

Policy 8: Community Development and Transportation



Summary

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.

Transportation is a key ingredient to community livability and local economic development. Local governments must carefully consider and address the transportation needs and implications of their land use and community development decisions. Mn/DOT will work with regional and local partners as well as state agencies to promote the planning and development of local transportation systems that are sensitive to the community context, support local development goals, and conform to regional system plans.

Transportation is a key ingredient to community livability and local economic development.

8A. Metropolitan, Regional, or Corridor Planning for Transportation: Tribes and local governments should participate in the transportation planning for their metropolitan area or region.

8B. The Land Use – Transportation Connection: State and local authorities should consider the connection between land use and transportation in zoning, land use, and economic development decisions.

8C. Street and Development Design: State and local government should seek to enhance quality of life in communities by coordinating the design of streets and developments.

8D. Compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): State and local governments should work to make their transportation systems ADA compliant.

8E. Networks for Timely Communication: Mn/DOT and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) will take a stronger leadership role in establishing and maintaining an institutional framework for communication and sharing of land use and transportation plans and technical knowledge.

Background and Context

The quality of life in every Minnesota community depends on many factors: the ability of residents to earn a living; the opportunity to live in a safe neighborhood; the availability of education, health services, shopping, and recreation; clean air and water; and the ability to travel safely and conveniently. Safe, convenient, and timely travel options are expected by residents and businesses throughout Minnesota.

Meeting these expectations will be challenging given the socio-economic trends in Minnesota and the revenue outlook for state and local transportation investments over the next decade. The competition for transportation funding is high due to the numerous needs of an aging infrastructure and the competition among local governments for access and capacity improvements. These transportation improvements support local economic growth and development.

A community's long-term development prospects can be hampered by inadequate transportation connections to the surrounding region and state. Community viability can also be hindered by poorly integrated street designs. At the same time, inadequate community planning and insensitive site development can severely reduce the effectiveness of the state and regional transportation systems.

Where interregional corridor planning is addressed in Policy 5 and the need for a metropolitan or regional approach toward transportation is addressed in Policies 6 and 7, Policy 8 focuses on the important planning and community development concepts and techniques that local governments should consider to promote more effective linkages between land use and transportation. It also identifies strategies to improve coordination among the many governmental jurisdictions, public agencies, and business associations engaged in the complex process of developing communities.

Strategies

This section presents strategies that transportation and land use authorities can use to achieve Policy 8 objectives. Based on specific conditions and circumstances, the specific mix of strategies employed may be different from community to community.

8A. Metropolitan, Regional, or Corridor Planning for Transportation

Tribes and local governments should participate in the transportation planning for their metropolitan area or region.

Transportation investments provide access to land, enabling its development.

Land use and transportation are inextricably linked. Transportation investments provide access to land, enabling its development or redevelopment. Land development generates travel demand on the transportation system in the form of auto, truck, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian trips.

Because local planning and development decisions must be consistent with regional transportation plans, local governments should participate in the regional planning efforts. Tribes and local governments should develop and share land use plans with their regional partners and modify or adjust the plans so that a consistent vision for the transportation system is shared throughout the entire region. These plans should be multimodal, consist of roads that accommodate people and freight, and define major access points as well as transit and bicycle-pedestrian facilities.

8B. The Land Use-Transportation Connection

State and local authorities should consider the connection between land use and transportation in zoning, land use, and economic development decisions.

Greater coordination and long-term planning is needed to ensure land uses and transportation systems are in balance.

When planning local development and redevelopment projects, consideration should be given to the transportation improvements needed to support the proposed land uses. Transportation infrastructure changes typically require substantial lead times as well as significant investment of public funds. Public dollars and projects are often planned and programmed many years into the future, thus providing little opportunity to fund new projects unless others are deferred or additional funds are provided. Proposed land uses, on the other hand, are relatively flexible and can be tailored to fit an area or site. This suggests that greater

coordination and long-term planning is needed to ensure land uses and transportation systems are in balance.

Local and state government can do a number of things that ensure the transportation system successfully supports community development and redevelopment over the long-term, including:

Clustering development and locating freight generators on major highways, rail lines, or ports reduce the amount of infrastructure required.

- a. Local governments should develop comprehensive transportation plans that address all needs and are consistent with other state and regional transportation plans. These plans should provide a framework for guiding local transportation and land use decisions, and should include, at a minimum, a future functional classification system, number of travel lanes to accommodate future growth, identification of key access points, and locations of existing and future multimodal connections or facilities.
- b. Local governments can use their planning and zoning powers to guide land uses that make efficient use of the transportation system. Examples include clustering activity centers, organizing development into a mix of compatible land uses, and locating major freight generators adjacent to major transportation facilities. Clustering development and locating freight generators on major highways, rail lines, or ports reduce the amount of infrastructure required. At the same time, clustering development and creating a mix of compatible land uses, especially in metropolitan areas, creates opportunities for short trips, which could be made by transit, bicycling, or walking. Supporting land use density either from households/dwellings or employment is a significant factor in providing viable transit service and bicycle-pedestrian systems as well.

