

STATEWIDE MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

TRANSPORTATION EQUITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

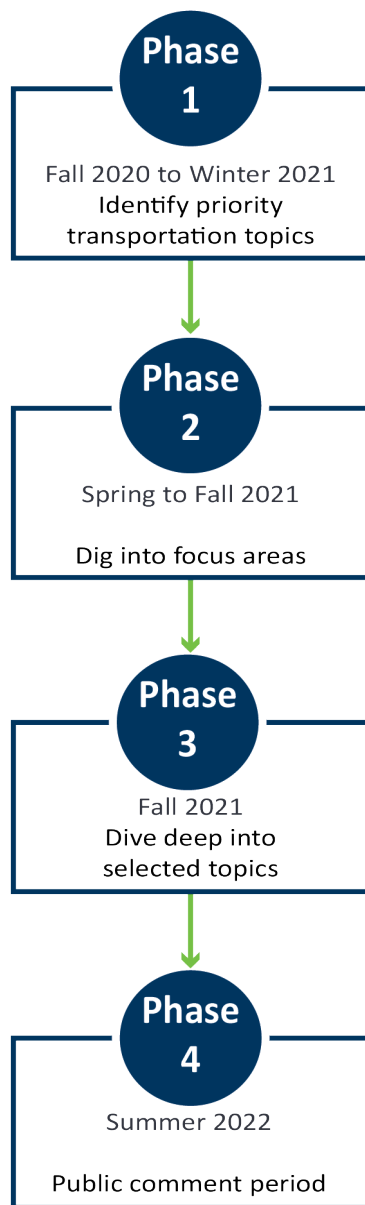


FIGURE 1: FOUR PHASES OF SMTP ENGAGEMENT

PURPOSE

The 2022 Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan (SMTP) process included several activities to embed transportation equity in the planning approach. This summary outlines activities the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) completed during public engagement for the SMTP to create a transportation equity definition.

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 engagement that was completed throughout Phases 2-4 as it related to defining transportation equity and MnDOT’s statement of commitment.

WHAT IS THE STATEWIDE MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN?

The SMTP explains how to 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.

TRANSPORTATION EQUITY DEFINITION OVERVIEW

OVERVIEW

Since 2018, MnDOT 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 through the [Advancing Transportation Equity Initiative](#). After several years, it became clear that the ongoing work needs a common understanding of the meaning of transportation equity and its implications.

As part of SMTP engagement, project staff worked with the members of the Equity Work Group to draft a transportation equity definition and engaged with partners, stakeholders and the public to obtain feedback on each iteration of the definition. The definition has been revised throughout the SMTP to ensure the final definition reflects the lived experiences of people harmed by transportation decision making. The final definition is included in the 2022 SMTP.

ACTIVITIES

Transportation equity definition engagement included several input activities:

- Equity focus area and resulting Equity Work Group.
- Let's Talk Transportation Trivia and Storytelling focused on equity.
- Focused outreach and engagement for the transportation equity definition.

EQUITY FOCUS AREA AND WORK GROUP

Equity was one of six focus areas for the SMTP, which resulted in the creation of the Equity Work Group that advised the planning process and draft policy direction. The scope of the Equity Work Group was bigger than the other five work groups. The Equity Work Group guided planning considerations for two statewide transportation plans—the SMTP and the 20-year State Highway Investment Plan (MnSHIP). In addition to helping draft policy direction like the other work groups, the Equity Work Group also provided oversight on planning considerations and processes beyond the SMTP. This work group helped develop:

- A list of resources for people to learn more about transportation equity.
- What transportation equity means to MnDOT and list of terms.
- Updates to the Plan Development Guidelines that document requirements and expectations for MnDOT's Family of Plans.
- An equity review process applied to the SMTP draft policy direction.
- A list of equity impacts of MnSHIP investment scenarios.
- An accountability plan for implementing transportation equity after the adoption of the SMTP.

LET'S TALK TRANSPORTATION TRIVIA AND STORYTELLING

MnDOT partnered with six community-based organizations across the state to help reach the voices of people who are historically underrepresented in transportation decision-making. Organizations were provided with the tools, content and support to host a trivia-themed virtual gathering for their members—Let's Talk Transportation: Stories, Trivia, Conversation. The trivia and visuals included explanations and examples for transportation equity, served as conversation prompts. Select partners hosted events in other formats based on their capacity and preference, including focus groups and Facebook Live conversations. Community partners received a stipend for their participation, depending on the scope and scale of what they were able to do.

