



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

REVISED DRAFT | January, 2016

SUMMARY

This document is a draft of this Project’s Public Participation Plan. The PPP presents a summary of tools, approaches, issues and considerations related to Community Engagement for the Greater Minnesota Transit Investment Plan. The PPP is intended to evolve through the life of the project, and to respond to guidance received from MnDOT and its project partners.

DESIRED LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT

Based on the project’s scope and timeline, the desired level and role of public participation is “Involve” (based on International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)’s “Public Participation Spectrum”):

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the Public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

Objectives for Public Involvement

This Public Participation Plan is intended to mesh with and support primary goals and priorities for public involvement as detailed in the Public Involvement Strategy for the 2011 Greater Minnesota Transit Investment Plan. The primary objectives of the 2011 Public Involvement Strategy are:



- Maintain regular contact with stakeholders to inform them of plan development and findings
- Provide opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the planning process and influence the determination of investment priorities
- Understand and respond to stakeholder concerns and incorporate them in evaluating investment priorities
- Build support for investment priorities

The objectives for the 2015 Plan Update are being reviewed by the Project Management Team and may be updated with the final PPP.

Community Engagement Deliverables as Defined in Scope of Work

The following are identified as Task 3 (Public Outreach) Deliverables for this Project's Scope of Work:

- Community Engagement Plan
- Stakeholder Interviews/Meetings and Presentations
- Onboard Traveler Survey
- Online Engagement including:
 - Project Website
 - Non-User Input "Build a Transit System" Tool and Needs Survey
 - Mapping Tool
- Open Houses/Public Hearings/Community Meetings

This document provides additional details on possible configuration/implementation options for these deliverables. Options and configuration for community engagement will be finalized in consultation with MnDOT and will be included in the project's Public Participation Plan.

Stakeholder / Audience Types

To account for the complexity of communication loops and the importance of opportunities for effective feedback during various stages of the project, two types of stakeholders are defined for engagement activities in this PPP:

- Internal stakeholders
- External stakeholders

These stakeholders are defined in the next sections of this document.

Internal Stakeholders

Internal stakeholders include staff, organizations and members of project-related bodies who are directly involved in the steering, management or development of the project and consist of the following:

1. Project Management Team

The Project Management Team is made up of key MnDOT staff and members of the consultant team. The PMT:

- Is involved in day-to-day decisions
- Provides project direction
- Facilitates communication with other stakeholders
- Provides initial review of items prior to wider internal and external stakeholder discussion/distribution
- Manages the work of the consultant team

Members of the PMT are listed below.

- Sara Dunlap, MnDOT, Project Manager
- Noel Shughart, MnDOT, Deputy Project Manager
- Bobbie Retzlaff, MnDOT
- Judy Ellison, MnDOT
- Tom Gottfried, MnDOT
- Sarah Lenz, MnDOT
- Mike Schadauer, MnDOT
- Joey Goldman, Nelson\Nygaard, Project Manager
- Stephanie Wright, Nelson\Nygaard, Deputy Project Manager
- Antonio Rosell, Community Design Group
- Kelsey Fogt, Community Design Group

Members of the PMT meet (via telephone) every two weeks.

2. Technical Advisory Committee

The Technical Advisory Committee includes MnDOT staff and transit providers. The TAC:

- Helps guide the direction of the project
- Provides initial review of items prior to wider discussion/distribution, especially related to methodology and proposed study approach

Staffing: Nelson\Nygaard will facilitate the meetings, the MnDOT Project Manager and Project Coordinator will attend all TAC meetings and will distribute materials to members of the TAC.

Schedule: The TAC will meet approximately five times during the course of the project. Meetings will be scheduled in coalition with other project events to maximize efficiency. The TAC will meet in July, September and November of 2015 and in January/February and March of 2016.

