



**DRAFT FOR PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT**

*The Minnesota Department of Transportation invites public comments on a draft 50-year vision for transportation in the state. Comments will be accepted until 4:30 p.m. on October 21, 2011 and can be submitted:*

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The Minnesota Department of Transportation launched the Minnesota GO visioning process to better align the transportation system with what Minnesotans expect for their quality of life, economy and natural environment.

The effort is based on an understanding that transportation is a means to other ends, not an end in itself. It also recognizes that infrastructure is only one of many elements necessary to achieving a high quality of life, a competitive economy and a healthy environment.

This 50-year vision for transportation will require consistency and collaboration across jurisdictions and sectors to be fully achieved. Although MnDOT initiated the effort to develop the vision, this is a vision for all forms of transportation, and ownership of the vision is a shared responsibility.

**What is a Vision?** A vision is a description of a desired future. It answers the question “what are we trying to achieve?” It does not answer the question “how will we do it?” – This will be addressed in subsequent statewide, modal and regional planning efforts.

## Guiding Principles

The following principles will guide future policy and investment decisions for all forms of transportation throughout the state. These are listed in no particular order.

**Leverage public investments to achieve multiple purposes:** The transportation system should support other public purposes, such as environmental stewardship, economic competitiveness, public health, and energy independence.

**Ensure accessibility:** Transportation must be accessible and safe for users of all abilities and provide access to key resources and amenities.

**Build to a maintainable scale:** Consider and minimize long-term obligations – don't overbuild. The scale of the system should reflect and respect the surrounding physical and social context of the facility. The transportation system should affordably contribute to the overall quality of life and prosperity of the state.

**Ensure regional connections:** Key regional centers need to be connected to each other and to the Twin Cities.

**Integrate safety:** Systematically and holistically improve safety for all forms of transportation. Be proactive, innovative and strategic in creating safe options.

**Emphasize reliable and predictable options:** The reliability of the system and predictability of travel time are frequently as important or more important than speed. Prioritize multiple options over reliance on a single option.

**Strategically fix the system:** Some parts of the system may need to be reduced while other parts are enhanced or expanded to meet changing demand. Strategically maintain and upgrade critical existing infrastructure.

**Use partnerships:** Coordinate across sectors and/or jurisdictions to make transportation projects and services more efficient.

- Health Care Costs: The increased frequency of several chronic diseases related to obesity--heart disease, diabetes, and cancer--coupled with an aging population places enormous strains on the ability to pay for health care. Unless significant measures are taken, the deaths, diseases, and health care expenditures attributable to physically inactive lifestyles will only increase. Regular and sustained physical activity can help Minnesotans lead healthier lives. Health advocates will continue to push and recommend more active lifestyles and higher levels of daily physical activity, including through transportation choices such as biking and walking.
- Increased Global Competition: The global economy is likely to become even more competitive as countries like China, India and Brazil expand and invest in their economies. In addition, global population growth will put enormous pressure on basic resources like water, food, energy and metals. Many economists are suggesting that Minnesota and the US need to shift away from a consumption-based economy toward a production/export-based economy. Minnesota's diversified economy, natural resources, food production systems and increasingly diverse population offer the potential to compete globally, but Minnesota will also need to compete with the rest of the world for talent and other human capital to maintain innovation and competitiveness.
- Changing Work Environments, Telecommunications and Access to Services: While not all jobs will adjust and adapt, many jobs and businesses will increasingly deploy telecommuting and flexibility in work. This may not impact overall travel, but it has the potential to impact the patterns of travel and could ease pressure on congested urban areas. Remote access to health care and other services are also likely to increase. Expanding virtual access will improve smaller communities' abilities to participate in the global economy.
- Floods/Water Quality: Minnesota is likely to experience more flooding, particularly flash floods, in the future. As the climate changes, precipitation patterns are projected to shift from large fronts of precipitation to more thunderstorm-like events. This could lead to regular incidence of simultaneous drought and flood conditions. This is an issue that affects infrastructure design and runoff management strategies. More frequent and more severe flooding also will further exacerbate water quality issues in the state.

## **Next Steps**

The Minnesota GO vision presents a set of long-range objectives for transportation in the state that may take up to 50 years to be fully realized. This vision and guiding principles are intended to be used by all agencies responsible for transportation planning, construction and delivery in Minnesota to inform their investment and service decisions.

With its partners, MnDOT will begin updating the 20-year Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan in the fall of 2011, which will articulate policies, strategies and performance measures necessary to support the vision over the next two decades. Updates to MnDOT's plans for highways, rail, aviation, transit, freight and non-motorized transportation will also follow, so that MnDOT's entire "family of plans" fully reflects the Minnesota GO vision.