

STATEWIDE MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

PHASE 1 ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

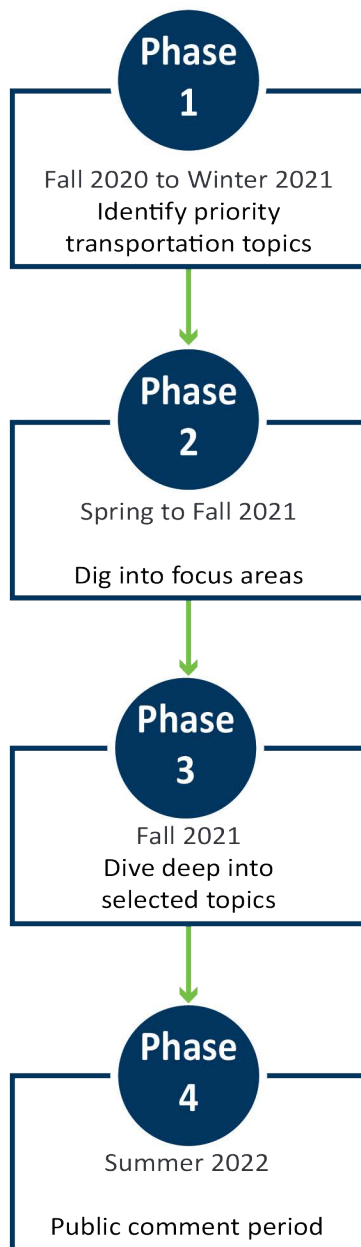


FIGURE 1: FOUR PHASES OF SMTP ENGAGEMENT

PURPOSE

This document explains how people were engaged during Phase 1 of public engagement for the 2022 Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan (SMTP). The SMTP had a four-phased engagement approach. **Figure 1** highlights the four phases of engagement and the focus of each phase. This summary describes the process for Phase 1, what people said and how their comments were used in the planning process.

SUMMARY

Comments received from people during Phase 1 of public engagement for the 2022 SMTP helped the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) select six focus areas: aging infrastructure, climate change, economy and employment, equity, safety and transportation options. These six focus areas were the subjects of more in-depth public engagement and work group activity during Phase 2.

During Phase 1, people were invited to comment via several methods. These included a fun online fill-in-the-blank “Mode Lib” story game. A “VideoAsk” webpage allowed participants to speak or text their comments in English, Spanish, Hmong and Somali. A traditional online survey was also offered. In addition, comments were collected through meetings and via an online comment form.

WHAT IS THE STATEWIDE MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN?

The SMTP explains how we will move toward the Minnesota GO Vision of a multimodal transportation system that maximizes the health of people, the environment and our economy. The SMTP is about more than just MnDOT and the state’s highways. It has information and recommendations for everyone who is involved in moving people and goods in Minnesota—by cars, trucks, bicycles, buses, trains, planes, walking and rolling. The SMTP looks 20 years into the future and is updated every five years with new information and public input about the

transportation system. It looks at how important changes occurring in other parts of society and the economy may influence transportation. It also recommends how the transportation system should respond to and prepare for those changes.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF ENGAGEMENT IN THE 2022 PLAN UPDATE?

Public engagement has a central role in the update of the SMTP. People need and deserve to be involved in decisions that affect their lives, and transportation is something that impacts everyone every day. Therefore, MnDOT provided inclusive and meaningful ways for people to take part in shaping the SMTP. The SMTP planning process was a great opportunity for the public to have a say in Minnesota transportation decision making because it has policies that guide the updates of Minnesota's future plans for highways, rail, aviation, transit, freight and non-motorized transportation (walking, rolling and bicycling).

Public comments on the 2022 SMTP update had an impact because this is the third time the long-range transportation planning process has happened since 2011 when the original Minnesota GO Vision was set. The 2022 SMTP brings a deeper understanding of important transportation topics and sets the stage for updates to MnDOT's modal and system plans.

