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# WHAT IS DIRECTING THIS PLAN

This update of the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan (SMTP) was based on evaluation of the public and stakeholder engagement and analyses of other plans and studies by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) or transportation partners completed since 2017. The work that guided this plan has highlighted the complex problems facing Minnesota today and into the future. Commitment is needed from all who have a role in making transportation move for Minnesotans. MnDOT in collaboration with the public, stakeholders and partners have incorporated these insights into the policy direction in Chapter 5.

## READ CHAPTER 4 TO:

- Learn how MnDOT connected with people through plan engagement.
- Read what staff learned through reviewing plans and studies that relate to transportation.
- Learn about the plan's state and federal requirements.
- Read about the plan's six focus areas:
  - Aging Infrastructure
  - Climate Change
  - Economy and Employment
  - Equity
  - Safety
  - Transportation Options

# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Transportation has a large impact on people, the environment and the economy. People have a right and deserve to be involved in decisions that impact their lives. Accordingly, public engagement was an essential part of the update to the SMTP. The transportation system exists to meet the needs of the people and businesses in Minnesota. It is important to understand what those needs are and use that information to guide decision making. It is also important that everyone is able to participate and be heard.

A high-level summary of engagement is included in the following section. More detailed information can be found in Appendix G – Engagement Summary.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN CONTEXT

The impact of transportation on peoples’ lives has the potential for vast change. Not all people experience outcomes equitably. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately affected Black, Indigenous and People of color (BIPOC) due to ongoing systemic health and social inequities. These inequities combined with the killing of Philando Castile in 2016, George Floyd in 2020 and Daunte Wright in 2021 have highlighted the need to focus on racial and social justice.

Long-range planning efforts like the SMTP have the potential to address some of these inequities

when planning within the social and economic context of the time. However, plans like the SMTP are not at the top of many Minnesotans’ minds. The goal for this update of the SMTP was to have meaningful, inclusive and accessible interactions with Minnesotans while understanding demands from these overlapping public health crises.

MnDOT recognized the extraordinary circumstances surrounding the plan process. However, the goal to engage Minnesotans meaningfully in this project remained. MnDOT committed to a flexible, phased approach to respond to the changing context.





*“I believe it is essential to ensure we find ways to live together across diverse perspectives and that people who have been underrepresented in opportunities for health and [unclear] gain be given more support.”*

*– Comment shared during SMTP engagement*

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## COMMITTEES & WORK GROUPS

The project team created several advisory committees and work groups that helped to guide the planning process. These groups included individuals from a variety of audiences.

### **POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PAC)**

guided the overall SMTP update process, including advising on engagement activities. PAC members included advocacy organizations, boards, councils, stakeholders and partners who represent different perspectives and modes of transportation.

### **TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)**

provided guidance on the plan update process, including input on engagement activities. The TAC helped ensure the final policy strategies reflect the priorities and needs of MnDOT and partners. TAC members included staff from MnDOT, other state agencies and partner transportation organizations.

**WORK GROUPS** related to the six focus areas identified in Phase 1 engagement – one work group for each focus area. These groups addressed technical issues and drafted strategies for MnDOT and partners to address transportation priorities. Members included staff from MnDOT and partner agencies with subject matter expertise in each topic. The six work groups were:

- Aging Infrastructure
- Climate Change
- Economy and Employment
- Equity
- Safety
- Transportation Options

A complete list of committee and work group members is included in Appendix A – Acknowledgments.



## TRIBAL COORDINATION & CONSULTATION

Minnesota is home to 11 federally recognized reservations or communities and 12 federally recognized sovereign governments (see Figure 4-1). Each tribe is a separate sovereign nation — unique unto itself and distinct from all other federally recognized tribes. Each tribe has an independent relationship with the United States and the State of Minnesota. Minnesota affirmed the government-to-government relationships between tribes and the state by Minnesota Statute Section 10.65 and Executive Order 19-24.

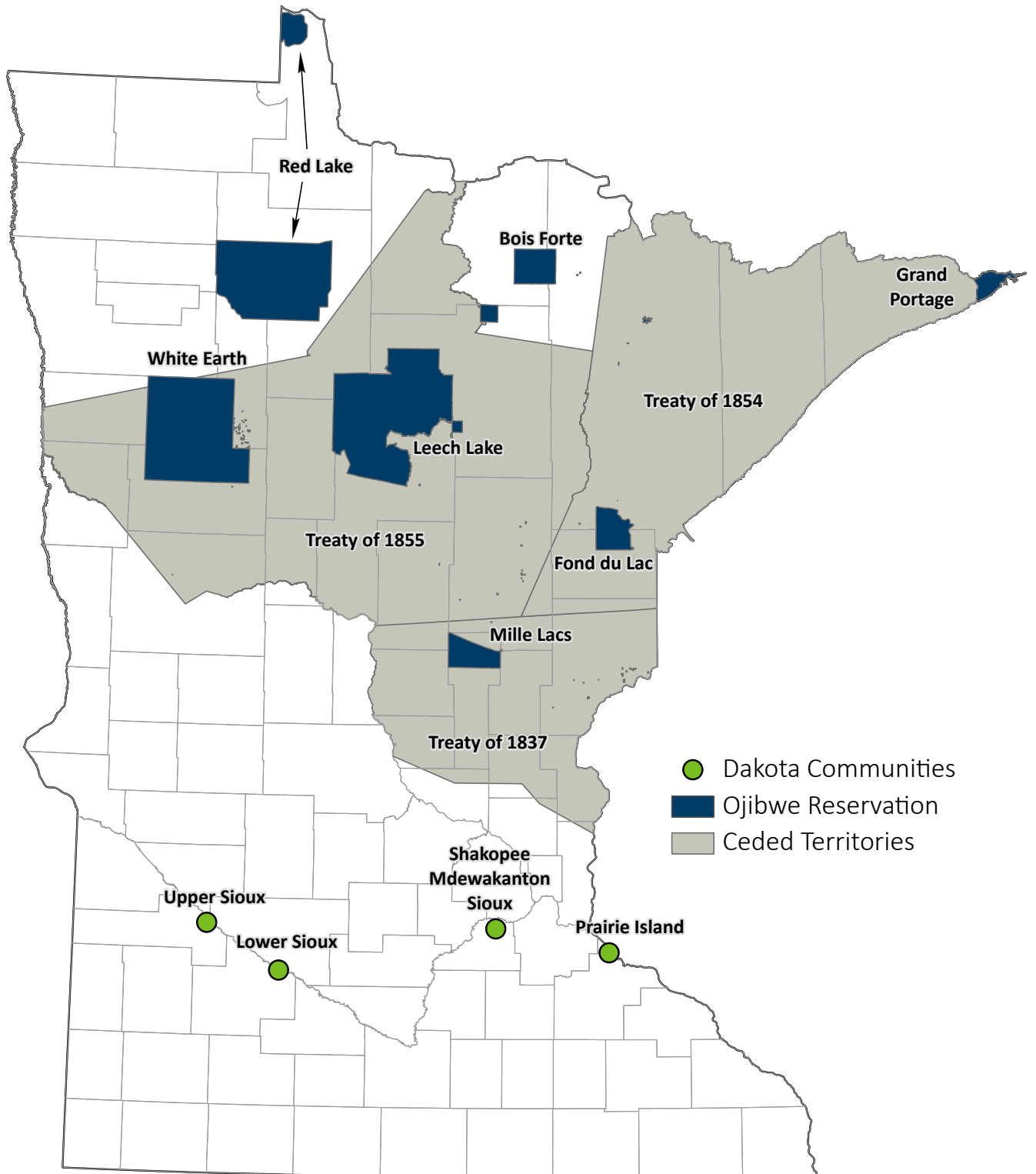
It is important to recognize the long history and enduring relationship between Indigenous peoples' connection to “Mni Sota” and the lasting impacts of policies detrimental to the balance of nature. Mutually respectful relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples are founded on long-term relationship-building, learning processes and developing solutions. Meaningful consultation assists in building better relationships and ensuring a transportation system that works for all.

