CHAPTER 5

Transportation Policy Review

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Overview / Summary

The ROCOG 2040 Long Range Plan identifies ten major policy directions to guide transportation decisions in support of regional development goals and quality of life objectives. These policy directions were originally adopted as part of the ROCOG Policy Directions Report adopted in 1998, based on input from focus groups, key informant interviews and public input comment with refinement through discussions with TTAC and the Policy Board. The Policy Directions were reviewed during the course of developing the original 2040 Plan with only minor modifications adopted.

In developing the Plan, alignment of the MPO Long Range Plan with State Transportation policy needs to be considered. Beginning on page 5-16 is a discussion of how the ROCOG Plan supports state policy goals related to the provision of transportation services within the state. The chapter concludes with a discussion of performance measures, which are likely to come into greater use in the future as a tool for assessing success in achieving the goals and objectives of the plan. Moving to a performance based planning process at the MPO level will likely require the MPO to reconsider how it allocates its planning funds in the future. Desirably, this effort can be coordinated with state and other local efforts to reduce the need for additional data collection costs in order to implement a performance based assessment system.

Introduction

The policy framework on which the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan is built was established with adoption of the ROCOG Policy Directions Report as part of the 1998 update of the Long Range Transportation Plan. This policy framework was reaffirmed by the ROCOG Policy Board in 2003 as part of an interim update to the Long Range Plan, during the 2035 Plan update completed in 2005, and then again for the 2040 update completed in 2010. After review of this Chapter for the Reaffirmation, these policies remain intact.

The policy framework reflects the common goals and values shared by members of the community. The policy framework responds to the issues and concerns of users, community leaders, and policy

objectives established at the statewide and national level. Statewide and national interests are a consideration due to the need for the local system to function seamlessly with larger regional and national systems serving the economic, energy and security interests of the country. The policy framework recognizes the intersection of transportation and many other local policy interests, including:

- Economic development
- Land use
- Urban revitalization
- Housing
- Health
- Environmental
- Human services
- Aging of the populace

ROCOG Policy Directives

The 1998 ROCOG Policy Directions Report identified 10 major policy directions to guide transportation decisions in pursuit of quality of life and regional development goals. These policy directions were developed based on input from focus groups, key informant interviews, public comment, and review of relevant state and federal policy to identify possible constraints or mandates that needed to be considered. Following is a summary of the adopted ROCOG Policy Directions, including a brief discussion regarding the continued relevance of each to the update of the transportation plan.

POLICY DIRECTION 1: RESOURCES

Establish Adequate and Stable Funding for Transportation Systems

Objective 1: Provide adequate funding to support timely preservation and capital replacement of the transportation system

Goals:
1.1 - Provide annual funding for capital replacement at a level sufficient to lower the Average Replacement Cycle (ARC) to a level equal to the Anticipated Design Life (ADL) of all system components
1.2 - Provide adequate funding to eliminate the backlog of transportation system needs
1.3 - Provide adequate funding to support life cycle maintenance activities for all transportation system components
1.4 - Provide adequate funding to support annual operations and maintenance (O&M) needs associated with the transportation system
1.5 - Embody adequate funding within the financial framework of the Long Range Plan for justifiable capacity preservation and enhancement projects
1.6 - Provide for the timely implementation of local access facilities or services needed to serve planned urban development areas or to upgrade areas deficient in local access capacity

Objective 2: Develop a broader toolbox of mechanisms for financing transportation investment

Goals:

2.1- Provide information and analysis on new or modified revenue and financing mechanisms to elected officials at all levels of government with responsibility for transportation investments

2.2 - Provide the support and coordination needed to acquire authority for preferred financing tools

2.3 - Work with legislators at state and national level to insure that devolution of responsibility is accompanied by resources or revenue authority to aid local governments in meeting transport needs

Objective 3: Utilize user charges where possible to finance the costs of the transportation system

Goals:

3.1 - Provide information and analysis to decision makers on the full costs and subsidy patterns associated with the various users of transportation and land use development patterns

3.2 - Benchmark maximum levels of general fund support and minimum level of user fee support for various transportation functions

3.3 - Provide an adequate level of assistance to support the transportation needs of low income households

DISCUSSION: The need to establish adequate and stable funding continues to be an important goal. Since adoption of the ROCOG 1998 plan MNDOT, Olmsted County and the City of Rochester have investigated and utilized innovative financing and funding tools, such as Advanced Construction (AC) financing, transportation bonding, implementation of substandard street charges and Transportation Improvement District charges in an effort to increase the level of resources available. The city of Rochester and Olmsted County continue to work with local legislators to support increased funding for transportation through mechanisms such as the state gas tax, the motor vehicle sales tax (MVST) and other sources, such as economic development funds. Rochester and Olmsted County have supported dedication of a portion of a ½ percent Rochester sales tax to fund the local share of major regional highway projects, and in some cases, the full cost of projects. Rochester and Olmsted County have also worked with advocacy groups in an effort to gain legislative approval for local funding tools such as authority to charge Transportation Utility Fees or Wheelage Taxes to support maintenance and operation activities through direct charges to users. In 2014 Olmsted County adopted a Wheelage Tax under statutory authority established by the State Legislature in 2013, and the County also adopted a ¼ percent sales tax for transportation, which along with the Wheelage Tax will fund the county's required contribution to the Destination Medical Center initiative as well as other projects.

