
STATEWIDE MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Minnesota’s highest level policy plan for transportation

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WHAT IS THE SMTP

As the highest policy plan for transportation in Minnesota, the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan (SMTP) provides policy direction to move Minnesota’s transportation system forward. The SMTP is:

- Long range. The plan looks 20 years into the future.
- Statewide. The policy direction guides decision making for transportation throughout Minnesota.
- Multimodal. The plan covers all the ways people and goods move around Minnesota.

This update of the SMTP covers 2022-2041 and replaces the 2017-2036 plan.

The plan is developed by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) but applies to all forms of transportation in the state. Everyone has a role in implementing the policy direction in this plan and ensuring the success of the transportation system.

LOCAL PARTNERS

Agencies and organizations responsible for transportation decisions at the local level.

TRIBAL PARTNERS

Sovereign Tribal Nations with jurisdiction over lands and resources within Minnesota.

REGIONAL PARTNER

Agencies and organizations involved in regional planning, programming and economic development.

STATE PARTNERS

Agencies and organizations with a statewide mission and interest in or impact on transportation.

FEDERAL PARTNERS

Agencies and organizations that provide federal funding and have policies that impact planning, implementation and maintenance of the transportation system.

PRIVATE SECTOR

Companies that own and operate transportation services, developers, consultants, etc.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Advocates, academics, chambers and more who help improve transportation.

PUBLIC

Everyone can contribute to transportation decisions by participating in public processes that inform transportation decisions.

WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO ACHIEVE

In 2011, MnDOT created the Minnesota GO Vision to set guiding principles for everyone with a role in transportation in Minnesota. The vision for transportation in Minnesota is seen in Figure ES-1.

The Minnesota GO Vision answers the question, “What are we trying to achieve with transportation over the next 50 years?” In addition to the Minnesota GO Vision, the Minnesota Legislature has established 16 goals for transportation. The SMTP answers “How are we going to achieve the vision and goals for transportation in Minnesota?” The SMTP provides objectives, performance measures, strategies and actions to move Minnesota’s transportation system forward.

Figure ES-1: Minnesota GO Vision and guiding principles

MINNESOTA’S MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MAXIMIZES THE HEALTH OF PEOPLE, THE ENVIRONMENT AND OUR ECONOMY.

The system:

- Connects Minnesota’s primary assets—the people, natural resources and businesses within the state—to each other and to markets and resources outside the state and country.
- Provides safe, convenient, efficient and effective movement of people and goods.
- Is flexible and nimble enough to adapt to changes in society, technology, the environment and the economy.



- Recognizes and respects the importance, significance and context of place – not just as destinations, but also where people live, work, learn, play and access services.
- Is accessible regardless of socio-economic status or individual ability.



- Is designed in such a way that it enhances the community around it and is compatible with natural systems.
- Minimizes resource use and pollution.



- Enhances and supports Minnesota’s role in a globally competitive economy as well as the international significance and connections of Minnesota’s trade centers.
- Attracts human and financial capital to the state.

WHAT IS DIRECTING THIS PLAN

There are many opportunities and challenges facing transportation over the next 20 years. It is vital to plan for these to achieve the state's transportation goals and vision for the system. Firm conclusions for the long-term future of Minnesota and transportation are not possible. But reviewing trends can highlight opportunities and challenges to inform recovery efforts and plan what comes next for Minnesota's transportation system.

The SMTP was developed in the midst of a global pandemic that upended how Minnesotans worked, traveled, engaged with each other and accessed goods and services. Geo-political issues along with the pandemic also uncovered frailties in the global transportation system and the capacity to respond to demands. Supply chains continue to struggle. Recent data highlight the unprecedented effects of COVID-19 across the transportation system. The lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic remain unclear.

FOCUS AREAS

This update of the SMTP focused on six topics—aging infrastructure, climate, economy and employment, equity, safety and transportation options. These focus areas cut across all transportation topics and guide priorities for the system.

