

TRANSITWAY STATION STATUS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR LOCAL COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

The transitway planning process in the Twin Cities region has a standard set of milestones that the Met Council actively tracks and maintains publicly available data on. There are different expectations for community comprehensive plans and other coordination for station areas associated with a transitway based on the project status. Because the process often takes many years, the nature of local planning and support moves from general planning to specific implementation efforts, and the expectations of the Council and the Federal Transit Administration follow a similar path.

Expectations apply for transitways in the region's fiscally constrained plan

The first piece of information to understand is if a transitway is included in the region's fiscally constrained plan. The Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) identifies which planned transitways are included and these are shown in your system statement. Communities are required to include and plan for transitways found in the fiscally constrained plan. Transitway stations identified as "not included in the fiscally constrained plan" do not have Council requirements associated with them. However, communities are encouraged to still undertake station-area planning efforts to better position these potential investments for future funding and help ensure the region gets a good return on its investment with the understanding that their implementation is uncertain and not guaranteed, regardless of the completeness of station-area planning.

The map on the final page shows all transitway lines that are included in the fiscally constrained plan.

Transitway station status definitions and expectations

Over time, transitway plans and designs become more certain, including alignment, station locations, funding commitments, construction schedule, and service opening day. As the transitway and its station locations become more certain, communities must adopt local plans, policies, and programs that support these important regional investments. The following:

- **Existing** includes transitways that have completed construction and are currently in operation. Future infill stations, extensions, or reconfiguration of stations would need to be considered through separate projects. By this point in the process, the following expectations apply to local communities and their comprehensive plans:
 - i. Opening-day, station-supportive improvements are completed, including Locally Requested Capital Investments (LRCIs).
 - ii. Adopted zoning and regulatory changes implementation is ongoing
 - iii. Joint development projects are complete
- **Engineering** includes stations that are on transitways with final design completed and have submitted for federal capital investment grant funding (New Starts or Small Starts) if applicable. The station locations and designs are finalized for construction and agreements for local financial participation is also final (e.g. local enrichments). At this stage of the process, the following expectations apply for local communities and their comprehensive plans:
 - i. Zoning studies are completed and zoning and other regulatory changes supportive of station-area plan implementation are adopted
 - ii. Improvements in local Capital Improvement Plans are scheduled
 - iii. Opening-day, station-supportive capital improvements with transitway construction, including (LRCIs) are coordinated
 - iv. If undertaking FTA Joint Development project, finalize agreement with partner jurisdictions and developers on participation

- **Project Development** includes stations that have preliminary designs and locations determined by the lead agency working with communities. Typically, environmental review is complete, and design has progressed from 1% to 30% completion. At this point, projects submit their first New Starts application for entry into engineering, if applicable. Please note, communities must ask for municipal approval for station locations to advance into final design. At this stage of the process, the following expectations apply for local communities and their comprehensive plans:
 - Undertake station-area planning with policies supportive of transit that address requirements in the TPP and other funding criteria (e.g. New Starts)
 - Incorporate small area plans into comprehensive plan and submit amendment to Council for review
 - Request forecast changes and adjust forecast allocations in conjunction with comp plan amendment
 - Begin implementing elements of station-area plan, such as updating zoning ordinances, adopting overlay districts, and updating Capital Improvement Plans
 - Identify potential FTA Joint Development opportunities
- **Corridor Alternatives and Initial Planning** includes stations that have their general locations proposed through a Locally Preferred Alternative recommended by the project's lead agency and included in Transportation Policy Plan. An LPA includes the corridor mode, alignment, and general station locations. Specific station locations may still change at this point in the process through coordinated planning work between the transitway lead agency and local communities. At this stage of the process, the following expectations apply for local communities and their comprehensive plans:
 - Participate in alternatives analyses and initial planning
 - Resolution of support for mode and alignment recommendation
 - Commitment and to develop transit-supportive plans and policies that meet minimum expectations for transit station areas and to undertake station-area planning

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Metropolitan Council has several additional resources for communities working on transitway planning that provide more specific guidance to local government about how to best plan for and implement land use that supports transitway investments.

- [Transportation Policy Plan – Transit Design and Performance Guidelines](#)
- [Transit-Oriented Development Guide](#)
- [Livable Communities Act Transit-Oriented Development Grants Webpage](#)

In addition to these resources, communities should contact the transit agency providing service in their area and/or the lead agency working on delivering a specific transitway. Lead agencies are typically transit agencies (more common with arterial bus rapid transit projects) or counties (more often with highway or dedicated bus rapid transit and rail projects). In some cases, cities have been the lead agency. If you are unsure who to contact, refer to the project webpage or contact your Met Council [sector representative](#).