POLICY DIRECTION 2: ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

Support regional industry and business and provide area residents with high quality commercial transportation services

Objective 1: Expand the services provided by Rochester International Airport to the region

Goals:
1.1 - Attract additional passenger and air cargo service to Rochester International Airport (RST)
1.2 - Provide economical ground transportation for all customer markets between Rochester International Airport and developed areas of Rochester
1.3 - Provide adequate landside access to meet the activity needs of Rochester International Airport

Objective 2: Improve High Speed Ground Transportation alternatives in the region

Goals:
2.1 - Continue to support development of intercity High Speed Rail Service to Rochester.
2.2 - Work with MnDOT and the Olmsted County Regional Railroad Authority to provide input to the Tier I EIS underway for High Speed Rail (Zip Rail) between Rochester and the Twin Cities
2.3 – Provide input and technical/policy assistance in efforts to Identify a preferred location for a high speed passenger rail terminal in the Rochester area

Objective 3: Provide strategic direction for future rail cargo service in the region

Goals:
3.1 – Identify, in cooperation with regional rail and port operators, the local business community, and other interested transportation agencies, potential economic opportunities that would support current or expanded rail freight service in the Rochester region

Objective 4: Target customers of the hospitality and recreation industries with new or upgraded facilities and services

Goals:
4.1 - Support recreation and tourism through development of the regional trail system
4.2 - Provide convenient and reliable information services for visitors to the community
4.3 – Support efforts to upgrade the appearance of gateways to the City, Medical Campus and University Center

Objective 5: Facilitate Intermodal transfer of goods and passengers

Goals:
5.1 - Provide safe and adequate loading zone facilities to meet the needs of local business
5.2 - Insure adequate highway access and truck route service to all intermodal terminals

5.3 - Develop planning & investment indicators for use in monitoring the need to complete a Regional Intermodal Truck Freight Terminal Study for the Rochester economic region

DISCUSSION: Economic competitiveness remains an important regional development goal. Efforts continue to improve the facilities at the Rochester International Airport, including plans to develop a new modern passenger terminal on the airport property. Development of high speed rail transportation is of high interest to the region, reflected in the creation of the Southeast Minnesota Rail Alliance and its active participation in development of the State Rail Plan. Rail freight traffic, due to the potential for increased traffic on the Canadian Pacific rail corridor, continues to be an issue of interest, with a significant local effort having gone into assessing the impact of possible train traffic increases, including recent completion of the Southern Rail Corridor study funded by the Mayo Clinic, and a study funded by the Olmsted County Regional Rail Authority to compile the results of previous studies and facilitate further community discussion of rail options.

A number of communities in the planning area, including Rochester, Eyota, Dover, Byron and Stewartville, have groups working on improvements to the regional trail system. With the ever increasing share and volume of goods being shipped by truck, the goal of providing adequate intermodal connections, truck routes and highway access also remains an important policy goal as discussed in Chapter 9 of this report.

POLICY DIRECTION 3: EQUAL ACCESS TO TRANSPORTATION CHOICES

Provide transportation services to meet the unique travel needs of the older adults, persons with disabilities and the economically disadvantaged

Objective 1: Promote the importance of access to transportation for older adults, persons with disabilities and low income individuals as essential to the quality of life such individuals will enjoy

Goals:

1.1 – Continue to provide the opportunity for involvement by older adults, disabled individuals and persons with low incomes in the planning, design and implementation of transportation services

1.2 - Ensure that adequate transportation alternatives are available to older adults and disabled individuals to support a choice of living arrangements

Objective 2: Ensure a minimum level of critical access throughout the ROCOG area to meet the needs of the older adults, persons with disabilities or low income individuals

Goals

2.1 - Develop an acceptable level of suburban and rural transportation service for older adults, disabled and low income individuals in areas outside of Rochester in Olmsted County

Objective 3: Organize publicly assisted transportation services to more efficiently meet the needs of the elderly, disabled and low income

Goals
3.1 – Support the work of MnDOT District 6 to establish a local clearinghouse function to more broadly disseminate information on transportation services for the elderly, disabled and low income individuals
3.2 - Increase the mobility and independence of elderly, disabled and low income individuals through improved coordination of publicly assisted transportation services

Objective 4: Maximize the convenience of Fixed Route and Dial-a-Ride transit services for elderly, disabled and low income individuals