TRANSPORTATION EQUITY DEFINITION OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

Staff engaged with over 1,000 people both within MnDOT and with community members and representatives of community-based organizations to gather feedback on the draft definition. MnDOT staff engaged with Minnesotans using two primary methods. First, staff attended virtual presentations to share information about the SMTP and to hear Minnesotans’ reactions to the working transportation equity definition. Second, staff invited members of the public to share their feedback at MinnesotaGO.org, the website for the SMTP and MnDOT’s other modal and system plans. This engagement process lasted through Phases 2-4 for SMTP engagement.

EVOLUTION OF THE TRANSPORTATION EQUITY DEFINITION

The definition has been revised throughout the SMTP to ensure the final definition reflects the lived experiences of people who have been harmed by transportation decision making. Phase 2 engagement in summer 2021 included conversations about a working definition of transportation equity. It was intended this draft definition would evolve based on feedback from the public, stakeholders, partners and staff. The definition was revised for Phase 3 engagement in fall 2021 based on the initial feedback. MnDOT leadership built on that recommendation to clarify what transportation equity means to the agency resulting in a statement of commitment to transportation equity. See the evolution of the transportation equity definition in Table 1.

TABLE 1: EVOLUTION OF THE TRANSPORTATION EQUITY DEFINITION

Date	Definition	Feedback
Summer 2021	Transportation equity ensures the benefits and burdens of transportation spending, services, and systems are fair, which historically have not been fair, and people—especially Black, Indigenous and People of Color—are empowered in transportation decision making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be bold and provide strong support for Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities getting a seat at the decision-making table. • Keep the acknowledgement of historic harms in the final definition. • Emphasize the active work needed for specific outcomes that repair the past. • Replace or define “fair.” • Address urban vs. rural resource needs and distribution. • Include people with disabilities and people with low incomes.

Date	Definition	Feedback
Fall 2021	<p>Transportation equity ensures the benefits and burdens of transportation spending, services, and systems are fair and just, which historically has not been the case. Transportation equity also requires sharing power in decision-making with people, especially Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep “fair” because it matches language in other transportation equity definitions, academic literature and the Equity Work Group recommended language. • Change “ensures” in the first sentence to “means” to clarify the start of the definition in the statement of commitment. • Change “also requires” in the second sentence to “ensures” to reinforce aspirational language in the definition. • Add “underserved communities” to reiterate inclusivity and to match current federal language. • Change “sharing power” to “share in the power” to clarify that some decisions are exclusively under the authority of an agency to make. Not all decisions can be shared.
Spring 2022	<p>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.</p>	<p>Feedback will be gathered during the public comment period expected summer 2022.</p>
Fall 2022	<p>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</p>	<p>No changes made to the definition as a result of the public comment period.</p>

Date	Definition	Feedback
	Black, Indigenous and People of Color, share in the power of decision making.	

INITIAL WORKING DEFINITION

As part of the SMTP, staff engaged with internal and external stakeholders to define transportation equity. Members of the Equity Work Group drafted a working definition that was used for early SMTP conversations related to equity. The transportation equity working definition said:

Transportation equity ensures the benefits and burdens of transportation spending, services, and systems are fair, which historically have not been fair, and people—especially Black, Indigenous and People of Color—are empowered in transportation decision making.

REVISED DEFINITION

SMTP staff collaborated with Equity Work Group members to revise the working definition based on the feedback staff heard during the preceding three months of engagement. The work group members proposed the revised definition for inclusion in the draft SMTP for public comment, which needed review and approval by MnDOT leadership. The revised definition said:

Transportation equity ensures the benefits and burdens of transportation spending, services, and systems are fair and just, which historically has not been the case. Transportation equity also requires sharing power in decision-making with people, especially Black, Indigenous and People of Color.

FINAL DEFINITION

The following definition was included in the draft SMTP available for public comment. No changes were made to the language as a result. The final definition for transportation equity is:

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.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

MnDOT leadership built on that recommendation to clarify what transportation equity means to the agency resulting in a statement of commitment to transportation equity. The draft statement of commitment was included in the draft SMTP available for public comment in summer 2022.

