

MnDOT Response: 2020 Sustainable Transportation Advisory Council Recommendations

In 2020, MnDOT created a new process to invite business, nonprofits, local governments, legislators, and community groups to partner with agency to help us make progress towards our goals.

The Sustainable Transportation Advisory Council (STAC) was designed as a unique type of long-form public engagement to provide new ideas for how the state could move towards a low carbon transportation future. STAC members were appointed by the Commissioner of Transportation and met regularly throughout the year. The agency plans for the STAC to be an ongoing collaboration and for this to be the first of many annual reports.

MnDOT facilitated the STAC process but did not actively participate in development of the recommendations that came directly from the STAC members. The agency did coordinate internally and with external stakeholders and subject matter experts to develop responses.

About this Document

This report presents the MnDOT response to recommendations that the STAC provided in December 2020. For many of the recommendations, the agency expects this response will be the start of future conversations about the recommendations from this first year of the STAC.

It is worth noting that very few constraints were suggested by MnDOT for STAC members related to transportation climate actions. Both STAC members and MnDOT recognize that some of the recommendations to MnDOT may fall outside of direct agency ability to control, which is described in the MnDOT responses.

MnDOT Response to Fueling and Powering Transportation Recommendations

Recommendation #1: Develop a clean fuels policy

MnDOT Related Activities	MnDOT Proposed Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support clean fuels to reduce GHG emissions Governor’s Climate Change Subcabinet and Governor’s Council on Biofuels identified a Clean Fuels as a policy priority 	<p>Support: The 2021 Governor’s budget proposal includes funding for MnDOT to lead a stakeholder process to develop a Clean Fuels Policy for the state</p>

Recommendation #2: Establish rebates for public and private light-, medium-, and heavy duty- EVs, including dealership support and consumer rebates

MnDOT Related Activities	MnDOT Proposed Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2019, MnDOT began a three-year pilot to give a one-time MnPass account credit to eligible EV drivers Several utilities in MN provide incentives for EV charging rates and Level 2 charger rebates 	<p>Explore Further: Support efforts by Governor and legislature to promote EV use.</p>

Recommendation #3: Increase investment in EV charging infrastructure, beyond existing VW settlement investments

MnDOT Related Activities	MnDOT Proposed Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current investment in EV chargers at State Facilities Bond funding for additional state agency EV chargers Clean Transportation Pilot Funding Program MPCA Small Grants for Fleets 	<p>Support: The 2021 Governor’s budget proposal includes funding for MnDOT to install EV chargers and more strategic opportunities for EV chargers will be identified in the Minnesota 2021 EV Strategic Plan</p>

Additional Fueling and Powering Transportation workgroup recommendations:

- Minnesota signs a multi-state EV charging corridor Memorandum of Understanding:** MnDOT is re-engaging states about the potential for signing the MOU.
- Examine value of NextGen highways:** MnDOT joined an external steering committee to clarify opportunities/challenges to co-locate broadband and electricity transmission in highway right-of-way.
- Develop a state-level plan to support medium/heavy duty electric vehicles:** MnDOT kicked off the 2021 Strategic EV Plan process in February 2021. STAC representatives will be invited to join the Technical Advisory Committee for the plan.
- Incentives to support increased manufacturing of EVs:** MnDOT is exploring opportunities and the agency role to support EV manufacturing.
- Minnesota signs on a Zero Emissions Vehicle truck and bus MOU:** MnDOT is re-engaging states about the potential for signing the MOU.

MnDOT Response to VMT & Transportation Options Recommendations

Recommendation #1: Adopt a statewide goal of reducing VMT by 20% by 2050

MnDOT Related Activities	MnDOT Proposed Action
Improve understanding of a VMT goal, understand ways to evaluate VMT in projects and plans, tracking and reporting VMT	Support: Adopt a preliminary statewide and per capita goal that will be finalized after engagement as part of the SMTP process.

Recommendation #2: Stop expanding highway capacity to reduce congestion

MnDOT Related Activities	MnDOT Proposed Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent with statute 174.01, Minnesota GO 50-year vision 4-tier mobility investment strategy Regional planning coordination: MnSHIP, SMTP, TPP, METC Regional Solicitation, CMP MnDOT Complete Streets Policy update: adding modal-hierarchy framework, based on land use context and functional classification 	Explore Further: MnDOT will partner to evaluate agency actions that support the recommendation in upcoming planning processes. Capacity expansion remains the lowest agency priority option to address congestion. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MnDOT will add a tier to mobility investment strategy for TDM and explore ways to track and report mobility project decisions. MnDOT will engage STAC in MnSHIP and SMTP updates.

Recommendation #3: Prioritize transit and high occupancy vehicles on MnDOT owned right of way

MnDOT Related Activities	MnDOT Proposed Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage and expand MnPASS lanes to provide transit/HOV advantages, 2021+ build-out plans Manage and expand bus-only shoulders system: largest system in US (over 300 miles), 12 additional miles planned Regional coordination: Transit Advantages program 	Support: MnDOT will continue to support this recommendation and build on current efforts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a communications strategy Partner with METC to explore expanded transit opportunities Engage STAC in current policy and planning efforts: MnSHIP and SMTP

Additional VMT and Transportation Options workgroup recommendations:

- Conduct a spending audit across project categories:** MnDOT will encourage engagement in MnSHIP and provide a list of capacity expansion projects included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program.
- Support efforts by local governments to dedicate their right of way to low carbon and active transportation:** MnDOT will explore opportunities and MnDOT's role to engage in this area.
- Discard auto-centric metrics like Level of Service (LOS), in favor of people-centered metrics like reducing VMT, providing choices for the maximum number of travelers, and accessibility and safety for all users:** Internal discussions within MnDOT are ongoing.