For this update of the SMTP, MnDOT engaged with Tribal Nations through a government-to-government process. Tribal Nations were asked to provide tribal transportation plans as part of the planning review process. To ensure Tribal Nations interests are included in these high-level decisions, Minnesota Indian Affairs Council helped to designate representatives to serve on three advisory committees (see Appendix A – Acknowledgments). Three Tribes participated in staff-to-staff coordination meetings: Bois Forte, Prairie Island Indian Community and White Earth Nation. Additionally, staff presented to the Advisory Council for Tribal Transportation at key decision points: project start, public launch, strategy development, policy direction coordination and public comment period.

More details about coordination and consultation with Tribal Nations can be found in Appendix G – Engagement Summary and Appendix J – Tribal Coordination and Consultation.



Figure 4-1: Tribal reservations and communities in Minnesota, 2021



## WE ARE STILL HERE

We live in a place the Dakota call “Mni Sota”, which is not only our state’s name but can be translated to “where the sky reflects off the water.” MnDOT acknowledges the Dakota and Ojibwe people that have historically called this place home, **are still here**. To discuss land acknowledgement, we must recognize that historic events on this land had serious consequences to Tribal Nations, including the Dakota and Ojibwe people, and MnDOT, as a state agency, must not only be willing to verbally acknowledge but go beyond and take action.

After 163 years, Minnesota state elected leaders have not only recognized that **TRIBAL NATIONS ARE STILL HERE**

but also codified the government-to-government relationship between Tribal Nations and the State of Minnesota. MnDOT acknowledges Dakota and Ojibwe self-governance, self-determination, and that they adopted the first and most effective sustainability laws.

MnDOT not only verbally acknowledges land issues that paint a shared past but is also taking action with Dakota and Ojibwe Nations to forge a new future around these lands we call home.

The Ojibwe and Dakota people believe you live with the land. It is not something you own but rather an animate being, full of living things, all equally important to human beings. So, we must take advantage of this opportunity to move past our historic social norms to truly acknowledge the historic events around these lands we call Mni Sota, home of the Dakota and Anishinaabe.

One opportunity for the SMTP is to demonstrate that our work will be different. The objectives, strategies and actions in Chapter 5 emphasize investing time and resources in relationships with the eleven Tribal Nations in Minnesota. Building better relationships helps to ensure a transportation system that works for all Minnesotans. Early coordination is key to meaningful consultation with Tribal Nations.



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## NECESSARY CONCEPTS ABOUT JURISDICTION IN INDIAN COUNTRY

To understand jurisdiction in Indian country, there are a few basic concepts that you need to know about first. To that end, this section will explain that tribes are sovereign nations and that “Indian” is a legal status, not just a race. This section will also explore the definitions of the terms “jurisdiction” and “Indian country,” as well as how jurisdiction in Indian country impacts transportation.

**TRIBES ARE SOVEREIGN NATIONS.** Sovereignty is the authority of a political entity to govern itself. A tribe determines its own government structures and laws.

**“INDIAN” IS A LEGAL STATUS, NOT SIMPLY A RACE.** You might think of “Indian” as a race. It is true that individuals can self-identify as belonging to the race “American Indian” on Census Bureau surveys. However, “Indian” is also a legal status.

**WHAT IS JURISDICTION?** Jurisdiction is the power and authority of a government or court to make or enforce law. The federal government, state government, and tribal governments all have different jurisdiction (i.e., different powers to make and enforce law). When determining what kind of jurisdiction a government has, where you are located geographically is important.

**WHAT IS INDIAN COUNTRY?** The most commonly used definition of Indian country comes from federal criminal law, but courts often use the same definition in civil (non-criminal) court cases. Indian country includes more than just reservations. Here is a simplified version of the most commonly used definition of Indian country: reservations; allotments; and “dependent Indian communities” (i.e., land that is federally supervised and set aside for the use of Indians, this is usually found on trust land). You can find the complete – more nuanced – definition of Indian country at 18 U.S.C. § 1151.

