



Response to Public Comments on the Draft Minnesota GO Vision

This document includes all comments received on the draft Minnesota GO long-range vision for transportation in Minnesota during the public review period September 22 through October 21, 2011 as well as the Minnesota Department of Transportation's responses. Changes to the vision in response to comments are documented.

Comments were received through several mechanisms. A public hearing was held on October 4 through videoconference facilities at 15 locations throughout the state and online via Adobe Connect. In addition, comments could be submitted through an online forum or via email, fax or mail. MnDOT staff also gave more than 30 briefings for stakeholder groups during the comment period.

A total of 57 formal comments were submitted from 38 individuals and 19 organizations. Many groups and individuals commented on the same basic issues or themes. In order to respond to comments and develop recommended revisions to the draft plan, staff sorted the comments into a series of common categories or similar themes and then developed a common response as found below.

Based on the comments received, a revised vision was reviewed by MnDOT senior leadership and adopted by the Commissioner of Transportation on November 2, 2011. The final adopted vision can be found at:

www.minnesotago.org

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Quality of Life

Praise / Support for the Vision's Link Between Transportation and Quality of Life

"We particularly endorse the draft Vision's emphasis on a system that
o Recognizes and respects the importance and significance of place – not just as destinations, but also where people live, work, learn, play and access services.

The members of the Chamber live and work in these places, and we know that healthy places support healthy businesses."

(Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce)

MnDOT Response:

Comment noted; no further response needed.

Importance of Transportation Impacts on Quality of Life

"While the first bullet under "quality of life" talks about the significance of "place", there seems to be little in the "what this means" and "guiding principles" section about place-making or a realization that transportation design will impact local economies and multi-modal accessibility. Specifically, I'm thinking about building roads in a way that changes with context: an urban environment (a small town downtown area) deserves significantly different road section, speed limit, access standards than the places between towns."

(Brendon Slotterback)

"Excessive congestion on the regional system leads to cut-through traffic and severely impacts the quality of life in local communities."

(The I-35W Solutions Alliance)

"Looking at neighborhood/community. MnDOT has potential to largely affect how well—or how badly we pass through and serve neighborhoods with projects."

(Liz Walton)

"On the other side of the ledger, I believe there are scenic roadways that must be retained. Highway 23 from Sandstone to Duluth readily comes to mind. I often travel that roadway to Duluth to avoid the stress of driving on Interstate 35. It is one of the most beautiful stretches of roadway in this state, especially in the fall. Never mind that a railroad follows alongside the highway for several miles. I actually believe it adds a bit of value to the surroundings."

(Kenny Broshofske)

MnDOT Response:

Comments noted. Quality of life is one of the key components of the Minnesota GO vision. The Quality of Life bullet has been modified to read:

"Recognizes and respects the importance, significance and context of place – not just as destinations, but also where people live, work, learn, play and access services"

Additional detail on how this will be achieved will be discussed in the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan and subsequent modal plans and guidance.

Economic Competiveness

Praise / Support for the Vision's Link between Transportation and Economic Competiveness

"We are very supportive of the draft vision and commend MnDOT for undertaking this effort to establish a long-range vision for transportation in Minnesota. A multimodal vision that recognizes how critical transportation access and mobility are to our quality of life and economic competitiveness is vital for the future of all Minnesotans.

Again we commend MnDOT for its work to develop this long range vision and appreciate the opportunity to provide comment."

(St. Paul Smart Trips)

"The Council is especially pleased to see that the Vision acknowledges the relationship between transportation, land use and economic development. This relationship is of particular importance to the Council and we hope that it will continue to be addressed with more specific guidance and strategies in the development of the Statewide Multimodal Plan."

(Metropolitan Council)

MnDOT Response:

Comments noted; no further response needed.

Importance of Transit's Role in Economic Competiveness

However, we feel the statement on the role of transit may be too weak given its importance to the health of the metro region. While the goal of supporting "Economic Competiveness" is mentioned, the role of transit appears relegated to "those who cannot or choose not to operate a personal vehicle". But we know that high quality mass transit is a critical element in reducing congestion and moving large volumes of workers efficiently to create an environment where business will choose to locate and expand. This is truly key to our economic competitiveness and we would appreciate it if that could be recognized in the document.

(Greater Minneapolis Building Owners & Managers Association)

MnDOT Response:

Comment noted. The Minnesota GO vision supports multimodal transportation solutions, including mass transit, to provide predictable and reliable travel options. The vision has been updated to make that point more clear. Also, as a broad objective, the vision sets the goal of attracting human and financial capital—a goal for which transit has an important role. Finally, the vision has been revised to add the objective for transportation to "enhance, enable and encourage productive land uses." Transit will be one of the strategies considered to enable productive land use. The role of transit in achieving these objectives will be further elaborated in the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan.

Enhance / Strengthen Emphasis on Transportation's Role in Economic Competitiveness

"I disagree with previous comments on overbuilding. I believe that Minnesota is falling behind in our competitive advantage at the regional, national and international level through lack of investment in infrastructure. I recommend a goal of increasing our current economic competitiveness through benchmarking ourselves to other cities and states nationally and internationally. Our infrastructure investments should be exceeding those of similar levels. I also recommend a detailed analysis on the economic impact our infrastructure has on both existing and future companies. We must provide our businesses and residents with an economic advantage; we should invest to retain and add new companies. The business community should have a strong voice in the plan. If it is anticipated that alternative methods of transportation such as LRT, BRT or other methods are needed to increase our competitive advantage, we should identify corridors now and acquire right of way now to reduce future construction costs and provide increased competitiveness at minimal cost. Let's leave behind a better Minnesota."

(Matthew Ruble)

"MinnARP strongly urges the Department to pay greater attention to enhancing the competitiveness of Minnesota and especially the Twin Cities with other states and cities with which we compete for investment and population growth. Obviously, we do not function in a vacuum; rather, we compete on a daily basis with other states and cities throughout North America. Mobility is one foundation of that competition. Already, we are falling farther and farther behind some cities, including Denver, Dallas, Salt Lake City and others, whose investments in rail-based urban and regional mobility dwarf our own. What can we learn (for purposes of our 50-Year Vision) from these other cities and states?"

(The Minnesota Association of Railroad Passengers)

MnDOT Response:

Comments noted. Economic competitiveness is a central goal in the Minnesota GO vision. MnDOT will evaluate strategies to achieve greater competitiveness for the state, including inter-state collaboration on major investments, in the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan. The business community was involved in the visioning effort and will have ample opportunities for involvement in the process of developing the plan.

Bike / Walk Economic Contributions

"Global competition. Though perhaps only a small part of this category, bicycling and walking can contribute to MN's economy. As Mn is known more and more as bike-friendly, the state draws more tourists spending money on "clean" transportation. In addition some residents will travel close to home, spending money on local clean transportation."

(Liz Walton)

MnDOT Response:

The Minnesota GO vision recognizes the link between a multimodal transportation system, which includes bicycles and pedestrians, and the economy. The vision supports an expansion of biking and walking.

Environment

Enhance / Strengthen Environmental Concerns

"I think the vision is generally well thought out. However not anywhere do I see environmental concerns really addressed. Our state has fantastic natural resources, which are discussed as connection pieces, but not as an important factor in planning so that they can be preserved. It is important to me - to my MN values - to make sure any vision includes the preservation of natural and historic resources for the future generations we are trying to move around."

(Paul Danicic)

"I like the vision in general terms, but I think it could be more aggressive in defense of the environment. I agree with the comment someone made that over-building is probably not a problem. Minnesota is light years away from many other nations of the world when it comes to environmentally friendly transportation systems."

(Don Roome)

"I'd like to see these issues addressed more explicitly in planning. I would like to see air quality improvement integrated into transportation planning. Thanks for this forum. I probably would not have taken the time to participate were it not for the online connect forum."

(Mark Brigham)

"Environmental health. While the environment is called out at the top of the vision statement, it is not effectively covered in the guiding principles. This makes it seem like environmental health is a consideration that may be under appreciated in the next steps. We suggest adding a guiding principle or two related to achieving environmental health.

Global warming. We are glad that the Challenges and Opportunities background section recognizes the likely impact of climate change on transportation in Minnesota. We feel that it also needs to reflect the reality that the transportation sector—including Mn/DOT—has a responsibility to help support less carbon pollution to meet the state's greenhouse gas reduction goals and the legislative mission of Mn/DOT articulated in Section 174.02 of state statutes. Not mitigating the worse impacts of global warming by reducing emissions will certainly lead to a degradation of quality of life, environmental health, and the economy of our state. We need to avoid that to achieve this vision."

(Fresh Energy)

MnDOT Response:

Comments noted. The Environmental Health section of the vision has been revised to read:

- *Is designed in such a way that it enhances the community around it and is compatible with natural systems*
- *Minimizes resource use and pollution*

No additional guiding principles were added, but the principle Leverage Public Investment to Achieve Multiple Purposes explicitly lists environmental stewardship as a public purpose to be achieved through transportation investment. Also, the What This Could Mean Section has been expanded to include:

- *The balance of transportation modes enables an economically and environmentally efficient option for every trip.*

MnDOT is committed to environmental stewardship and evaluating air quality, water quality, and other environmental impacts are part of our transportation planning and project development processes.

Environmental Enhancements

"Good draft vision. Under the environmental health bullet it seems unnecessary to include the words "enhances the community around it" unless it is intended that transportation projects will include environmental health enhancements.

Which if that is the case, change "minimizes the impact to the environment" to something like "improves the environment". It just seems like you can't enhance the environmental community while creating an impact, however minimized. Something to think about."

(Thomas Miller)

MnDOT Response:

Comment noted. The Environmental Health section of the vision has been revised to read:

- *Is designed in such a way that it enhances the community around it and is compatible with natural systems*
- *Minimizes resource use and pollution*

Accessibility / Multimodal System

Praise / Support for the Vision's Emphasis on Accessibility and a Multimodal System

"Very pleased to see multi-modal discussions throughout and relationship transportation has on quality of life, health, and environment. Perpetuate these thoughts into plans/actions.

In Transp. Vision for Generations, good to see clear mention of:

- Integrated networks, including non-motorized
- Reliable, affordable transit—but must be convenient
- Active transportation
- Zero death for all modes (non-motorized is currently under-represented in TZD)

Overall, very promising to see the vision is multi-modal and broadly emphasizes the role transportation plays in the many aspects of our individual, local, state, financial, and physical health and well-being."
(Liz Walton)

"The Council appreciates MnDOT's recent efforts to develop a long term multimodal statewide vision for transportation, even for modes and facilities that are not directly under MnDOT's jurisdiction. This unified Vision is important given that transportation networks are interconnected across both modes and geographies."
(Metropolitan Council)

"Minnesota Go correctly identifies the importance of transportation access regardless of age or economic means and that reliability and multiple transportation options are more important than the speed of vehicle traffic."
(Transit for Livable Communities)

MnDOT Response:

Comments noted; no further response needed.