Phase 1 of public engagement for the SMTP began in October 2020 and ended in February 2021. Phase 2 then began and continued through fall 2021. Phase 2 included online conversations throughout the state with members of community-based organizations, as well as people who are affiliated with transportation partner agencies and Tribal Nations. For those not able to attend online meetings, the same information and comment opportunities were available at MinnesotaGO.org. Also, staff responded and reached out to people individually by telephone to assure that everyone who wishes to comment was able to do so.

Through this approach, MnDOT made efforts to listen closely to the voices of people who are historically underrepresented in transportation decision making, including Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), people with low-income, people with limited English proficiency, and people age 17 and under. Staff prioritized partnerships with community-based organizations, promotions within these communities and input opportunities in Spanish, Hmong and Somali. Restrictions on in-person meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic likely made it difficult for many people to participate in planning.

WHAT DID WE HEAR DURING PHASE 1?

The most often-mentioned comments received during Phase 1 public engagement were about the condition of transportation infrastructure. Coming in a close second was the desire to have more options and better facilities for non-auto travel. Aging infrastructure was most commonly mentioned by transportation partners and industry stakeholders whereas the desire for more transportation options was most frequently mentioned by more public audiences. A total 314 responses were received across all input activities.

Among survey respondents, who were generally transportation partners, addressing aging infrastructure was mentioned most often as the top focus area for the SMTP. This rating was fairly consistent among all people, even if they were from different types of organizations or agencies. The other focus areas that people named on the survey were, in order of frequency, the availability of transportation options, climate change, safety, the environment and equity.

The two other input tools – “Mode Lib” and “Video Ask” – were completed by more public audiences. Among the responses that MnDOT received via the “Mode Lib” fill-in-the-blank story tool, the most often described community “transportation wish” was for better facilities and more options for people who walk and bike. Many others wished for better safety through lower traffic speeds and more transit options. When asked about their favorite way to travel, bicycling, walking and driving were the most common responses.

The stories people told about their transportation experience via the “Mode Lib” activity also highlighted that most people currently use cars to travel to their main destinations. They expressed neutral feelings about their current type of travel but indicated they would be more excited to travel in other ways like by public transportation or walking. Similar sentiments were expressed by participants in the “VideoAsk” activity.

The “Mode Lib” and “VideoAsk” activities also asked about the impacts of COVID-19 on people’s travel now and into the future. Across both platforms, people said that they are driving less and going to places like work, school and bars and restaurants less frequently. Instead, they noted that they walk and bicycle more and travel to parks, outdoor spaces and grocery stores more frequently. They expressed positive feelings about these changes and noted they want to continue walking and bicycling more in the future. They also expressed positive feelings about reduced traffic due to the impacts of COVID-19.

Both input activities also asked about what changed people’s travel apart from COVID-19. Most commonly, people noted life events such as moving, a new work location, staying home or changing family dynamics (marriage, new children, new pets, etc.) as reasons why their travel changed. Many people indicated that these changes made it easier to do shopping and recreational travel by any and all types of transportation. Several noted these changes made this type of travel easier specifically by walking and bicycling. Overall, people expressed positive feelings about these changes to their travel. The “VideoAsk” activity asked people to identify specifically what has made transportation more challenging for them. Construction and unsafe facilities for people who walk and bike were the most common responses.

Additionally, general comments were collected via the “Mode Lib” and “VideoAsk” activities, meetings and an online comment form. Common themes people mentioned were a desire for more transportation options, the impacts of working from home on traffic, wanting to see communities sustainably built and maintained and the importance of equity and accessibility being at the forefront of design. Related to the future of transportation, some people expressed interest in electric, connected and automated vehicles, while others were more interested in expanding options for people to walk and bicycle.

The majority of people who responded during Phase 1 were from community and nonprofit organizations, local government agencies and other public agencies.

HOW DID WE SELECT THE FOCUS AREAS?