Goals:
4.1 - Achieve acceptable travel times for transit travel to major travel destinations
4.2 - Capture more of the potential market for transit travel among the older adults and disabled during off-peak hours
4.3 - Provide assured seating for elderly and disabled riders

DISCUSSION: The special needs of the disadvantaged or vulnerable are important issues and transportation plays an important role in assisting the community to help these individuals achieve a quality life experience. Services in the urban area are well established, with efforts continuing in times of fiscal constraint to provide cost effective services for the greatest number of individuals. The Citizen's Advisory on Transit actively solicits input from disadvantaged population groups on ways to improve transit services to better meet the needs of these individuals. While suburban and rural areas continue to be provided with only minimal levels of service, efforts continue to explore options for improving these services. Efforts have also been undertaken to look at opportunities for coordination and cooperation among the various providers of publically assisted transportation services.

POLICY DIRECTION 4: SYSTEM FUNCTION AND STRUCTURE

Design the transportation system to meet functional and structural demands safely, efficiently and effectively

Objective 1: Manage the transportation system to reflect travel markets and to satisfy user expectations

Goal:
1.1 - Emphasize efficient interregional and cross-town transportation flows for all modes of travel

Objective 2: Facilitate the movement of people to Jobs, Schools, Health Care, Shopping, Services and Places of Culture or Recreation

Goals

2.1 - Strive to meet the following Minimum Service Goals for the major highway system:

A) Preserve adequate capacity to meet current and projected demand for passenger and freight travel
B) Preserve reasonable levels of mobility along all major highway corridors

2.2 - Strive to meet the following Minimum Service Goals for the public transit system:

A) Provide Fixed Route service to a majority of households within Rochester
B) Comply with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act related to the provision of comparable Fixed Route service on Dial-a-Ride transit systems

2.3 - Strive to meet the following Minimum Service Goals for the bicycle system:

A) Provide safe and comfortable conditions for bicycle use on all secondary street corridors to supplement the system of paths and trails planned for the region
B) Provide a network of safe and convenient facilities for bicycle travel between all activity areas in the region
C) Provide adequate residential access to the regional bikeway system
D) Make adequate provision for users with different abilities on all off-road trails consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act

2.4 - Strive to meet the following Minimum Service Goals for the pedestrian system:

A) Provide adequate pedestrian accommodations to connect all developed property with other properties in the same or adjacent neighborhoods or business activity centers
B) Provide designated transit corridors and non-freeway major highway corridors with adequate pedestrian facilities
C) Insure that paths and trails are suitable for pedestrian travel
D) Provide appropriate structural or operational measures to facilitate safe crossing of major highway corridors at locations with high levels of pedestrian activity
E) Provide convenient connections across limited access transportation corridors for non-motorized travel between residential neighborhoods and community education and recreation facilities
F) Provide wheelchair ramps at all sidewalk approaches to intersections and other provisions to insure consistency with the Americans with Disabilities Act

Objective 3: Provide adequate structural capacity to satisfy desired transportation functions

Goals:

3.1 – Strive over time, to provide adequate year round structural strength on all truck routes in Olmsted County

3.2 - Design all new or reconstructed roadways to consider future truck weights and sizes

Objective 4: Provide for safe travel on all segments of the transportation system

Goals:

4.1 - Respond to critical increases in system level accident trends

4.2 - Respond to safety concerns at critical locations exhibiting statistically high accident rates

4.3 - Reduce potential traffic conflict locations through early detection and timely mitigation

4.4 - Enhance the user friendliness of the transportation systems for elderly travelers

Objective 5: Provide for adequate capacity and safe operations at system crossroads

Goals:
5.1 - Provide for safe and efficient operation at highway crossings
5.2 - Ensure that all multi-modal corridor crossings are safe

Objective 6: Provide efficient access management along regionally significant transportation corridors

Goals:
6.1 - Provide adequate accessibility through development of local access roads for non-residential land uses where primary market access is from a limited access highway facility
6.2 - Balance access and mobility needs along major highway corridors which are not access controlled in order to maintain adequate capacity and safe traffic flow

Objective 7: Facilitate the delivery of Emergency Response and Public Safety services

Goals
7.1 - Provide for the integrated operation of traffic control systems and emergency response vehicles
7.2 - Minimize transportation system barriers that would hinder the timely response to incidents or hazardous materials spills
7.3 - Promote partnerships among emergency response, public safety and transportation authorities to implement mutually beneficial technology

Objective 8: Maximize the utilization of existing transportation corridors and services

Goals
8.1 - Manage the transportation system to ensure the efficient use of existing road space, and support Complete Street policies and efforts
8.2 - Promote actions to reduce vehicle use in congested areas during peak travel periods

DISCUSSION: Policy Direction 4 covers a wide range of performance related goals that are important considerations in each and every project that is undertaken in the ROCOG Planning Area. Safety, capacity, congestion and service levels all need to be considered during preservation, improvement and expansion projects. Focusing on the role and function of each facility, as addressed in Objective #1, insures that dollars are targeted where they will provide the greatest benefit. Maximizing the use of transportation corridors, as addressed in Objective #8, insures the greatest return on the substantial public investment in transportation. Implementing programs or projects that include strategies such as access management (Objective #6) insure the highly efficient use of facilities.