Appendix J – Tribal Coordination and Consultation has more information about:

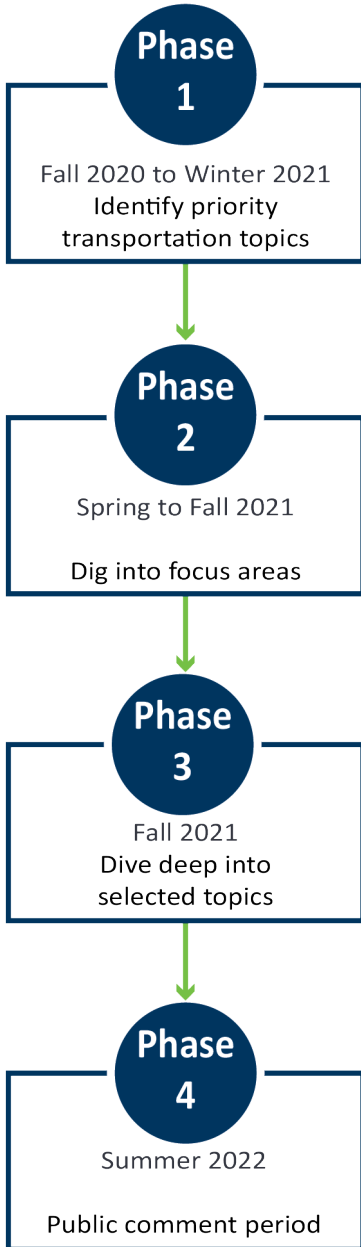
- Building better relationships with Tribal Nations.
- Case studies of recent work MnDOT has completed in partnership with Tribal Nations.
- Considerations for Tribal Coordination.
- Details about Tribal Coordination and Consultation throughout the SMTP.

Much of the information in Appendix J can apply to any jurisdiction wanting to build better relationships with Tribal Nations.



## PHASED APPROACH

**Figure 4-2: Four Phases of SMTP Engagement**



The four-phased engagement approach (see Figure 4-2) included a variety of ways and opportunities to meet people where they were at. The goal during Phase 1 (completed in early 2021) focused on identifying six focus areas for the SMTP update. The goal for Phase 2 (completed in fall 2021) was to dive deep into each of these six focus areas. The goal for Phase 3 (completed in fall 2021) was to get more feedback on select topics where MnDOT and transportation partners needed more information on how to proceed. Phase 4 (completed in summer 2022) was the public comment period and hearing for the draft SMTP. See the [Overall Engagement Summary](#) for a brief overview of Phase 1-3 engagement activities.

### PHASE 1

Phase 1 began in October 2020 and ended February 2021. The first phase of engagement focused on connecting with both the general public and transportation partners. This phase prioritized partnerships with community-based organizations and promoted input opportunities with communities and people who have been underserved by transportation decision making. Activities built a broad understanding of Minnesotans’ transportation challenges and priorities over the next 20 years. MnDOT asked participants to identify up to six focus areas for this plan update. See the [Phase 1 Engagement Summary](#) for more information on activities, demographics and what MnDOT learned.

### PHASE 2


Phase 2 began in March 2021 and ended in October 2021. The second phase of engagement dove deep into each of six focus areas to understand impacts to the transportation system. People were asked to share ideas that evolved into draft strategies and actions for the six focus areas—aging infrastructure, climate change, economy and employment, equity, safety and transportation options. See the [Phase 2 Engagement Summary](#) and [Transportation Equity Definition Report](#) for more information on activities, demographics and what MnDOT learned.

Figure 4-3: SMTP Mode Lib Postcard, 2020

MINNESOTA  
TRANSPORTATION CENTER

### Transportation Mode Lib Game

## A FILL-IN-THE-BLANK STORY ABOUT HOW YOU MOVE IN MINNESOTA




I am a \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_ ideas for the future of transportation in Minnesota!

For the past few years, I would go to \_\_\_\_\_ almost every day to \_\_\_\_\_. These trips were \_\_\_\_\_, I would use \_\_\_\_\_ most often because I needed a \_\_\_\_\_ way to get there. In an ideal world I would be able to move around using \_\_\_\_\_ to get to \_\_\_\_\_.

Life has changed a lot since April, when our normal routines changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, I go to \_\_\_\_\_ way more often, but go to \_\_\_\_\_ much less frequently. Instead of \_\_\_\_\_ now I take my \_\_\_\_\_ and it is \_\_\_\_\_. Over the last 6 months, I realized I would like to \_\_\_\_\_ more in the future.

Ever since \_\_\_\_\_ it has been \_\_\_\_\_ to go to \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_. I feel especially \_\_\_\_\_ about that.

The easiest way to take short trips around my community is \_\_\_\_\_. Someday, I hope that: \_\_\_\_\_



Send this back to us or go online to submit your story!  
[www.minnesotago.org/modelib](http://www.minnesotago.org/modelib)




Illustration by Noah Lawrence-Holder

Figure 4-4: SMTP Air Quality Comic, 2021

LET'S TALK

# AIR QUALITY!



HIGHER EFFICIENCY VEHICLES,



REGULATION OF ENGINE DESIGNS AND ALLOWABLE EMISSIONS,



OVERALL, AIR QUALITY HAS IMPROVED IN THE US SINCE THE 1970'S CLEAN AIR ACT.



HOWEVER, POOR AIR QUALITY CONTINUES TO HARM MINNESOTANS --



ESPECIALLY BLACK, INDIGENOUS AND PEOPLE OF COLOR.

AND RIDING BIKES AND BUSES MORE - WHILE USING OUR CARS LESS.



TRANSPORTATION CONTINUES TO BE THE THIRD LARGEST POLLUTANT IN THE US.



HOWEVER, TRANSPORTATION EMISSIONS ARE IMPROVING FOR A FEW KEY REASONS:



WHAT DO YOU THINK CLEANER TRANSPORTATION IN MINNESOTA MIGHT LOOK LIKE?