The transportation equity definition didn't change as a result of the public comment period. However, a portion of the statement of commitment did. Some language was perceived as a reversal of other information in the statement. Two sentences were combined and positive language used to reiterate the work to be done.

Previous language: *We will not transform our transportation systems, services and decision-making processes overnight, nor will we always get it right on the first try. Transportation equity is an ongoing journey of listening, learning, changing, implementing and adapting.*

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

See the Transportation Equity Statement of Commitment section for the acknowledgment of past harms, transportation equity definition, MnDOT commitments and a list of key terms.

TRANSPORTATION EQUITY STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

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.

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.

LIST OF KEY TERMS

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.

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 that have disproportionate impacts 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 and posted 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. OTSM'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 that are served. MnDOT has been expanding partnerships with education partners (e.g., MnDOT's CAV Career Pathways Camp) to ensure the future transportation workforce is representative 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.

WHO PARTICIPATED

Staff connected with thousands of Minnesotans to discuss transportation equity as part of the SMTP. Staff are unable to provide detailed engagement numbers for the transportation equity definition conversations only. Demographics were typically not requested during transportation equity definition conversations. Not everyone is comfortable sharing this information, and asking about demographics may result in people opting out of conversations. To encourage candid feedback, staff typically did not request demographic questions. Instead, staff focused on attending events and meetings that were likely to have higher attendance for people underserved by transportation, especially Black, Indigenous and People of Color.

TRANSPORTATION EQUITY DURING PHASE 2 ENGAGEMENT

MnDOT staff reached 274 individuals via email, interacted with another 601 participants during presentations and received 126 online submissions at MinnesotaGO.org. While demographic information was not obtained during presentations or via email, participants were asked to share demographics as part of their submission on MinnesotaGO.org. Of the 126 total responses, 116 included demographic details. The tables below provide a high-level review of the demographic information provided by MinnesotaGO.org participant submissions.

TABLE 2: ONLINE TRANSPORTATION EQUITY DEFINITION ENGAGEMENT RESPONSES BY RACE OR ETHNIC BACKGROUND

Race or Ethnic Background	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
White	58	50.0%
Asian	1	0.9%
Biracial/mixed	6	5.2%
Black	1	0.9%
No response	50	43.1%

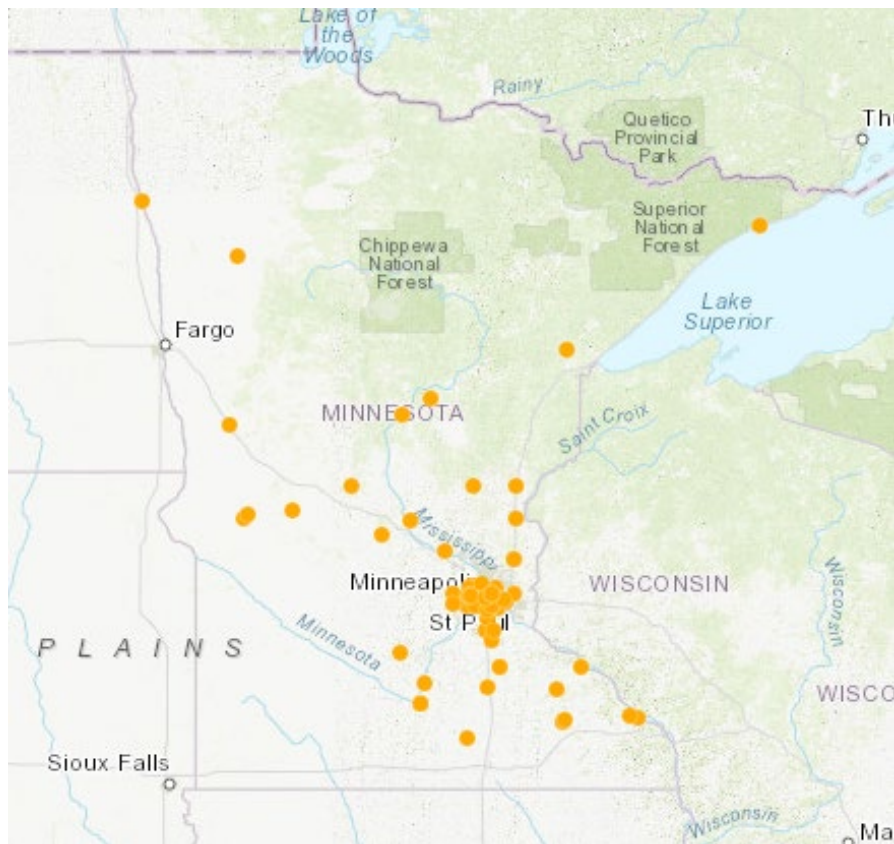
TABLE 3: ONLINE TRANSPORTATION EQUITY DEFINITION ENGAGEMENT RESPONSES BY GENDER IDENTITY

