

PHASE 3 ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY FOR THE STATEWIDE MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

March 2022

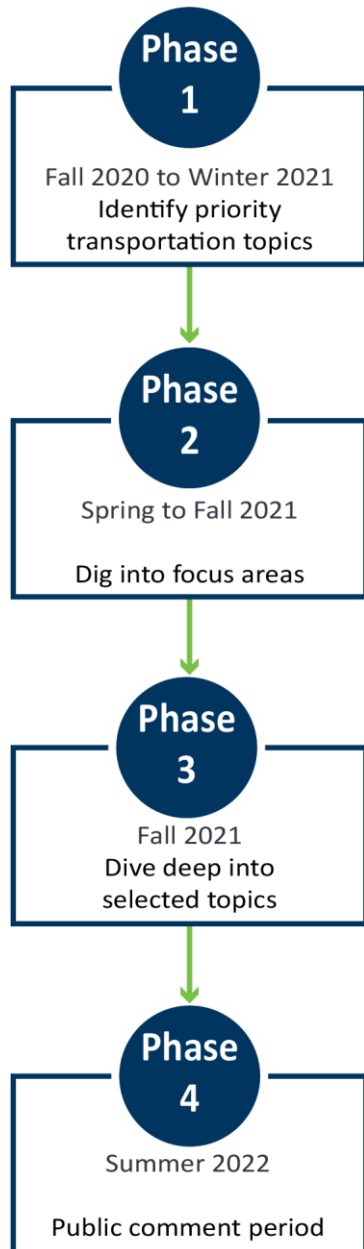


FIGURE 1: FOUR PHASES OF SMTP ENGAGEMENT

PURPOSE

This document explains how people were engaged during Phase 3 of public engagement for the 2022 Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan (SMTP). This update of 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 3 and what people said.

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 Minnesota Department of Transportation (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.

As part of the planning, the SMTP has identified proposed policy objectives to help guide how the future of transportation can best meet the needs of all Minnesotans:

- **Open Decision Making**—Make equitable transportation decisions through inclusive and collaborative processes that are supported by data and analysis. Ensure effective and efficient use of resources.
- **Transportation Safety**—Safeguard transportation users as well as the communities the system travel through. Apply proven strategies to reduce fatalities and serious injuries for all modes. Foster a culture of transportation safety in Minnesota.
- **System Stewardship**—Strategically build, maintain, operate and adapt the transportation system based on data, performance and community needs. Use technology and innovation to get the most out of investments and manage system performance.
- **Climate Action**—Advance a sustainable and resilient transportation system. Enhance transportation options and technology to reduce emissions. Adapt Minnesota’s transportation system to a 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.
- **Healthy Equitable Communities**—Foster healthy and vibrant places that reduce disparities and promote healthy outcomes for people, the environment and our economy.

Feedback obtained from stakeholders and participants during Phase 3 engagement activities informed these policy objectives as well as the performance measures, strategies and actions supporting each objective.

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

Public engagement has a central role in the update of the SMTP. Transportation is something that impacts everyone, and people need and deserve to be involved in decisions that affect their lives. 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 April 2021 and ended September 2021. Phase 2 included online conversations throughout the state with members of community-based organizations, as well as partners, stakeholders and Tribal Nations. For those not able to attend online meetings, the same information and comment opportunities were available at MinnesotaGO.org. The restrictions on in-person meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic likely made it difficult for many people to participate in the planning process. Posters, sidewalk stickers, social media posts and ads, newsletter content and more were used to shared information and engagement opportunities as broadly as possible. More on the communication efforts can be found in the Communication Channels section.

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.