AGING INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure across the country is aging. As the system ages, more resources go to maintenance and repairs so the system can serve communities as intended. Many parts of Minnesota's transportation system show signs of deterioration and require attention.

CLIMATE

Minnesota's climate is changing. Temperatures are increasing and larger, more frequent extreme weather events are occurring year round. Climate change will impact the way transportation is used, built, designed, operated and maintained. It will also affect people's transportation experience, safety and access. Transportation needs to shift to combat climate change and provide people with environmentally friendly choices to ensure their daily travel needs are met.

ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT

The system works best when it evolves to meet the needs of people and the changing economy. Understanding these needs helps ensure that people and goods move safely and efficiently throughout Minnesota. A strong economy depends upon an efficient transportation system that is able to move raw materials and finished goods from point of origin through manufacturing to the consumer. Collaboration is required to support the economy and employment.

EQUITY

Policy, design and operations decisions have led to inequities for underserved communities, especially Black, Indigenous and People of Color. Advancing transportation equity requires understanding how the transportation system, services and decision-making processes help or hinder the lives of people in underserved communities in Minnesota.

SAFETY

Recent shifts in transportation behavior have led to a significant step backward in transportation safety. 2021 was the deadliest year on Minnesota roads in more than a decade. A mix of traditional and new practices and methodologies is needed to prevent and mitigate human error and ensure people are safe traveling in Minnesota.

TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

A variety of transportation options support how people and goods move across the state, throughout a region or within a community. Collaboration is required to ensure the transportation system offers safe, convenient and affordable options for moving people and goods.

WHAT IS DIFFERENT FROM THE PREVIOUS SMTP

CLIMATE

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 the largest percentage of GHG emissions, the sector can also deliver strategies to reduce transportation’s impact on the climate. Bolder action is needed to meet targets to reduce and mitigate GHG emissions. This SMTP focuses on how the transportation system—not just individual people—can act to combat climate change. SMTP implementation will require collaboration with partners to account for different needs and contexts around the state. Solutions should ensure people have safe, accessible transportation options to meet their daily needs.

Transportation will need to make a shift to default to climate-friendly options, which will require the transportation system to look, feel, operate and be maintained differently in the coming decades. The SMTP includes the following climate action commitments:

- Decrease annual greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector by 80% by 2040.
- Meet target that all new light duty vehicles registered in Minnesota are zero emission vehicles by 2035.
- Reduce the number of vehicle miles traveled across Minnesota per capita by 14% by 2040.
- Integrate vulnerability identification and resilience into planning and programming.
- Develop system and asset resiliency measures.



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EQUITY

Since 2018, 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 2022 SMTP process included several activities to embed transportation equity in the planning approach. The plan process included an equity review that was applied to review all draft strategies and solutions. As a result, equity has been integrated throughout the policy direction. The SMTP includes the following equity commitments:

- Build internal capacity to advance transportation equity.
- Enhance analysis and evaluation for transportation equity in project selection and project development.
- Co-create stories about transportation in Minnesota in collaboration with communities.
- Collaborate with partners to evaluate and address equity impacts of transportation fees, fines and fares.
- Develop a measure of how much household income is spent on transportation.
- Develop measures for transportation equity.
- Use the transportation equity statement of commitment to inform ongoing work.

It was clear that there needs to be clarity about goals to be able to measure progress and hold transportation decision makers accountable. To that end the Equity Work Group recommended a transportation equity definition for MnDOT leadership to consider. MnDOT leadership built on that recommendation to clarify what transportation equity means to the agency resulting in the following transportation equity statement of commitment.

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.

HEALTH

The transportation system is fundamental to the health and wellbeing of people. Safe, convenient and affordable transportation options help people connect with schools, jobs, friends and family as well as essential needs like healthy food, recreation and health care. The transportation system can also be a barrier if it does not adequately serve all Minnesotans. These can be physical barriers or operational issues such as congestion or lack of service.

Transportation has an impact on a variety of health outcomes including heart disease, obesity, asthma, heat-related illnesses as well as injury and death related to car crashes. Making active transportation options such as walking or bicycling more viable provides people the option to improve their health.