3. Plan Advisory Committee

The Plan Advisory Committee is made up of key transit stakeholders. The PAC:

- Helps guide the direction of the project, especially regarding higher level policy decisions
- Provides initial review of items prior to wider discussion/distribution

Staffing: Nelson\Nygaard will facilitate the meetings; MnDOT's Project Manager and Project Coordinator will attend all PAC meetings and will distribute materials to members of the PAC.

Schedule: The PAC will meet approximately four times during the course of the project. Meetings will be scheduled in coalition with other project events to maximize efficiency. The PAC will meet once during the months of September, November (2015), March and May (2016).

External Stakeholders

External stakeholders include members of the general public (including current transit users, and residents who don't currently use transit), staff from public agencies outside of MnDOT, and members of populations which don't often participate in public planning projects (sometimes known as "hard to reach" populations and including low income populations, homeless persons, individuals with disabilities, seniors, veterans, and New Americans, among others).

External stakeholders will be engaged through a variety of tools, methods and approaches through the five phases of outreach envisioned for the Greater Minnesota Transit Investment Plan. Each phase and the outreach tools are listed below.

Phase 1: Stakeholder engagement

The purpose of Phase 1 is to both gather and disseminate information to, and from, a variety of stakeholders. Information will be gathered through individual stakeholder interviews and focus groups conducted in each District. These meetings will gather perceptions about transit across Greater Minnesota. Information will be disseminated to a variety of internal MnDOT and external stakeholders through presentations. The goal of this outreach is to provide a background for the development of the plan and explain core plan components. Feedback on these presentations will help ensure that context and topics are addressed in the plan.

1. Individual Stakeholder Interviews

To enrich the project team's understanding of Greater Minnesota transit systems' conditions and opportunities, the consultant team will conduct a series of individual stakeholder interviews with people and agencies with a clear stake in public transportation services, such as human and health service agencies, advocacy groups, business leaders, educational institutions, tribal governments and other agency representatives. The stakeholders will represent the geographic diversity of Greater Minnesota and may include statewide, regional or local organizations, which are recommended individuals who offer an important or unique perspective. Given the emphasis MnDOT has in strengthening its relationship with tribal governments, Nelson\Nygaard will ensure that representation from one or more of the 11 recognized tribes in Minnesota are included in the stakeholder outreach. The Nelson\Nygaard team will coordinate with Ed Fairbanks, MnDOT Tribal Liaison, on the best approach to include input from the tribal communities throughout Greater Minnesota. Telephone and/or face-to-face interviews will be arranged with key stakeholders who are unable to attend meetings (described below) and will be scheduled early on in the study.



2. Focused Small Group Stakeholder Meetings

To ensure a diverse group of stakeholders are engaged in the study process, small group meetings will be conducted with key stakeholders that will include the types of organizations described above as well as hard to reach groups, including ethnic, cultural, geographic, income, and other socioeconomic diversity of populations (veterans, the elderly, and non-English speaking populations). The objective of the meetings will be to discuss current perceptions of transit needs, trends and challenges. Input received will help the Nelson\Nygaard project team understand the types and levels of public transportation services that will best meet the needs of the state's residents. A list of potential questions and topics to be discussed at stakeholder meetings is included at the end of this plan.

3. Stakeholder Meetings / Stakeholder Listening Sessions

These meetings allow the Nelson\Nygaard project team to host deeper conversations with a smaller group of participants, and receive detailed information from stakeholders with a common interest or affiliation (for example, members of a cultural or community group, members of a local chamber of commerce or a civic group with an interest in the project).

Meetings are planned for each of the several Districts as part of this work. The Nelson\Nygaard project team worked with the PMT to identify stakeholder organizations or groups. These meetings occurred during the week of September. 22- 25.

Staffing: The project team sent letters of introduction to stakeholders, is conducting follow-up communication, and will facilitate the sessions. MnDOT provided a list of stakeholders with contact information and reserved meeting rooms.

Schedule: Stakeholder meetings occurred in each of the MnDOT districts for a total of seven meetings. Each stakeholder meeting will be held at MnDOT District Offices unless otherwise noted. The following schedule of meetings is listed chronologically.