PHASE 3 ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

ACTIVITIES

A variety of in-person and virtual engagement opportunities were conducted during this phase of engagement to collect input, including:

- **In-person community events**—The project team attended 14 in-person community events across Minnesota to ask people about their transportation priorities and share information about the plan update. Through interactive activities, participants were able to provide input on the six objectives and the SMTP more broadly.
- **Market research policy panel and discussion board**—The goal of the online policy panel and discussion board was to use a representative sample of Minnesotans to understand their perspectives and preferences related to specific potential policies, strategies and targets under consideration for the SMTP. These included MnDOT goals and targets for commuter delay, greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled reduction. The research also aimed to understand Minnesotans’ attitudes about technology and transportation, transportation modes and options, community engagement, safety and equity.
- **Virtual stakeholder forums**—MnDOT hosted two virtual stakeholder forums as an opportunity for stakeholders to discuss specific changes to objectives, performance measures, strategies and actions in the plan.

IN-PERSON COMMUNITY EVENTS

Project staff attended 14 in-person community events across the state to gather input on the six proposed policy objectives. Materials included objective overview information, planning overview information, online feedback form (via iPads), large signs and a policy objective prioritization game. All materials were provided in English, Spanish and Somali. During these events, staff estimated they had 425 interactions with event attendees about transportation priorities and received 310 feedback submissions.

Each participant that completed a comment was asked to “prioritize” which policy objective was most relevant to them and to provide commentary. The following section provides an overview of the key themes and takeaways from the comments received within each of the proposed SMTP policy objective, as well as highlights quotes from the feedback forms.

EVENT SUMMARY

Table 1 lists the events in the order they occurred, estimated interactions and number of responses received.

TABLE 1: ESTIMATED IN-PERSON INTERACTIONS AND RESPONSE TOTAL BY LOCATION

Event	Location	Estimated Interactions	Number of Responses
Duluth Farm Fest	Duluth, MN	55	28
Hibbing Farmers Market	Hibbing, MN	20	12
Roseau Driving Event	Roseau, MN	33	29
Twin Cities Marathon	St. Paul, MN	30	18
University of Minnesota Morris Farmers Market	Morris, MN	30	19
Brainerd Touch-a-Truck	Brainerd, MN	15	6
Minneapolis Open Streets	Minneapolis, MN	100	70
Mankato State University	Mankato, MN	N/A	12
St. Cloud Transit	St. Cloud, MN	15	7
Rochester Farmers Market	Rochester, MN	30	25
Midtown Global Market*	Minneapolis, MN	14	13
New Brighton Farmers Market	New Brighton, MN	52	52
Southwest Minnesota State University	Marshall, MN	10	6
Mercado Central*	St. Paul, MN	21	13

Note: Asterisk denotes events chosen specifically to reach BIPOC communities in Minnesota

SUMMARY OF KEY THEMES AND TAKEAWAYS

The objectives are listed in the order they are proposed to appear in the SMTP.

OPEN DECISION MAKING

Open Decision Making was not as frequently chosen by participants at the community events. Those that did suggested that transportation policy and planning would benefit if all or a wider variety of the public was included. In addition, people suggested the need to demystifying the decision-making process and/or remove some of the bureaucracy so that the public better understands how and why decisions are made.

- Involving all members of the public
 - “People who live there are the local experts and should be asked what their needs are.”
 - “Asking people in the community before decisions are made. ex: Why aren't people riding the bus? Wrong time of day/wrong intersection etc.”
- Demystifying the decision-making process
 - “Removing bureaucracy involved starting transportation projects allows the local and state government to be responsive to their [community's] needs.”
 - “I don't trust your decision-making process.”

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

Transportation Safety was the most chosen objective in terms of priority at the community events. Comments focused on the need to address the increasing driver speed and distracted driving caused by cell-phone usage. Other comments focused on the need to improve signs, improve bicycle and pedestrian lanes and road conditions.

- Safety, general
 - “I want us to be able to travel safely even in different weather conditions.”
 - “Lost a son because of poor signage.”
 - “We all need to feel safe on roads with modern and good structures.”
- Speeding
 - “People going too fast - big speeding during pandemic, less patrols.”
 - “People drive too fast, and no one gets caught.”
 - “Too many car crashes. People driving too fast.”
 - “I'm concerned about increased speeding, road rage and drag racing.”
- Driver distractions
 - “Mitigate distractions while driving; text/call.”
 - “Too many people are still killed by drivers. We need to be operative (sic) with texting while driving.”