Gender Identity	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Male	40	34.5%
Female	31	26.7%
Non-binary	3	2.6%
Prefer not to answer	10	8.6%
No response	32	27.6%

TABLE 4: ONLINE TRANSPORTATION EQUITY DEFINITION ENGAGEMENT RESPONSES BY AGE GROUP

Age	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
18-24	2	1.7%
25-34	11	9.5%
35-44	12	10.3%
45-54	24	20.7%
55-64	15	12.9%
65-74	14	12.1%
75+	2	1.7%
No response	34	29.3%
Prefer not to answer	2	1.7%

FIGURE 2: MAP OF ONLINE RESPONSES BY ZIP CODE (N=59)



Respondents were asked to share their ZIP code. Thirty responses came from the seven-county metro area. Twenty-nine responses came from Greater Minnesota.

WHAT WE HEARD

WHAT DOES TRANSPORTATION EQUITY MEAN TO YOU?

When asked to define transportation equity, people most often included the following themes:

- **Accessible transportation for everyone**—especially that individuals have equal opportunity and access to different modes of transportation regardless of age, race, geography, ability, socioeconomic status, etc.
 - “It means that every person has an equal chance at using any type of transportation at all times regardless of race or economic level.”
 - “Ability to access good transportation to home, work, shopping and entertainment for all people regardless of age, disability, sex, political view, gender identification, religion or race.”
 - “Being poor or brown doesn’t mean that transportation takes longer, is slower, is unhealthier or unsafe.”
 - “Equal access for everyone and mitigating past harms created by transportation systems.”
- **Transportation options**—especially that options are available to meet people’s travel needs, particularly for those that don’t own a car or drive.

- “Building a variety of transportation options that allow everyone a fair chance and creates a high level of accessibility and mobility.”
- “Better rural transit options for all rural communities. Especially helping older people continue to live in their homes but have access to transportation instead of self-driving.”
- “Having access to transportation options and modes without the need to buy a car to live quality life and have access to quality employment options.”
- “Accessibility for people who cannot drive, whether due to a disability, age (too young or old), or the cost of owning a car. The patchwork that exists today is grossly inadequate for getting people to and from work or school. Trying to get to medical appointments, social gatherings or religious services is even harder due to location or the lack of public transportation service on evenings, weekends, and holidays.”

Other less common themes:

- Roadway improvements
- Finance/taxes
- Decision making

Nearly 24% of responses expressed negative perspectives on the topic of equity. Several people indicated that this is not something MnDOT should be considering, with reasons varying from equity not being a transportation issue to not believing that equity is an issue in Minnesota.

HOW DO YOU ENVISION A MORE EQUITABLE FUTURE?

When asked how they envisioned a more equitable future, people most often noted:

- **Change in legislative, political, or local representation and planning**—specifically increasing representation of People of Color in planning and decision-making.
 - “Accurate representation, shared decision making, and continued acknowledgment of past harm.”
 - “Eliminating bias and racism in transportation.”
 - “[People of color (POC)] seek opportunities to be on planning groups. In some area of the state, POC are less than 5%.”
 - “Re-envisioning ways to bring people to the table, addressing the barriers, and altering the educational requirements that limit Indigenous and Persons of Color to the planning and design process.”
- **Accessible and affordable transportation**—especially ensuring that access to multiple affordable, safe transportation options are available to all individuals.
 - “By building a more robust network of bike lanes and paths that will allow people more freedom to get around the cities without a car or relying on a bus.”
 - “Improve access, capacity, and safety in public transportation. Safety is a huge issue for those using public transportation.”