District 6

Tuesday September 22 | 3PM - 5PM
2900 48th Street NW, Rochester MN 55901

District 7

Wednesday September 23 | 9AM - 11AM
City of Mankato Intergovernmental Center
10 Civic Center Plaza, Mankato MN 56001

District 8

Wednesday September 23 | 3PM - 5PM
2505 Transportation Road, Willmar MN 56201

District 4

Thursday September 24 | 9AM - 11AM
1000 Hwy 10 West, Detroit Lake MN 56501

District 2

Thursday September 24 | 3PM - 5PM
Headwater Regional Development Commission
403 4th Street NW #310, Bemidji MN 56601



District 1

Friday September 25 | 9AM - 11AM
1123 Mesaba Ave, Duluth MN 55811

District 3

Friday September 25 | 3PM - 5PM
3725 12th Street North, St. Cloud MN 56303

4. Stakeholder Presentations

To widen the audience of stakeholders and provide an opportunity to collect input from additional stakeholders, the Nelson\Nygaard team will prepare materials that can be used and presented by MnDOT staff and other stakeholders. The materials can also be posted to the webpage in accessible formats to create some “tutorial” type materials. An advantage of conducting presentations with stakeholder groups is that it allows the MnDOT team to participate in scheduled activities. This makes it easy for the stakeholders because they are already gathered. It can also be an efficient approach to reaching critical but typically hard to reach groups including groups with Limited English Proficiency and minorities. MnDOT will schedule presentations with the following audiences:

- Regional Development Commissions/Organizations
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations
- Area Transportation Partners
- Environmental Resource Agency
- Statewide Homelessness Initiative
- Community Action Partnership Agencies
- Area Agencies on Aging
- Tribal Advocacy Transportation Group
- MnDOT All Planners Group
- MnDOT Planning Management Group

Statewide advocacy organizations headquartered in the Twin Cities area will be contacted to increase participation from minority and Limited English Proficiency groups. These organizations may be able to distribute project information to their group members and partner organizations throughout the state. MnDOT provided an extensive list of multicultural groups headquartered in the Twin Cities who may be able to identify opportunities for additional stakeholder presentations at regularly scheduled group events or additional methods for engaging typically hard to reach groups. Groups to contact include:

- Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans
- The Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage (formerly Council on Black Minnesotans)
- Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs (formerly Chicano Latino Affairs Council)
- Minnesota Indian Affairs Council

Staffing: Nelson\Nygaard will collaborate with MnDOT staff in preparing materials for the presentations. Community Design Group (CDG) will coordinate with MnDOT and



Nelson\Nygaard to contact and interview statewide advocacy organizations located in the Twin Cities area.

Schedule: Presentations will be grouped whenever possible throughout the duration of the project.

5. Transportation Stakeholder Forums:

The Office of Transit collaborated with the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan and the Minnesota State Highway Investment Plan to conduct three stakeholder forums in Minnesota. These all-day forums were targeted towards transportation stakeholders. MnDOT Project Managers will provide an overview presentation of the 2016 GMTIP and lead a priority ranking exercise with participants using Decision Lens.

Stakeholder Forums are scheduled for the following dates and locations

1. Mankato, November 5, 2015. Civic Center Plaza, Mankato Room. 10 Civic Center Plaza, Mankato, MN
2. Minneapolis, November 6, 2015. Hennepin County Library. 300 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis
3. Brainerd, November 9, 2015, Northland Arboretum. 14250 Conservation Drive, Brainerd.