SYSTEM STEWARDSHIP

System Stewardship was the least chosen policy objective at the community events. Those that did choose this objective as a priority pointed to the need to not only proactively repair infrastructure, but also design roadways to accommodate future traffic.

- Preserving all roads/planning appropriately for the future
 - “When projects are completed, already too small for the traffic. Oakdale, Wooddale, lanes.”
 - “Roads in small towns are as important as big towns. I think MnDOT should understand and fix them too.”
 - “Focus on maintaining/reducing highway and street mileage. We have to allow space for bike and ped access.”

CLIMATE ACTION

Climate Action was a frequently chosen policy objective at the community events. Those that identified this objective as a priority often indicated that they were concerned about how climate change will impact future generations and the need to adopt policies and practices to mitigate any future harm. Another key theme in this category pointed to the fact that climate change is a time-sensitive issue that requires immediate attention and action if any progress or change is possible.

- Future generations
 - “Future generations, reducing carbon footprint, impacts all other actions. Transit and EV fleets are important!”
 - “Sustainability efforts are important to the community because we need to live in this world, thinking about the next generations--preserve environment thru sustainability projects.”
 - “I want my children to live in a healthy world.”
 - “The changing climate needs to be considered for future projects. While I may not see the change, I would love for my grandchildren to live in a better climate.”
- Requires immediate attention
 - “Act before it is too late. We're almost done in.”
 - “I'm worried about the future of all of life on this planet if we do not do something fast.”
 - “We need to take action now to preserve our planet for future generations.”
 - “Addressing climate issues needs to be done now. Less talk and more action.”
 - “The impacts of climate change are already here, and we are behind in dealing with it. Lots of opportunities to include other objections while tackling it such as helping equitable communities.”

CRITICAL CONNECTIONS

Participants that chose Critical Connections as the highest priority focused on the need to improve transportation access for all, particularly rural, low-income and historically underserved populations. Additionally, a key theme from this group suggested the need to make Minnesota’s transportation system truly multimodal to improve access to economic opportunity, reduce climate impacts and increase efficiency.

- Improving access for all (rural communities, low-income, etc.)
 - “Roseau needs better connections to the rest of the state. Current transportation connections are very outdated, unsafe and limited.”
 - “My children all have disabilities, and safe, public accessible transportation is necessary in small towns! Rural communities need more flexible, accessible transportation.”
 - “I would like some variety in the forms of transit across rural Minnesota so we can have more options.”
 - “Not everyone can afford a car and it's important that cities are accessible for everyone to be able to get around to their jobs, grocery stores, medical appointments, etc. Cities planned around the assumption that everyone has a car are inaccessible and bad for the environment. There needs to be more affordable and numerous options to get around a city and get from city to city.”
- Multimodal
 - “American infrastructure focuses on cars so having a multitude of ways to get around would be nice.”
 - “Improving access to multimodal transportation helps reduce overall traffic, carbon emissions, access to transportation and overall costs.”
 - “Diversification in transportation options for efficiency and optimization for transport and personal travel.”

HEALTHY EQUITABLE COMMUNITIES

Healthy Equitable Communities was also a frequently chosen policy objective at the community events. Those that identified this objective as a priority often noted the need for future transportation planning to place less emphasis on cars, not only for health and safety reasons but also economic ones (e.g., not everyone is able to afford a vehicle). Another key theme in this category focused on the need for a more equitable planning process that includes historically underserved and underrepresented voices and does not repeat the mistakes of the past (e.g., dividing communities to build a highway).