Importance of Public Transit for Accessibility and Mobility

"There is a large population including low income, seniors, veterans, ADA dependent, homeless, and general citizenship whose livelihood depends on affordable public transit. Our state cannot afford to build all of our roads out of gridlock, nor will we be able to keep up with all roadway expansion projects. Roadways and their expansion do not pay for themselves...they are highly subsidized and often times promote poor land use policy. Gasoline prices will be escalating and volatile ongoing. Public transit funding must not be marginalized. Now is not the time to pause on planning efforts for future transit corridors including, The Interchange and the Southwest LRT."
(Karen Lee Rosar)

"Supports for the faith-based, community action and other providers of volunteer drivers are very important. They provide excellent transportation services that otherwise would have elderly live life at a lower level of dignity and most importantly, they would not even have essential service needs met. In particular, volunteer drivers nor public transit providers are able to sufficiently meet the needs of commuters or for those needing ongoing rides for medical treatments.

Thankfully, portable technologies and social media will be an increasing part of the new vision and hopefully can be effectively utilized with a nice balance between efficient/needed vs. wishful and transient. Ridesharing, as a present day example is just coming into its own for effectively/efficiently meeting driver and rider needs."
(Dean Loidolt)

"For many people who use public transportation, it is one of several options. For most people with disabilities, it is often the only option. People with disabilities are often in the lower income levels and cannot afford to have a personal vehicle. For this reason it is extremely important that public transportation be available for people to go to work, school and medical appointments. Without adequate reliable transportation to the needed areas of travel, as determined by an individual, people with disabilities are not able to participate in society like others in the work and social environments."
(Diogo Reis)

"Also, having transportation systems that support youth (for sports, or school), able-bodied adults and disabled/elderly adults is very, very key."
(Linda Wolfman)

"I am 75 years old and many of the Sr. citizens would like to stop driving and do no longer drive at night because of poor or failing eye sight. There is rail tracts but no bus or cab or any other way to go to medical dental or other needed transportation. Most of us live farther out of the T.C. as of necessity ie. cheaper rents and places to rent. I live in a Sr. housing with many others. Transportation is paramount to our continued existence. The Sr. population is continuing to grow but affordable housing is not. I live on \$848.00 a month and as many others and can no longer afford to own a car or drive. It also would be safer for all concerned to keep us off the road as our driving skills suffer with age. There other groups of citizens that would also benefit from some other form of transportation as well as lowering congestion on whys/394 -7 -5 and co rd. 6 which will have to be up graded to more lanes in the near future I wish you would consider this in your future plans. Thank you for your valuable time."
(Dovid Blinderman)

"My comments are in support of your vision and I've elaborated a little further on some of that with an elderly advocacy focus. At the Central MN Council on Aging we commonly understand that if things are done with the elderly in mind, it is usually best for all ages and abilities as well.

Persons over 50, in the next 50 years or so, will drive most of the categorical age growth in Minnesota's population. The number of Minnesotans over age 65 will represent over 20% of the population by 2030 (more or less a doubling from where we are at now). These demographics will prompt accommodations, changes and responses for pedestrian paths, rolling, biking, scooters/wheelchairs and vehicles. The love of cars/personal transportation (by all ages) will hopefully see some offsets through increased public transit or multi-modal approaches as well.

New and existing infrastructure, from a complete streets perspective as well as corresponding work on roadways, river ways, walk/bike ways, lighting, signage, zoning, clustering, maintenance and realistic integration of new technologies are all important. Hopefully there is greater funding, than is presently being provided, to better meet today's and the future needs."
(Dean Loidolt)

MnDOT Response:

Comments noted. The Minnesota GO vision supports a multimodal system which includes public transit and recognizes the importance of affordably ensuring accessibility for all people, including children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. Specific suggestions for achieving accessibility will be considered in the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan, future mode-specific plans as well as project-level planning and design guidance.

Enhance / Strengthen Multimodal Position

"Concern about draft implications:

Because we value places, and broad access to them, we are concerned by the draft vision's "What This Means", which includes:

- o Reliable and affordable transit options for people who cannot or choose not to operate a personal vehicle.
- o Connected options to walk and bike for everyone choosing active forms of transportation.

These do not, to our read, describe a multi-modal system that responds to the needs of specific places and the people and businesses in them. Rather, the language describes a system in which people using transit, walking, and biking are identified as choosing to place unique burdens on the system. All users make choices, and all choices create needs and burden the system. And with few exceptions, everyone is a pedestrian at some point.

The most efficient way to access our businesses will vary with many factors: person, time, place, and purpose. The Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce and our members believe—and Mn/DOT's studies show—that a true multi-modal transportation system in the metro area is critical to reducing congestion and supporting economic development and business growth.

"Thus, the "What This Means" section should describe a system in which people can use different modes for different purposes at different times, as appropriate."
(Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce)

"While the vision is framed by a comprehensive list of guiding principles and challenges/opportunities, we feel there are two areas where the vision could be enhanced. We think it should address the importance of intermodality. Assuring true access and mobility for all Minnesotans requires that MnDOT think strategically and proactively about how the various modes – especially transit, bike and walking – support one another."
(St. Paul Smart Trips)

"Predictable options: reliance on a single option is never wise. The more we have options, the more we do not overload one mode, which creates better predictability/reliability."
(Liz Walton)

MnDOT Response:

Comments noted. The vision has been revised to include the following two bullets:

- *The balance of transportation modes enables an economically and environmentally efficient option for every trip*
- *Transportation infrastructure and services designed to enhance, enable and encourage productive land uses*

Definition of Accessibility

"Lastly, is one small concern or question on definition. The second principle, ensure accessibility, says transportation must be accessible and safe for users of all abilities and provide access to key resources and amenities. MSCOD feels strongly that transportation does need to be accessible to all users regardless of abilities. However, I have a questions on what is meant by key resources and how key resources will be determined. Obviously people have

their own schedules and preferred doctors restaurants etc, so how is it determined which one of these will be considered key?"

(Diogo Reis)

MnDOT Response:

Key resources will be identified in area-specific planning efforts and through Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plans. Key resources include but are not limited to: medical services, groceries, schools, government services, libraries and cultural amenities.

Specific Language Changes

Guiding Principals

- Ensure Accessibility has been revised to read: The transportation system must be accessible and safe for users of all abilities and provide access to key resources and amenities.

The change is proposed because the word transportation on its own suggests that individuals own the form of transportation suggesting that the SOV is still central to the thinking.

(ADA Accessibility Advisory Committee)

MnDOT Response:

The guiding principle now reads:

"Ensure accessibility: The transportation system must be accessible and safe for users of all abilities and incomes. The system must provide access to key resources and amenities throughout communities."

"What this means

- Bullet seven has been revised to read: Technology and innovation improve the safety, productivity and accessibility of each mode of transportation and may be implemented as an alternative to expanding the physical layout of the system."

(ADA Accessibility Advisory Committee)

MnDOT Response:

The bullet now reads:

"Technology and innovation improve the safety, accessibility and productivity of each mode of transportation and may be implemented as an alternative to expanding the physical layout of the system"

Connections

Connection Compatibility Issues

"As a guiding principle, "Compatibility with national and international systems" will be important in the next 50 years, but is not mentioned in the vision. Consider compatibility of: MBUF or VII systems; freight systems and linkages compatible with intermodal infrastructure investments in other parts of the world; interstate high speed rail that will require special tracks; new transportation fuels such as electric plug-in or liquified natural gas; heavy haul route continuity; passenger connections between air, rail and transit; freight connections between truck, rail, water, air and origins/destinations. These are all compatibility issues for the future that will be different from the past."
(Bruce Holdhusen)

MnDOT Response:

Comment noted. The Increased Global Competition section under Challenges and Opportunities has been revised to include:

"It will be important for Minnesota's transportation system to integrate and be compatible with national and international systems."

Connections Outside of Minnesota

"The vision statement should give equal weight to the needs of Minnesotans to travel to destinations outside Minnesota (and of others to reach Minnesota) as it does to the intrastate mobility needs of our residents."
(The Minnesota Association of Railroad Passengers)

"This does support what I think is important for SE Mn region, to be better connected not only to Mpls but also to joining US States primary/key cities. I think comments should be added about "interstate" visions, or connections."
(Linda Wolfman)

MnDOT Response:

The Minnesota GO vision supports connecting Minnesotans to destinations outside the state.

"Connects Minnesota's primary assets—the people, natural resources and businesses within the state—to each other and to markets and resources outside the state and country"

In addition, The Increased Global Competition section under Challenges and Opportunities has been revised to include:

"It will be important for Minnesota's transportation system to integrate and be compatible with national and international systems."

Regional Connections for Bicycles

"Ensure regional connections: Even if long distances between regional centers, plan to connect centers with all modes. Assume distances are manageable for bikes if connect regions via town-to-town connections."
(Liz Walton)

MnDOT Response:

Comment noted. The guiding principle now reads:

"Ensure regional connections: Key regional centers need to be connected to each other through multiple modes of transportation."

Expand Points of Interest

"Guiding Principals

- Ensure Regional Connections has been revised to read: Ensure Connections: Key commercial centers need to be connected to each other through a variety of transportation means.

The recommendation is made because not all points of interest are necessarily regional and there is no clear definition of regional would include or exclude."
(ADA Accessibility Advisory Committee)

MnDOT Response:

Regional centers were identified and defined first by the University of Minnesota in the 1960s as part of the Regional Trade Center analysis and system. The analysis has been updated and revised many times since. An update to the definition and analysis is currently being conducted by the University of Minnesota's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs.

Language Changes

What this means

- Bullet four has been revised to read: Connected options for all forms of non-motorized transportation for everyone choosing active forms of transportation. (It is suggested that the underlined portion be struck because there many individuals for whom active transportation is a necessity and not a choice.) (ADA Accessibility Advisory Committee)

MnDOT Response:

The bullet has been revised to read:

"Connected options to walk and bike"

Demographics

Include All Underserved Populations

"The vision statement does not directly mention people with disabilities. This is a serious omission, considering that one in every five people in Minnesota has a disability – a population that constitutes the largest minority group in Minnesota.

Thank you for taking to the time to review these public comments. Please give serious consideration to the need for quality accessible transportation for people with disabilities – particularly in Greater Minnesota."

(Minnesota's Statewide Independent Living Council, the State Rehabilitation Council – General, and the State Rehabilitation Council-Blind)

"Challenges and Opportunities

- Aging population. It is request that this conversation be expanded to traditionally underserved populations which are going in size and will have even greater need as their populations age."

(ADA Accessibility Advisory Committee)

MnDOT Response:

Comments noted. The vision places a high emphasis on accessibility—both disability and socio-economic related. The section previously on the aging population has been expanded to include the diversification of Minnesota's population.