6. Tribal Outreach Efforts

As part of a larger MnDOT effort to improve the planning consultation process, the GMTIP is coordinating with four Minnesota tribes to gather information about regional travel, distribute and collect paper-surveys and present information on the GMTIP. The following activities have been planned and coordinated:

1. GMTIP presentation to the Leech Lake Band Tribal Council, January 2016
2. Presentation and regional mapping exercise at the Mille Lac Band of Ojibwe District 3 meeting, January 2016
3. Regional Mapping exercise and distribution and collection of paper surveys at the Leech Lake Winterfest Event, January 2016
4. Presentation and regional mapping exercise with Island Prairie, March 2016
5. Regional mapping exercise and discussion of transit needs, March 2016

Phase 2: Data collection

The goal of phase 2 is to gather information from the general public regarding transit preferences and needs along with relevant demographic information. This will be collected through four opportunities including an Onboard Traveler Survey, an Online Interactive web survey, a Non-User paper survey and an online Wikimapping survey tool. More information on each tool is listed below.

4. If “yes”, why do you use transit?
5. Is transit important part of your community, whether you use it or not?
6. Which of the following improvements would make you more likely to take transit? (this can include service changes such as frequency or programmatic changes such as employer-sponsored transit passes)
7. Demographic information (car ownership, employment status)

Figure 1 MNDOT Design Your Own Transit Tool



Greater Minnesota
Transit Investment
Plan

Need an accessible version of this survey?
¿Necesita una versión en español?
Ma u baahan tahay werin Af Somali ah?
Puas xav tau ua ntawv Hmoob?

Build Your Transit System

How would you change transit in your Minnesota community?

The state of Minnesota is home to numerous transit systems, ranging from large urban systems to county services that pick you up at your door and take you where you need to go. This exercise allows you to design the ideal transit system to meet your transportation needs.



Here's how it works:

1. Mouse over the thumbnail image to see details about each strategy
2. Select the checkbox on the left of each strategy you would like implemented
3. Spend your "budget" of \$100 and mix and match strategies for transit about what's important to you

Cost Breakdown

\$ = \$10
 \$\$ = \$20
 \$\$\$ = \$30
 \$\$\$\$ = \$40
 \$\$\$\$\$ = \$50

Community Benefits

Strategies	Access to Employment	Access to Community Services	Support Economic Development	Reduce Congestion	Reduce Greenhouse Gases	Cost
<input type="checkbox"/> Offer transit service in more areas						
<input type="checkbox"/> Increase bus service to rural areas	▬▬▬	▬▬▬▬▬	▬▬▬	▬▬▬	▬▬▬	\$\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Increase bus service to small cities	▬▬▬▬▬	▬▬▬▬▬	▬▬▬▬▬	▬▬▬▬▬	▬▬▬▬▬	\$\$\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Increase bus service to large cities	▬▬▬▬▬	▬▬▬▬▬	▬▬▬▬▬	▬▬▬▬▬	▬▬▬▬▬	\$\$\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Create more regional bus service	▬▬▬	▬▬▬	▬▬▬	▬▬▬	▬▬▬	\$\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide service in areas with no transit	▬▬▬▬▬	▬▬▬▬▬	▬▬▬	▬▬▬	▬▬▬	\$\$

[Reset All Choices](#)

YOUR OVERALL BENEFITS

Access to Employment

Access to Community Services

Support Economic Development

Reduce Congestion

Reduce Greenhouse Gases

YOUR TOTAL COSTS

Maximum is 100

[Proceed to Next Page](#)



Staffing: Nelson\Nygaard will lead the effort, MnDOT Project Manager and Project Coordinator will assist in sending the survey link out to various stakeholder groups as well as to other state agencies. The consultant team will also send the survey link out to the stakeholder list.