- Less emphasis on cars for connection
 - “We need to stop [treating] bikes and peds as second-class citizens. Network of slow streets where cars are the guests.”
 - “We need to make transportation more available to all and affordable.”
 - “Low-income people without cars need reliable-on-time-access for transportation.”
 - “Building bike and bus lanes that provide meaningful connections and build equity should be the primary objective of transit planning.”
- More equitable planning process
 - “Everyone should have equal access to jobs and opportunities in education and recreation to achieve their full potential without extreme hardship.”
 - “I believe it is essential to ensure we find ways to live together across diverse perspectives and that people who have been underrepresented in opportunities for health and [unclear] gain be given more support.”

- “MnDOT needs to listen to the communities that have to live next to the freeways/highways, including people who don't drive. We still have to navigate around this massive barrier and the drivers on streets near the highway are already/still in "highway mode" (fast, not looking for peds/bikes/strollers/wheelchairs).”
- “There are many long-standing inequities that are directly affected by transportation. Good transportation should not depend on displacing existing communities.”
- “Planning should reflect the needs and desires of all Minnesotans but most of all those who weren't listened to previously.”

MARKET RESEARCH ONLINE POLICY PANEL AND DISCUSSION BOARD

MnDOT commissioned a statewide virtual market research panel with a representative sample of Minnesotans to aid decision making about policies, strategies and targets and related messaging. Specifically, the goals of this research were to understand top of mind perspectives and preferences related to MnDOT goals and targets for:

- Commuter delays
- Greenhouse gas emissions
- Vehicle miles traveled reduction

The research also aimed to understand attitudes about:

- Technology and transportation
- Transportation modes/options
- Community engagement, safety and equity
- Trade-offs and priorities

The policy panel had two phases, both of which were conducted virtually. The first phase was a quantitative online survey conducted in October 2021. The criteria for qualification in the survey was that participants live in Minnesota and be over 18. Participants were recruited for the survey through traditional market research recruitment processes and via direct email to community partner organizations from Phase 2.

Following the completion of the online survey, participants were told about an opportunity to participate in a follow-up discussion that would dig deeper into some of the content areas. The follow-up online discussion board was a qualitative segment of the study and included approximately 50 individuals using a bulletin board research platform, which is a moderated discussion that takes place over a few days. The online discussion board concluded in November 2021.

WHO PARTICIPATED

QUANTITATIVE SURVEY

The ending sample for the quantitative survey was 665 respondents, with 375 from MnDOT's Metro District and 290 from Greater Minnesota MnDOT districts. Demographic data for participants in this phase is in the following tables.

TABLE 2: PERCENT OF TOTAL PARTICIPANTS IN QUANTITATIVE SURVEY BY GENDER IDENTITY BY REGION

Gender Identity	Total (n=665)	Metro (n=375)	Greater MN (n=290)
Female	55%	54%	56%
Male	45%	46%	43%
Gender diverse, non-binary, etc.	<1%	0%	1%

TABLE 3: PERCENT OF TOTAL PARTICIPANTS IN QUANTITATIVE SURVEY BY AGE GROUP BY REGION

Age Group	Total (n=665)	Metro (n=375)	Greater MN (n=290)
18-34	29%	31%	27%
35-54	35%	37%	33%
55+	36%	33%	40%

TABLE 4: PERCENT OF TOTAL PARTICIPANTS IN QUANTITATIVE SURVEY BY RACE OR ETHNICITY BY REGION*

Race or Ethnic Background	Total (n=665)	Metro (n=375)	Greater MN (n=290)
American Indian or Alaska Native	2%	2%	2%
Asian	4%	7%	1%
Black or African American	5%	8%	2%
Hispanic	6%	6%	5%
White	87%	81%	94%
White only/non-Hispanic	81%	74%	89%

*Note that participants were allowed to select more than one option.

QUALITATIVE DISCUSSION

Following the conclusion of the quantitative survey, respondents were invited to participate in an online discussion forum that would dig deeper into the survey topics. A total of 52 people chose to move forward with the qualitative discussion platform. Demographic data for those participants is captured in the tables below.