Implications of Aging Population

"Aging population: ...many will adjust the amount, time, and destinations of their travel... Assume they will also adjust the mode."

(Liz Walton)

MnDOT Response:

Comment noted. The section on the aging population includes:

"many will also seek alternatives to driving their own vehicle."

Health / Safety

Praise / Support for the Vision's Emphasis on Health and Safety

"The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) has drafted a vision that recognizes and acknowledges the impact transportation options have on the health and safety of people in Minnesota. MDH applauds MnDOT for including public health throughout the draft vision and guiding principles. MDH fully supports MnDOT's vision as it further leverages our agency's goals and vision to keep all Minnesotans healthy.

MDH recognizes opportunities to collaborate as we strive for a safer and healthier Minnesota. Therefore, MDH will continue to support and participate in the visioning process and implementation steps. Currently, there are efforts at MDH that could assist in realizing the proposed MnDOT vision. For instance, MDH has been building the State's capacity to conduct Health Impact Assessments (HIAs), which are used to evaluate potential health outcomes associated with the built environment. MDH has used HIAs to evaluate transportation related projects, such as the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit. MDH and its local partners work on a number of active living efforts that create changes in the built environment, which is an evidence-based strategy to promote regular physical activity. Through MDH, many communities have received Walkable Community Workshop and Safe Routes to School trainings that helped integrate non-motorized transportation into communities across the state.

In addition to synergistic work at MDH, MDH has been involved in other MnDOT efforts. For example, MDH has been represented on the State Non-motorized Transportation Committee for over twenty years. More recently, MDH has participated on the Complete Streets Advisory Group and transportation research technical advisory panels related to non-motorized transportation.

The aforementioned are examples of how public health is integrated into the transportation planning process. Integrating public health efforts into the MnDOT process can help fulfill the State's transportation vision. MDH believes current and future collaboration between health and transportation aligns with the vision's guiding principles. MDH looks forward to exploring ways to collaborate with MnDOT in the future to further our mutual goals of safe, healthy and accessible transportation throughout Minnesota."
(Minnesota Department of Health)

"Transportation's impacts on public health are woven into Minnesota Go. The growing demand for active transportation (i.e. non-motorized) and public transit are seen as assets toward maximizing the health of people and the environment."
(Transit for Livable Communities)

MnDOT Response:

Comments noted; no further response needed.

TZD is Unrealistic

"I believe the implication of "zero deaths or serious injuries" due to transportation is unrealistic. The vision is lofty, which is what it should aspire to. However, I would be concerned about chasing an outcome of "zero deaths or serious injuries" in lieu of more attainable results. In short, I think it stands out from the other implications and could be a distraction."
(Dan Brady)

"What this means

- Bullet five [Zero Deaths] is viewed as impractical."
(ADA Accessibility Advisory Committee)

MnDOT Response:

Comments noted. Through the Toward Zero Deaths partnership, MnDOT and partners have made great progress in dramatically reducing the number of fatalities and serious injuries on the highway system to record low levels.

MnDOT remains committed to a data-driven approach to safety that strives for regular progress over time. While this aspiration may never be fully achieved, the goal remains as a focus for long-term collaborative efforts that encompass education, enforcement, and emergency services along with system engineering, especially lower-cost proactive measures. The Minnesota GO vision for safety is to be integrated with other efforts and is part of a broader vision for transportation that supports a high quality of life, a healthy environment and a competitive economy.

Multimodal Safety

"The mention of the 8 to 80 rule is encouraging, however, the phrasing of that bullet is troublesome to me. It seems to me that we could say right now that we have "An environment that allows safe travel for both an 8 year old and an 80 year old in every neighborhood and community". If you travel by car, you have this already. I think this bullet should say something more like "An environment that allows safe travel using multiple modes for both an 8 year old and an 80 year old in every neighborhood and community."

(Brendon Slotterback)

"Excellent statement. One suggestion, the section on Health Care Costs could note the need for safety of walkers and bikers in the design."

(Bright Dornblaser)

"Besides cars, trucks, buses, and bicycles that are mentioned, another very popular mode of transportation in rural Minnesota during the winter is the snowmobile. The DOT spent multi-millions upgrading Highway Ten through Detroit Lakes which we appreciate, however, it wasn't until the City of Detroit Lakes hired a consultant did citizens point out how dangerous it is for snowmobilers to travel across Highway Ten near the Holiday Inn to reach the other side of the trail through the area. After the fact, I believe there is now a move to have a tunnel for that purpose in the future. Such safe passages for snowmobilers as well as walkers and bicycle riders should be part of the DOT's plan throughout the state. With that, safety from muggers needs to also be addressed since those tunnels can be potential hangouts for crime, too."

(Kathy Coyle)

MnDOT Response:

Comments noted. The What This Could Mean section now reads:

"An environment that allows safe travel using multiple modes for both an 8 year old and an 80 year old in every neighborhood and community."

A reference to trails has also been added to the section. Snowmobiles are among the modes that will be considered in the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan and where appropriate in other future planning efforts.

Specific Language Changes

What this means

- Bullet six has been revised to read: An environment that allows safe travel for all users (or everyone) in every neighborhood and community.
(ADA Accessibility Advisory Committee)

MnDOT Response:

The concept of using ages 8 and 80 has been retained. 8-80 was first introduced in the Minnesota GO expert interview with Dr. Dan Halvorsen and was also recommended by the Steering Committee for inclusion in the vision. 8-80 is an international effort to make communities safer and more accessible for all users. The theory is that if it's safe for an 8-year-old and an 80-year-old then it is probably safe for most everyone. Using specific ages, however, helps to illustrate the types of users that need to be considered in the planning, design and maintenance of the transportation system.

Freight

Enhance / Strengthen the Importance of Rail Freight

"Another thing that bothers me is the incredible lack of foresight by state planners regarding rail transport. A few years ago we had many more miles of tracks than we have today. Many of them could be used today for transporting goods, but instead we have this overload of trucks on the road driven by people who are putting in too many hours on the road at times - which has proven to be dangerous and even deadly on occasions. A glaring example of the elimination of railway is between Minneapolis-St-Paul and Duluth, where many miles of tracks have been replaced with nature and bike trails in Minnesota AND Wisconsin. Now don't misunderstand me, I'm all for nature and bike trails, but why at the expense of railroads? Seems to me a trail can be constructed far cheaper per mile than any railway. Instead of ripping up what seldom or unused track remains elsewhere, there should be some effort taken to salvage at least some of it instead of ripping it all up now, only to turn around and rebuild it later. Notice I'm not talking about this so called "light rail" here. I'm talking about railways that are able to handle freight trains. Freight engines are rapidly becoming more fuel efficient, and the effective use of trains could reduce truck traffic on the highways. I don't believe it was ever intended for trucks to dominate the transportation system like they do today, especially for long haul distribution of goods and services."

(Kenny Broshofske)

"Improve all types of rail: freight, High Speed, regional. Improve grade crossings for safety and efficiency reasons. Need more double track."

(Leone Mauszycki)

MnDOT Response:

Comments noted. The Minnesota GO vision supports a flexible and adaptive approach to transportation planning acknowledging that needs change over time. Improving freight rail is consistent with the Minnesota GO vision. Specific strategies for rail are available in the Minnesota Comprehensive Statewide Freight and Passenger Rail Plan, which is available at: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/planning/railplan/index.html>

Urbanization Has Freight Implications

"I would also like to comment on the "Challenges and Opportunities" that were identified. In particular, I would like to address the issue of "Urbanization". It appears as though this has an emphasis on the shifting population, specifically those that are moving to urban centers; however, keeping in mind the second bullet point under the vision itself, "Provides safe, convenient and effective movement of goods and people", we need to remember that it is also about the movement of goods. This is important to remember since there is a large amount of agricultural products and other goods moving around throughout greater Minnesota. We need to make sure that the focus isn't only about people, but also about movement of goods."

(Ronda Allis)

MnDOT Response:

Comment noted. The paragraph on Urbanization in the Challenges and Opportunities section is primarily focused on shifting population, but it does indeed have implications for the movement of goods. The Minnesota GO vision does include both the movement of people and the movement of goods. In the same section under the Increased Global Competition a reference has been added on the need for Minnesota's transportation system to integrate and be compatible with national and international systems—something particularly important for freight movement. Specific

strategies for the movement of goods in greater Minnesota will be discussed in the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan and subsequent modal plans.

Transit Investment

Include More Focus on Transit

In a phrase, rail needs to be priority...streetcars, commuters...
(Robert Hively-Johnson)

MnDOT Response:

Comment noted. The vision supports rail transit and transitway development, which could include streetcars and commuter rail. Specific strategies for rail will be considered in the Statewide Multimodal Transportation, future mode-specific plans, and through collaboration in development of regional/metropolitan plans.

Strengthen / Emphasize the Importance of Transit

Transit is an important option for the general population. Over 40 percent of people working in the City of Minneapolis use transit to get to work. New housing developments near transit nodes in the suburbs as well as the urban core are proving popular as people opt to live near transportation choices that make it easy for them to travel within the region.

In sum, I would submit that the current draft document falls short in emphasizing the role of transit as a key element in the long-term vision for transportation in the State of Minnesota. The CTIB would appreciate the opportunity to participate in the on-going dialogue of developing this vision and, importantly, in the development of the plans for implementation.

(Peter McLaughlin in capacity as the CTIB Chair)

MnDOT Response:

Comments noted. The vision supports a multimodal system which explicitly includes public transit as a core element of the future transportation system. MnDOT will work with CTIB in developing specific transit and transit-oriented development strategies in the Statewide Multimodal Transportation, future mode-specific plans, and through collaboration in development of regional/metropolitan plans.

Don't Include Focus on Transit

"Frankly, I believe "light rail" is a waste of taxpayer money. That is especially true if any of it is built outside the metro area. If the system can't afford to sustain itself, it's not worth having. Why should the taxpayers continued to be burdened with these unsustainable transport systems??? In trying to interpret your vision, It almost sounds like it supports such thinking.