Schedule: Present draft survey questions to TAC Sept. 21

- Revise and finalize questions, late October
- Survey goes live early December
- Take down survey mid-February 2016

Distribution: Nelson\Nygaard will create an email blast with the survey link. CDG will help to distribute the link to all stakeholders invited to the September meetings. MnDOT Project Manager and Project Coordinator will distribute the link to stakeholder groups including:

- College students: can be reached through Minnesota State Colleges and University System (MnSCU - www.mnscu.edu)
- Low-income groups: can be reached through the Minnesota Community Action Partnership (MinnCAP - www.minncap.org). MinnCAP is made up of member Community Action Agencies throughout the state. These agencies offer resources to families in need.
- Seniors: can be reached through the Minnesota Association of Area Agencies on Aging (www.mn4a.org)
- Veterans: can be reached through the County Veterans Service Officer/Veterans Administration (CVSO/VA) system
- Individuals with disabilities through the Center for Independent Living

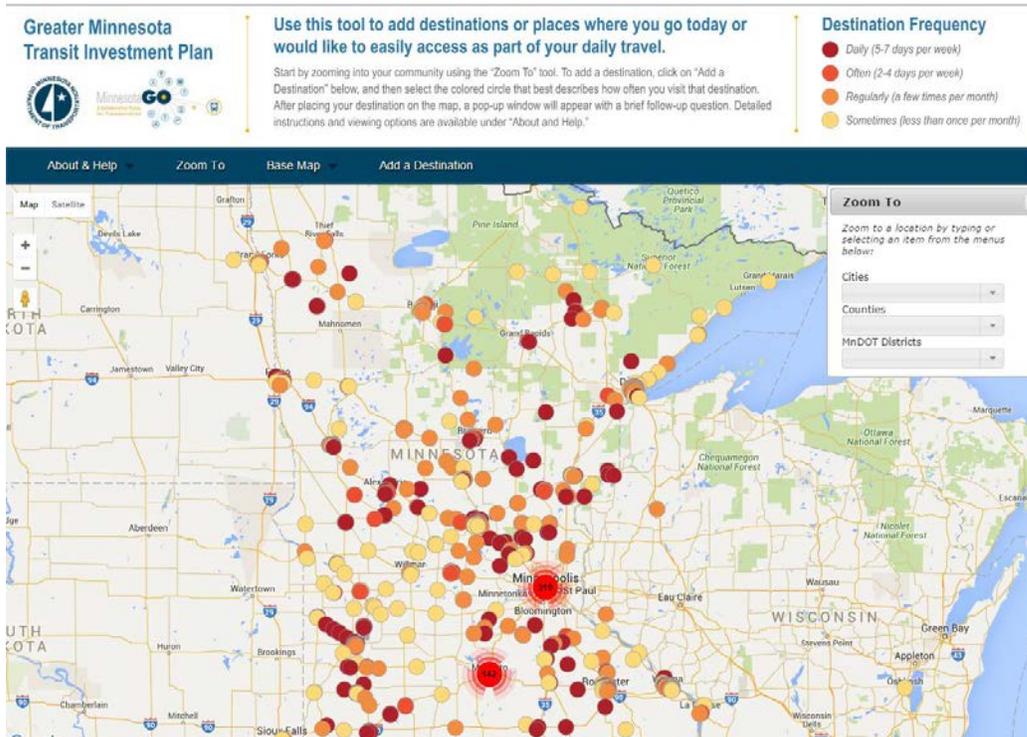
Analysis: Once the survey is taken down, results will be analyzed in Excel and summarized.

3. Online Interactive Wikimap Mapping Tool

An interactive mapping tool will be developed to solicit comments about important Greater Minnesota destinations and desire lines as well as improvement priorities. The tool will be used to gather statewide guidance without requiring that participants travel to a specific location to provide location-specific comments. The tool will allow users to zoom into specific cities, counties or MnDOT districts to easily identify destinations that are important to them.

The information collected will help establish destinations and desire lines throughout Greater Minnesota, and will be used to develop service delivery options for the Transit Investment Plan. The target level of participation for the online Interactive Mapping tool (and its accompanying ADA compatible online survey) is to receive 1,000 – 2,000 responses from members of greater Minnesota populations, including transit users and non-transit users.

Staffing: CDG will develop. MnDOT will be responsible for disseminating the link through its communications channels, including Facebook and Twitter postings at least two times per week while the tool is available.