MnDOT selected focus areas for the 2022 update by beginning with a review of the 2017 SMTP and looking at the 12,000-plus public comments it received. Staff found opportunities to better address health and equity. Also, staff reviewed more than 100 plans by MnDOT, peer state agencies, federal plans, metropolitan planning organizations and Tribes and found common concerns about aging infrastructure and safety. MnDOT also learned from the Phase 1 public engagement that the general public also shares these concerns and would like to have more transportation options than by single occupant car.

MnDOT updated the analyses of 30 social and technical trends affecting transportation in Minnesota. The trends cover a range of topics related to changes in Minnesota's population, economy, environment, technology and transportation behavior. More information on the specific trends can be found at www.MinnesotaGO.org/trends.

MnDOT weighed all this information and proposed a list of five focus areas: aging infrastructure, climate change, equity, safety and transportation options. They then reviewed this list with several advisory groups of people from within and outside MnDOT. Advisory committee members agreed with these focus areas and added one more: economy and employment. These six focus areas guided the development of the 2022 SMTP Phase 2 public engagement and overall planning process.

WHAT ARE OUR NEXT STEPS?

MnDOT used the six focus areas to organize the next steps in the 2022 SMTP planning process.

First, MnDOT set up six work groups to dig deeper into each focus area. Each work group had 12-16 members from around Minnesota who are experts and practitioners in their respective topics. The goal for each work group was to deliver policy recommendations for the draft plan by late summer 2021.

Second, Phase 2 public engagement ramped up in the spring and summer. There were virtual meetings held jointly with community-based organizations and transportation partner agencies. Also, the Minnesota GO website had several new, fun pages where visitors could learn more and make comments.

Third, MnDOT shared Phase 2 public input with the work groups to help them develop recommendations that were responsive to the needs of people using Minnesota's transportation system. MnDOT continued to share public input with the various groups that advised MnDOT on the SMTP update.

MnDOT plans to publish a draft version of the 2022 SMTP for public review in mid-2022. The draft will reflect the comments received from public, work group recommendations, trend analysis and more. Comments received on the draft will be addressed in the final version of the SMTP, which is expected to be adopted in fall 2022.

Policy Priorities Preliminary Survey Summary

✓ TRANSPORTATION POLICY PRIORITIES

As part of the 2017 SMTP update, MnDOT heard from over 12,000 Minnesotans about their priorities for transportation in Minnesota. This input was the foundation for the 2017 updated policy direction. This 2022 update is a chance to reaffirm and/or readjust that direction.

From mid-November to mid-January 2020, MnDOT surveyed staff and transportation planning partners about what has changed, which areas they need more guidance and how important the policy topics still are as the agency continues to plan for the future.

Note: topics have been added and reorganized since 2017 as MnDOT completed other statewide planning activities.

110

TOTAL RESPONDENTS

Targeted audience:

- MnDOT staff and partner planning organizations

Survey promotions:

- MnDOT email
- MnDOT website

Respondents by agency/organization types:

Note: some respondents selected more than one

- State transportation agency/organization
- Community organization/non-profit
- Other public agency
- Local agency/organization
- Regional agency/organization
- Transportation advocacy organization
- Other
- Personal
- No response

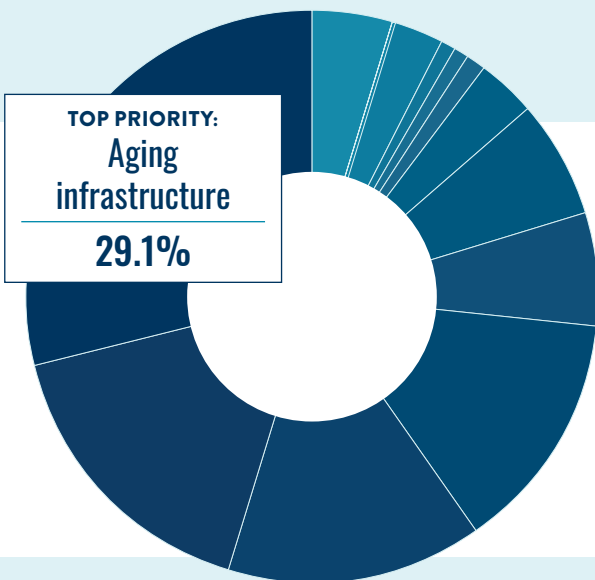
Ways that respondents would like to be involved:

Note: some respondents selected more than one

- Receiving project-related emails
- Participating on a topic-specific workgroup
- Sharing project information and input opportunities within my network
- Engaging with my network on behalf of the MnDOT project team

WHICH TOPIC IS YOUR NUMBER ONE PRIORITY?