Finally, private transport is and will continue to be a big part of our way of life - provided of course the country remains free. If government chooses to ignore the people's right to private transportation - for whatever reason - then we are headed towards a doomed society. People are dependent on private transport for more reasons than merely having something of their own to commute to wherever in. Not only that, but WHAT they choose to commute in is just as important. How many people do you know that can direct a light rail train to stop at a lumber yard to pick up a load of building materials, then pick up groceries on the way home from work???? You CAN do that with a pick up truck. How many light rail trains allow smoking for those who choose to indulge - and I don't want to hear the arguments about smoking. I haven't lit up a cigarette in 30 years, but I'm not against the rights of others to do so. A private

vehicle meets that need. How about listening to the radio? People like their private moments, and for some that privacy only occurs when commuting to or from work in their own vehicles. The privacy aspects of transportation cannot ever be ignored.”
(Kenny Broshofske)

“Here are some observations:

- On holidays that government and banks observe, I noticed the park and ride lots are 80% empty. Ridership is high percentage government employees. Another perk?
- When gas prices go up, the bus fare stays the same. Shouldn't there be some shared pain?
- Park and rides are taking some prime real estate off the tax productive rolls. Couldn't these for in more “backwater” cheaper areas.
- I live in a city with almost no bus routes and a county without light rail, yet my property taxes charge me for light rail, etc.
- Mass transit assumes everyone works at a central location. It is environmentally more sound for people to live and work in the same area. Encourage that, not commutes
- Flexible? How flexible will the investment in the train station at the Metro Dome look if the Vikings move out too?
- Train to Duluth? Amtrak failed. Who are we bringing where?
- I've been to Amsterdam. The reason for all the bikes, unions strike so often that the mass transit is shut down so frequently (the unions have solidity and if one union goes on strike, they all shut down) people just get used to bikes. We do not need to give the unions more power over our lives.
- Make bus/train fares equal to the cost.”

(Dave Roeser)

MnDOT Response:

Comments noted. The Minnesota GO vision continues to advocate a system that includes the use of privately owned vehicles. However, MnDOT also maintains its commitment to developing a multimodal transportation system, of which transit is a key component.

Land Use

Praise / Support for Vision's Link between Transportation and Land Use

"The Council is especially pleased to see that the Vision acknowledges the relationship between transportation, land use and economic development. This relationship is of particular importance to the Council and we hope that it will continue to be addressed with more specific guidance and strategies in the development of the Statewide Multimodal Plan."

(Metropolitan Council)

MnDOT Response:

Comment noted; no further response needed.

Vision Does Not Address Land Use Concerns

"Additionally, we feel the vision needs to identify the interrelation between land use and transportation. Land development patterns have a profound impact on mobility demand and by evaluating the impact that transportation investments have on land use, MnDOT can play a significant role in assuring accessibility and supporting long-term economic development."

(St. Paul Smart Trips)

"While we broadly agree with the guiding principles, and challenges and opportunities in Minnesota Go, we also have these recommended additions and questions. Changing land use patterns (both with and without policy intervention) should be included in Minnesota Go. Most experts agree that housing demand over the next several decades will be increasingly for more compact designs (i.e. attached rather than detached) that allow access to key destinations by a combination of transit, bicycling and walking. A 50-year vision should not be silent on the importance of better integrating transportation investments and land use."

(Transit for Livable Communities)

"While it is an important step for Mn/DOT to so explicitly recognize the important impact that its investments have on land use, and the need to consider local context, Mn/DOT also needs to consider and be more involved with how land use impacts transportation demands. Mn/DOT should be actively seeking new partnership with entities in charge of land-use planning and that could be reflected in the background or explicitly included in the guiding principles."

(Fresh Energy)

MnDOT Response:

Comments noted. The What This Could Mean section has been revised to include:

"Transportation infrastructure and services designed to enhance, enable and encourage productive land uses."

MnDOT will work to expand and build on its partnerships with entities in charge of land-use planning as it updates the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan and subsequent modal plans.

Expansion / Preservation

Include More Focus on Expansion

"I've wondered for years what the transportation department in this state is thinking sometimes. This concern goes back to when the Interstate Highway System was started. One question still remains with me, and that is, how can the Twin City Metro Area continue to ignore the need for - at a minimum - a THREE LANE flow of traffic both ways all the way around the metro? I don't know of any other major metro area - and I've driven around a lot of them - that still have only two lanes of roadway in each direction on their bypasses. Yet, there are still sections of two lane roadway on 694 on St Paul's northeast side."

(Kenny Broshofske)

"Among the stated implications are, "Technology and innovation improve the safety and productivity of each mode of transportation and may be implemented as an alternative to expanding the physical layout of the system." It is probably safe to assume that the first part of the statement is accurate but the second clause is a guess and a thin reed upon which to rely as a realistic alternative to expanding the system."

(The I-35W Solutions Alliance)

MnDOT Response:

Comments noted. The Minnesota GO vision does not preclude expansion of the transportation system. In many instances new capacity in multiple modes may be required if the vision is to be achieved. The vision does not say that technology will always be implemented as an alternative to physical expansion, but rather that it may be implemented as an alternative to physical expansion if and/or where practical and feasible.

Include More Focus on Preservation of Existing Infrastructure

"And existing infrastructure [needs to be priority]. Plan for consequences, not conveniences."

(Robert Hively-Johnson)

"We support completion and proper maintenance of the regional infrastructure."

(The I-35W Solutions Alliance)

"Fix the system. Maintain what we have before we expand. Always look for alternatives to gain value from existing infrastructure before major project changes. For example: 4 lane to 3 conversions where appropriate ADT allows ability to retain smooth flow while adding options such as walks and/or bike lanes."

(Liz Walton)

"Fix existing infrastructure (roads + bridges)"

(Leone Mauszycki)

MnDOT Response:

Comments noted. The Minnesota GO vision supports the maintenance and preservation of existing infrastructure, including but not limited to the two guiding principles "build to a maintainable scale" and "strategically fix the system." The concept of "fix it first" was considered in the public engagement process for Minnesota GO. Although fixing existing infrastructure was emphasized, the specific strategy of fixing what exists before doing anything new was not supported. The concern expressed in the public workshops was that the transportation system that exists today is not

all of the system we will likely need in the future and such a strategy could prevent Minnesota from transitioning to that future system.

Maintainable Scale / Strategic Investments

Praise / Support for the Vision's Emphasis on Maintainable Scale and Strategic Investment

"I agree with concerns of overbuilding. The system now is not maintainable do to size."
(Roger Dukowitz)

"Build to a maintainable scale (don't overbuild): this is important if we want to be fiscally responsible. Let's only build what we need and reevaluate what it is we actually need (ie. 10 or 11' travel lanes versus 12-14' travel lanes)

Strategically fix the system: if a segment of the system ceases to meet our needs, we should not continue to invest in it."
(Lindsey Knutson)

"Minnesota Go also includes a forward thinking notion for any public agency or service provider, that less is more, in some cases. Minnesota Go guides the state to "not overbuild", "that some parts of the current system may no longer be needed in the future", and that innovation can present "an alternative to expanding the physical layout of the system." TLC strongly agrees with this new direction."
(Transit for Livable Communities)

"The I-494 Corridor Commission supports many elements in the draft 50 year vision for transportation, especially as it relates to enhancing quality of life and economic development through strategic expansion and upgrades."
(I-494 Corridor Commission)

MnDOT Response:

Comments noted; no further response needed.

Caution against Underbuilding

"Build to a maintainable scale – I agree that it is prudent to not "overbuild". However, I think there are too many examples in our current transportation infrastructure where the caution about "overbuilding" resulted in underbuilding. To fully "consider and minimize long-term obligations", do not underbuild."
(Luke Van Santen)

"Building to a maintainable scale seems intuitively correct. Structures and systems should not be built that cannot be maintained. However, "minimizing long-term obligations" and "don't over build" are not the same. Does it mean that a new road will not be built in a growing area because system financing is inadequate to maintain current roads in the system if the new road is built? Does it mean that a transit line is not built because future operating costs may increase while projected revenues do not? Roads and bridges are normally built to last 50 years or more and must be maintained. Does "don't overbuild" mean that a road is not built, that a lane is not included for future use, or that a BRT or LRT line is not built?"
(The I-35W Solutions Alliance)

"I disagree with previous comments on overbuilding. I believe that Minnesota is falling behind in our competitive advantage at the regional, national and international level through lack of investment in infrastructure. I recommend a goal of increasing our current economic competitiveness through benchmarking ourselves to other cities and states

nationally and internationally. Our infrastructure investments should be exceeding those of similar levels. I also recommend a detailed analysis on the economic impact our infrastructure has on both existing and future companies. We must provide our businesses and residents with an economic advantage; we should invest to retain and add new companies. The business community should have a strong voice in the plan. If it is anticipated that alternative methods of transportation such as LRT, BRT or other methods are needed to increase our competitive advantage, we should identify corridors now and acquire right of way now to reduce future construction costs and provide increased competitiveness at minimal cost. Let's leave behind a better Minnesota."
(Matthew Ruble)

"I like the vision in general terms, but I think it could be more aggressive in defense of the environment. I agree with the comment someone made that over-building is probably not a problem. Minnesota is light years away from many other nations of the world when it comes to environmentally friendly transportation systems."
(Don Roome)

MnDOT Response:

Comments noted. The principle "build to a maintainable scale" does not preclude expansion of the transportation system. Instead the principle emphasizes the need to consider the long-term obligations of infrastructure and to build the right amount of infrastructure for the context. Economic competitiveness is a central piece of the Minnesota GO vision and the caution against overbuilding simply recognizes the need for transportation to affordably contribute to the prosperity of the state.

Cost-Benefit Implications of Maintainable Scale

"I appreciate the idea of "maintainable scale", but what does this mean? Anything is maintainable or affordable at a certain cost (tax level). I'd say we need a reexamination of the cost-benefit calculations used to value projects. The language in this guiding principle doesn't seem strong enough. When MNDOT is advocating a 50 year (100 year?) project like the Stillwater Bridge, I'd say we need a fundamental rethinking."
(Brendon Slotterback)

"While I'm sure this will be controversial, I like that the plan also acknowledges that some parts of our transportation system will be trimmed while others will grow. We do have a very large road system given our state's population. I hope this leads to debate about what parts of the system are cost effective and equitable."
(Brian Forney)

MnDOT Response:

Comments noted; no further response required.

Include LOS for All Modes

Maintainable scale: Begin to look at level of service for all modes—don't overbuild at the expense of any one mode.
(Liz Walton)

MnDOT Response:

Comment noted. Future MnDOT statewide and modal planning efforts will consider level of service for multiple modes.

Mobility / Speed

Praise / Support for the Vision's Emphasis on Reliability and Predictability

"Reliable and predictable options: I am happy to see that speed is no longer the most important factor when evaluating transportation systems. Reliability and predictability are important."

(Lindsey Knutson)

"Emphasize reliable and predictable options – I can't stress enough how important this is to my family. In order to ensure being on time to school every morning, we would have to leave 20 minutes earlier (and then wait at school to get in for up to 20 minutes) if we were not able to rely on the consistent traffic flow in the HOT lane on I-394. Having dedicated lanes or preferably, the ability to alter lane configuration based on congestion, should be a high priority design criteria for new construction and for being retroactively applied to existing infrastructure."

(Luke Van Santen)

MnDOT Response:

Comments noted; no further response needed.