Local government can use its zoning powers to guide land uses that are compatible with major existing and planned transportation facilities

- c. Local governments can use their zoning powers to guide development consistent with metropolitan and regional plans for major access to the highway system. As discussed in Policy 7, the development and implementation of a regional plan for access to the highway system is a complex process that requires substantial investment. Local governments should carefully consider the location of major highway access points in land use decisions.
- d. Local governments can use their zoning powers to guide land uses that are compatible with major existing and planned transportation facilities such as major highways, ports, intermodal terminals, and airports. For example, safe zoning areas can be established around airports to increase safety during take offs and landings, and buffers or transitions areas can be developed around industrial land uses such as intermodal terminals to minimize potential impacts. Similarly, land uses serving people with special needs, such as schools serving children, can be sited sensitive to busy streets or intersections in ways that promote safe bicycle and pedestrian travel.
- e. State and local government can work to improve coordination between their transportation and economic development agencies. For example, local governments can consider the implementation of development review committees that make use of expertise from multiple agencies and/or departments, and provide a well-rounded review of projects in terms of land use and transportation. State government can also consider the implementation

of an economic development review committee consisting of economic development and transportation experts.

8C. Street and Development Design

State and local government should seek to enhance quality of life in communities by coordinating the design of streets and developments.

Infrastructure improvements affect quality of life in communities both during and after construction. Mn/DOT and local governments can minimize negative effects using good project development and construction planning. These efforts will strive to reduce the overall footprint of the design on the community as well as minimize delays and detours during street construction, which may affect local businesses. Local government can do several things to ensure the coordination of street and development design, including:

- a. Local governments should require the completion of traffic impact studies for larger developments. When traffic studies are performed, all stakeholders better understand the transportation investments needed to support the development in the context of the overall transportation system. Guidance on traffic studies is available from Mn/DOT.
- b. Local governments should require that subdivision, other development, and redevelopment designs provide appropriate connections between neighborhood and regional road networks. This coordination ensures the transportation system will provide a good balance between mobility and access. Guidance on appropriate connections is available from Mn/DOT through its Access Management Guidelines.
- c. Local governments should require that subdivision, other development, and redevelopment designs support a system of interconnected streets, trails, and sidewalks that supplement the area's major highways and roads. These designs should support travel by multiple modes including transit, bicycles, pedestrians, emergency vehicles, vehicles servicing utilities, and commercial vehicle configurations, where appropriate. These designs better support cost-effective transit, bicycle and pedestrian travel, and the concept of Complete Streets.
- d. Local governments, within growing communities, should preserve right-of-way for expansion of major highways and arterials consistent with state, regional, and local plans.
- e. All transportation authorities should consider all modes and the appropriateness of Complete Streets as they develop and plan their transportation system. Mn/DOT is currently working with local governments to evaluate the feasibility and process needed to develop a Complete Streets policy.

Concurrently, Mn/DOT and local governments should work together in a number of ways to coordinate transportation and development design. Together, Mn/DOT and local authorities should use the Context Sensitive Solutions approach for the development and scoping of transportation projects within all neighborhoods and communities. This will help ensure the roadway development process and resulting projects reflect community values, setting, and character.

8D. Compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

State and local governments will work to make their transportation systems ADA compliant.

All transportation authorities will work to make transportation facilities compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Currently, Mn/DOT's highway project development process provides accessibility by requiring new facilities and/or modifications of existing facilities to meet accessible design standards (e.g., ADA Accessibility Guidelines, Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards, Minnesota State Building Code). Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter 8, Mn/DOT is completing an ADA transition plan to identify existing physical obstacles in Mn/DOT facilities and to describe the methods that will be used to make the facilities accessible.

8E. Networks for Timely Communication

Mn/DOT and MPOs will take a stronger leadership role in establishing and maintaining an institutional framework for communication and sharing of land use and transportation plans and technical knowledge.

Timely communication among all transportation and land use authorities is essential to coordinate work as well as to provide a common understanding of both community development and transportation needs. This communication and understanding should occur at and between the local and state level, and should be promoted with all entities involved in land use, economic development and public works. Although communication and coordination efforts are required by environmental impact statement (EIS), environmental assessment (EA/EAW), and alternative urban areawide review (AUAR) processes, partners often find it to be too little, too late. Stronger coordination across jurisdictions and functional responsibilities is needed.

Building on the success of the Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) initiative (see Policy 1) and Area Transportation Partnerships (ATP), Mn/DOT Districts will work to develop new networking frameworks that facilitate timely and regular communication among all stakeholders regarding land use, transportation and infrastructure issues. Examples of issues include coordinating the replacement of local underground utilities during the reconstruction of a roadway and the location of new schools or major employment centers.

The frameworks will vary depending on the needs of the area and agencies or jurisdictions involved. Some areas have an institutional framework in place provided by the MPO or regional development commission (RDC). Mn/DOT will offer technical and organizational support in these areas. In other areas of Minnesota that do not have a framework in place, Mn/DOT will work with its local partners to develop a strong network. In either instance, Mn/DOT will work to involve not only

transportation and local public works and land use authorities, but also key state agencies involved in community development such as the Department of Employment and Economic Development, the Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Commerce.

Performance Measures and Indicators

Performance measures and indicators provide quantitative information to managers, decision-makers, and the public. This information is tracked over time to monitor performance and investment levels as well as the changes in performance given changes in levels of investment. One performance measure has been identified for this policy area and is listed below. This measure is described in greater detail in Appendix D.

- Airport Airspace and Land that is Protected