POLICY DIRECTION 5: STEWARDSHIP

Manage transportation systems to maximize effectiveness while minimizing impacts to the Fiscal, Economic, Social, Natural and Built Environments

Objective 1: Manage short and long term investments to minimize costs consistent with social, economic and environmental goals

Goals:
1.1 - Minimize long term costs to users of the transportation system
1.2 - Minimize the public costs of providing facilities and services
1.3 –Continue to incorporate revenue and expenditure forecasting and life cycle management into annual budgeting processes

Objective 2: Provide for timely annual maintenance of the transportation system

Goals:
2.1 - Provide cost-effective operations supporting safety and environmental goals
2.2 - Life Cycle pavement maintenance activities on highways and bridges should be completed in a timely manner

Objective 3: Preserve existing and future transportation corridors

Goals
3.1 - Provide for the development of multiple public or quasi-public uses within transportation corridors through adoption and implementation of measures such as Complete Streets policies
3.2 - Emphasize the preservation of transportation corridors that provide regionally significant functions
3.3 - Implement corridor preservation measures where the risk of losing planned facility improvement options is high due to the likelihood of incompatible development

Objective 4: Utilize where appropriate low cost maintenance strategies on a permanent or temporary basis

Goals:
4.1 - Permanently reduce the level of structural or functional investment where it can be justified on the basis of extremely limited transportation demand
4.2 - Develop Decision Support parameters for determining appropriate maintenance treatments on facilities where deferred maintenance exists

Objective 5: Protect social, cultural and environmental resources from adverse impacts

Goals:
5.1 - Strive to meet or exceed standards for social / cultural / environmental quality established in existing environmental laws

5.2 - Assess economic impact from a total societal perspective, managing transportation system development to maximize economic gain and minimize economic loss over both the short and long term

Objective 6: Promote measures to minimize the impact of transportation on our natural resources

Goals:
6.1 - Conserve fossil fuel energy resources through shifts to more fuel efficient modes of travel or reductions in demand for non-renewable energy

Objective 7: Consider the development and implementation of an integrated Information Systems plan to support capital programming and planning activities

Goal:
7.1 – Consider the concept of an Information Systems Plan that responds to the needs of all transportation agencies and organizations in the ROCOG planning area

DISCUSSION: Policy Direction 5 supports a more holistic consideration of the benefits and impacts of transportation facilities and services, taking into account economic and environmental considerations as projects or programs are planned and implemented. ROCOG in cooperation with its transportation partners, has supported the implementation of these objectives such as in the support for official mapping of future highway corridors, and support through the programming of projects that provide timely life cycle maintenance of facilities. The City of Rochester has instituted a Decision Support System to identify maintenance treatments where deferred maintenance exists and funds for improvements are limited. Environmental planning and mitigation efforts are described more fully in Chapter 14 and Appendices E and H of the report.

POLICY DIRECTION 6: SUSTAINABLE SETTLEMENT

Encourage Land Use Patterns which will maximize accessibility while minimizing the demand for vehicular travel growth

Objective 1: Promote development that will maximize the use of existing infrastructure capacity

Goals:
1.1 - Promote regional land use planning to encourage development in designated growth areas where adequate highway capacity already exists
1.2 - Support and/or facilitate redevelopment and infill and maintain the value of existing development

Objective 2: Promote development of land use and transportation investments which will maximize the opportunity for non-auto modes of travel to succeed

Goals:

2.1 - Support continued intensification of activity in the Rochester Central Business District (CBD) and Medical Campus Area by increasing opportunity to travel to and within the CBD by non-automotive means
2.2 - Promote corridor or non-CBD activity center development that will facilitate the use of alternative travel modes based on a feasibility study of urban high capacity transit service
2.3 - All schools, libraries, major employers, and retail centers should provide for adequate on-site bicycle and pedestrian circulation

Objective 3: Provide increased opportunity to utilize walking and bicycling as utilitarian modes of travel through community design

Goals
3.1 - Expand the number of households with safe and convenient access by walking or bicycling to nearby commercial, educational and recreational activity centers
3.2 **-** Encourage all new development to accommodate non-motorized access to adjacent residential areas and neighborhood activity centers

Objective 4: Promote local street systems that reinforce the character and identity of neighborhood residential environments