- “One where all people have access to the same opportunities, social capital, economic opportunities, and the ability to live there best live without the economic burden of needing to own an automobile.”
- **Transportation options**—especially options that deprioritize personal vehicle use and expand climate-friendly and/or public transportation.
 - “More focus on pedestrian and bicycling facilities, and convenient affordable public transportation.”
 - “Transit/walk/bike that support land use patterns that are healthier, more integrated and provide essential land uses without requiring auto ownership.”
 - “More funding for alternative modes (other than single vehicle).”
- **Infrastructure enhancements**—especially the need to focus on including neighborhood planning in transportation projects to reduce pollution, mitigate impacts and create sustainable, equitable spaces for the future.
 - “Better engineering and use more money to fix something if it is broken. They should fix the road so people can drive better and help with the pollution, so we won't get sick.”
 - “Equitable transportation in the future will require neighborhoods that include amenities not just places to sleep. This includes entertainment, businesses, grocery, and recreational spaces. Single use zoning regulations do not create equitable spaces.”
 - “Transportation options while considering future goal planning and safety for all people.”
 - “Communities involved in the planning of not only transportation systems, but of all development (housing, business).”

Other less common themes include:

- Financial investments/tax changes.
- Rural vs. urban—responses focused on the idea that transportation equity might look different in rural communities than in urban communities. For example, some suggested that equity in urban communities might need better planning for large transportation infrastructure projects to lessen historical impacts, whereas rural communities need more access to public transportation options.

Of note, 30% of responses indicated that the respondent doesn't envision a more equitable future, suggested MnDOT shouldn't ask this question, didn't believe that there were inequities in the state or instead favored equality over equity.

HOW TO DEFINE TRANSPORTATION EQUITY

MnDOT used www.MinnesotaGO.org to get feedback on the transportation equity working definition as part of Phase 2 engagement. This section summarizes the feedback received via the website.

Eight responses were from people who self-identified as non-white people. Four gave constructive feedback, one had only negative criticisms, and three did not answer the discussion questions. These responses focused on the acknowledgment of past harm and ensuring marginalized voices are included in the decision-making process.

Three people shared their gender identity as non-binary. Two did not offer constructive feedback and one suggested more emphasis on modes other than travel by private automobile.

There was debate around the definition and use of the word “fair.” Respondents shared that “fair” seems to be saying “equal.” “Equal” focuses on the concept of sameness and “equitable” recognizes that each person has different circumstances and needs to reach an equal outcome.

Respondents shared that people with disabilities should be included in the transportation equity definition. Lack of access to any one part of the transportation system could render the entire network unusable for people with disabilities.

Respondents shared notable quotes when asked, “How do you envision a more equitable future?”:

- “By focusing transportation spending on clean, sustainable options including improved infrastructure for walking, bicycling and transit, rather than prioritizing traffic flow and the convenience [of] people who are wealthier and whiter at the expense of people of color and low-income people.”
- “Equitable transportation creates access in communities that have been historically disinvested in and/or marginalized. Including BIPOC and people with disabilities.”
- “You need to be specific about the equity outcomes that we are trying to achieve. It’s important to be specific about what needs to be addressed, the process and the outcome. Specifically, name who is harmed and what is the harm then get to addressing that harm.”

Feedback on the transportation equity working definition was also gathered via small group and one-on-one conversations. This section provides a review of the feedback received primarily from external partners, community-based organizations and members of the public during engagement efforts specifically about the working definition of transportation equity.

Several key takeaways emerged from the conversations about the working definition held during focused outreach with external stakeholders and the public during the summer of 2021. These key takeaways, as well as direct quotes from participants, are included below.

- When discussing the working definition of equity and future applications of transportation equity, feedback from stakeholders indicated a need to focus on defining equity for all parts of Minnesota, not just the metro area. Comments in this category often correlated equity with transit services and/or equity in terms of meeting transportation needs across the state.
 - “Whatever groups we do reach out to, let’s take care to not ‘overfocus’ on the metro area and “underfocus” on Greater Minnesota groups/communities.”
 - “Transit services can be real limited outside the city. Also, people love their vehicles. How do we make sure it is safe and accessible? Outside the core can require hours more to meeting your transportation needs. “
 - “I agree it is important to make sure this group uses the definition and lens of “equity” that MnDOT as a whole is using. Need to be consistent, especially as this gets used across the state.”
- Feedback from stakeholders about the working definition also emphasized a need to ensure that if the word “empower” is used in the definition, that there are certain ways to ensure populations are actually

empowered to be part of transportation decision making. Comments indicated there should be a clear pathway to identify how people will be empowered, what that will look like and how those outcomes will impact equity.