Changes to transportation can make the system work better for all people and modes. When transportation works well, it improves health outcomes and reduces disparities. The SMTP includes the following public health commitments:

- Adopt the Safe System approach to transportation safety.
- Increase the percent of Minnesotans who walk or bicycle at least weekly to 60% by 2040.
- Develop resources to mitigate urban heat islands.
- Develop measures for walking, bicycling and taking transit at a project- and program-level.



WHAT HAS STAYED THE SAME

There are several commitments in the 2017 SMTP that have carried into the 2022 SMTP. These continue to be priorities in transportation decision making:

- Ensuring inclusive and collaborative decision making.
- Providing safe and convenient movement of people of goods.
- Preserving the existing transportation system, while considering strategic improvements.
- Leveraging transportation investments for economic vitality.
- Considering social, environmental and economic impacts

HOW WILL WE GUIDE OURSELVES MOVING FORWARD

The challenges facing Minnesota require bold, coordinated approaches. This work cannot be left to chance. Collective commitment is needed from all with a role in making transportation work for Minnesotans. The policy direction in this SMTP is an invitation to join MnDOT to build this bold new transportation future together.

Each objective includes related performance measures, strategies and actions for MnDOT and transportation partners. These items support the Minnesota GO Vision and 16 statutory goals for transportation in Minnesota.

Each objective has two parts:

- **Objective statement** – desired outcomes for meeting the Minnesota GO Vision and transportation goals
- **Strategies and actions** – approaches to meet or support the objective

Performance measures and actions for each objective are also available in Chapter 5 and not shared in this summary.



TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

SAFEGUARD TRANSPORTATION USERS AS WELL AS THE COMMUNITIES THE SYSTEM TRAVELS THROUGH. APPLY PROVEN STRATEGIES TO REDUCE FATALITIES AND SERIOUS INJURIES FOR ALL MODES. FOSTER A CULTURE OF TRANSPORTATION SAFETY IN MINNESOTA.

STRATEGIES

1. Coordinate with partners to ensure the health, safety and security for people most vulnerable especially for those walking, rolling, bicycling and taking transit.
2. Modify infrastructure to accommodate all modes of transportation using complete streets, context sensitive and Safe System approaches.
3. Emphasize equitable education and enforcement techniques with proven safety benefits for people and communities.
4. Prioritize safety for people and communities through the safe movement of goods.
5. Collaborate with local, regional, Tribal, state and federal partners to ensure efficient and coordinated response to special, emergency and disaster events.
6. Promote the development and deployment of connected and automated transportation technologies.

SYSTEM STEWARDSHIP

STRATEGICALLY BUILD, MAINTAIN, OPERATE AND ADAPT THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM BASED ON DATA, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY NEEDS. ENSURE EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT USE OF RESOURCES.

STRATEGIES

1. Maximize the useful life of transportation assets while considering performance, costs and impacts to people, the environment and our economy.
2. Improve coordination with partners on the management of all assets connected to the transportation system.
3. Plan, design, develop and maintain transportation infrastructure and facilities in a way that reflects and is informed by the surrounding context.
4. Preserve and improve Minnesota's natural resources and minimize harm to the environment.
5. Provide training and resources for a diverse and inclusive transportation workforce.
6. Promote transportation trades and technical careers.

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CLIMATE ACTION

ADVANCE A SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM. ENHANCE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS AND TECHNOLOGY TO REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS. ADAPT MINNESOTA'S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM TO A CHANGING CLIMATE.

STRATEGIES

1. Transition the transportation sector away from dependence on fossil-based fuels.
2. Make transportation and land use decisions that reduce total greenhouse gas emissions.
3. Protect people and communities through regional approaches to mitigate risk from the changing climate and extreme weather.
4. Increase resiliency of people and communities by adapting infrastructure to withstand the changing climate.

CRITICAL CONNECTIONS

MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION CONNECTIONS ESSENTIAL FOR MINNESOTANS' PROSPERITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE. STRATEGICALLY CONSIDER NEW CONNECTIONS THAT HELP MEET PERFORMANCE TARGETS AND MAXIMIZE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS.