Goals:
4.1 **-** Minimize the impact of through traffic on local street systems and neighborhood livability
4.2 - Minimize travel speeds on local street systems
4.3 - Support safe bicycle and pedestrian activity in residential neighborhood areas with appropriate traffic calming measures

DISCUSSION: Policy Direction 6 addresses the key interactions that occur between land use and transportation system development. Implementation of these objectives needs to rely heavily on land use review and approval processes to insure that necessary transportation connections are established and that land use approvals consider the adequacy of public facilities and the benefits of mixed use, compact development patterns. Since land use on a macro scale changes slowly over time, it is important that these policies be maintained through time to encourage development consistent with this policy. The City of Rochester, in particular, has taken strides through its adoption of Adequate Public Facilities requirements and institutionalizing the process of General Development Planning to provide tools that will aid in achieving these objectives. Chapter 6 contains additional discussion and recommendations relative to Objective 4 for promoting local street systems that reinforce the neighborhood environment, and Chapter 14 contains additional discussion and recommendations regarding concepts such as Transit Supportive Development (TSD) and Pedestrian-Oriented Development (POD) that if implemented should bolster the use of alternative modes of travel.

POLICY DIRECTION 7: SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL BEHAVIOR

Encourage individuals to travel where feasible by means other than single occupant private automobiles

Objective 1: Increase the share of trips made using alternative modes of travel

Goals:
1.1 - Encourage those making low occupancy vehicle trips to divert some trips to alternative modes of travel
1.3 - Encourage individuals to utilize private vehicles more efficiently

Objective 2: Increase the level of amenity associated with alternative modes of travel

Goals:
2.1 - Maintain acceptable access times[1] to major travel destinations in the community
2.2 - Provide route flexibility on fixed route transit during off-peak hours or on low volume routes
2.3 - Strive to improve the comfort/ambiance of transit vehicles as one means to attract more users to the system
2.4 - Provide safe and secure facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists
2.5 - Provide higher speed transit service along selected high demand travel corridors

Objective 3: Promote the use of public parking policy to influence individual's choice of travel

Goals:
3.1 - Support transit use within designated transit service areas and serving downtown Rochester through implementation of complementary off street parking policies
3.2 - Promote the broader application of market based pricing to employee parking, other long term parking demand, and on-street short term parking

DISCUSSION: Encouraging sustainable travel behaviors is a difficult challenge in even the most committed communities. It is important at a minimum that local jurisdictions continue to consider these policy directions as facilities, programs or services are developed or modified to maximize the choice individuals have in their daily transportation. A number of the objectives identified in Policy Direction 7, in order to be achievable, will require continued close coordination between the public sector and private sector, particularly with major employers or businesses located in concentrated areas of commercial or industrial development. Chapter 14 discusses more fully strategies available under the umbrella of Travel Demand Management (TDM) that should be considered to increase the share of travel that occurs utilizing alternatives to a single-occupant private vehicle.

[1] *"Access time" refers to the time it takes to travel from the vehicle used to make the trip to the traveler's final destination*

POLICY DIRECTION 8: AWARENESS AND EDUCATION INITIATIVES

Provide citizens, businesses and leaders of the community with the information they need to make informed transportation choices

Objective 1: Improve Pedestrian, Cyclist and Motorist understanding of how to share common roadway space

Goals:
1.1 – Promote and encourage an attitude of mutual respect and accommodation between bicyclists and motorists on all streets where bicycle use is legal
1.2 - Improve cyclist and motorist understanding of laws pertaining to on-street bicycle travel and safe cycling practices
1.3 - Provide adequate cyclist education to all children, parents, and adults

Objective 2: Promote alternatives to the private automobile in selected customer markets

Goals:
2.1 - Implement awareness outreach and marketing activities regarding the availability and advantages of alternative modes of travel to various consumer markets (Students, Senior Citizens and workers in targeted transit service areas)
2.2 - Attract additional medical campus and CBD employment trips to alternative modes
2.3 - Attract additional medical campus and hospitality industry visitor trips to transit services

Objective 3: Provide convenient and timely information for short term trip planning

Goals:
3.1 - Provide current information on road incidents and road closures to users of the transportation system
3.2 - In cooperation with private sector partners provide advanced traveler information services to visitors in the region

Objective 4: Foster informed community debate on Sustainable Development and Transportation Policy

Goals:
4.1 - Educate the community about the costs of transportation to business and individuals and its influence on development patterns
4.2 - Promote the benefits of alternatives to travel in low occupancy private automobiles through education / awareness and information programs
4.3 - Increase awareness of how transportation and land use influence and impact sustainable development issues

DISCUSSION: Awareness and education initiatives are particularly important in the areas of transportation safety and in making individuals aware of available transportation choices. This policy has helped support the implementation of services such as the Senior Shopper transit route, a transit route connecting South Broadway lodging facilities with the medical center, and safety education programs in the schools. Since some level of population turnover is a fact of life in a vibrant urban area, there will be an ongoing need for continued awareness and education initiatives to make individuals knowledgeable about the transportation choices available and to improve the chances of success for new and innovative services. Additional ideas for promoting the use of the bicycle and walking as alternative modes are discussed in Chapter 7 of the report. Chapter 8 along with the 2005 Transit Development Plan include recommendations regarding transit enhancement that could serve to attract more patrons, and Chapter 14 discusses potential TDM options and opportunities. The 2015 Update of the Rochester Comprehensive Plan will include a significant effort to look at the sustainability of historic development patterns and future options as well as the current and projected costs of transportation to the community as called for in Objective 4.