The percentage of respondents that selected each topic as their number one priority:



- Aging infrastructure: **29.1%**
- Public health: **0.9%**
- Availability of transportation options and choice of mode: **16.4%**
- Changing demographics: **0.9%**
- Climate change: **14.5%**
- Economy and employment: **0.9%**
- Safety: **13.6%**
- Other: **2.7%**
- Environment: **6.4%**
- Funding (write-in addition): **0.1%**
- Equity: **6.4%**
- No response: **4.5%**
- Electric, connected and automated vehicles: **3.6%**



Policy Priorities Preliminary Survey Summary

HOW IMPORTANT IS EACH TOPIC?

On a scale of 1 to 10, how important do you think it is for Minnesota to plan for each topic over the next five years?

An overall average score for each topic is shown at left. Respondent groups are noted below the topic they rated highest along with their average rating.

Safety – Wasn't specifically asked about in 2017

State transportation agencies/ organizations rated Safety: 8.3	Local agencies/ organizations and other public agencies rated Safety: 7.7	Regional agencies/ organizations rated Safety: 8.8
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7.4 Availability of transportation options and choice of mode – In top 5 in 2017

Community organizations/ non-profits rated Availability of transportation options and choice of mode: 9.7	Personally invested respondents ranked Availability of transportation options and choice of modes: 8.8
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Aging infrastructure – In top 5 in 2017

Regional agencies/organizations rated **Aging Infrastructure: 8.8**

Environment – In top 5 in 2017

Equity – Up from 12th in 2017

Transportation advocacy organizations ranked **Equity: 9.5**

Climate change – In top 5 in 2017

Public health – Up from 9th in 2017

Economy and employment

Changing demographics

Freight and logistics

6.0 Technology and web access

5.5 Electric, connected and automated vehicles

WHICH TOPIC IS THE NUMBER ONE PRIORITY?

Most selected number one priority by respondent type:

RESPONDENT TYPE	PRIORITY TOPIC(S)	%
State transportation agency/organization	Aging infrastructure	30%
Community organization/ non-profit	Availability of transportation options and choice of mode	41%
Other public agency	Aging infrastructure	40%
Local agency/organization	Aging infrastructure	50%
Regional agency/ organization	Aging infrastructure	38%
Transportation advocacy organization	Availability of transportation options and choice of modes; Climate change	50%; 50%
Personal	Availability of transportation options and choice of modes; Environment	33.3%; 33.3%

ADDITIONAL TOPIC INSIGHTS

Most variation in ratings:

- Climate change
- Public health
- Equity
- Availability of transportation options and choice of modes

While their average importance was high, these topics saw a wide spread of ratings, suggesting respondents are split on their importance.

Write-in additions:

- Reducing vehicle miles traveled
- Access to food
- Homelessness
- Funding
- Congestion/mobility
- Land use and transportation
- Plowing

Respondents identified these topics as important but missing from the 2017 list.

Mode Lib and VideoAsk Preliminary Summary

MODE LIB SUMMARY TO DATE

A fill-in-the-blank story about how you move in Minnesota

Starting in mid-November 2020, MnDOT asked Minnesotans to share their transportation stories through a fill-in-the-blank survey activity. This activity encourages Minnesotans to tell MnDOT in their own words about their transportation experiences and wishes for their communities.

The Mode Lib is still open and MnDOT will continue collecting input as engagement continues.

