

# Rest Areas

MnDOT estimates \$30-33 billion in available funding for the state highway system over the next 20 years. A minimum of \$23.5 billion is needed to manage highest risks and meet legal requirements. This folio provides information on potential Rest Areas investment strategies, funding levels, and outcomes for the estimated \$7-9 billion of remaining investment.

## 1 | WHAT IS REST AREAS?

The Rest Areas investment category includes all 51 MnDOT-owned rest area buildings, sites, and parking lots. Rest areas was included in the 2017 MnSHIP Facilities investment category along with weigh stations, which has been moved to the Freight category. Rest areas remains a separate category in the 2022 MnSHIP because it is managed centrally at MnDOT instead of by MnDOT districts.

### GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF INVESTMENT

The goal of investment is to effectively manage MnDOT-owned rest areas and wayside pull offs that support traveler health, safety, freight, tourism, and are accessible to all. To reach this goal, investments are focused on minimizing rest areas buildings, pavements, sidewalks and site amenities in poor condition and meet Americas with Disabilities Act requirements and expectations of the traveling public.

### TYPES OF IMPROVEMENTS

There are several ways MnDOT invests in rest areas. As rest area buildings deteriorate over time, MnDOT completes renovation or reconstruction projects to maintain the building's condition. Parking lot pavements and amenities outside of buildings are also addressed

either in conjunction with a rest area building project or as a standalone project. Finally, rest area buildings, sites, and parking lots need to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act standards for accessibility. This includes building access and amenities, site amenities, sidewalks, and curb ramps.

### HOW DOES MNDOT CURRENTLY SELECT REST AREA IMPROVEMENTS?

Before the 2017 MnSHIP investment direction, investment in rest areas was not steady or predictable. The 2017 MnSHIP provided funding to address rest areas through the Safety Rest Area Program. The program funds construction, repair and rehabilitation of rest areas and waysides. Candidate projects are identified based on the physical condition of rest area buildings and pavements, accessibility and building code compliance, partnership potential and availability of alternative funding sources. Rest areas are then selected for construction and included in the 4-year State Transportation Improvement Program.

MnDOT Districts may also identify rest area capital investment projects. These typically focus on the physical condition of rest area vehicular pavements and ramps. These projects typically use one-time funding.





## 2 | WHY IS INVESTING IN REST AREAS IMPORTANT?

Rest area investments support several state transportation goals including:

- To minimize fatalities and injuries for transportation users throughout the state
- To provide for and prioritize funding of transportation investments that ensures that the state's transportation infrastructure is maintained in a state of good repair
- To enhance economic development and provide for the economical, efficient, and safe movement of goods to and from markets by rail, highway, and waterway
- To encourage tourism by providing appropriate transportation to Minnesota facilities designed to attract tourists and to enhance the appeal, through transportation investments, of tourist destinations across the state

Rest areas serve as a countermeasure to drowsy driving, reduce unsafe highway shoulder stops, support freight movements, and promote state and regional tourism as well as providing convenient services for travelers. By providing adequate and properly spaced rest areas along the state highway network, MnDOT can meet the demand and expectations of the traveling public. Rest areas are essential safety features on the highway system that help address driver fatigue, a major cause of serious accidents. Their basic service is crash prevention. Studies reveal that a 15 to 20-minute break improves a driver's performance, even among sleep-deprived people.

### HOW DOES REST AREAS SUPPORT EQUITABLE OUTCOMES?

Rest area investments ensure that buildings, site amenities, sidewalks, curb ramps, and parking lots are accessible and

available for use by person's with disabilities. It also allows MnDOT to address any ADA compliance issues and ensure they meet current standards. If MnDOT does not provide enough funding for a rest area project every year, it may require more standalone projects to solely address the ADA issues which can be more expensive and less efficient in the long run.

### HOW DOES MNDOT MEASURE PERFORMANCE, CONDITION, OR OUTCOMES?

MnDOT measures rest area building condition through periodic assessments. As part of the 2022 Transportation Asset Management Plan, MnDOT set a target for rest area building condition of no more than 4% of buildings in poor condition. That would equate to 2 buildings on the system in poor condition at any time. Through current investment levels, by 2042 MnDOT anticipates 24% or 12 rest areas to be in poor condition without additional investment.