POLICY DIRECTION 9: TECHNOLOGY

Stimulate the application of new technology to the solution of transportation problems

Objective 1: Provide strategic direction for the application of new technologies to the solution of transportation needs

Goals:
1.1 - Educate citizens and officials about Sustainable Transportation Technologies and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) highlighting Minnesota-based initiatives
1.2 - Complete and periodically update a strategic plan for ITS deployment focused on technologies that will improve the efficiency, safety or effectiveness of transportation service in the region

Objective 2: Support a public leadership role in developing & gaining market acceptance of alternative fuels.

Goals:
2.1 – Support research and development of alternative fuel markets
2.2 - Increase awareness of public sector support for alternative fuels

Objective 3: Encourage market acceptance of new transportation technologies

Goals:
3.1 – Support the development of new transportation technologies
3.2 - Increase awareness of public sector support for new transportation technologies
3.3 - Incorporate new transportation technologies in transportation infrastructure investments

Objective 4: Promote the development and use of technologies which may substitute for the need to travel

Goals:
4.1 - Encourage broad range acceptance of telecommuting
4.3 - Increase awareness of public sector support for telecommuting

DISCUSSION: Technology plays an important and ever increasing role in our everyday lives. To the extent technology can be harnessed in a cost effective manner to improve the efficiency of transportation services and facilities, efforts to implement its use should be encouraged. Examples of technology implementation or evaluation underway in the ROCOG area include MNDOT's ITS Deployment program associated with the post TH 52 Reconstruction project, Mayo Medical Center's continued involvement with MNDOT and others in studying MayDay services, investment in signal priority systems for use on transit and emergency response vehicles, and study of alternative fueled transit and maintenance fleet vehicles.

POLICY DIRECTION 10: GOVERNANCE

Support delivery of efficient and effective transportation service through government processes

Objective 1: Coordinate transportation expenditures with other public sector expenditures to maximize the productive use of public resources

Goals:
1.1 -Coordinate system planning for transportation with system planning for other community infrastructure systems such as sewer, water, storm water or recreation facilities
1.2 - Develop integrated public investment programs for defined neighborhood or corridor areas

Objective 2: Reduce government regulations which inhibit flexibility and reduce competitiveness

Goals:
2.1 - Make greater use of performance-based criteria and reduce the impact of mandates on system and service design
2.2 - Make greater use of market mechanisms to provide transportation services and products and reduce the impact of anti-competitive regulations on the private transportation sector

Objective 3: Support decisions on Major Investment Projects[2] with appropriate analysis

Goals:

[2] Adding new lanes on any regional travel corridor or other projects over $7.5 million in cost in 2014 dollars

3.1 - Identify the benefits, costs and impacts and assess multi-modal alternatives on all major investment projects
3.2 - Decision processes should provide all affected interests the opportunity to review and comment on proposed plans consistent with the guidelines and principles established in the ROCOG Public Involvement Plan

Objective 4: Provide for public/target market involvement in early phases of planning and programming

Goals:
4.1 – Provide opportunities for community involvement in planning for development of bicycle - pedestrian facilities and programs
4.2 - Continue to provide opportunities for Elderly and Disabled involvement in transportation decision-making
4.3 – Continue outreach efforts for Immigrant and Low Income individuals and households in transportation decision-making

DISCUSSION: Policy Direction #10 supports the use of public decision making processes which consider the full range of alternatives prior to settling on a course of action and which support opportunity for public involvement by groups that traditionally may be under-represented in the decision making processes. This policy is expanded upon in the ROCOG formal Public Participation efforts.

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Alignment of ROCOG Plan with State Transportation Policy

ROCOG makes every effort to coordinate policy setting with MnDOT and Federal Transportation Agencies. The following sets forth state (MnDOT) goals.