- “When we connect with BIPOC, we need to be clear the power that people will have and what outcomes they have to influence. We don’t want to just check a box that we include people. We need to make sure there are results. We need to answer what the outcomes will be.”
- “How are people empowered? How can we make sure this happens?”
- “Outreach and engagement is said a lot. People should be engaged in the beginning through the end. When it happens after it is a meeting in which people are told what they are doing. If we include “empower” we must make sure that this happens.”
- “Services stands out. At time people are told what the services will be and people don’t have input in what will best serve them. Resident voice is not taken into account at times.”
- Feedback from stakeholders also indicated a need to expand the working definition of equity beyond race to include additional groups that have historically been underserved or impacted by transportation. Specifically, input suggested a need to expand the working definition of equity to also include gender, disability, socioeconomic background and geographic location.
 - “Mentioning BIPOC is good. We should also call out economically disadvantaged/low-income people and people with disabilities.”
 - “When we are talking about equity, we need to include all abilities!”
 - “In our small group I commented that I believe equity extends beyond race. There is equity in economic status, which has been mentioned and geographic equity, which hasn't so much. My concern with the equity framework is the word, AND in that it reads to me that the policy will be measured against equity AND structural racism, which does not seem to make them exclusive of each other.”

Additional discussions were held with internal staff including employee resource groups and diversity and inclusion committees. Themes and quotes include:

- Conversations highlighted the need for more education around transportation equity. This is a new concept to many people including transportation professionals and agency staff. History of the transportation system and the impact of agency decision making is not well known by all.
 - “Provide history of transportation inequity, this group is not very knowledgeable about transportation inequities.”
 - “Yes, and 35W had negative impact in Minneapolis to BIPOC communities, which we talk about less often.”
 - “Surprised in a good way to see burden. Sometimes investments are sold to the public. Burdens are likely also there and calling them out is important. Also good to call out BIPOC explicitly. Call out the communities that need to be heard most. Targeting of black communities for the location of the freeways. We need to look at communities that hold more of that burden like the Rondo neighborhood. Andrea Jenkins did a good job highlighting a similar experience for 35W in South Minneapolis.”

- “Add some examples/stories to make the words/content itself more understandable and impactful. Equity is still a hard topic for a lot of people to understand.”
- Several groups commented that the definition could be more inclusive of groups harmed by previous decisions. People specifically commented on the need to include people with disabilities in the definition.
 - “Disability doesn’t discriminate – disable folks have distinct needs no matter their race, and ethnicities.”
 - “How do we make sure the transportation equity process includes improvements that add to the existing services like ADA ramps for people with disabilities?”
 - “I appreciate that BIPOC is called out, why isn’t disability called out as well?”
 - “I think of accessibility including physical accessibility. Infrastructure is not set up to move people easily to parks, food, and bus stops. This is the case compared to white communities. The definition need to be less conceptual and show what equity actually means.”
 - “BIPOC doesn’t include people of disabilities. We don’t have the right ramps, ped crossings. They aren’t safe for everyone.”

WORKING DEFINITION KEY TAKEAWAYS

Some of the key takeaways from the working definition conversations and feedback include:

- Be bold and provide strong support for BIPOC communities getting a seat at the decision-making table.
- Keep the acknowledgement of historic harms in the final definition.
- Emphasize the active work needed for specific outcomes that repair the past.
- Replace or define the word fair.
- Address urban vs. rural resource needs and distribution.
- Include people with disabilities and people with low incomes.

PHASE 2 BROAD EQUITY KEY TAKEAWAYS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Responses on the topic of equity focused on the need to better include BIPOC communities in long-range planning, as well as ensuring that multiple affordable transportation options are available in communities—particularly those that have historically been marginalized or underserved. It is worth noting that there were quite a few responses that expressed negative sentiments about equity. Those comments also often included additional, irrelevant political commentary. As the concept of equity—as opposed to equality—is fairly new to many people, MnDOT plans to devote more effort to messaging and education about what transportation equity means or could look like.

NEXT STEPS

MnDOT will use the Transportation Equity Statement of Commitment as a lens for ongoing work including for Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan implementation. Visit the [Advancing Transportation Equity Initiative page](#) to learn about current and recent work.