MnDOT also began assessing parking lot pavement condition in terms of percent of parking lots in poor condition. There is no set condition target for parking lot pavement currently.

An inventory is scheduled to be completed within the next four years to assess ADA compliance issues with rest area buildings, sites, and parking lots to better understand where there are ADA compliance issues. Currently, ADA needs are identified as a part of individual rest area projects and any nearby pavement project scoping processes.

### 3 | OPTIONS FOR INVESTING OVER THE NEXT 20 YEARS

#### Reconstruct or renovate rest area buildings, pavements, and site elements

The **minimum level** MnDOT would invest in rest areas is **\$55 million**. This would represent no additional investment beyond two projects which MnDOT has committed to funding. With minimum levels of investment, the buildings in poor condition would rise to 16 buildings (32%) and 35 sites/parking lots (70%) in poor condition.



**Outcomes:**  
 12 buildings (24%) in poor condition by 2042  
 33 sites/parking lots (66%) in poor condition by 2042



**Outcomes:**  
 9 buildings (18%) in poor condition by 2042  
 28 sites/parking lots (56%) in poor condition by 2042



**Outcomes:**  
 6 buildings (12%) in poor condition by 2042  
 28 sites/parking lots (56%) in poor condition by 2042




**Outcomes:**  
 Meeting the target of 2 buildings (4%) in poor condition by 2042  
 13 sites/parking lots (26%) in poor condition by 2042



**Outcomes:**  
 Meeting the target of 2 buildings (4%) in poor condition by 2042  
 5 sites/parking lots (10%) in poor condition by 2042

**\$X.X** Total cost of investment level

 Portion of remaining \$7-9 billion investment for level

 Remaining investment available for other priorities



## 4 | REST AREAS RISKS

### WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF UNDERINVESTING?

As a part of developing performance levels for various programs and strategies, MnDOT also identified the risk to underinvesting in rest areas. Four risks were identified as low to high risk. The risks and their impacts are identified below.

#### HIGH RISKS

**Risk:** Potential closure of rest areas due to decreased replacement and renovation creating unsafe conditions

**Impact:** Fewer available rest areas could reduce health and safety for highway system users, commercial freight safety/support and inability to meet public expectations

#### MEDIUM RISKS

**Risk:** Inability to make appropriate and timely repairs

**Impact:** Deferring repairs could lead to quicker deterioration and larger and more costly renovations/rehabilitations are needed sooner

**Risk:** Inability to meet state of good repair for rest areas through capital funding

**Impact:** Increased burden placed on maintenance and operation budgets to maintain rest areas through repairs

**Risk:** Fewer rest area reconstruction projects to address non-compliant ADA infrastructure

**Impact:** Requires more costly, less efficient stand-alone projects to mitigate formal ADA complaints/liability and meet ADA obligations

### WHAT LEVELS OF INVESTMENT REDUCE THE LIKELIHOOD OF THE RISK OCCURRING OVER THE NEXT 20 YEARS?

The table to the right provides a summary of how risk levels changed with increased investment in Rest Ares.

RISK STATEMENT	SHIFTS FROM HIGH TO MEDIUM RISK	SHIFTS FROM MEDIUM TO LOW RISK
Potential closure of rest areas due to decreased replacement and renovation creating unsafe conditions	Investment Level 1	Investment Level 4
Inability to make appropriate and timely repairs	Already Medium Risk	Investment Level 3
Inability to meet state of good repair for rest areas through capital funding	Already Medium Risk	Investment Level 2
Fewer rest area reconstruction projects to address non-compliant ADA infrastructure	Already Medium Risk	Investment Level 3



To find out more details about Rest Areas planning and projects, go to:

**Project Selection:** [www.dot.state.mn.us/projectselection/](http://www.dot.state.mn.us/projectselection/)

**Rest Area Planning:**

<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/restareas/>

**For more information, contact:**

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