Importance of Reliability and Predictability Over Speed

"Emphasize reliable and predictable options: The reliability of the system and predictability of travel time are frequently as important or more important than speed. * * *

This statement may be true for some transit riders to a certain extent, and even possibly some drivers, but time costs money. For 2010, peak time automobile commuter congestion costs (time and fuel) as shown by the Texas Transportation Institute data for Minneapolis and St. Paul, was \$916, ranking 13th nationally.

http://mobility.tamu.edu/files/2011_109lminne.pdf. Traffic on neighborhood streets increases as traffic on major arterial streets slows. Drivers try to find alternative routes that are faster. Time is critical when going to work, to the next appointment, or to pick up a child at school or day care."

(The I-35W Solutions Alliance)

MnDOT Response:

Comments noted. The vision recognizes the importance of reliable and predictable transportation 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 multimodal options over reliance on a single option."

Importance of Speed / Timely Movement

"Key elements that are missing from the vision are the concepts of ensuring mobility and accessibility. The Commission recommends that an additional Guiding Principle be added, namely: "Ensure Mobility and Accessibility: Transportation systems must further the timely movement of people and goods while providing the ability of people to reach desired destinations." "

(I-494 Corridor Commission)

"We support reliable and predictable travel options as well as overall system performance that includes both transit and roads, but think speed is equally important."
(The I-35W Solutions Alliance)

MnDOT Response:

Comments noted. Accessibility is a core component of the vision and one of the guiding principles. Mobility is inherent to transportation addressed throughout the vision. The vision does not say that speed is not important; rather it is one of several factors that are important including reliability and predictability.

Network Synergy

"The synergy of networks must be better understood in long-range mobility planning. We have tended to measure, analyze and compare various investments using discrete segments (e.g., in federal "minimum operable segment" analysis) of a mobility system, whether that is a roadway improvement (such as a segment of T.H. 610 or a new link in the Regional Rail system such as Red Rocks corridor) without understanding the exponential impact on the entire transportation matrix of each incremental addition or subtraction. Networks experience exponential growth in flow as a consequence of merely additive expansion of the scale of the network, and we would better serve our need to leverage finite capital resources by taking full account of the significant aggregate effects of individually discrete and minor additions to each network."

(The Minnesota Association of Railroad Passengers)

MnDOT Response:

Comment noted; no further response required.

In-Region Mobility

"CTIB envisions a network of interconnected transitways throughout the metro area with a goal of making the region more competitive by improving mobility, slowing the growth of congestion, and fostering economic development. Your draft principle proposes to "Ensure regional connections." What is missing from the current draft, however, is a statement that addresses the importance of mobility within regions, a responsibility shared by local governments and Mn/DOT. This concept of regional mobility is critical to the growth and long-term economic viability of the State.

We believe it is necessary to plan for mobility within regions so that our long-term growth is not stunted by inadequate travel options. Commuters and families increasingly desire more transportation choices so they can get to where they want to go safely, on time and without hassle. As the statement "Emphasize reliable and predictable options" suggests, our region must continue to develop a system of options that allow people to choose the travel mode best suited for their needs. Transit and highways complement each other, and both are important components of our region's transportation system."

(Peter McLaughlin in capacity as the CTIB Chair)

MnDOT Response:

Comment noted. The ensure accessibility guiding principle now reads:

"Ensure accessibility: The transportation system must be accessible and safe for users of all abilities and incomes. The system must provide access to key resources and amenities throughout communities."

The emphasize reliable and predicable options guiding principle now reads:

“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 multimodal options over reliance on a single option.”

In addition, the following bullet has been added to the “What this Could Mean” section:

“The balance of transportation modes enables an economically and environmentally efficient option for every trip”

Partnerships

Concern about Potential Consequences of Partnering

"Partnering is fine, if it can be accomplished without the creation of another level of committees etc. There are already too many meetings held just to meet the mandates."

(Roger Dukowitz)

MnDOT Response:

Comment noted. Not all partnerships require the creation of additional committees.

Partnership Continuation

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

Is this not already being done?"

(The I-35W Solutions Alliance)

MnDOT Response:

Yes, partnering across sectors and jurisdictions is already occurring. The intent of the guiding principle is to recognize the importance of partnerships and encourage continued and improved use of partnerships in transportation where they provide the opportunity to leverage investments and overall effectiveness or efficiency.

Suggestions for Partnerships

"Partnerships: look to health, education, PCA, etc. for partnerships—in policy, implementation, and funding

Health care costs: Refine existing and establish new partnerships to create safe, convenient, affordable active transportation options and infrastructure."

(Liz Walton)

MnDOT Response:

Comment noted. The Minnesota GO vision supports the use of partnerships. However, specific partnerships will be identified in subsequent planning processes.

Project Funding / Project Selection

Include Cost-Benefit for Project Selection

"We support an emphasis on pursuing low cost/high benefit solutions while recognizing that solutions to some large existing problems will require high cost solutions. Some of the necessary high cost projects create benefits down the line for other communities and supports employment centers outside the downtown area."
(The I-35W Solutions Alliance)

"Achieve multiple purposes: in the past, we have looked at MnDOT's project cost and may have deemed some elements too expensive, losing sight of the potential savings elsewhere. For example, instead of installing bike lanes, sidewalks, etc. to encourage active transportation, we lose opportunity and in turn likely pay more in health care costs—so we simply transfer costs, rather than avoid the cost."
(Liz Walton)

"With respect to your vision paper, I think budget and economic constraints are under-represented. If a new project has exceptionally high up-front and operating costs in return for some small, difficult-to-prove, future environmental or perceived social benefit, it might not be wise to start this project. Often the costs are underestimated and the benefits are based on concepts with very little proof or ideas that are economically unsustainable even if their are some real benefits. Therefore, in the "Persistent Budget Challenges" section, I'd like to see something along the following lines included: "Additionally, new projects should be given careful consideration in terms of cost-benefit analysis. This analysis should use realistic assumptions and evidence about the initial cost, ongoing operating costs, and actual, provable benefits. Ideally, new projects will be economically sustainable without a large, ongoing financial drain on current and future Minnesotans." "
(John Gates)

MnDOT Response:

Comments noted. Analysis of benefits and costs, including environmental and economic impacts, are conducted as part of the environmental review process. MnDOT is sponsoring research to more fully understand the economic impacts of transportation projects. MnDOT is also committed to develop context sensitive solutions, which entails a broad examination of costs and benefits.

Better Align Performance Measures with Priorities

"The vision should include or suggest performance measures relative to the guiding principle to "emphasize reliable and predictable options" that "prioritize multiple options over reliance on a single option" and moving toward "energy independence" in the transportation sector. MnDOT, over the past several decades, has relied far too heavily on levels of traffic congestion and vehicle speed as the leading performance measures, and has used these as the rationale for committing huge sums to expand the state's highways and bridges. We are concerned that Minnesota Go does not directly address this institutional impediment to change. At a minimum, the vision should reference Minnesota's statutory goals for the transportation system (Minnesota Statutes Section 174.01, Subdivision 2)."
(Transit for Livable Communities)

"MinnARP urges a greater emphasis on understanding the financial and energy efficiency of various mobility options, using appropriate metrics. All too often we see planners relying, e.g., on "ridership" as the benchmark for evaluating public transport modes, when revenue passenger miles is a far more appropriate measure of the output produced in

a given system. The capital, operating, and lifecycle costs of a given system can be better measured and compared to other investment options using cost-per-unit-of-output than cost-per-transaction.”
(The Minnesota Association of Railroad Passengers)

MnDOT Response:

MnDOT remains committed to performance-based planning. The Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan and other mode-specific plans will identify performance measures, indicators and targets, which may include new measures or modifications to existing measures. In addition, the statutory goals for the transportation system will be considered and referenced as part of the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan.

Emphasize Efficient Use of Resources

“In addition to the draft’s current content, the Chamber respectfully suggests that the Vision emphasize more explicitly the need to utilize transportation resources efficiently. Laudably, the current draft implicitly recognizes the need to maximize the resources available for Minnesota’s transportation needs. But expressly stating that efficient use of transportation resources is a main objective as Minnesota crafts its 50-year transportation goals will clarify and enhance the Vision’s current content. Accordingly, the Chamber recommends incorporating the following—or similar—language into the first line of the Vision:

Minnesota’s multimodal transportation system maximizes the efficient use of resources as well as the health of people, the environment and our economy.”
(Minnesota Chamber of Commerce)

MnDOT Response:

Comment noted. Efficiency has been added more explicitly to the vision with the second bullet now reading:

“Provides safe, convenient, efficient and effective movement of people and goods”

In addition, the following has been added to the What This Could Mean section:

“The balance of transportation modes enables an economically and environmentally efficient option for every trip”

Address Funding Sources

“Funding. There is little or nothing in here about changing the traditional financing methods for state transportation projects. Isn’t it feasible (perhaps even desirable) that we should move away from traditional methods towards more tolling/VMT tax to address congestion and ongoing funding issues? I believe this should be addressed somewhere in a long-term vision.”
(Brendon Slotterback)

“Will the money follow the vision? The impact of Minnesota’s transportation system on health, the environment and the economy will largely be determined by what actually gets built. Minnesota Go strongly articulates a multi-modal, equitable future that sufficiently maintains the state’s transportation assets. It is incumbent upon the state legislature, MnDOT, and its partners to establish funding priorities (in future transportation planning documents) consistent with

this new vision. This might require a fundamental reconsideration of barriers (including language in the Minnesota Constitution) that currently dictate how transportation projects are selected and how funds are spent.”
(Transit for Livable Communities)

“Funding for mass transit could come from taxes on people who want to drive cars and on places that want to provide parking for them.”
(Don Roome)

“The statement recognizes the “ ... wide range of implications ... ” that it holds and provides some examples. However, without an explication of the implications the Vision Statement lacks a contextual framework necessary for the public to understand its intended effect. If the Vision means anything, it will direct certain consequences and preclude others. We understand that this Vision is a component of MnDOT’s Enterprise Risk Management program (“ERM”). The Vision Statement cannot be divorced from projected funding needs as contemplated in your Minnesota Transportation Vision: Interim Highway Risk Management Investment Strategy, also a component of the ERM.

The Interim Highway Risk Management Investment Strategy states:

“Step 5: Identify New Strategies and Spending Options for Additional Funding - This plan identifies a \$50 B funding gap. Since 2008, Mn/DOT has been exploring various approaches to address this gap using a risk based investment strategy. Innovative finance is one approach that we have been assessing. The Better Roads proposal is being developed to address the funding gap for pavements and stem the decline in pavement conditions. Furthermore, with almost \$40 B of the funding gap related to mobility needs in the Twin Cities, Mn/DOT’s Metro District together with the Metropolitan Council has developed a new three-prong strategy for mobility. It includes increased transit, improved land use-transportation coordination, and optimizing use of the existing highway system through active traffic management and low-cost safety j capacity improvements.”

Apparently, this is to be achieved by reducing the projected needed investment in mobility from \$41.6 billion to \$3.3 billion. Given the funding cuts for metropolitan transit operations in recent state budgets we question soundness of this proposition.”