It's as easy as 1-2-3

How the activity works:

- Follow the prompts to fill in words—as serious or silly as you'd like (*shown at right*)
- Read through your random, automatically created story
- Edit your responses for accuracy and submit to MnDOT

192
RESPONSES

English responses:
183

Spanish responses:
9

Targeted audience:

- All Minnesotans, with an emphasis on multicultural communities

Survey promotions:

- Social media posts, general and targeted ads
- MnDOT email

INITIAL INSIGHTS

What did people put as their transportation wish for their community?

Frequent themes (*mentioned often in responses*):

- **Bicycling and Walking:** more or better sidewalks, trails, bike lanes; prioritizing vulnerable road users; bicycling/walking as a more viable option
- **Safety:** slower speeds; safe for walking/bicycling; zero deaths
- **Transit:** more and better transit; transit and as more viable option

Common themes (*at least a handful of mentions in responses*):

- Less traffic congestion
- New highways/more roads
- No trains/LRT
- Zero-emission transportation/ more electric vehicles
- Prioritize driving

1

STEP ONE ▶ Have some fun filling in a single unique word or phrase for each blank shown below. Then generate your transportation story, Mad Libs-style. (*Don't worry, you can change them later.*)

Character trait: ex: smart, silly, curious or creative _____

Job or hobby: ex: mechanic, teacher or tuba player _____

Number: ex: 100, ten million or just a few _____

Place: ex: grocery store, clinic or the best pie shop _____

Verb: ex: run, eat or climb a mountain _____

Adjective: ex: short, fast or super-duper _____

Transportation option: ex: bike, car or hot air balloon _____

Adjective: ex: strong, easy or slightly-messy _____

Transportation option: ex: scooter, kayak or garbage truck _____

Place: ex: church, shopping mall or a friend's house _____

Place: ex: city park, zoo or a favorite nearby lake _____

Place: ex: school, restaurant or dream vacation spot _____

Transportation option: ex: walking, bus or carpool _____

Transportation option: ex: ferry, minivan or wooden canoe _____

Adjective: ex: modern, intuitive, modern or good-looking _____

Verb: ex: visit family, celebrate or go to a rodeo _____

Change in your life or your community: ex: had a baby, got new neighbors or learned the tuba _____

Adjective: ex: friendly, intuitive or squishy _____

Place: ex: basement, office building or dance club _____

Transportation option: ex: skateboard, boat or dog sled _____

Emotion: ex: happy, angry or super confused _____

Favorite way to move around: there's no wrong way _____

Transportation wish or idea for your community:
tell us something you'd like to see _____

CREATE YOUR STORY →



Mode Lib and VideoAsk Preliminary Summary

SAMPLE RESPONSES

These examples highlight the type of input we received. The input collected gave insight into how people currently use transportation and what they'd like to see in their community in the future.

I am a **Eficiente Cocinero** with **30000** ideas for the future of transportation in Minnesota!

For the past few years, I would go to **Restaurante** almost every day to **Trabajar**. These trips were **Grandiosos**. I would use **Bicicleta** most often because I needed a **Rápida** way to get there. In an ideal world I would be able to move around using **Bicicleta** to get to **Trabajo**.

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

Ever since **Conocí a mi novio** it has been **Grandioso** to go to **Campo** by **Autobús**. I feel especially **Satisfecho** about that.

The easiest way to take short trips around my community is **Bicicleta**. Someday, I hope that: **Rutas más rápidas de autobuses**.

I live in **Minneapolis** and would describe myself as **40** years old, **Latino**, and **Masculino**. My story will help plan the future of transportation in Minnesota!

Additional info:

El sur de Minneapolis se necesita mayor seguridad en el transporte público especialmente en el tren ligero. Gracias

I am a **hometown program director** with **several** ideas for the future of transportation in Minnesota!

For the past few years, I would go to **downtown Mankato** almost every day to **work**. These trips were **quick**. I would use **my car** most often because I needed a **consistent** way to get there. In an ideal world I would be able to move around using **greener transportation** to get to **work**.

