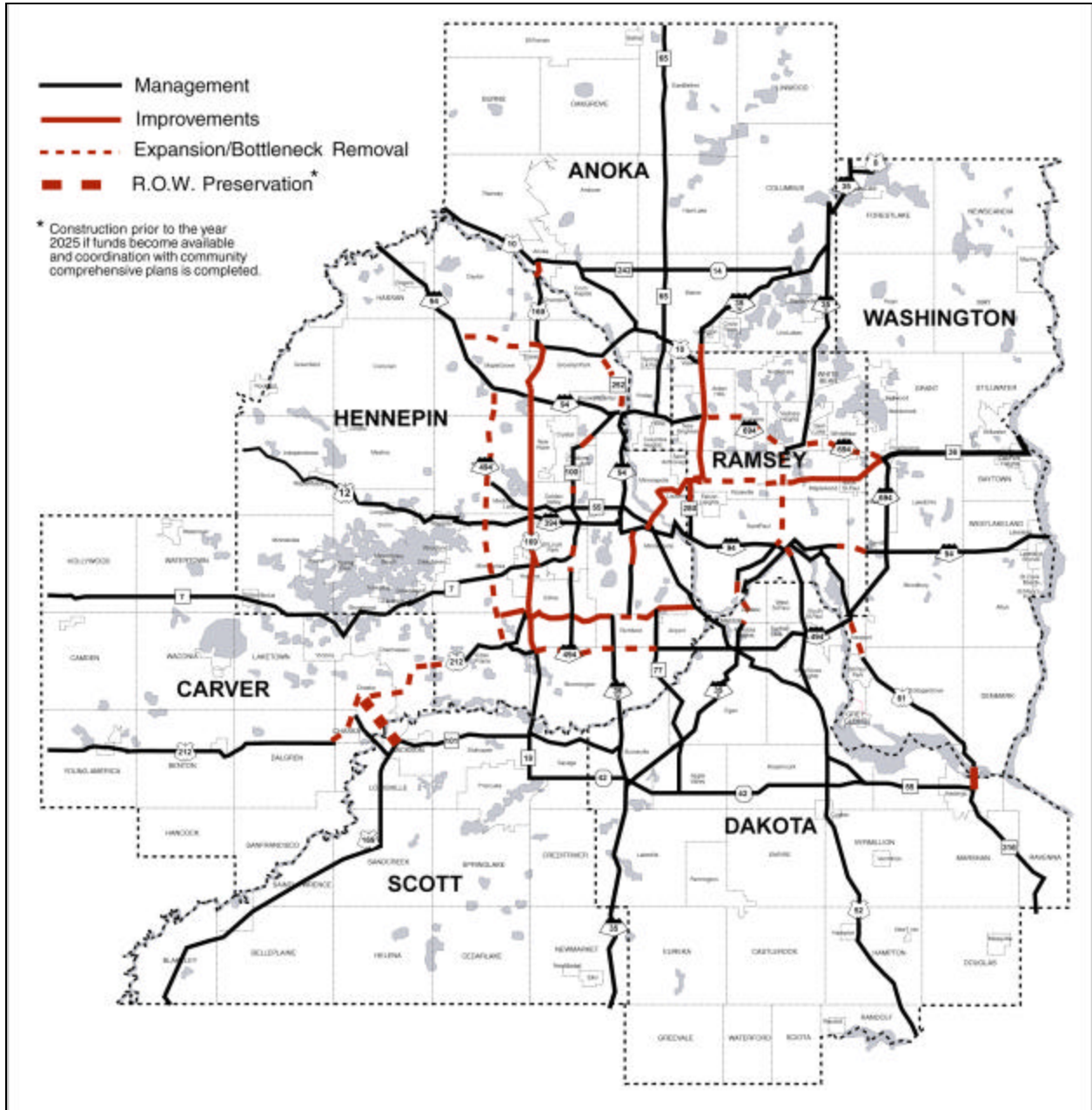
Within the freeway beltway, the following highways have the highest funding priority between 2005 and 2025:

- I-494 from Hwy. 77 (Cedar Avenue) west and north to I-94.
- I-694 from I-35W east to Hwy. 36.
- Hwy. 36 from I-35W east to I-35E.
- I-35E across the Minnesota River into Lilydale.
- I-35E from I-94 to I-694
- Hwy. 61 from I-494 through Newport.
- I-94 from McKnight Road east to Hwy. 120.
- I-35W and Hwy. 62 commons area in Richfield.