## CHAPTER 4 | PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

### PHASE 3

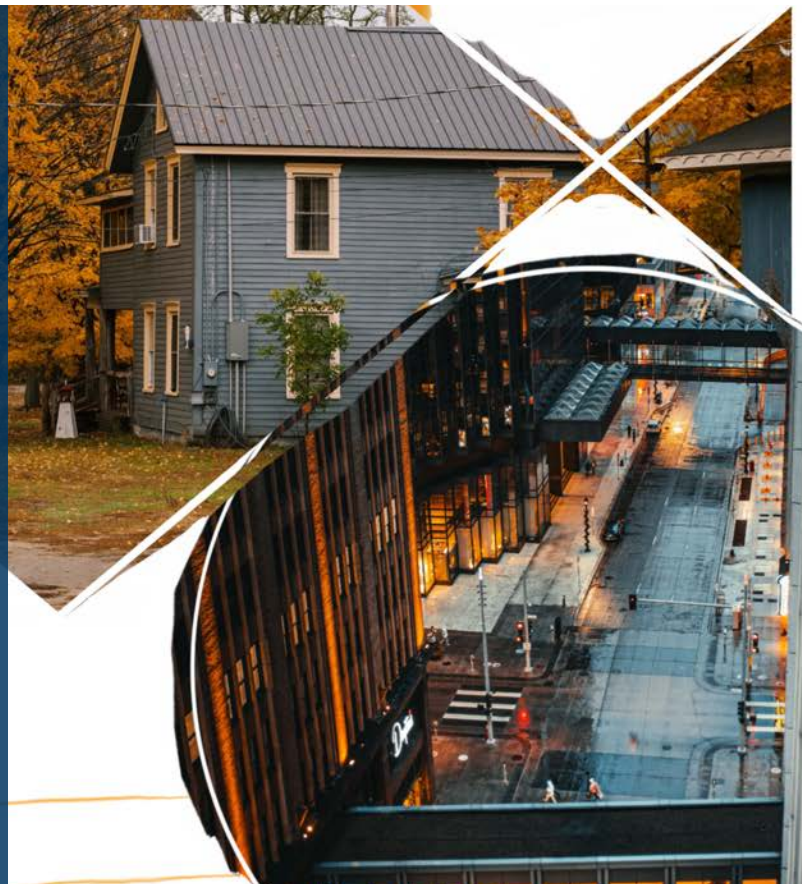
Phase 3 began in September 2021 and ended in December 2021. The aim was to get feedback on select topics where MnDOT and transportation partners needed more information on how to proceed. Phase 3 included both virtual and in-person engagement activities. The changing circumstances around COVID-19 briefly provided an opportunity for staff to connect with people at in-person community events. Phase 3 included a collaboration with MnDOT’s Artist-in-Residence, Marcus Young 楊墨, to facilitate the Council of Old and New Wisdom. Two forums provided opportunities for stakeholders to share feedback on select policy areas where MnDOT could use additional guidance. See the [Phase 3 Engagement Summary, Council of Old and New Wisdom Report, Policy Panel Survey and Discussion Forum Report](#) and [Stakeholder Forum Summary](#) for more information on activities, demographics and what MnDOT learned.

*“Both my mind and my heart agree that the bridges that we build – physically, theoretically and spiritually – connect us to a world bigger than ourselves, and will likely impact the safety of my children and my grandchildren. And when I think about that, I want to mix concrete. I want to pour it in all of the places that need something solid. So that the safety of this collective project can more than anything be what matters the most. I feel like the world around us sometimes only focuses on an agenda. We don’t think about the human aspect of it; we don’t think about the people that it might impact.”*

-Marie Chanté Flowers, Council of Old and New Wisdom

### PHASE 4

Phase 4 ended on September 18, 2022, with the completion of the eight-week public comment period and public hearing held on September 7, 2022.



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# PLANNING REVIEWS

The SMTP development process includes plan analyses to ensure we are tracking current and relevant work completed by MnDOT, Tribal governments, transportation partners and other organizations. This section is a summary of work that offered insights that informed how engagement was conducted and what was included in the policy direction in Chapter 5.

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## PREVIOUS PLAN REVIEW

This SMTP is an update of the 2017-2036 SMTP. To inform the update of the plan, MnDOT staff reviewed engagement conducted for the 2017 plan, progress on the 2017-2020 Work Plan for MnDOT identified in the 2017 plan and the recommendations of a Health Impact Assessment by the Minnesota Department of Health on the 2017 plan.

### ENGAGEMENT REVIEW

In developing the previous SMTP (2017-2036) MnDOT conducted robust engagement receiving over 12,000 responses, which included determining which trends impacting transportation were the most important. In 2019, MnDOT staff completed a qualitative review of the responses to identify common themes and rationale about why the trends were important. Common themes followed topics included in the 2017 plan's objectives:

- Access and use of different modes (Critical Connections)
- Asset management, funding, spending, extreme weather (System Stewardship)
- Environment, land use, complete streets/context sensitive solutions, behavior, health equity (Healthy Communities)
- Planning and engagement processes, performance measurement, data, technology (Open Decision Making)
- Safety related to different modes (Transportation Safety)

### EQUITY IN THE 2017 SMTP ENGAGEMENT

MnDOT completed a deeper analysis on transportation equity in the engagement responses. The analysis signaled the need to ask about access to destinations, transportation options, travel experiences, opportunities to provide input and barriers to transportation. Themes from the analysis noted the need to plan for:

- Providing safe, convenient and affordable transportation alternatives to driving. Quality transportation options are essential for equity.
- Minimizing environmental impacts. People of different races and people with low incomes are disproportionately affected.
- Meeting the transportation needs of people of different races and people with low incomes first.

The themes from the analysis also highlighted the need to use a people-first planning approach and a health-equity lens in setting the policy direction. See Appendix D – Planning Reviews to see the 2017 SMTP Engagement Review.



## CHAPTER 4 | PLANNING REVIEWS

### 2017-2020 SMTP WORK PLAN ASSESSMENT

The 2017 SMTP included a MnDOT-specific work plan with 17 activities to advance the goals and objectives established in the plan. The activities were organized into six subject areas:

- Engagement, communications & education
- Advancing equity
- Asset management
- Land use & transportation
- Planning
- Climate change & environmental quality

Progress on the work plan items were listed as complete, substantial progress, some progress or in progress. At the time of the assessment, all 2017-2020 Work Plan items had been initiated. Only two were marked as complete: increase the transparency of MnDOT's project selection processes and review existing and potential new National Highway System intermodal connectors.

