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# RESPONSE TO COMMENTS SUMMARY

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## MINNESOTA STATE HIGHWAY INVESTMENT PLAN UPDATE - PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

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### OVERVIEW

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) is updating the Minnesota State Highway Investment Plan (MnSHIP). MnDOT released a draft of the Public Participation Plan, which outlines how Minnesotans will be involved in the MnSHIP update, for formal public review and comment on July 7, 2021. The comment period closed on July 22, 2021. MnDOT advertised the public comment period in the State Register and via the project website and an email update. Minnesotans were able to submit comments via online form, email, or phone.

This document summarizes the comments submitted during the public comment period and provides MnDOT's response. The final Public Participation Plan is available at [minnesotago.org](https://minnesotago.org).

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### COMMENTS

MnDOT received two comments from individuals and organizations:

**Fred Sandal (St. Cloud Area Planning Organization):**

*Hello Josh,*

*The Saint Cloud APO has reviewed the proposed Public Participation Plan for the MnSHIP update.*

*Careful thought has been given to representative stakeholder engagement using a variety of interactive tools and technologies for both in-person and on-line formats. We note the use of ADA accessible formats, that MnSHIP materials will be made available in translations, and use of social media to drive participation to your online engagement tools. All appears to be very correct and in-line with the latest Federal and State guidance on inclusive stakeholder engagement.*

*We appreciate that you are measuring outreach through quantitative and qualitative measures. We are very interested in the success you achieve in your use of many new interactive tools throughout plan development. I would be most appreciative if you can share your evaluation of the outreach when available. We are considering the applicability of these tools for public engagement as the APO looks to its own plan and project development needs.*

*Please keep us informed of other opportunities to comment as the MnSHIP plan develops.*

Fred Sandal  
Associate Planner  
St. Cloud Area Planning Organization

**Michael Robertson:**

*To All Involved in this Plan,*

*I am writing as a private citizen who is not affiliated with any particular transportation or political group.*

*I urge you to think outside the box in developing this plan. In particular I suggest the following.*

- 1) The shoulders of highways, particularly interstates, should be converted into thru lanes. I am 65 so I remember when the shoulders would be littered with stalled cars during very cold winter days. That doesn't happen any more. In fact, the sight of a vehicle on the shoulder of a highway is a rare sight today. Rather than being a waste of space used only rarely by a stalled vehicle, these shoulders could be put to use. I'm aware that many shoulders don't have the underlying base that regular lanes do. Reconstructing them with a good base is still much, much cheaper than acquiring land and going thru all the hoops necessary to add capacity to crowded highways. In fact, some shoulders are now used as bus lanes. That should mean that they are good enough for all vehicles. In addition, when there are repairs or resurfacing of traffic lanes, shoulders are often used as part of the detour. Both those examples preclude the use of shoulders for stalled vehicles. If the shoulders are good enough to be used for vehicle traffic in those circumstances, they should be used for regular traffic in all circumstances. This would be a way to add capacity to highways at much less cost than typical expansions.*
- 2) I suggest that highways, particularly interstates, be studied for the possibility of designating one lane in each direction exclusively for truck traffic. These lanes could have limited access points. This would remove truck traffic from heavily traveled highways, which would also increase capacity. It would be a boon to interstate trucking, as the trucks would not have to share the road with cars, which would be safer for both parties.*

*Thank you for allowing comments on your plan. Please share this email with all of the project planning personnel.*

*Sincerely,*

*Michael Robertson*

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## **RESPONSES**

**Fred Sandal (St. Cloud Area Planning Organization):**

*Thank you for your comment. MnDOT will conduct an evaluation of the public outreach techniques used by the project team following major outreach phases and efforts during the public participation process. When appropriate, MnDOT will share the evaluation of these efforts with the APO.*

**Michael Robertson:**

*We appreciate your response and encourage your continued participation throughout the MnSHIP public participation process.*

No changes were made to the draft Public Participation Plan. Stay informed about the plan update via [www.MinnesotaGO.org](http://www.MinnesotaGO.org).