STRATEGIES

1. Provide equitable access to destinations and services.
2. Ensure efficient, affordable, reliable and safe movement of goods to support a vibrant and growing economy.
3. Provide transportation options to connect people to services, employment, neighborhoods and other destinations.
4. Support economic vitality through transportation investment.
5. Follow a tiered, phased approach to addressing mobility and safety.
6. Encourage modal shifts away from single-occupant vehicles through infrastructure improvements, education, programs and services.



HEALTHY EQUITABLE COMMUNITIES

FOSTER HEALTHY AND VIBRANT PLACES THAT REDUCE DISPARITIES AND PROMOTE HEALTHY OUTCOMES FOR PEOPLE, THE ENVIRONMENT AND OUR ECONOMY.

STRATEGIES

1. Coordinate transportation and land use planning among transportation partners, stakeholders and the public.
2. Eliminate burdens and reduce structural inequities for people and communities disproportionately impacted by transportation.
3. Reduce combined housing and transportation costs for cost-burdened households.
4. Develop and support a diverse workforce in Minnesota.
5. Leverage transportation solutions to improve public health.

OPEN DECISION MAKING

MAKE EQUITABLE TRANSPORTATION DECISIONS THROUGH INCLUSIVE AND COLLABORATIVE PROCESSES THAT ARE SUPPORTED BY DATA AND ANALYSIS.

STRATEGIES

1. Ensure people have opportunities to play an active and direct role in transportation decision making.
2. Build and strengthen lasting relationships to ensure that people are engaged in transportation projects and activities especially with underserved communities.
3. Provide consistent, transparent, fair, just and equitable communication.
4. Understand and learn from personal and community experiences on how the transportation system can negatively and positively affect communities.
5. Use research and data to drive decision making in pursuit of local, regional, Tribal, statewide and national goals.



2022-2027 SMTP WORK PLAN

MnDOT will initiate the work plan activities before the SMTP is updated in five years. These activities are not necessarily specific to any objective or strategy. Also, the list is not meant to be all-inclusive. Taken together, these activities will help advance the policy direction laid out in this plan. There are many other activities in each of these areas and other areas that MnDOT will do in the upcoming years to help move the SMTP forward. It is possible that MnDOT might not be able to complete all work plan items before the next update of the SMTP. Lessons learned through implementation will provide valuable information and insights for MnDOT processes and operations that could likely extend beyond long-range planning.

The 2022-2027 SMTP Work Plan includes over 30 activities in the following categories:

- Engagement, communications and education
- Climate action and public health
- Equity
- Transportation options
- Planning, policy and guidance
- System stewardship and operations
- Transportation safety

IMPLEMENTING THE SMTP TOGETHER

Implementing the plan requires translating the broad policy direction into specific, action-oriented tasks. Some of the considerations are easier to foresee. For example, investing in first- and last-mile connections continues to be a priority for walking, rolling, bicycling, transit, freight and economic development. Other things are harder to see 20 years—even 10 years—from now.

Evolving technology, reckoning with systemic oppression, a global pandemic and climate change present new opportunities, stresses, innovations and practices to keep transportation moving in Minnesota. The transportation industry can't anticipate all the unknowns. However, it is known that the transportation system of the past cannot solve the problems of today or those of tomorrow.

Fully implementing the SMTP will require adequate funding that is sustainable and equitable. MnDOT is committed to working with the Legislature and transportation partners to determine long-term, reliable and sustainable funding plans for the future of Minnesota's multimodal transportation system. This may include changes to current funding mechanisms as well as exploring alternative ways to fund transportation in the state.

The SMTP needs to be implemented with purpose, intention and in coordination with stakeholders and partners. Each step of the process helps to understand needs. The resulting strategies can help address short- and long-term changes needed to advance the commitments.

Everyone has a role in implementing the policy direction in this plan and ensuring the success of the transportation system. We will make Minnesota GO together.