TABLE 5: TOTAL PARTICIPANTS IN QUALITATIVE DISCUSSION BY GENDER IDENTITY

Gender Identity	Total (n=52)	Percent of Participants
Female	27	52%
Male	22	42%
Gender diverse, non-binary, etc.	3	6%

TABLE 6: TOTAL PARTICIPANTS IN QUALITATIVE DISCUSSION BY AGE GROUP

Age Group	Total (n=52)	Percent of Participants
18-34	16	31%
34-54	22	42%
55+	14	27%

TABLE 7: TOTAL PARTICIPANTS IN QUALITATIVE DISCUSSION BY RACE OR ETHNIC BACKGROUND

Race or Ethnic Background	Total (n=52)	Percent of Participants
American Indian or Alaska Native	3	6%
Asian	7	13%
Black or African American	4	8%
Hispanic	2	4%
White only/non-Hispanic	36	69%

TABLE 8: TOTAL PARTICIPANTS IN QUALITATIVE DISCUSSION BY MNDOT DISTRICT

MnDOT District	Total (n=52)	Percent of Participants
1	3	6%
2	0	0%
3	7	13%
4	2	4%
6	5	10%
7	5	10%
8	2	4%
Metro	28	54%

SUMMARY OF KEY THEMES AND TAKEAWAYS

As noted previously, the goal of the online policy panel survey and discussion board was to understand Minnesotans' perspectives and preferences related to MnDOT goals and targets for:

- Commuter delays
- Greenhouse gas emissions
- Vehicle miles traveled reduction

The research also aimed to understand Minnesotans' attitudes about:

- Technology and transportation
- Transportation modes/options
- Community engagement, safety and equity
- Trade-offs and priorities

This research was conducted first through a quantitative survey that captured high-level beliefs, perspectives and opinions. Select participants were then asked to dig deeper into these ideas and provide more context to why or what informed their opinions via a qualitative discussion. This summary will first provide a review of the key data points of each topic that were found in the quantitative survey and then expand upon this information using insights from the qualitative discussion when applicable. Note: not every topic from the quantitative survey was discussed in more depth during the qualitative discussion.

COMMUTER DELAYS

Minnesota statute sets a goal for the transportation system to “provide reasonable travel time for commuters.” To assess reasonable travel time, MnDOT uses the average delay a commuter in the Twin Cities metro area will face while traveling and measures progress against that.

Two metrics were evaluated in this survey:

- Forty hours of delay per person per year or
- Nine minutes of delay per person each weekday

The average participant indicated that nine minutes of delay per person per weekday seemed more reasonable than 40 hours per person per year. This is also perhaps because participants also indicated that minutes per workday was easier to understand than hours per year. Over half (67%) felt this is a reasonable amount of time for a person traveling in the Twin Cities metro area to be delayed on average.

- “...I usually need to get to work at a specific time each day and just from a logistical standpoint I cannot really afford to introduce any variables into my morning commute.”

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Transportation is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) in Minnesota and nationally. Minnesota statute sets a goal for Minnesota to “reduce GHG from the state’s transportation sector.” Consistent with the

Minnesota Next Generation Energy Act, MnDOT previously set a target to reduce transportation GHG emissions by 30% by the year 2025 when compared to 2005 levels.

When asked about setting a target for GHG emission reduction, there is general agreement about the need to do so but not necessarily how to align it, i.e., whether with the state goals or the President's goals and Paris Agreement.

During the qualitative discussion, most respondents indicated that they were not surprised at the need for GHG emission reduction goals but were surprised to see so much support for the goal in general.

- “No, I am not surprised. Many people find it difficult to conceptualize these emission targets in their heads and decide what they really prefer.”
- “Surprised that 70% agree to one of the two initiatives. Thought it would be less.”
- “This doesn't surprise me at all, seeing that there's generally a level of trust with MnDOT I think, compared to other state agencies. I think it's good that most people think we need to reduce emissions.”

Participants also indicated that the discussion also got them thinking about the rural and urban divide when it came to GHG emissions.