Minnesota Statute Chapter 174 as amended establishes the following goals for transportation in Minnesota:

1. *Minimize fatalities and injuries for transportation users throughout the state;*
2. *Provide multimodal and intermodal transportation facilities and services to increase access for all persons and businesses and to ensure economic well-being and quality of life without undue burden placed on any community;*
3. *To provide a reasonable travel time for commuters;*
4. *To enhance economic development and provide for the economical, efficient and safe movement of goods to and from markets by rail, highway and waterway;*
5. *To encourage tourism by providing appropriate transportation to Minnesota facilities designed to attract tourists and to enhance the appeal, through transportation investments, of tourist destinations across the state;*
6. *To provide transit services to all counties in the state to meet the need of transit users;*

7. *To promote accountability through systematic management of system performance and productivity through the utilization of technological advancements;*
8. *To maximize the long term benefits received for each transportation investment;*
9. *to provide for and prioritize funding of transportation investments that ensures that the state's transportation infrastructure is maintained in a state of good repair;*
10. *to ensure that the planning and implementation of all modes of transportation are consistent with the environmental and energy goals of the state;*
11. *to promote and increase the use of high-occupancy vehicles and low-emission vehicles;*
12. *to provide an air transportation system sufficient to encourage economic growth and allow all regions of the state the ability to participate in the global economy;*
13. *to increase use of transit as a percentage of all trips statewide by giving highest priority to the transportation modes with the greatest people-moving capacity and lowest long-term economic and environmental cost;*
14. *to promote and increase bicycling and walking as a percentage of all trips as energy-efficient, nonpolluting, and healthy forms of transportation;*
15. *to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the state's transportation sector; and*
16. *to accomplish these goals with minimal impact on the environment.*

The Minnesota Department of Transportation is the agency given the primary charge of implementing the state goals through development and implementation of plans and programs for the operation of statewide transportation systems and facilities. In addition to its responsibilities for maintaining the trunk highway system, which is established in Article XIV of the Minnesota Constitution, it provides funds and technical assistance to counties, cities, and other local transportation authorities for highway, aeronautics, public transportation, and other multi-modal transportation purposes.

MNDOT overall policies are established in the Statewide Transportation Plan. ROCOG and its partner local jurisdictions work with MNDOT to assist in implementing these policies and seek to harmoniously manage the transportation investment in the ROCOG planning area. The following paragraphs provide a listing of these state policies.

Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan 2012-2031

The state transportation plan is a policy plan that identifies six key policies which shape the management and investment decisions of the state department of transportation. ROCOG activities and strategies align well with the policies that have been adopted, as excerpted here:

1. ACCOUNTABILITY, TRANSPARENCY, AND COMMUNICATION

Make transportation system decisions through processes that are open and supported by data and analysis; provide for and support coordination, collaboration, and innovation; and ensure efficient and effective use of resources.

What This Is About

The importance of accountability, transparency, and communication to the transportation decision-making process is recognized and supported in federal legislation and state regulations. Current legislation calls out specific requirements for state departments of transportation and MPOs related to public involvement and collaboration.

While legislation related to public participation is important, true accountability, transparency, and communication go beyond just meeting requirements. They are about building public trust, one of MnDOT's priorities. Since the majority of transportation funding comes from the public through fees and taxes, transportation decision-makers need to be accountable for the system they provide, ensuring that public resources are used efficiently and effectively. This means achieving the most "bang for the buck" on transportation investments, including completing projects on time and within budget as well as performing timely and efficient operations and maintenance. Additionally, it is the responsibility of transportation providers to continually explore technology, innovation, and the driving forces behind the system as important tools for improving transportation planning processes and increasing the efficiency of the transportation system.

Transportation decision-makers are stewards of the transportation system and have the responsibility to be open about how and why decisions are made. Communication is an essential component of this transparency. Good communication is not just making information available, but also making it easy to find and understand. Education is the foundation for understanding. This includes telling the big-picture story of the transportation system and the importance of investing in it.

2. TRAVELER SAFETY

Safeguard travelers, transportation facilities, and services; apply proven strategies to reduce fatalities and serious injuries for all travel modes.

What This Is About

Safety is a top priority for Minnesota. MnDOT is partnering with the Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) on the Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) program. This program is the state's cornerstone traffic safety initiative with the goal to raise awareness of traffic safety issues and develop tools to reduce the number of deaths and injuries resulting from traffic crashes in Minnesota.

Traveler safety applies to all users on all types of transportation and involves an integrated approach that includes the "4Es" of safety— education, enforcement, engineering, and emergency medical and trauma services. MnDOT, in coordination with DPS and MDH, has also developed a Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) that brings together all safety plans and programs from agencies and advocacy groups working to improve transportation safety.

An example of a contributing plan to the SHSP is the annual Commercial Vehicle Safety Plan (CVSP) where MnDOT and DPS coordinate to further enhance safety and reduce the number of commercial vehicle crashes and fatalities. This plan outlines the state's commercial motor vehicle safety objectives, strategies, activities, and performance measures.

3. TRANSPORTATION IN CONTEXT

Make fiscally responsible decisions that respect and complement the natural, cultural, and social context; and integrate land uses and transportation systems to leverage public and private investments.