(The I-35W Solutions Alliance)

MnDOT Response:

Comments noted. The question of funding is an important topic and an important next step in the Minnesota GO process now that the vision is adopted. The Next Steps section has been updated with the following addition:

“Additional research and discussion will be necessary to achieve this ambitious vision for transportation in Minnesota. An important question that needs further public discourse is the appropriate method to fund and finance the necessary investments and ongoing service operations envisioned in Minnesota GO. MnDOT will work with the Legislature and its partners during the coming years to explore options for funding the vision.”

Broaden Discussion on Cost

“I would like to see cost examined from multiple perspectives when any transit / transportation issue is planned (e.g. new busways, new rail lines, freeway expansion, etc.). Many times, the focus is on funds needed to build and maintain a project. This is important, but only part of the story. Consider also cost of alternatives; costs of the individual commuter; costs & benefits to the communities served. For example, if a rail line such as Hiawatha or Northstar is built, and achieves a certain ridership, one angle on cost should be the cost offset to individual commuters. In other words, if an individual drives 50 miles per day less, because he or she can take the Northstar

from Anoka to downtown, there is considerable savings to that individual in terms of per-mile vehicle costs, parking, etc. This should not be the only metric by which cost gets examined, but too often we get stuck in the total dollars a project costs, and we lose sight of the fact that car commuting is incredibly expensive. I would like to see rail and bus travel examined from a fuel efficiency standpoint, i.e. fuel consumed and/or emissions generated per passenger mile traveled. Are things like Northstar actually efficient from a fuel-consumptions / emissions perspective? I am a big proponent of building out a regional rail system as an alternative to the roads-only infrastructure that has dominated since our trolley system was dismantled. However, my interest in regional rail is tempered by lack of knowledge about just how commuter rail and LRT compares to cars & buses from a fuel consumption and pollutant emissions standpoint. I'd like to see these issues addressed more explicitly in planning. I would like to see air quality improvement integrated into transportation planning. Thanks for this forum. I probably would not have taken the time to participate were it not for the online connect forum."
(Mark Brigham)

MnDOT Response:

Comments noted. Your recommendations will be considered in the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan and subsequent planning efforts.

Funding Implications to Specific Geographic Areas

"The Vision acknowledges that there are other implications not listed. What are the implications for specific regions of the state or county or city? It assumes that population growth will continue in the metropolitan areas. What are the spending and funding implications for specific geographical areas such as the metropolitan area?"
(The I-35W Solutions Alliance)

MnDOT Response:

These are important questions that will be addressed in subsequent statewide and regional planning efforts by MnDOT, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, Regional Development Commissions and other jurisdictions.

Develop Projects in Phases

"We support plans to complete some major projects in phases, thereby making funding options more likely and obtainable."
(The I-35W Solutions Alliance)

MnDOT Response:

Comment noted. This suggestion is consistent with the vision.

Turnback Law

"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. * * *

One may not take issue with the concept that key elements of the system are critical to its operation and must be maintained. If it means that the state should use the turnback law to shift the system to a different governmental body to operate and maintain it simply shifts the financing burden.”
(The I-35W Solutions Alliance)

MnDOT Response:

Comment noted. The method of reduction could take many forms depending on the type of transportation and the specific element of the system. For example, transit or air service may be adjusted or a road may be narrowed or eliminated. Jurisdictional transfer–turnbacks–may be considered, which do in fact shift the financial burden but also the decision-making authority. Any decision to reduce the system will only be made after concerted analysis and stakeholder consultation.

Public Participation / Planning Process

Support / Praise for the Vision Planning Process

"Mr. Nelson and Mr. Schaffner shared with us MnDOT's outreach efforts in developing this Vision. It is apparent that both MnDOT and the Council recognize the importance of including all stakeholders in the planning process, particularly individuals from typically under represented populations. Based on the Council's experience in planning and implementing the Central Corridor LRT, if we can be of any assistance to MnDOT in reaching these under represented populations, please let us know."
(Metropolitan Council)

MnDOT Response:

Comment noted; no further response needed.

Concern Over the Vision Planning Process

"The bottom line to all this is, while wiser and more cost effective decisions are needed at every level, it is just as important to maintain the needs of private citizens. A vision alone isn't good enough if it isn't directed towards where it's focus should be, and that is towards the best interests of the people themselves - NOT what government THINKS the best interests of people is or should be."
(Kenny Broshofske)

MnDOT Response:

Concerns noted. The Minnesota GO vision was developed through extensive public engagement, including but not limited to advisory groups, online forums and public workshops. MnDOT remains committed to transparent and inclusive planning. The following language has been added to the What This Could Mean section:

"Inclusive and transparent planning and decision making for all modes of transportation and land use"

Ensure Public Participation in Transportation Planning

"The Guiding Principles should be amended to add:

Significant transportation policy matters, such as but not limited to project selection, prioritization, and routing should only be made after significant public input from residents, businesses, and municipalities along the proposed route has been solicited and considered. These major decision-making processes should be transparent to, and accessible by, the public."

(Sue Sanger)

"The shared responsibility approach to planning requires new models for citizen education and engagement. Transportation planning is too frequently cast as an engineering problem rather than a community building opportunity. To succeed in "adapting to changes in society, technology, the environment and the economy," MnDOT will need to increase its capacity for communicating both the detailed technical aspects, and the multiple purposes, of each transportation project, at an earlier point in the process. Additionally, meaningful community input should be solicited in the formative stages of the project rather than at the final stages."

(Transit for Livable Communities)

MnDOT Response:

Comments noted. The What This Could Mean section has been revised to include:

“Inclusive and transparent planning and decision making for all modes of transportation and land use”

Rural Minnesota and Other Non-Metro Concerns

Acknowledge Growth in Regional Centers

"There is one area we find disagreement with. It is the section on urbanization that says, "The suburbs are likely to see increases in population as well as changes in basic community design as activity nodes or town centers develop and suburbs seek to differentiate from each other."

It's true that suburbs will seek to differentiate from each other, but the section puts too much emphasis on suburbs as the future.

Many demographers in America, even the state demographer, have projected young families wanting to live in regional centers like Albert Lea, Austin and Owatonna. In Albert Lea, our elementary student population already is growing. Regional centers are places with a good sense of community and neighborliness that suburbs lack. These places possess shorter commutes and less expensive lifestyles than suburbs. Yet regional centers still have a variety of restaurants, stores and entertainment options that families want.

These all are quality-of-life factors for parents working longer hours and wanting to spend more time with their children. It's going to be a lot easier to, for example, be a coach on your child's sports team in Albert Lea than, say, Eden Prairie, all while holding down a 55-hour-a-week salary position.

MnDOT would be wise to consider the growth of regional centers in Greater Minnesota in its section on urbanization." (Albert Lea Tribune)

"Another comment is the statement that regional centers need to be well connected to the Twin Cities. That is certainly true and frankly, I hold my breath each time I have to drive to the Twin Cities because I hate the traffic so much. The other thought, however, is that regional centers also need to be well connected to other strong employment centers such as Fargo, ND. Fargo is to western Minnesota what the Twin Cities is to your ninety mile radius. Fargo has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the nation and because of it, many seek employment there while still able to enjoy rural living in smaller towns and actual countryside. The same could be said for Grand Forks, ND that employs many rural Minnesotans as well as Rochester, Alexandria, St. Cloud, Duluth and the smaller towns of Thief River Falls, Roseau, Warroad, Alexandria, Fergus Falls, and Perham. It is important that this plan is not only focused on the Twin Cities. There are a number of areas around the state that have a lot of amenities, including jobs that attract people driving up to 60 miles to reach each day." (Kathy Cole)

MnDOT Response:

The Minnesota GO vision is for all of Minnesota. The Urbanization section under Challenges and Opportunities has been revised to include:

"Regional centers will likely see increases in population as will the core walkable urban areas in the Twin Cities."

In addition, the vision explicitly identifies the need for Minnesota to connect to "markets and resources outside the state," which would include places like Fargo.

Ensure Vision isn't Solely Metro Focused

"The other part is, like so many other issues, the only place that seems to matter to state government is the Twin City Metro area."

(Kenny Broshofske)

MnDOT Response:

The Minnesota GO vision is for all of Minnesota. The Ensure Regional Connections guiding principle now reads:

"Ensure regional connections. Key regional centers need to be connected to each other through multiple modes of transportation."

Importance of Maintaining Rural Environment

"The vision does not address the importance of maintaining our rural environment as rural or mention anything about compensation to people whose places of peaceful living may become no longer peaceful-rural or not. This should be addressed in your plan, that those who own property that will be disturbed by future change should be not only adequately, but very well compensated for any disturbance due to the changes or the giving up of their peaceful environment- being provided acceptable property in the area that has not been disturbed or compensation that will provide an equal size home, comparable yard area, business site, or farm land acres to which they have been accustomed or working as an income source and also being provided the labor of moving without cost if such a decision is made."

(Connie Hagen)

MnDOT Response:

Comments noted. MnDOT and other public agencies must follow a variety of laws and have existing procedures for handling damages to property. MnDOT recognizes the inconvenient and sometimes traumatic nature of being displaced by a public improvement project and does provide compensation and relocation assistance. More information is available at: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/row/index.html>

Include Specific Mention of Collar Counties

When preparing your Plan, Isanti County would appreciate your consideration of "collar counties," in addition to the planning areas of Greater Minnesota and the Twin Cities metropolitan area. With one of the highest worker commute times in the nation, Isanti County residents would appreciate your efforts to help alleviate this significant problem.

(Isanti County)

MnDOT Response:

Comment noted. When updating the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan, mode-specific plans, and through collaboration on regional/metropolitan plans, consideration will be given to the "collar counties" and their transportation issues.

Importance of Rural Public Transportation

"In addition, 2.4 million people, or 45 percent of all Minnesotans, live outside the metropolitan area. People in rural areas and small towns are in desperate need of accessible, high-quality public transportation.

The need for transportation is compounded for individuals who have a disability. For a person with a disability, the lack of accessible transportation can have a profound negative impact on community involvement, employment and economic well-being.

What transportation services exist in rural areas need to be coordinated to serve more people more efficiently.

Transportation needs to be provided across county lines."

(Minnesota's Statewide Independent Living Council, the State Rehabilitation Council – General, and the State Rehabilitation Council-Blind)

"Access to accessible public transportation is an obstacle for people with disabilities in small rural towns and those living in the country away from town. Often you don't hear them complain because they know it doesn't exist for them but it is still an issue."

(Southwestern Center for Independent Living)

MnDOT Response:

Comments noted. The What This Could Mean section now reads:

"Reliable and affordable transit options for people who cannot or choose not to operate a personal vehicle in both rural and urban areas."