4. “Hard To Reach” Populations: Non-User Paper Survey

A paper survey will be developed and distributed through specific partner agencies to reach and provide an opportunity to comment for non-users who may be members of “hard to reach” populations. This tool will be especially useful for non-transit users in areas with limited internet availability or for populations with limited computer skills. Potential partner agencies include human service providers, multicultural organizations and tribal councils. The goal is to receive at least 100 completed paper surveys. This option was added to the Public Participation Plan in December 2015 to better engage and involve hard to reach communities as identified by MnDOT.

Staffing: The consultant team will be responsible for developing a survey with guidance provided by members of the PMT. MnDOT will print surveys, arrange pre-paid return postage and manage the distribution of surveys. The consultant team will research, communicate and coordinate with selected groups through Greater Minnesota who will distribute surveys to individuals and provide support for these groups throughout the distribution process. MnDOT will mail surveys to identified contacts and manage the collection of surveys. Data will be processed and analyzed by the consultant team.

Distribution: CDG will deliver a draft survey based on the Online Survey and a draft email announcement to MnDOT on December 15th. After MnDOT emails potential partners in mid-December, CDG will follow-up with phone calls to the potential partners to confirm participation. Surveys will be printed and mailed to confirmed project partners during the week of December 28th for distribution starting in early January. Surveys will be collected and analyzed during January 2016.

Analysis: The consultant team will manage the processing and analysis of completed surveys.

Phase 5: Ongoing Communications

The purpose of Phase 5 is to provide ongoing communication with the public and stakeholders through a MnDOT GMTIP website and social media.

1. Project Website

The project website offers an opportunity to provide an overview of the project and inform members of the public, to share project progress, to host interactive mapping tools, questionnaires, and to receive comments from the wider community. The project team will work with MnDOT to support hosting the project website internally. The website may host questionnaires or mapping tools as directed by the PMT. The website for the GMTIP is www.mndot.gov/transitinvestment

Staffing: We expect MnDOT to host and manage the project website. CDG will be responsible for some graphic design elements and web content and will additionally create and manage an online Wikimapping tool to map origins and destinations (see Phase 2.4).

2. Social Media

Coordination with MnDOT webpages, Facebook pages and Twitter channels will help disseminate project information, increase access and participation in online engagement tools, and announce upcoming public in-person meetings.

Social media messages will be developed by the project team in consultation with the PMT. MnDOT will send approved messages through the agency's Facebook and Twitter accounts to support online (survey) and in-person (open house) engagement activities. Recommended frequency of posting in preparation for these engagement opportunities will be two to three times per week. Posts should, if possible, include an image or infographic to increase response.

Transit postings will be posted on Tuesdays under the #TransitTuesdays on @minnesotago and @mndotnews in addition to the MnDOT and Minnesota Go Facebook pages.

Staffing: CDG will draft social media messages. MnDOT will be responsible for approving messages and for posting them to the agency's Facebook and Twitter accounts.

3. Paid Facebook Advertisement campaigns

Low-cost project outreach can be conducted using MnDOT's Facebook account – for example, the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan used Facebook sponsored ads to reach approximately 30,000 people, which in turn yielded over 300 survey responses.

Considerations:

- Total Cost: \$500 - \$600 (Approximately \$400 for a sponsored ad that reaches people age 16-65+, in Gr MN zip codes, and \$50 to \$100 each to reach veterans and students in Greater Minnesota)
- Ads ran during the week of January 4 and January 11

4. News Releases and Media Alerts

News releases and media alerts covering upcoming opportunities to participate and important project milestones may be authored and submitted to local and regional news outlets, websites and public access outlets. Focused outreach focusing on media serving members of minority, low-

income, and/or health disparity communities will be conducted. Contact information for numerous Greater Minnesota human service providers, multicultural organizations and tribal councils was provided by MnDOT and will be used to distribute project information and encourage participation in surveys and in-person meetings.