- “I think it really forced me to think about the rural/urban disconnect in Minnesota and how we can create more transport options besides cars to get from the suburbs to the Twin Cities.”
- “What most surfaced for me was that vehicle and road/transportation policy really has a different impact depending on where you live.”

Finally, respondents indicated that all parties (e.g., government agencies, Minnesota businesses and individuals) share some portion of the responsibility for GHG reduction. On an individual level, many indicated that cost is a common restriction in their ability to change personal habits.

- “I would love an electric car and am considering it. I need the price to go down and I need to make sure my electric used is clean.”
- “MnDOT cannot address everything on its own. Reducing emissions is largely in the hands of the consumer and their behaviors.”
- “I personally feel that we all need to pitch in equally to make a change.”

VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED REDUCTION

A possible strategy for GHG emission reduction shared during the survey was increasing transportation options for people to travel fewer miles in personal vehicles (referred to as “vehicle miles”). On average across the state, MnDOT is considering a 20% reduction per capita in miles traveled by 2050 when compared to 2019.

When this strategy was proposed to participants, nearly half (47%) felt that that the vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction goal should vary throughout the state. Within that same group, the majority felt that the goals should focus more in large urban areas that have greater access to transit options. Nearly six in ten find the goal of a 20% reduction in VMT per capita by 2050 to be reasonable; roughly one quarter think it is not.

During the quantitative discussion, many of these sentiments were echoed. In particular, respondents suggested that due to the greater traffic volume and availability of transit options, it makes sense that the Twin Cities metro area should be subject to more stringent VMT goals than the rest of the state.

- “It should be varied and take into account population, commuting options and road use. As I noted, it is far easier for residents of large cities to use alternate transportation options to cars. In rural areas it's often much less practical give a lack of bussing, rail, or other options. Traffic is also much less of a problem in less populated areas.”
- “I agree that it should be more in urban areas because people who live in rural areas have no option but to drive if they have to go somewhere because of the absence of public transportation. There is no bus, light rail, or ride-sharing services available.”
- “I feel the goal should be varied. People who live in rural areas have to go to other towns to get their necessities and have far fewer options for public transportation.”

Participants during the online discussion forum also indicated that VMT should be varied on how goals are set and what should be considered (e.g., line of work, availability of public transit, etc.).

- “I think the goal should be varied but it needs to take into account miles driven by farmers because I assume their farm vehicles and equipment will count towards the mileage thing. I think that if it didn't, we would lose a lot of agricultural business in the state. Also what about people who drive for their jobs like home health nurses? Would that be charged per mile or would that cost be passed on to their employers?”
- “The goal can be set using two separate metrics, weighed differently, One could be a pure VMT model, in which the geography does not count. The other may be set to a modified VMT that takes into consideration of the median number of miles driven by various types of vehicles, private and commercial, with the goals adjusted accordingly. The two goals can then be aggregated for the purpose of the overall emission goal setting.”

Of note, when pushed, participants in all contexts did start to identify ways in which they could change their individual behavior to reduce VMT.

ATTITUDES: TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

During the quantitative survey, it was clear that while there is widespread support for investment in connected and automated vehicle development. Roughly two-thirds commenting that they would like Minnesota to take a lead role in developing transportation technology, nearly all participants agreed that human drivers should also benefit from future transportation planning.

Of the participants, seven in ten drove a vehicle and specifically among participants of the qualitative discussion, most drove a car daily or at least twice weekly.

ATTITUDES: TRANSPORTATION MODES AND OPTIONS

There was strong agreement amongst the quantitative survey participants about the need to improve transportation modes and options in Greater Minnesota, with roughly three quarters of respondents agreeing

that Greater Minnesota could benefit from better transit options, support for teleworking and improvements that would support the increased ease and comfort of walking and bicycling.

When asked to provide more context for transportation choices during the qualitative discussion, many participants indicated that access and customized needs (e.g., work schedule, childcare, etc.) are reasons they do not use rideshare or carpool options more often. Others indicated that they would use light rail or bus more often if access was more readily available and the timing was more convenient. For others, this mode would need to be safer, less expensive or both.