Technology / Innovation

Ensure MnDOT is a Leader

"I'd like to see something in the guiding principles that places Minnesota in the forefront of transportation and innovation. The accessibility of public, open, natural spaces (such as parks and bike trails) is one example where Minnesota had lead the rest of the nation in the past, marking our state as one where people want to live and love to live. Similarly, taking some risks on early adoption of new transportation innovation could further emphasize the value of making Minnesota your home for family or business. Examples may include:

- Tackling high-speed rail in partnership with IL and WI to connect homes and business to other industrial hubs
- Early adoption of electric vehicle infrastructure (already mentioned!), particularly in the Twin Cities where need/desire will more rapidly develop
- Expanded and highly integrated public transportation options. We're on the right track here with the light rail.
- Encouraging (perhaps incentivizing) re-urbanization and localization of "home-to-work": Shorten the commute! Less travel = lower cost in infrastructure, energy consumption, etc."

(Jonathan Schauer)

"Energy shift: take advantage of new technology where possible. Look for partnerships for fuel options. For example, rest areas allow for vehicle recharge infrastructure, etc. MnDOT should be a leader by example"

(Liz Walton)

"As you move forward to consider ideas, I think very important to learn from Europe, and study higher speed mass transit systems, figure out means to tap Solar and Wind energy to support at least a portion of these future systems.

Renewable energy is important to me."

(Linda Wolfman)

MnDOT Response:

MnDOT's own agency-specific vision challenges the agency to be a global leader. Agency-adopted core values include promotion of collaboration, research and innovation. The examples given are all areas of agency involvement.

Impacts of Change

"The likely safety and efficiency benefits of vehicle automation need to consider the costs and affordability of these improvements. Making it safer or easier to drive using vehicle automation may have "enormous efficiency and safety benefits" but it will also, in many cases, be at cross purposes with many of the other guiding principles in Minnesota Go. The more expensive motor vehicles become, the fewer people can afford to own one."

(Transit for Livable Communities)

"MinnARP urges the Department to give due consideration to the economic implications of the potentially vast petroleum resources of the Bakken field, which are just beginning to be harvested, and understood. Assumptions based on perceived scarcity or declining quantities (and increasing costs) of petroleum fuels may be materially wrong over the next 50 years."

(The Minnesota Association of Railroad Passengers)

MnDOT Response:

Comments noted. The Minnesota GO vision recognizes that the transportation system will need to adapt to changes over time including changes in technology and the economy.

"Is flexible and nimble enough to adapt to changes in society, technology, the environment and the economy"

Specific Projects

Comments on Specific Projects

"Please also consider the extension of light rail transportation west and south of the twin cities. I am 75 years old and many of the Sr. citizens would like to stop driving and do no longer drive at night because of poor or failing eye sight. We have little or no form of transportation in Watertown or points west of Mound Mn. Delano etc. There is rail tracts but no bus or cab or any other way to go to medical dental or other needed transportation. Most of us live farther out of the T.C. as of necessity ie. cheaper rents and places to rent. I live in a Sr. housing with many others. Transportation is paramount to our continued existence. The Sr. population is continuing to grow but affordable housing is not. I live on \$848.00 a month and as many others and can no longer afford to own a car or drive. It also would be safer for all concerned to keep us off the road as our driving skills suffer with age. There other groups of citizens that would also benefit from some other form of transportation as well as lowering congestion on whys/394 -7 -5 and co rd. 6 which will have to be up graded to more lanes in the near future I wish you would consider this in your future plans. Thank you for your valuable time."
(Dovid Blinderman)

"MinnesotaGo" transportation vision guiding principles call for, in part, consideration of reducing or eliminating previously identified roadway system capacity improvements due to the lack of funding and other social and environmental considerations.

Over the last ten years, MnDOT, the St. Cloud APO, local governments and the public have cooperatively agreed upon the need for many major capacity improvements to Interregional Corridors and other critical State and local transportation system infrastructure in the St. Cloud Metropolitan Area and Central Minnesota through corridor specific technically based transportation studies and system-wide transportation plans.

The St. Cloud Area Planning Organization wishes to enter into a cooperative dialogue with MnDOT and other transportation stakeholders during development of the APO 2040 Transportation Plan regarding all State and local system capacity improvements identified from studies or plans within or impacting the St. Cloud APO planning area, including but not limited to the following: TH 10 freeway through St. Cloud, TH 15 freeway through St. Cloud, I-94/TH 10 Regional River Crossing near Clearwater, I-94 expansion to St. Cloud and other supporting local road projects, regional trail projects and Northstar".
(St. Cloud APO)

"Please consider building a four lane or freeway from St Cloud to Interstate 90 or to come into Interstate 35 near Owatonna, MN. This would relieve a great amount of traffic and congestion going into the twin cities for people who want to travel south and don't need to go thru Mpls. The highways (Hwy 15 to 90 or hwy 15 to hwy 19 to go over to 35) are already there and would need to be enlarged. "
(Alice Drown)

"We support BRT on Cedar Ave and 1-35W."
(The I-35W Solutions Alliance)

"I have no affiliation, just a concerned citizen of the metro area. I am here to specifically oppose the LRT from Minneapolis to Eden Prairie. It's really expensive, there's already a SW Metro bus service, and it goes against your listed goal of zero deaths (Hiawatha has proven to be far more deadly than the bus system). Thank you. Also, I'd like to know who is responsible for making the decision regarding this train. I've talked to my legislators, and they say it's not something they can control. Why does an unelected Met Council, Railway Authority, or whoever ultimately decides, have so much power over such a large project (estimated to cost a billion dollars or more). If I'm not mistaken, the Met Council has more say on the issue than MNDOT, the local city officials, or anyone in state

government. Who ultimately decides whether or not this train from Mpls to EP will be built? Who can we talk to, in a meaningful way, that is making this decision? Thank you in advance for any answers you can provide."
(John Gates)

"I think there should be high speed rail going from Albert Lea all the way to Baudette. Of course, this rail would go to the MSP airport. It should connect up with the cities of Albert Lea, Austin, Mankato, Rochester, MSP airport, St. Cloud, Duluth, Brainerd, and on up to Baudette. There should be one MAIN line going from far south to far north. Then there should be hubs going from places like Winona, thru Rochester, over to I-35, where I think a pickup/dropoff area should be. Then the line would continue on over to the SD border, going thru Mankato. Same thing over in Duluth. Leave Duluth, over to Grand Rapids, to a pickup/dropoff area near Walker, then over to Fargo. You get my point.

One main line heading north and south and then sub-lines, running east and west, schedules coordinated with the main line running north to south. The main line running north to south should have trains at each spot 3 times a day. Anywhere from 4 to 6 hours apart at each spot. Of course, demand would determine the schedules.

I can see Iowa residents having to travel out of MSP using this all the time. I can see SD residents using this. North Dakota. Wisconsin. Also, the pricing should be fairly close to what it would cost in gas in a vehicle to get to your destination. If it costs me \$20 in gas to get from Lewiston, MN to the MSP airport, then this is what the train ride should cost. Parking at the pickup/dropoff areas should be free. And I say this because less road maintenance is going to be done. Less traffic congestion will be had in MSP. If a person in Rochester, on a daily basis, can travel to the MSP area for work, look how much gas/maintenance is going to be saved! So I buy a gas efficient car and travel from Rochester to somewhere in St. Paul every day. It's going to cost me \$100/week for gas. I would gladly pay that for a train ride up, especially if I can get some work done while on the train.

Anyways, those are my thoughts. I know there are many challenges that go along with this idea. Obtaining property. Obtaining the money to get something like this completed. Phase it out of course over the next 10 years. Jobs creation for sure for the next 10 years."
(Mike Plass)

"Also, strengthen roads to accommodate increase in heavy trucks carrying Frac Sand in the Winona area."
(Leone Mauszycki)

"There is a large population including low income, seniors, veterans, ADA dependent, homeless, and general citizenship whose livelihood depends on affordable public transit. Our state cannot afford to build all of our roads out of gridlock, nor will we be able to keep up with all roadway expansion projects. Roadways and their expansion do not pay for themselves...they are highly subsidized and often times promote poor land use policy. Gasoline prices will be escalating and volatile ongoing. Public transit funding must not be marginalized. Now is not the time to pause on planning efforts for future transit corridors including, The Interchange and the Southwest LRT."
(Karen Lee Rosar)

"I've also questioned the wisdom behind the highway marking system in this state. For example, I got confused once while traveling on Highway 101. I lost track of the roadway because it was not marked as a STATE roadway for several miles. I thought I had missed a turn somewhere and wound up back-tracking for several miles before I realized that STATE 101 had become COUNTY 101, then changed back to STATE 101! In other words, there's a lack of roadway marking consistency here."
(Kenny Broshofske)

"Although there may be increased needs for electricity in the future, I disagree with the use of wind to provide the electricity needed for this.

For your information, the wind does not blow all the time. Wind energy is inefficient, intermittent, unpredictable, and cannot be stored. Wind turbines are not powered by wind; they are powered by taxes. Because the wind does not blow all the time, balancing the minute-to-minute variations in supply and demand on the grid is difficult. Backup gas-fired plants or natural gas-fired plants need to be kept ramped up so that they can kick in when the wind does not blow. When do the wind developers tell about the carbon emissions that are given off by these backup plants during their "green" mantra?

There are many concerns with industrial wind energy including low frequency noise, shadow flicker, and siting too close to humans and wildlife--to name a few.

Low-frequency noise was reported by several people I have met who live in Dexter, MN, and in the Owatonna, MN, area. One man complained of increased tinnitus (ringing in his ears) when the wind turbines spin. The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission told him he could move. Now what kind of industry promoting wind energy generation would put up an industrial wind turbine over quality of life for a man and his wife in their own home? The lady from Dexter, MN, spoke of a drumming in her chest when the large wind turbines spin. She and her family cannot even sleep on the main floor of their home and have resigned to sleep in their basement. This is truly wrong!

In Goodhue County where I live, the wind developers are touting that there are no bald eagles in the footprint of their wind project. Local concerned citizens have taken the time to locate many bald eagle nests with active adults and eaglets, along with raptors, and an endangered species called the Loggerhead Shrike and have shown the DNR and US Fish & Wildlife Service. The wind developer did not take the time or much effort to do a complete and accurate avian study prior to their request for a site permit. These local citizens were easily able to find many of the bald eagle nests just by driving on public roads. Our bald eagles--the symbol of our freedom and democracy--are struggling in numbers in the lower 48 U.S. states. We do not need to put up green energy despite the need to keep our eagles thriving in Goodhue County. I am tired of everything "green" at any and all costs!

Human health effects may take years to emerge as a pattern when the detrimental effects are past correction. Southeast Minnesota has more densely populated areas which do not accommodate industrial wind turbines sited too closely to people and wildlife.

