

## Chapter 6: Plan Vision and Approach

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Earlier chapters of this plan lay out the trends and issues that will affect transportation in Minnesota over the next 20 years. As these trends and issues were shared with stakeholders around the state during the development of this plan, a long-term vision for mobility in Minnesota began to emerge. Stakeholders identified a range of desired system improvements, additions, and enhancements to transportation in Minnesota. Some of the key components include:

- Superior highway connections to adjacent states and Canada
- Active ports in Duluth and along the Mississippi River
- Connections to a national high-speed passenger rail network
- Cost-competitive national freight rail connections supported by a network of regional freight rail corridors and intermodal terminals
- Vibrant Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport “Hub” and secondary supporting airports throughout the state
- Upgraded highways and expanded transit service connecting the regional trade centers throughout the state
- Reliable mobility in the Twin Cities through innovative highway capacity improvements and expanded transitways
- Reliable mobility in Greater Minnesota metropolitan areas through expansion of both the highway network and transit systems
- Greater transit options throughout the state with improved connectivity between services and modes
- Safe travel throughout the state, with a goal toward zero deaths
- Expanded networks for safe biking and walking
- Infrastructure maintained in safe and structurally sound condition

The vision is broad and far reaching and may take the next 50 years to fully realize. But, the vision speaks to transportation as a critical ingredient for the continued economic vitality of the entire state and the livability of its communities.

This plan is intended to move Minnesota toward the long-range transportation vision, recognizing the challenges and opportunities involved. The following key principles frame the plan approach and are reflected throughout the policies and strategies:

**1. Continue performance-based planning and investment management:**

This plan continues the commitment to performance-based planning established in the 2003 Statewide Transportation Plan. This plan further suggests that performance measures be developed and applied to all modes and jurisdictions as a way to measure progress and the effectiveness of policies and strategies.

**2. Articulate a more multimodal and multijurisdictional approach to transportation:**

The 2003 plan was primarily a plan for Mn/DOT and focused on the highway system as the backbone of the transportation system. While this plan continues to acknowledge the importance of the highway system, it also recognizes that a more multimodal and multijurisdictional approach to transportation is needed to achieve major goals, including maintaining Minnesota's economic competitiveness, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and providing modal choice for consumers.

**3. Build on existing plans:**

Since 2003, several major modal and specialty plans and studies have been completed related to aeronautics, freight, bicycles, and safety. Metropolitan plans have been updated around the state. The policies and strategies in this Statewide Transportation Policy Plan build on these plans and studies and, in many instances, identify issues and strategies that need to be examined further in the future.

**4. Concurrently update the 20-year State Highway Investment Plan:**

Mn/DOT develops its long-range State Highway Investment Plan in a decentralized manner through the preparation of plans by each of its eight districts. The last update took place during 2004 after the Statewide Transportation Plan was adopted. To provide stakeholders with a clearer picture of the link between the policy and investment program, the District Highway Investment Plans have been updated concurrently with the policy plan process. The investment plans are summarized in a separate document, the 20-year Statewide Highway Investment Plan.

**5. Emphasize importance of partnerships:**

Minnesota's transportation system is a complex network of interconnected modes, owned and managed by a variety of government jurisdictions and private companies. To operate effectively, coordination across modes and jurisdictions is essential. Toward this end, the plan identifies key issues and strategies for consideration by Mn/DOT's partners who provide key components of the statewide system. The plan begins to set a framework for enhanced coordination and stronger collaboration among Minnesota's transportation partners.

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*This plan recognizes that a more multimodal and multijurisdictional approach to transportation is needed.*

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*Innovation is imperative to address transportation challenges.*

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#### **6. Commit to innovation:**

With all the challenges facing Minnesota's transportation system in both the near and longer term, innovation is imperative. Creativity and innovation needs to permeate every aspect of transportation service delivery, from how revenues are generated, services are contracted, and projects are constructed to how existing capacity and right of way are managed.

#### **7. Seek cost-effective and context-appropriate solutions:**

Given limited financial resources, it is essential that cost-effective and context-appropriate solutions are implemented so that resources can be stretched to provide benefits to the greatest number of users.

#### **8. Maintain a flexible and opportunistic approach:**

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*This plan has been developed during a time of significant economic change.*

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This plan has been developed during a time of significant change bringing both challenges and opportunities for the future of transportation in Minnesota. The Minnesota Legislature approved increased funding for transportation and directed investments toward a major bridge rehabilitation program. Gas prices peaked in July 2008 at more than \$4.00 per gallon, Minnesotans drove fewer miles, transit ridership increased, and transportation revenues declined. As of this writing, gas prices have plummeted and the national economy is in serious recession. The economic outlook has prompted the U.S. Congress to pass a stimulus bill and major infrastructure investment program. Clearly, the policies, strategies, and investment plans set forth in this plan may need to be revisited to respond to the evolving challenges and opportunities.

## **Policies, Strategies, and Performance Measures**

The remainder of this plan provides direction for the development of all levels of Minnesota's transportation system over the next 20 years. Chapter 7 outlines the policies, strategies, and performance measures to address the various transportation trends and issues described in this plan. The policies, strategies, and performance measures are organized around the following 10 key policy objectives relating to maintaining and improving the multimodal, multijurisdictional transportation system in Minnesota.

1. **Traveler Safety:** Reduce the number of fatalities and serious injuries for all travel modes.
2. **Infrastructure Preservation:** Ensure the structural integrity of the transportation systems serving people and freight.
3. **Maintenance and Security:** Maintain and operate the statewide transportation system in an efficient, cost-effective, and secure manner.
4. **National and Global Connections:** Maintain and strengthen Minnesota's strategic multimodal connections to the Upper Midwest, the nation, and the world.
5. **Statewide Connections:** Enhance the movement of people and freight between regional trade centers within Minnesota by providing efficient, multimodal transportation connections.

6. **Twin Cities Mobility:** Provide mobility and address congestion in the Twin Cities by optimizing use of the existing system and making strategic capacity investments in both highways and transit.
7. **Greater Minnesota Metropolitan and Regional Mobility:** Provide for the changing transportation needs of people and freight within Greater Minnesota regions and metropolitan areas by planning regionally for critical investments and improving coordination across modes and jurisdictions.
8. **Community Development and Transportation:** Support local efforts to increase jobs, expand housing, and improve community livability through more coordinated planning, complementary design, and timely communication among land use and transportation authorities.
9. **Energy and the Environment:** Improve the energy efficiency and environmental sustainability of Minnesota's transportation system.
10. **Accountability and Transparency:** Strengthen accountability and transparency in the delivery of Minnesota's transportation system.

The policies, strategies, and performance measures as well as transportation issues and needs have been identified for multiple modes. Highway-based transportation, including travel by personal vehicle, bus, or freight-hauling truck, is discussed in each policy area. Railroads, which provide both freight and passenger transport, are discussed explicitly in all policy areas except 7 and 10 where they should be considered part of the freight system and future studies discussions. Aviation is discussed in policy areas 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 8. Bicycle and pedestrian travel is discussed in all policy areas except 4 and 5, as large numbers of long-distance, global, or statewide trips are not presently common for these modes.

A number of performance measures and indicators are selected for representation and discussion within individual policy areas. A full description of all performance measures and indicators associated with this plan is provided in Appendix D.

## Future Plans and Studies

Chapter 8 outlines that additional plans and studies that will be completed over the next two years in response to issues or strategies identified in this plan. These studies range from identifying the vision for the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area highway system to clarifying the state's role, responsibility, and vision for passenger rail. It is anticipated that the results of these studies will lead to an amendment of this plan in late 2010 or early 2011.