See Appendix D – Planning Reviews to see the 2017 SMTP Work Plan Assessment.

### HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES REVIEW

The 2017 SMTP was cross-referenced with the corresponding 2016 Health Impact Assessment (HIA). The review focused on confirming areas where the SMTP included health recommendations and identifying opportunities for greater inclusion in the SMTP update process. Opportunities identified for inclusion in the 2022 SMTP range fell into the following five categories:

- Transportation Safety
- Critical Connections
- Equity
- Healthy Communities
- Additional Opportunities for the SMTP update

See Appendix D – Planning Reviews to read the results of the Health in All Policies Review of the 2017 SMTP.



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## OTHER MNDOT, PEER & PARTNER PLAN REVIEW

Staff compiled a list of peer and partner agencies whose work is impacted or informed by transportation decisions or is transportation focused. Staff reviewed nearly 100 plans completed since January 2017—the adoption date for the previous SMTP. The review confirmed that MnDOT, partners and peers were tracking similar trends and issues. Many of the topics in the plans and studies were topics MnDOT had already integrated into its work or was tracking for the 2022 SMTP. Examples of topics and trends MnDOT is already tracking include planning for all transportation modes, economic vitality, safety and environmental stewardship. This alignment confirms staff were aware of the trends and topics most likely to affect transportation.

The review identified the following potential new topics to include in MnDOT’s trend analysis. Other MnDOT plans and programs may already consider these, but this review indicated increased emphasis on their importance.

- Extreme weather impacts
- Housing affordability
- Logistics including change in freight traffic
- Park access and transportation needs
- Travel safety including speeds

See Appendix D – Planning Reviews to learn more about the Other MnDOT, Peer and Partner Plan Review.





# PLANNING REQUIREMENTS

The SMTP update process is guided by federal, state and agency requirements. Chapter 1 includes a list of state transportation goals. Two notable requirements guiding the 2022 SMTP are Environmental Justice & Title VI and Justice40. A complete list of requirements can also be found in Appendix K – Planning Requirements.

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## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE & TITLE VI

Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color and national origin in federally funded programs and activities. Additionally, Presidential Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice requires agencies to identify and address the effects of all programs, policies and activities on minority and low-income populations.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of environmental justice is to ensure that public agencies treat people fairly and involve them in meaningful ways during the development and implementation of transportation plans and projects.

Appendix E – Environmental Justice and Title VI provides an analysis of the potential impacts the policy direction identified in Chapter 5 may have on the state’s environmental justice populations. More information on how MnDOT engaged people in the SMTP plan process can be found in Appendix G – Engagement Summary.

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## JUSTICE40

In January 2021, President Biden signed Executive Order 14008 “Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad,” which created the Justice40 Initiative. Justice40 aims to “deliver 40% of the overall benefits of relevant federal investments to disadvantaged communities.” The Executive Order combined with investments like the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) make this the largest expansion in environmental justice in history. The initiative is to ensure cross-governmental collaboration to ensure benefits from investments in climate and clean energy are delivered to disadvantaged communities.

Given transportation’s role in contributing to climate change and contributing to inequities in communities, the industry will need to align work to ensure federal investments achieve this goal. Implementation of Justice40 is unclear. However, the policy direction in Chapter 5 helps to build a foundation for this work going forward.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. President. Proclamation. “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Population and Low-Income Populations,” Executive Order 12898 of February 11, 1994, Federal Register 59, no.32 (February 16, 1994), <https://www.archives.gov/files/federal-register/executive-orders/pdf/12898.pdf>.

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# PLAN FOCUS AREAS & EQUITY REVIEW

Planning context, analysis and public engagement resulted in the following framework guiding the SMTP policy guidance and work plan. Since the adoption of the Minnesota GO Vision in 2011, MnDOT has helped to usher in a new standard for moving people and goods. This includes using technology, strategic investments and commitment to communities to make transportation more equitable, sustainable, efficient and convenient.

However, there is uncertainty of what the future may look like and what the lasting impacts of COVID-19 will be. People are experiencing the quadruple threat of a pandemic, systemic racism, climate change and an inequitable economic recovery. Any one of these crises could have significant consequences to people, the environment or the economy. Combined, the threats have created fluid, uncertain and complex challenges in which action can feel more hasty than bold.

Yet, the future can be more equitable, sustainable, efficient and convenient if planned in context. The

results of the work outlined in this chapter highlights the importance of acknowledging the most significant challenges and how the transportation system can change to deliver on the promises of the Minnesota GO Vision. To be clear on the priorities for transportation in Minnesota, this update of the SMTP is centered on six focus areas that cut across all transportation topics:

- Aging infrastructure
- Climate change
- Economy and employment
- Equity
- Safety
- Transportation options

The objective statements, performance measures, strategies and actions in Chapter 5 are the result of work completed by six work groups—one for each focus area. The TAC and PAC further refined the policy direction. Policy development was informed by an equity review process to ensure the policy direction advances transportation equity.





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## FOCUS AREAS

### AGING INFRASTRUCTURE

Minnesota’s transportation system shows signs of deterioration and requires attention. Between the 1950s and 1980s, the growth of urban and suburban areas required a rapid build out of sewer, transportation, utility and water systems. This means that a majority of transportation and other infrastructure was built between 40 and 80 years ago. This infrastructure is aging, which requires increased maintenance and repairs.

Minnesota, like other states across the nation, has an abundance of aging roads and bridges that need upkeep. For reference, MnDOT typically reconstructs roads when the road is between 70 and 80 years old and bridges are typically reconstructed when they are between 50 to 100 years old. Additionally, maintenance needs can be found on city and county roads, transit systems, ports and waterways, railroads and airports. These add to an ever-growing list of investments needed to maintain the quality of the state’s transportation system.

Faced with an extensive, rapidly aging system and increasing construction costs, transportation partners in Minnesota are struggling to keep the system out of poor condition. Poor condition can look like out-of-service transit vehicles, gaps in sidewalks, bridges in need of repair and poor pavement quality. Not only do deficiencies result in rough roads, sidewalks that fail to meet ADA standards, etc., deterioration can also make the system vulnerable to risks from things like climate change and extreme weather.