Staffing: CDG will develop news releases to announce the beginning of the Non-User Input tool and survey (December/January), the schedule for stakeholder presentations and/or in-person meetings (February/ongoing), and other events as needed. MnDOT is expected to distribute these to media lists and project partners.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR EXPANDING ENGAGEMENT

Connecting with Limited English Proficiency and minority populations is an important priority for this project. The project team will make proactive efforts to expand participation by working closely with organizations working with these populations statewide and at a more local level.

General recommendations for expanding participation at engagement events and for maximizing use of project tools

- Good marketing of tools and events is key. For public workshops, starting early (at least a month in advance) and using social media can create a buzz and invite additional participation
- Find local partners and champions who can get the word out to their groups and peers. Provide adequate supplies of event flyers to post and electronic versions to distribute.
- Residents, who want to ride transit, but do not, may be difficult to reach using typical outreach to transit users which focuses on transit stations and onboard transit vehicles. To reach out to the broader community, flyers will need to be distributed in locations that people frequent in the winter months: grocery stores, libraries, youth centers, ice areas, gyms, recreation centers, churches, high schools and community centers.
- Connecting with minority populations in Greater Minnesota will require intentional effort. Word of mouth, and efforts led by community leaders and organizers are effective approaches for connecting with these communities. SHIP and MPOs/RDCs may have contacts with local minority leadership groups, who should be contacted early so they have time to encourage participation. In addition, statewide organizations working with minority populations can help support outreach efforts in Greater Minnesota.

Potential Partners for Greater Minnesota Outreach

Provide workshop details to the following potential partners at least one month prior to each workshop. This will allow organizations to incorporate announcements in monthly and weekly communications well in advance.

- The Minnesota Department of Health can help reach organizations working on health equity issues statewide.
- Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota have strong partnerships with minority health organizations statewide.
- Statewide minority advocacy groups could be good partners.



Per District: Potential Partners and Additional Considerations

District 1

- Consider holding one of the February 2016 community meetings in Duluth.
- The Duluth Health Equity Project addresses Active Living through policy.
- Key locations for outreach: YWCA-Duluth, Lincoln Park Community Center, Memorial Community Center, Portman Community Center, and UM Duluth.

District 2

- Consider holding one of the February 2016 community meetings in Bemidji.
- There is no fixed route public transit service in Bemidji. Paul Bunyan Transit is a dial-a-ride service available for all residents, not just qualified ADA service users. Consider outreach to riders of the service.
- Consider collaborating with the Active Living Bemidji initiative.
- Key location for outreach: Girls and Boys Club of the Bemidji Area.

District 3

- Consider holding one of the February 2016 community meetings in St. Cloud.
- Key locations for outreach: YMCA - Brainerd Family, YMCA - Elk River, and YMCA - St. Cloud.

District 4

- Consider holding one of the February 2016 community meetings in Detroit Lakes.
- There is no fixed route public transit service in Detroit Lakes.
- Key locations for outreach: YMCA - Alexandria, YMCA - Cass and Clay Counties and YMCA - Fergus Falls.

District 6

- Consider holding one of the February 2016 community meetings in Rochester.
- The Rochester Community Bike Club is a Latino outreach organization in Rochester.
- Key location for outreach: Rochester Area Family YMCA.

District 7

- Consider holding one of the February 2016 community meetings in Mankato.
- Key locations for outreach: YWCA - Mankato, Mankato Family YMCA.

District 8

- Consider holding one of the February 2016 community meetings in Willmar.
- There is no fixed route public transit service in Willmar. Heartland Express is a dial-a-ride service available for all residents, not just qualified ADA service users. Consider outreach to riders of the service.



Community Meeting Structure

- An “open house” format can more easily allow community members to “stop in” after work or with children. Family-friendly activities and food (hearty snacks, including nuts, cheese, fruits) should be available and mentioned in all fliers and communications.
- Offer welcoming/orientation remarks.
- Consider assigning a staff person to assist children with family-friendly activities. Develop activities that can be enjoyed by various ages at the same time.