What This Is About

Transportation projects do not occur in a vacuum; they are surrounded by context. Context refers to the things people care about—the people, places, and circumstances of their lives. Transportation and context are intrinsically linked, and together they shape the communities where life takes place. It is important that transportation decisions are made with consideration of contextual elements such as land use, energy consumption, the environment, economy, public health, and the needs of traditionally underserved populations. Transportation decisions impact the surrounding context; they can shape the ways in which people live, work, play, and access services. More importantly, the surrounding context should impact transportation decisions. Not all places are the same; there is no one size fits all solution. Considering context when making transportation decisions leads to projects that are safer, sustainable in scale, and tailored to the specific places in which they exist—projects that respect and complement the economy, environment, and quality of life of a place.

MnDOT has embraced the importance of context through its Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) initiative. CSS has proven itself as a principle-based and benefit-driven approach that can better serve and balance the needs of all transportation stakeholders and users more successfully and cost-effectively within existing constraints. MnDOT has identified integration of CSS principles and best practices as one of the highest priorities for the department. Specific to transportation project development and maintenance, CSS is defined as an approach that leads to preserving and enhancing scenic, aesthetic, historic, community, and environmental resources while improving or preserving transportation safety, mobility, and infrastructure conditions. CSS requires ongoing and broad-based involvement of interdisciplinary perspectives and stakeholders to foster the continuing communication and collaboration that build and achieve consensus in decision-making. Other familiar programs and initiatives, such as sustainability, Safe Routes to School, Complete Streets, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements and opportunities, can be implemented more effectively with a CSS approach.

4. CRITICAL CONNECTIONS

Identify global, national, statewide, regional, and local transportation connections essential for Minnesotans' prosperity and quality of life; maintain and improve these connections by maximizing return-on investment, given constrained resources; and consider new connections.

What This Is About

Each person identifies different connections as critical based on where they live and their individual needs. In urban areas, critical connections may mean providing safe and reliable alternatives to driving during peak travel periods. In rural areas, it may mean roadway connections to regional centers for both people and goods. Critical connections also vary by type of transportation. For example, the key connections needed for driving may be different than those for transit, bicycling or walking. There also are different scales of connections. There are connections that move people and goods across the

state, connections that move people and goods throughout a region, and connections that move people and goods within a community. All of these connections are important to the overall economic prosperity and quality of life in Minnesota.

While many types of connections are important, given finite resources, it is necessary to set priorities to provide complete, efficient, and affordable movement of both people and goods. Though all connections are important to someone at some time, there are critical connections that serve as the backbone for movement across and within Minnesota. Identifying, maintaining, and enhancing these priority connections are shared responsibilities. As a state agency, MnDOT, in cooperation with other transportation stakeholders, strives to ensure connections that move people and goods across the state and within regions. This includes, but is not limited to, roadways, waterways, intercity and regional bus, airports, and rail. MPOs, as regional units of government, strive to ensure connections that move people and goods throughout their region. This means developing regional transportation plans and programming projects of regional significance. Local units of government, such as cities and counties, strive to ensure connections that move people and goods within their community. This could mean an integrated network of local roads, safe options to bicycle and walk, or last-mile freight connections. All connections regardless of level, location, or transportation type need to be developed in coordination with one another to ensure a truly connected Minnesota.

5. ASSET MANAGEMENT

Strategically maintain and operate transportation assets; rely on system data, partners' needs, and public expectations to inform decisions; put technology and innovation to work to improve efficiency and performance; and recognize that the system should change over time.

What This Is About

Asset management is a systematic process of cost-effectively operating, maintaining, and upgrading assets once they are built or purchased. It includes both keeping individual assets viable as well as managing for long-term system needs, including adjusting for change. Asset management involves planning for the appropriate changes that will allow the system to adapt to future needs. This includes supporting research that helps improve materials and practices to be more efficient and effective. In strategic asset management, it is essential to set priorities and manage based on those priorities. This includes making appropriate trade-offs when necessary. It is critical to think in terms of risk and to assess likely impacts to Minnesota's quality of life, economy and the environment.

Transportation assets include all aspects of the transportation system such as travel ways, vehicles, and support facilities. Examples include waterways, rail trackage, trails, roadways, runways, airspace, and transit vehicles.

6. SYSTEM SECURITY

Reduce system vulnerability and ensure system redundancy to meet essential travel needs during emergencies.

What This Is About

In times of emergency, the focus of the transportation system shifts to ensuring essential travel needs. Essential travel refers to the movement of goods and people that are critical to public well-being. This could mean ensuring access to hospitals and pharmacies, improving emergency response, as well as ensuring that food and supplies are able to reach all parts of Minnesota.

System redundancy and reliability are important components to ensuring system security. It is important not only to have the availability of alternatives in both transportation route and type, but to have a system that is consistent. In terms of reliability, it will be important to identify potential security risks the system may face in the next 20 years.