Warning signs of future problems with new technologies have been overlooked or ignored in the past, much to the detriment of the public's health. One has only to look at the history of asbestos and mesothelioma; tobacco and lung cancer and chronic pulmonary diseases; thalidomide and birth defects; mercury and neurotoxicity; x-rays and fluoroscopes and cancer; lead-based paint and childhood poisoning; and coal miners and black lung, to name a few. The pattern of medical problems took time to emerge before a pattern of health complaints were observed, followed by epidemiologic studies and public health policy.

Human health effects may take years to emerge as a pattern, when the detrimental effects are past correction. As the numbers of wind turbine installations close to people's homes increase, reports of health effects have escalated, from sites across the globe. These problems do not appear to be present where wind turbines are located at a safe distance from homes."

(Barbara Stussy)

"Measuring transportation systems in the I-494 Corridor against the draft Minnesota GO Vision provides an illustrative test:

Quality of Life - Our member cities experience a tremendous amount of cut through traffic as residents and commuters seek to avoid sitting in congestion on I-494.

Economic Competitiveness - With Minnesota's second largest concentration of employment, I-494 has long functioned as a major economic driver for the State. It has in many ways become Minnesota's Main Street. The congestion along I-494 is clearly slowing further growth in this important area.

Mobility and Accessibility - At present, I-494 is predictably congested and offers unreliable travel time, which dramatically affects business and Minnesotans alike.

Appropriately, the draft Minnesota GO Vision clearly supports an expansion of I-494.

MnDOT has long planned to implement a major reconstruction of I-494 as documented in the I-494 Final Environmental Impact Statement (I-494 FEIS), providing three lanes in each direction from T.H. 100 to the Fish Lake interchange and up to six lanes in each direction east of T.H. 100 to the Minnesota River. This reconstruction was originally intended to commence in 1996.

MnDOT representatives have recently indicated the full I-494 FEIS design is unlikely to ever occur due to fiscal constraints. The only I-494 expansion project planned for the near term is the construction of a WB auxiliary lane from 35W to France Avenue. The Corridor Commission finds the current conditions along I-494 and the lack of progress on addressing those conditions wholly unacceptable and implores MnDOT to aggressively pursue improvements along I-494. Minnesota is missing out on federal funding opportunities because MnDOT has not completed key design elements, most notably for the I-494/I-35W Interchange (Minnesota's biggest bottleneck). The I-494 Corridor Commission is steadfastly committed to an expansion of I-494 that aligns with MnDOT's stated vision for quality of life and economic vitality as well as MnDOT's emphasis on a reliable system with predictable travel times. The Commission believes major improvements could be achieved by segmenting the project into smaller pieces and aggressively seeking federal funds.

The I-494 Corridor Commission supports leveraging public investment and the utilization of partnerships which is why our member cities invest in staffing a local Transportation Management Organization, Commuter Services (formerly 494 Commuter Services), to work with the business community and residents to promote alternatives to solo driving as a strategy to reduce congestion. Unfortunately, congestion on I-494 is at a level that cannot be mitigated by managing demand alone. The time is long overdue to expand I-494."
(I-494 Corridor Commission)

MnDOT Response:

Comments noted. The Minnesota GO vision is not intended to be project-based. However, these suggestions will be addressed in subsequent planning and programming efforts, including the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan and mode-specific investment plans, and as applicable, through collaboration in development of regional/metropolitan plans.

Guiding Principles

Show Order Within Guiding Principles

"Guiding principles. Without a particular order to the guiding principles, it is unclear how Mn/DOT will go about determining priorities when principles are in conflict. This document will only be as good as the future policy and investment decisions that are made with its framework in mind, so having a transparent and effective method for accomplishing that will be an essential next step. In the meantime, ordering the principles by importance while noting that they all need to be balanced would be helpful."

(Fresh Energy)

MnDOT Response:

Comment noted. Ordering the guiding principles was considered by the Steering Committee but rejected in favor a more integrated approach that requires ongoing analysis, balance and evaluation. The specific balance between principles is likely to vary over time and with circumstances. No one principle should dominate, but rather all need to be taken into account. The introductory language to the Guiding Principles section has been revised to include:

The principles are intended to be used collectively.

Guiding Principles May Have Different Implications in Different Parts of the State

"As we look at the guiding principles that were identified, it is important to remember that, as a statewide plan, all areas of the state must be able to relate to each principle; but even more importantly, regions around the state may have varying interpretations of what a particular guiding principle may mean. These guiding principles may mean more to one area of the state than another, and we need to make sure we have a better understanding about those various interpretations and appreciate and accept those differences."

(Ronda Allis)

MnDOT Response:

Comment noted. The specific balance between principles is likely to vary over time and with circumstances. Likewise, the implications of a given principle may vary throughout the state as different parts of the state face different challenges and issues. Overall, the Minnesota GO vision places a high priority on the importance of context and flexibility. MnDOT will begin the conversation about the implications of the guiding principles to different parts of the state as part of the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan update.

Document Organization

Difficult to Follow

"I read through the Vision Document, and to be quite frank I tended to get lost in it."
(Kenny Broshofske)

MnDOT Response:

Comment noted. The final Minnesota GO vision has been re-ordered and edited to improve clarity.

Bullet Formatting

"The first sentence of the vision starts out great, but then loses focus with eight separate bullets that are not woven together into a cohesive vision statement. The added categorization into Quality of Life, Environmental Health, and Economic Competitiveness has me confused as to what is the vision for Minnesota's transportation. Do the three categories differ in importance than the bullets? Are the five that are categorized differ from the three that are not?"

The addition of examples in What This Means also has me confused. Are these policies, or examples of potential policies? These are important statements, but I am not sure how they fit with the rest of the document as currently written. "

(Steve Richards)

MnDOT Response:

Each of the nine bullets in the Minnesota GO vision has equal weight. The categories Quality of Life, Environmental Health and Economic Competitiveness provide additional context to the intended outcomes envisioned as part of Minnesota GO and were areas of emphasis throughout the visioning process.

The What this Could Mean section is intended to provide illustrative examples of the outcomes that could result as the vision is applied by Minnesota's transportation stakeholders. The examples provided are not intended to function as policies.

General Comments on the Vision

General Praise / Support for the Vision

"Thanks for the opportunity to provide these comments.

Your 50-year visioning draft has been done with an appreciated comprehensive perspective. Your consideration for the needs of the elderly, and the healthcare component they also impact, are appreciated.

Being 58 now, I hope to still see a good part of this vision materialize and evolve in Minnesota. Thanks again for this opportunity to comment as well as to Terry and Judy (District 3 MNDOT) for their encouragement to participate in this process."

(Dean Loidolt)

"MinnARP compliments the Department for undertaking the difficult task of visioning Minnesota's mobility options over a very long planning horizon. Minnesota viewed alone is a relatively small market with evolving demographics over the projected planning horizon, and we understand the challenge of creating a vision that can provide meaningful guidance to legislators, the Department, and others."

(The Minnesota Association of Railroad Passengers)

"I agree with the guiding principles. They are good foundations for the future of our transportation system."

(Steve Richards)

"First, I think that the overall concept is laid out nicely and will certainly be interested to see the details on how to accomplish these guiding principles.

Second, I appreciate the upfront recognition of opportunities and challenges. Without taking into considerations current and future climates, this process would likely not succeed."

(Diogo Reis)

"The vision is comprehensive and reflects our values. It also advances the guiding principles."

(Candace Kragthorpe)

"The Minnesota Chamber of Commerce appreciates the work completed to produce Minnesota GO: Creating a Transportation Vision for Generations and thanks those involved for their efforts. The Chamber supports comprehensive long-term planning for Minnesota's transportation needs as they relate to the state's overall demographics and development and agrees that an effective transportation system is important to the well-being of state residents and businesses.

(Minnesota Chamber of Commerce)

The Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce applauds Mn/DOT's work to develop a new vision for transportation in Minnesota, and for requesting comment on its draft. Congratulations on the Vision."

(Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce)

"I read your website vision statement. I very much agree with your goals, striving for balance of "quality of Life", respect for the environment, and understanding that newer more safe and economical solutions are needed for a wide range of people. Both Urban and rural communities need to be supported, and interconnected. Good start MN team, please continue the vision via MNDot's near-er term planning."

(Linda Wolfman)

"Transportation is a critical issue to our members and we applaud MNDOT for taking a long term statewide view in producing a thoughtful and thorough approach in the developing the Minnesota GO Vision and inviting input from interested stakeholders.

We find nothing to disagree with in the report as far as it goes."
(Greater Minneapolis Building Owners & Managers Association)

"Transit for Livable Communities applauds the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) for completing this long-range (50-year) vision and using a broad range of techniques for soliciting input from the public and outside experts. It is very encouraging to see the bold, transformative vision of Minnesota Go.

Several major forces will impact transportation in Minnesota in the decades ahead. MnDOT wisely notes that these include: changing demographics, rising energy prices, climate change, rising health care costs associated with obesity, and budget challenges. Minnesota Go also appropriately recognizes that responding to these challenges and opportunities is a shared responsibility across jurisdictions (and among transportation experts and the general public).

Understanding "what we are trying to achieve" through transportation is much more nuanced than getting from point A to point B. Rather, Minnesota Go notes that the transportation system can and should improve economic competitiveness, quality of life and environmental health. Minnesota Go also notes that "place", including the extent of transportation options and transportation's contribution to overall quality of life, can play an important role in attracting "human capital and financial capital to the state." It would also follow from this that a community should be enhanced not degraded by proximity to transportation corridors (for example degradation from vehicle emissions or noise)."

(Transit for Livable Communities)

"Fresh Energy praises the thoughtful process and outcome of the Minnesota Go project and is hopeful that this vision can lead to meaningful progress in how Mn/DOT plans, scopes, and builds projects and engages with partners. We are especially happy to see "multimodal," the three legs of sustainability, and Complete Streets principles so well integrated into what will hopefully be a meaningful way of better balancing the multiple goals and stakeholders of our transportation system."

(Fresh Energy)

"I think it is great that MnDOT has recognized that needs change and that we may not want to continue to build transportation infrastructure they way we have always done it for the mere reason that it is what we have always done."

(Lindsey Knutson)

MnDOT Response:

Comments noted; no further response needed.

Specific Language Changes

"One suggestion is to amend as follows: ".....promotes the health of people and maximizes the environment and our economy....." "

(Candace Kragthorpe)

"I also suggest that the initial one-sentence Vision statement be amended to add "maximizes....quality of life". You have referenced this concept in bullet points below, but not in the overall summary statement."
(Sue Sanger)

"What this means

- The group generally feels that bullet eight [Changing to meet future needs] is not really necessary and the sentiment is inherent to the idea of long range vision."

(ADA Accessibility Advisory Committee)

MnDOT Response:

Comments noted. No changes made.

"Quality of life

- in the second bullet replace physical with individual to avoid needlessly separating groups into subsets." (ADA Accessibility Advisory Committee)

MnDOT Response:

The Quality of Life bullet now reads:

"Is accessible regardless of socio-economic status or individual ability"