Climate change will likely disrupt critical systems, increase operating costs, exacerbate funding gaps and cause spillover effects for our communities and economy. Few infrastructure assets will be left untouched by the changing climate and none can be ignored entirely. However, investment needs present opportunities to build back better to adapt the transportation system to meet the challenges of climate change and extreme weather events.

*“Rebuild what is needed cost effectively. Do not let it get into poor condition which requires complete reconstruction.”*

*– Comment shared during SMTP engagement*

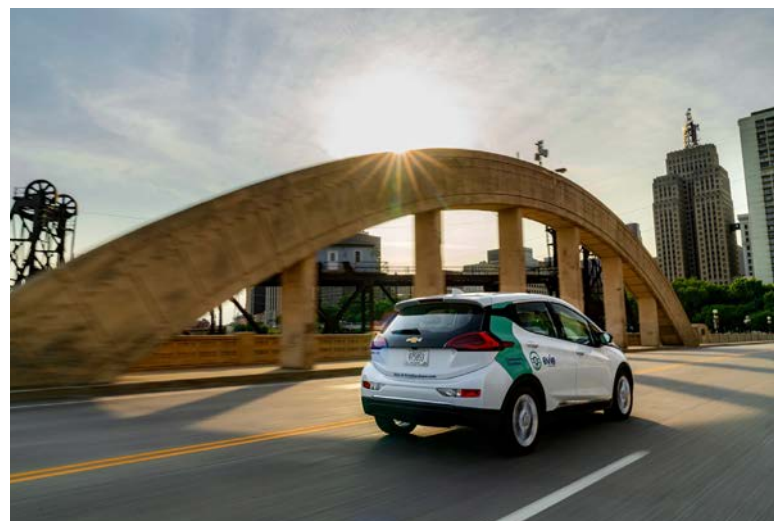
## CLIMATE CHANGE

Minnesota’s climate is changing rapidly. Temperatures are increasing and larger, more frequent extreme weather events are occurring year-round. Substantial warming during winter and at night and increased rain and snow fall damage buildings and infrastructure, limit recreational opportunities, alter growing seasons and impact natural resources. The decades ahead will bring even warmer winters and nights, even larger rainfall events, increased summer heat and longer droughts. For these reasons, climate change will impact the way transportation infrastructure is used, built, operated and maintained.

Transportation is the largest contributor to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions—the most significant driver of climate change—in the state. While GHG emissions from the transportation sector have been declining since 2005, Minnesota did not meet the statewide 2015 emissions target. Although continued declines in emissions are projected, they are still projected to be 10 to 15% higher than the 2030 reduction target. While transportation contributes a large percentage of GHG emissions, the sector can also deliver strategies to reduce transportation’s impact to the climate. However, bolder action is needed to meet targets to reduce and mitigate GHG emissions.

The SMTP focuses on how the transportation system—not just individual people—can act to combat climate change. The transportation choices people make as individuals contribute to climate change. However, people’s choices are constrained by the options available and affordable to them. Many Minnesotans need more choices to ensure their daily transportation needs are met while giving them options to do so in ways that contribute less to climate change. Change starts with bold policy solutions to ensure people have choices in how, when and in what form they act.

A combination of statewide policy solutions, like those in this SMTP, and local actions are needed to connect the goals of climate action with the tangible choices people have available to them. The future of transportation and climate change requires more coordination across jurisdictions and disciplines. Transportation will need to make a shift to default to climate-friendly options such as using modes that don’t depend on fossil fuels and building in ways that reduce impact on the environment. This shift will require the transportation system to look, feel, operate and be maintained differently in the coming decades.





### ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT

Trends in Minnesota’s economy are highly reflective of demographic, environmental and technological trends in the state. Changes in these areas impact the types of businesses that are needed to provide the goods and services that are in demand. Ensuring that a variety of modes are available to move goods to, from and within Minnesota is a vital part of supporting economic expansion and recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. Greater employment in service-based industries has changed where people work and the times that they need to be at work, placing changing demands on the transportation system, especially in Minnesota’s cities and towns.

Rising inflation and ongoing global supply chain disruptions are putting even greater pressure on Minnesota’s businesses, households and transportation partners.

Changes in the manufacturing sector may necessitate easier access to air cargo facilities to ship smaller, high value goods. On-demand shipping will continue to change the way that people think about delivery and courier services, and the way that those services use the transportation system. Freight movement was changing before the pandemic. But COVID-19 accelerated the trend toward customized deliveries for individual consumers. Freight destinations used to be focused on hubs and businesses, but now have expanded to include individual homes. Any place with an address can now be served as a freight destination.

Economic trends impacting transportation will also change the future of the transportation workforce. The sector employs millions of people in planning, design, construction, operation and maintenance of the vast transportation system. Many more people rely on transportation-related fields like freight operators and state troopers. Driver shortages, skills mismatch, an aging workforce, etc. are raising concerns about how to ensure the workforce can deliver the transportation system Minnesotans need and rely on. Also, evolving industry needs are requiring more and different positions like accountants, IT professionals, lawyers, etc. now and in the future.

Dealing with workforce challenges may require changes in ways transportation agencies do business and the role of partnerships. The transportation future in Minnesota needs to maintain flexibility to be nimble to serve people, businesses and the economy. Coordinated and collaborative solutions are needed to keep Minnesota’s economy and workforce moving.



## EQUITY

Policy, design and operations in housing and transportation have led to inequities for BIPOC. For example, construction of the interstate system in the 1950s displaced homes, businesses, places of faith and more. This mostly took place in communities where loans were denied or housing was restricted by deed, which led to much lower property values. Highway development was favored over investment in public transit for decades. As a result, housing development has been happening further from key destinations, further compounding issues of equity and access to jobs and essential services. These and other practices have exacerbated segregation and income inequity over generations creating a harmful legacy of past decisions. These inequities combined with the killing of Philando Castile, George Floyd and Daunte Wright have highlighted the need to focus on racial and social justice. This legacy has strengthened Minnesota’s commitment to advance transportation equity today.