Outside the beltway, the expansion priorities are:

- Hwy. 252 in Brooklyn Center and Brooklyn Park from I-94 north to Hwy. 610.
- Hwy. 610 from Brooklyn Park west to I-94.
- Hwy. 212 from Eden Prairie west to the current Hwy. 212 alignment in Chaska.

2025 Metropolitan Highway System Investment Priorities



Other highways are selected for improvements. **Improvements** involve pavement reconstruction and bridge replacement. They also include select intersection and interchange construction or reconstruction, corridor reconstruction, and larger safety management projects. In a few instances, lanes are added for short distances.

The highways with the highest priority for improvement projects over the 2005-2025 period are:

- Hwy I-35W from 46th St to the Ramsey County Line
- Hwy. 169 from Hwy. 610 in Brooklyn Park south to I-494 in Bloomington.
- Hwy. 62 from Hwy. 55 in Minneapolis to I-494 in Eden Prairie.

- Hwy. 61 across the Mississippi River into Hastings.
- Various short segments of Hwy. 100 from I-94 in Brooklyn Center south to St. Louis Park.

Expansion and improvement projects on the metropolitan highway system are expected to total \$2,433 million between 2001 and 2025.

- **Expansion** of metropolitan highway system – freeways and expressways – will cost \$1,490 million.
- **Improvements and bottleneck removal** on these highways will cost \$943 million.
- **Management** of all trunk highways in the region – which include freeways, expressways and other major highways – will cost \$510 million. Management focuses on moving more people, not more vehicles. It provides incentives to those willing to share rides and reduce vehicle travel.

Funding sources for expansion, improvement and management projects are the state Trunk Highway Trust Fund and federal dollars. Funding for projects scheduled for 2001 to 2004 has been approved.

- **Preservation** of all trunk highways from 2005 to 2025 will be \$1,430. Preservation includes pavement and bridge repair.

Unmet Highway needs could cost \$9 billion

- Limited expansion of “A” minor arterials are included in this plan.
- Non-MnDOT owned principal arterial improvements or expansions are not funded
- New “A” minor arterials and principal arterials needed to implement the Regional Blueprint and the local and county comprehensive plans are not funded.
- Many interchanges need to be reconstructed.

Bicycling and walking can be feasible alternatives to the automobile for shorter trips.

As the Council works with communities to promote Smart Growth principles in future development patterns, walking and bicycling become increasingly important as means of travel in compact, mixed-use neighborhoods. Continuous, barrier-free bicycle and pedestrian systems are crucial to the success of these Smart Growth developments.

Pedestrian trips, which average one-quarter to one-half mile, can best access transit service in areas where higher frequency service and sidewalks are provided. Bicycle trips, which average two miles, also provide easy access to transit. As light rail, commuter rail and busway corridors are developed, bicycle and pedestrian connections will be important aspects of planning for the region at the local level.

The majority of cities and counties in the seven-county region recognize the need for facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians in their community, and to a varying degree provide plans and policies in their local comprehensive plans to support these transportation and recreational needs.

A high-capacity, cost-effective freight transportation network is a key to the region's economic vitality.

Recommendations from a statewide study of freight movement suggest broad freight policy objectives and project-level specifics to address the needs of freight modes in Minnesota.

Suggestions included closer cooperation between Mn/DOT and the freight industry in sharing of industry-collected data, broader use of intelligent-transportation system technology, removing highway bottlenecks, addressing regulatory control inefficiencies, using statewide performance measures, and greater coordination for planning of and investments into public infrastructure and related freight facilities to increase operational efficiencies and expand capacity.