- “The local bus schedule is not convenient for when/where I need to travel. There is no light rail available anywhere in northern Minnesota. Bus routes have been further consolidated recently in my local community. I don't see light rail happening here in the near or distant future.”
- “If I lived in the Metro, I'm sure I would use them more. but even hearing from my friends who do live in the metro (and are students at the U), they say the buses don't come frequently enough or are unreliable.”
- “If public transportation was generally safer, I might be more inclined to use it.”

When discussing other modes of transportation, including walking, wheeling or bicycling, active transportation is viewed as being too inconvenient and/or weather dependent to be relied upon. Participants indicated that they would engage in active transportation more often if paths were safe from cars, well-lit and clear.

- “As a mode of commuting, I rarely bike or walk. It just doesn't make sense in the suburbs. If I lived downtown I would do it all the time. I love to do both. While biking for leisure is pretty doable in Woodbury, I wouldn't want to commute this way given how fast and often erratic people drive in town. People are often speeding and don't pay much attention, especially in roundabouts where awareness of bikers is particularly terrible. Biking in downtown areas is much more feasible, but much less so in suburbs.”
- “My neighborhood isn't very safe for me to be walking around in alone, so I often have to wait until I'm with someone to go on a walk. The sidewalks are also very limited near me. I would also love to bike on a bike trail, but I don't have one near me.”
- “The weather can be so extreme. It is so cold and when the ice gets here there is no way to walk safely even on really good sidewalks.”
- “If the sidewalks were completely plowed and salted so it was walkable.”
- “Several things have been implemented (in D1) to support more biking (bike lanes, bike racks on busses, public bike racks and repair stations) but most people do not have fat tire bikes to allow for commuting in the 6 months of the year we have snow on the ground. Walking in the winter is challenging due to snow drifts and lack of shoveled sidewalks.”

Finally, when asked about teleworking, participants in the qualitative discussion generally indicated that while preferred by some, it was up to the employer and not a personal decision. There were also suggestions about the need to improve fast, reliable internet access to make teleworking a viable option for more individuals. Some would also like their companies to approve it more readily.

- “While it doesn’t work for me in general, one of the major limitations is access to reliable and affordable Internet.”
- “I need to go into the office at least once a week. It’s more of a company policy so companies need to decide for themselves.”

ATTITUDES: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, SAFETY AND EQUITY

Over 90% of quantitative survey participants agreed on the need for early community input, fairness and justice in the transportation system. Additionally, over eight in ten agree that decision makers should include those impacted by transportation system in the decision-making process.

During the qualitative discussion, it became clear that many participants’ top-of-mind reactions to a ‘fair and just’ transportation system were viewed through a geographic lens, specifically urban versus rural.

- “I think fair and just means distribution shouldn’t just be prioritized in large metro areas but shared across the state.”
- “I don’t think we can have equal systems across the state because of the lack of population density and rural nature of much of greater Minnesota. There will always be more needs, more services and more expenses in the metro area where the population density is higher.”

Additionally, qualitative discussion participants indicated that while they view MnDOT’s definition of “fairness” positively, there are some who are skeptical of how it will be enacted in the ‘real world’. Similarly, most people are supportive of MnDOT’s definition of justice, though there remains cynicism of this concept in action.

- “This is a laudable goal, but so difficult to implement. As with anything, access depends on economic status. It’s so much easier to meet transportation needs if you have money.”
- “It’s the utopian ideal but maybe impractical.”
- “Again, great thought and necessary but you have to walk the walk as well.”
- “I think it makes sense but may or may not be easy to implement. We have to give look at each community and think about their access to transportation.”

During quantitative survey, 54% of all respondents agreed that transportation agencies should change the design of the roads to slow traffic and improve safety. As this topic was discussed further during the qualitative discussion, most participants voiced support for increased safety measures even if it meant slowing traffic.