MnDOT’s [Advancing Transportation Equity Initiative](#) has aimed to better understand how the transportation system, services and decision-making processes help or hinder the lives of people in underserved and underrepresented communities in Minnesota. The initiative has looked at transportation equity at a high level. Work completed as part of the initiative has ranged from equity-focused conversations with stakeholders in Greater Minnesota, policy and program equity reviews, research and more. Insights include:

- Lack of an agency-wide transportation equity definition or specific target populations is a challenge
- Equitable engagement is necessary but not sufficient
- Statewide solutions to advance equity can help address broader transportation challenges and vice versa
- Need to move beyond research to implementation

The 2022 SMTP process included several activities to embed transportation equity in the planning approach. Staff collaborated with the Minnesota Department of Health to complete a Health in All Policies review of the 2017 SMTP. Equity was one of six focus areas, which resulted in the Equity Work Group that advised the process and draft policy direction. An equity review was developed and applied to review all draft strategies and solutions. More work is needed to be able to measure progress and hold transportation decision makers accountable.

See Appendix H – Transportation Equity for more information.



# TRANSPORTATION EQUITY STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF PAST HARMS

MnDOT acknowledges the transportation system and agency decisions have underserved, excluded, harmed and overburdened some communities. We understand some of our past decisions denied Black and Indigenous communities as well as people with disabilities the full participation of transportation benefits. These and other underserved communities have historically carried disproportionate burdens of transportation decisions.

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## WHAT TRANSPORTATION EQUITY MEANS TO MNDOT

MnDOT is committed to creating an equitable transportation system.

Transportation equity means the benefits and burdens of transportation systems, services and spending are fair and just, which historically has not been the case. Transportation equity requires ensuring underserved communities, especially Black, Indigenous and People of Color, share in the power of decision making.

The journey of transforming our transportation systems, services and decision-making processes will require ongoing listening, learning, changing, implementing and adapting.

Everyone in our agency regardless of position or work assignment has a role to advance transportation equity. We will partner with community members, community-based organizations, transportation service providers, Tribal Nations and government institutions to evolve our work and to change outcomes for our communities.

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## TRANSPORTATION EQUITY KEY TERMS

What transportation equity means to MnDOT includes several key terms and statements including:

### **BENEFITS**

Transportation benefits are positive impacts of all modes of transportation, including access to affordable, reliable and safe transportation options. Other benefits of transportation include access to affordable housing, employment opportunities, healthy food, clean air and clean water. Transportation benefits are best defined by impacted communities.

### **BURDENS**

Transportation burdens are negative impacts of all modes of transportation including lack of or limited access to affordable, reliable and safe transportation options. Other transportation burdens include exposure to air pollution and related poor health outcomes as well as lack of or limited access to affordable housing and employment opportunities. Transportation burdens are best defined by impacted communities.

### **TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS, SERVICES AND SPENDING**

Transportation systems, services and spending refer to different transportation funding and decision-making processes that impact people. Transportation systems refer to the various elements and networks that constitute the overall state transportation system such as state and local road networks, sidewalks and trails, transit systems, rail networks, ports and airports, etc. Transportation services refer to various programs that transportation agencies manage. Transportation spending refers to the decisions that lead to the allocation of funds for specific activities like snow removal and projects such as spending of capital projects to construct interchanges or spending for maintenance on state highways.

### **FAIR**

Fairness in transportation means everyone has access to transportation outcomes that are free from bias and discrimination. Fairness in transportation requires a proportionate distribution of transportation benefits and burdens.

### **JUST**

Justice in transportation means taking proactive measures to ensure transportation benefits are adequately accessible to underserved communities especially Black, Indigenous and People of Color, who often bear disproportionate transportation burdens. Justice in transportation requires transforming current inequitable systems so no person is denied accessing the transportation opportunities they need to lead a dignified life.

### **UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES**

Underserved communities refer to populations that share a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied through public and private discriminatory practices and neglect the full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social and civic life. This includes Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality. These characteristics can and do overlap, which can magnify and increase the impact experienced.

## CHAPTER 4 | TRANSPORTATION EQUITY KEY TERMS

### BLACK, INDIGENOUS AND PEOPLE OF COLOR (BIPOC)

Transportation equity requires acknowledging past harms by intentionally naming and centering the experiences of communities that faced the most profound transportation harms and racism. While BIPOC includes all people of color, it leads with Black and Indigenous identities to counter anti-Black racism and erasure of Native communities.

### SHARING POWER

Sharing power means creating opportunities for underserved communities to access decision making power. This includes institutional and structural power. Institutional power is the ability to create or greatly influence and shape the rules, policies and actions of an institution. Structural power is the ability to create or greatly influence and shape the rules, policies and actions that govern multiple and intersecting institutions or an industry. Sharing power requires engaging early and often with underserved communities to better understand community needs and incorporating those needs to transportation initiatives that lead to real, measurable change in the lives of community members. Shared power framework recognizes and addresses the power imbalance that often leads to poor and uninformed decisions that perpetuate harms on underserved communities especially Black, Indigenous and People of Color.

Examples of sharing power include:

- Prioritizing solutions that combat the most pressing issues of our time that have disproportionate impact on underserved communities. Rethinking I-94 is a new model of corridor planning to prioritize community needs and co-create solutions to meet the challenges of the transportation system.

- Meaningfully engaging those communities most impacted by structural racism in the creation and implementation of the programs and projects that impact their daily lives. MnDOT recently created a community ambassador position to build better relationships with BIPOC communities.
- Collaborating with partners on projects that meet social and economic priorities for communities. MnDOT regularly partners with jurisdictions on locally initiated and led projects such as transit and interchanges.
- Reforming programs, policies and procedures to deconstruct institutional and structural barriers. The Office of Transportation System Management's Transportation Equity Labs explore programs, policies and procedures with a commitment to advancing transportation equity. Participants can include external partners depending on the focus of the lab.
- Creating a workforce at all levels that is representative of the communities we serve. MnDOT has been expanding partnerships with education partners (e.g., MnDOT's CAV Career Pathways Camp) to ensure our future transportation workforce is representative of our communities and capable of meeting the challenges arising.