Life has changed a lot since April, when our normal routines changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, I go to **grocery stores** way more often, but go to **work** much less frequently. Instead of **my car** now I take my **own two feet** and it is **enjoyable**. Over the last 6 months, I realized I would like to **walk** more in the future.

Ever since **moving back to Mankato** it has been **easy** to go to **stores** by **car**. I feel especially **sad** about that.

The easiest way to take short trips around my community is **by car**. Someday, I hope that: **Mankato is more walkable as we need to rely less on fossil fuels and make our community more accessible for people who don't drive, including older adults**.

I live in **Mankato** and would describe myself as **33** years old, **white**, and **female**. My story will help plan the future of transportation in Minnesota!

Additional info:

I work with older adults in greater MN and accessible transportation is a huge barrier as people age. When people stop driving they are unable to easily access medical appointments, grocery shopping, and socializing opportunities. Most rural communities do not have reliable public transportation to fill in the gaps. We need to help more rural communities become pedestrian-friendly and fund public transportation to ensure it is affordable and accessible everywhere and not just in large cities.

Mode Lib and VideoAsk Preliminary Summary

✓ VIDEOASK SUMMARY TO DATE

Answer questions from the project team

In late December 2020, MnDOT launched another input opportunity for Minnesotans to share their transportation stories by answering pre-recorded questions from the project team via video, audio or text. This input opportunity is targeted to multicultural communities throughout Minnesota,

specifically those with oral story telling traditions, and is available in Somali, Hmong, Spanish and English.

The VideoAsk is still open and MnDOT will continue collecting input as engagement continues.

QUESTIONS ASKED

? What makes getting around easier for you?

? What makes getting around more challenging for you?

? Prior to COVID-19, what has changed when, how and why you travel?

? Considering COVID-19, how has the pandemic changed when, how and why you travel?

? What else would you like to share with MnDOT?

8

RESPONSES

English responses:
7

Hmong responses:
1

Targeted audience:

- Multicultural communities

Survey promotions:

Promotions are still being developed

- Social media targeted ads
- MnDOT email
- Emails to multicultural community organizations

INITIAL INSIGHTS

These VideoAsk questions are opportunities to have more direct conversations with individual respondents. The questions are intentionally left open-ended.

Most talked about themes across all responses:

(Mentioned by multiple participants)

-  Most people primarily travel by car
-  Safety and winter maintenance impact whether people walk and bicycle
-  People are traveling less due to COVID-19, but walking and bicycling more
-  Street maintenance (e.g. plowing) makes it easier for people to get around
-  People want to see more bike lanes and paths, transit and overall greener transportation

OPPORTUNITY:

Talk to the project team!

We have some questions, and providing answers is easy.

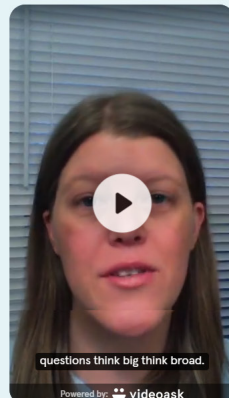
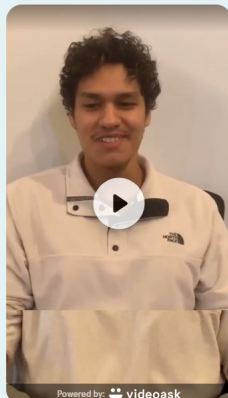
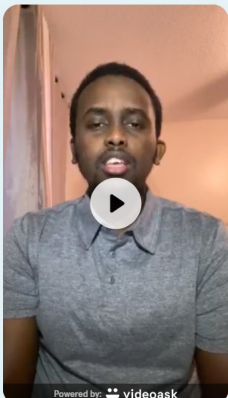
Choose one of the language options below and click the play button. Listen to our questions and respond by video, audio or text. We look forward to hearing from you.

Somali

Hmong

Spanish

English



Powered by: videoask

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