Additionally, on average, participants felt that the responsibility for transportation safety was shared relatively equally between MnDOT, individuals and law enforcement. Specifically, most individuals felt that MnDOT’s responsibility lies in creating effective and safe infrastructure, but individuals need to do their part, along with law enforcement, to make it work.

- “If there are dangerous speed limits, traffic flows, etc. it is up to MnDOT and law enforcement to help correct those conditions. Enforcement of bad driving habits can be selective by locality.”
- “I feel the majority of the responsibility relies on individuals themselves. MnDOT and police can only do so much. It’s up to us to keep ourselves safe.”

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

ATTITUDES: TRADE-OFFS AND PRIORITIES

In the quantitative survey, over 90% of respondents agreed that existing infrastructure should take priority over new projects. However, there was no consensus about what would make rough roads acceptable (new improvements for safety, reliable travel times, etc.). Additionally, one in seven individuals indicated that they have had their travel impacted because of a lack of safe or affordable transportation options.

During phase two, participants’ feelings were mixed, indicating that they feel transportation issues can impact them both negatively and positively; however, many viewed the headaches of construction worth it for the improved, safer infrastructure.

- “Construction on roads can create slow travel, but these projects will ultimately make roads safer.”
- “Everything is trending towards the good, but it's tough just getting to that point, change is never easy.”
- “It's one of those necessary annoyances to keep people going in their community. I'd rather have it and not need it than need it and not have it.”
- “Minnesota, and especially the Twin Cities, does more than a fair job in providing adequate and efficient transportation.”

VIRTUAL STAKEHOLDER FORUMS

MnDOT hosted two virtual stakeholder forums on December 2 and 7, 2021 as an opportunity for transportation stakeholders to discuss specific changes to the SMTP policy objectives, performance measures strategies and actions.

WHO PARTICIPATED

Invitees included:

- Advisory committees
 - Policy Advisory Committee
 - Technical Advisory Committee
 - Each of the six SMTP work groups
- Advocacy Council for Tribal Transportation
- Area transportation partnerships
- City and county engineers
- Metropolitan planning organizations
- Minnesota Freight Advisory Committee
- Regional development organizations
- Transit agencies

Table 9 lists the organization for the 125 people who participated in the two stakeholder forums. People in the “Other” organization category included a mix of public health, area boards on aging, advocates, etc.

TABLE 9: FORUM ATTENDEES BY ORGANIZATION TYPE

Organization Type	Total (n=125)	Percent of Participants
City	14	11%
County	26	21%
MnDOT District	19	15%
MnDOT Other	9	7%
Metropolitan Planning Organization	9	7%
Other State Agency	1	1%
Regional Development Organization	14	11%
Transit Agency	13	10%
Tribal Nation	3	2%
Other	19	15%

SUMMARY OF KEY THEMES AND TAKEAWAYS

Participants shared feedback on six policy areas that were the focus of the stakeholder forums: connected and automated vehicle readiness, climate change, vehicle miles traveled reduction, freight and economic competitiveness, Safe System approach to transportation safety and transportation equity implementation. Key takeaways included:

- Sixty-one percent of stakeholder forum participants (not counting MnDOT staff participants) supported setting a greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction target consistent with either the Paris Agreement or the Next Generation Energy Act, with the Paris Agreement receiving stronger support.

- Fifty-eight percent of stakeholder forum participants (not counting MnDOT staff participants) supported setting a target to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT).
- Some participants preferred stronger action verbs for climate action and transportation equity to elevate the urgency of the work required.
- Many participants stressed the need to consider different geographies for each of the topics. Several people commented the need to be flexible in the approaches based on the context.
- Participants noted that land use as essential component to planning for connected and automated vehicles, reducing vehicle miles traveled and advancing transportation equity.

Staff recommended GHG emission targets in alignment with the Paris Agreement for inclusion in the SMTP following these stakeholder forums. Feedback on the VMT target was shared with the internal work group that drafted a target recommendation for inclusion in the SMTP.