Ultimately, MnDOT cannot share decision-making power in all instances, as other agencies also have authority to make key transportation decisions. For example, sovereign Tribal Nations hold authority to make transportation decisions for programs, projects, studies and other efforts for tribal lands. Metropolitan planning organizations, federal and state regulatory agencies, and local units of government all have clear legal charges to make key decisions. Also, the Minnesota Legislature sets spending levels and allowable uses of funds.



## SAFETY

Over the last decade and half, Minnesota has made targeted efforts to reduce traffic fatalities through its multi-agency Toward Zero Deaths initiative. Unfortunately, reduced traffic volumes resulting from COVID-19, along with the expectations around enforcement during the pandemic, is thought to have produced higher speeds and more aggressive driving. That shift in behavior has continued despite a return to pre-pandemic traffic volumes.

### 2021 WAS THE DEADLIEST YEAR ON MINNESOTA'S ROADS IN OVER A DECADE.

Recently, transportation and public safety officials launched a traffic enforcement and awareness campaign aimed at the spike in speed-related fatalities.

This recent increase in traffic-related fatalities illustrates the value of a Safe System approach to transportation. The Safe System approach aims to anticipate human error and accommodate human injury tolerances to reduce fatal and serious injuries. Implementing traditional and new Safe System strategies can incrementally improve safety and help build a culture of safety in transportation.

New technologies like connected and automated vehicles (CAV) have the potential to reduce fatalities and injuries and significantly change the way that people travel. However, many questions still remain on how CAV will impact society as it relates to equity, liability and privacy. That is why it is important to consider the implications of this technology when planning for the future of transportation. One aspect of this is CAV readiness, which assumes a mix of non-automated, partially automated and highly automated vehicles on the roadway—which comes with several safety concerns—and unclear timelines for CAV adoption.

A mix of traditional and new practices and methodologies will likely be required to design the transportation system to prevent and mitigate human error. Partners like those in engineering, enforcement, education and emergency response can help shift the focus to design and operate a safe system for all Minnesotans especially those most vulnerable. Everyone has a role and responsibility to implementing an equitable, Safe System approach.

*“MnDOT and state government can create safe conditions with speed limits, no potholes, and keeping ice and snow off roads. All individuals have a responsibility to be safe and respectful on the roads.”*

*– Policy Panel and Online Discussion Board Participant*

### TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

The more people drive, the more vehicles there are on the road. More vehicles mean more congestion. Measuring delay can help a region understand congestion and its impacts. Delay per person controls for population growth and helps to understand efficiency and reliability on highways. MnDOT collaborated with the Metropolitan Council on the [Twin Cities Highway Mobility Needs Analysis](#) to develop a target of 9 minutes per person per day (equivalent to 40 hours per year). Overall, the transportation system needs a range of solutions including travel demand management, active transportation investment, land use changes and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction to meet the target.

VMT provides a measure of total travel by motor vehicle, travel changes over time and differences in travel among regions and state. When combined with other measures (e.g., accessibility, mode use, delay), VMT becomes a powerful indicator about how the transportation system is functioning. VMT tends to increase with population growth and in areas with lower density and long travel distances. Decreased VMT can have positive impacts on the overall health of people and the environment. For example, VMT bears a direct relationship to vehicle emissions, and can serve as a GHG emissions indicator.

The ability to meet the targets to decrease GHG emissions, delay and VMT requires similar strategies. These include providing more transportation options, encouraging mode shifts and coordinating land use policies. Making these changes allow people to take shorter trips, trips by other modes, combine trips, the opportunity not to travel or option to use virtual options. Health and equity considerations should be central to conversations about decreasing VMT. Without comprehensive and coordinated solutions, people with the least means are most likely to experience the negative impacts of policies to decrease VMT.

Transportation options vary in scale depending on whether people and goods move across the state, throughout a region or within a community. This could mean an integrated network of roads, safe options to bicycle and walk, easy access to transit service or local connections to key freight routes. All connections, regardless of level, location or transportation type, need to be coordinated to ensure they are accessible.

Each person identifies different connections as critical based on where they live and their individual needs. For example, the key connections needed for driving may be different than those for freight, transit, bicycling or walking. Transportation options in the suburban Twin Cities will look different than those for main streets around Greater Minnesota. Collaboration across all partners is required to ensure a connected transportation system offers options and choice for how people and goods move.

*“Not everyone can afford a car and it’s important that cities are accessible for everyone to be able to get around to their jobs, grocery stores, medical appointments, etc. Cities planned around the assumption that everyone has a car are inaccessible and bad for the environment.”*

*– Policy Panel and Online Discussion Board Participant*

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## POLICY DIRECTION EQUITY REVIEW

The Equity Work Group coordinated an equity review of the draft strategies identified by the other five work groups advising the SMTP. The review was completed in three parts—initial evaluation, equity workshop and staff review of strategies. The review process was guided by discussions and input with the Equity Work Group. During the initial evaluation, each of the six work groups prioritized which of the draft strategies would go through the equity review. Comments were consistent across work groups and included changes to strategies that focused on:

- Prioritizing people (specifically BIPOC), historically excluded communities and people disadvantaged in transportation decision making.
- Acknowledging who has been harmed by past decisions.
- Reducing barriers to participation and decision making.
- Considering who are the most vulnerable users of the transportation system.

During the equity workshop, participants discussed a mix of strategies from the equity review and flagged some for further review. Following the workshop, staff completed a thorough review of draft strategies and actions to amend language to advance transportation equity. Staff shared feedback from the equity review with the TAC and PAC, and both committees completed further review of the language. More information on the equity review process is available in Appendix H – Transportation Equity.

***“Our leadership, our people that cared for us, they always thought seven generations ahead. It wasn’t about your child and your grandchild. It was your great, great, great, great, great grandchild. It was thinking about someone who’s not here, and the importance of their care, of there being water, and land, and home, and food.”***

- Juanita Espinosa, Council of Old and New Wisdom