Communications

- Include information about accessing the meeting via all modes - car (including where to park), public transit, bicycle, and walking in all promotional materials. Additionally, include specific directions about how to find the room where the meeting is held.
- For the public meetings that are recommended in Districts 2 (Bemidji), 4 (Fergus Falls), and eight (Granite Falls), there is no fixed route public transit service; however, dial-a-ride service is available. Include outreach to these service users.

Limited English Proficiency Communities

- Provide interpreters for the languages expected at public meetings. Ahead of meetings, investigate which (if any) non-English languages are expected. Make sure the interpreter familiar with specific planning and project terminology.
- Develop a video introduction to the project, and provide in multiple languages. This will also help engage English-speaking residents who are unable to attend the public workshop and increase participation in online tools.
- Coordinate and hold individual listening sessions with focus communities. Consider holding meetings in conjunction with other existing community meetings.
- If seeking feedback from Muslim residents, take into consideration the five daily prayer times, as well as events such as Ramadan. Ramadan is not during the currently scheduled public workshops in February and March. However, providing a separate area for prayer will be a welcome accommodation for Muslim participants.



SCHEDULE OF ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Description	Type	2015 - 2016													
		JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY		
Community Engagement Plan	Email				Updates as needed										
Stakeholder Meetings	In-Person														
Stakeholder Follow-up Interviews	Telephone														
Non-User Input Tool and Survey	Online														
Onboard Traveler Survey	In-Person														
Stakeholder Presentations	In-Person / Email														
Open Houses	In-Person														
Social Media posts†	Online														
News Releases	Email														
Email Blasts / Distribution	Email														
Website	Online														
Online Mapping Tool	Online														

† For best results: 2 - 3 per week, ongoing

APPENDIX

Topics / Questions for Stakeholder Meetings

(Note: Not all topics or questions will be relevant for all stakeholders)

Transit Services

1. What are the major challenges your community / organization is facing with regard to public transit?
2. What is your opinion of transit service in your area? What are the strengths and weaknesses of existing service(s)? What is / should be the role of public transit?
 - a. Specifically, comment on service availability, quality, consumer familiarity with service, ease of use for local residents and connectivity to major destinations / activity centers.
3. Are there any potential transit markets (groups of people, types of people, people in certain areas) that you think could be better served? Do you have specific suggestions for serving them? Are there any populations that are over-served?
4. What comments do you have regarding access to the transit network? What opportunities do you see for improving accessibility and connectivity? Are there suggestions you have for enhancing amenities / facilities and / or infrastructure improvements?
5. Do you see a need to expand transit service beyond what exists today? To which cities or communities? To other neighboring counties?

Transit Needs

1. What do you think are the primary gaps in service? Do you have tools to assess gaps, service duplication, or underused assets?
2. What do you see as the top three transit needs in your county? For your city / organization? What are the primary transit-related concerns that you have / hear from your constituents / clients / consumers?
3. Do you and your partners provide travel training / information / customer education? How is it distributed and made available? How prevalent is awareness of transit service?
4. What are the top 3 - 5 priorities for transit within the short-term? What are the top 3 - 5 priorities in the long-term?

Transportation Funding and Partnerships

1. Does your agency fund transportation services? If yes, how much and to whom is the funding provided?
2. If there were more funds for transit, how should these funds be used? (For example, provide later evening service, weekend service, connections to neighboring counties, etc.)
3. Does your agency / organization have any current partnerships with public transportation providers? What do the partnerships look like? Are they formal or informal?
4. Do you have ideas about additional partnership opportunities between your organization and the public transportation providers?



Other

1. Do you have any advice for involving the public in this planning process? Are there any specific stakeholders or groups you think we should talk with?
2. What haven't we covered that's important to you?
3. Do you have any other comments, questions or concerns?