

Advancing Transportation Equity Project – Phase 1

The Advancing Transportation Equity project is a planning-level effort to better understand transportation equity in Minnesota. It is composed of multiple activities. Specifically, Phase 1 includes a research component and an engagement component. Future phases are yet to be scoped but will build off what is learned in Phase 1.

Background

As MnDOT updated the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan (2017), it was clear from engagement and internal discussion that the plan should provide direction on how to better incorporate equity in transportation decision-making. However, it was not clear exactly what that means or how to do it. More information is needed in order for MnDOT and other transportation partners to incorporate equity effectively.

Scope of Work

Phase 1 is focused on information gathering – we don't know what we don't know. The effort includes a research component and an engagement component.

Research & Literature/Program Review

The research component of the Advancing Transportation Equity project includes:

- A literature review of existing research related to transportation and equity, and the relationship between the two topics
- A state of the practice review of existing programs related to equity at transportation agencies and other public entities
- The development of a research roadmap to guide future research activities based on unanswered questions related to transportation equity

The primary goal of these activities is to understand what information already exists and to identify gaps. While the focus is on Minnesota, national and international data and examples will be included when appropriate.

MnDOT will be contracting with University of Minnesota researchers to complete these activities. Work is expected to begin in early 2018 and will run through late 2018.

Community Conversations

The engagement component of the Advancing Transportation Equity project includes one-on-one, in-depth interviews with groups, agencies and organizations that represent key communities:

- Communities currently underrepresented in our processes
- Communities experiencing known inequities
- Communities with unique transportation needs not well served by a business-as-usual approach

The goal of the conversations to better understand how different communities understand and define equity and what MnDOT and other transportation partners can do to make meaningful change.

MnDOT staff, with consultant support through Management Analysis and Development, an internal consulting function of Minnesota Management and Budget, will hold the community conversations. The effort will begin with a pilot of the approach in MnDOT District 2. The pilot effort will begin in February 2018 and will wrap up mid-2018. In Spring/Summer 2018, based on early results from the pilot, MnDOT will develop a plan to scale the approach statewide.

Next Steps

The Advancing Transportation Equity project is just starting. As the work begins on the different activities, additional MnDOT staff and partners will be involved and more information will become available. Stay tuned.