



---

# Statewide Bicycle+ System Plan

## Public Participation Plan

**Draft** for Public Comment

# Table of Contents

Table of Contents .....	2
1.0 Purpose and Background.....	3
2.0 Goals & Expected Outcomes .....	3
3.0 Audiences .....	4
4.0 Project Development Process .....	6
5.0 Engagement Techniques .....	8
6.0 Public Engagement Schedule .....	11
7.0 Evaluation of Efforts .....	12
8.0 How to Comment .....	13

## 1.0 Purpose and Background

This Public Participation Plan supports the Statewide Bicycle+ System Plan by articulating expectations and providing a framework for the engagement that will inform the development of the SBSP.

Bicycling and related modes have undergone significant changes since MnDOT's last statewide bicycle planning effort in 2016. Of note, bicycling for transportation and recreation greatly increased in popularity during the COVID-19 pandemic. The emergence of numerous human-scale devices that travel at the same relative speed as bicycles (scooters, e-bikes, OneWheels, etc.) has proliferated across contexts in Minnesota. These personal mobility devices often use bicycle infrastructure and must be accounted for in MnDOT's bicycle planning work. "Bicycling" and "biking" are terms frequently used throughout this Public Participation Plan and will refer to all the modes described above except when explicitly defined.

Minnesota's commitment to a multimodal transportation system is well-reflected in MnDOT's Minnesota GO Vision, its Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan, and other plans including the Statewide Pedestrian System Plan and the Minnesota Safe Routes to School Strategic Plan. MnDOT and its selected consultant team will develop a Statewide Bicycle+ System Plan (SBSP) that makes Minnesota a better place for people to bike and use bike-like modes while aligning with existing state transportation policy. The primary consumers of the plan will be MnDOT staff. The SBSP will be developed at a statewide planning level, though the plan's recommendations will be targeted locally based on land-use context and engagement results. Engagement work will be critical to understanding the expectations that people in Minnesota have for bicycling along and across the state trunk highway system. The purpose of this Public Participation Plan is to develop a framework for strategic, thorough, and meaningful engagement.

MnDOT's Plan Development Guidelines articulate clear expectations for public engagement during statewide planning initiatives. MnDOT's Public Engagement and Constituent Services team provided input on this plan. The plan meets the requirements of the agency's Plan Development Guidelines.

Public engagement for the SBSP will be integrated into the project timeline at two critical points in the process. First, information will be gathered from the public to develop an understanding of people's expectations for facilities and treatments that make it safer, more convenient, and more desirable to bike along and across the trunk highway system. Later on, the project team will return to the public to share the recommendations in the plan and collect feedback on whether or not the proposed recommendations align with the expectations of the public. This feedback loop is critical to ensuring that the SBSP is responsive to the desires of people in Minnesota.

## 2.0 Goals & Expected Outcomes

The overall goals for public involvement in the Statewide Bicycle+ System Plan are to:

- Meet people where they are, rather than ask that they come to MnDOT.
- Connect with identified priority populations through targeted engagement activities.
- Use a two-pronged approach with early engagement to understand what people want to see in the plan, then bring proposed plan strategies back to the public in a similar manner.
- Understand people's expectations for investments in places to bicycle along and across the trunk highway system.

- Offer a variety of platforms to provide input, including online and in-person opportunities.
- Convey complex, technical information using plain language and graphics.
- Ensure engagement tools and resources are accessible and provide translation where needed.
- Comply with MnDOT guidelines on public engagement activities.

The intended outcome of engagement for the SBSP is that the public, including stakeholder groups like local governments and health improvement organizations, have actively participated in the project process and assisted MnDOT in developing the plan. Additionally, engagement should develop buy-in and ownership of the plan among agency stakeholders, external transportation partners, and members of the public.

## 3.0 Audiences

Planning for people bicycling has a broad and diverse body of stakeholders who will be part of the Statewide Bicycle+ System Plan engagement process.

### MnDOT

The SBSP is a critical effort towards making it easier for people in Minnesota to bike safely and comfortably to their destinations, as well as achieving agency goals and meeting agency targets. In many parts of the state, trunk highways can be key connecting routes between destinations, difficult roads for people to cross, or both. MnDOT will be responsible for implementing the recommendations of the plan on the trunk highway system and is a key audience both for engagement in developing the plan and for establishing buy-in to ensure the plan is implemented effectively.

### Partner Transportation Agencies

People bicycling do not see changes in roadway jurisdictions as they go from one place to another. They see the quality and safety of the connections that they desire. To this end, it is critical that MnDOT work closely with local transportation partners to ensure that people biking have a high-quality experience regardless of the roadway that they are walking on, along, or across. Partner transportation agencies include counties, cities, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, Regional Development Organizations, Tribal governments, and more. It is critical to gather feedback from these partners as MnDOT seeks to understand expectations for its own system.

### Public Health Partners

There is a long history of coordination between transportation and public health stakeholders in Minnesota. MnDOT and the Minnesota Department of Health worked together closely to develop many of the preceding plans that guide the vision and methodology of the SBSP: Minnesota GO, the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan, the Statewide Pedestrian System Plan, and Minnesota Safe Routes to School Strategic Plan, among others. Locally, public health practitioners are a driving force in encouraging more people to bike and advocating for improvements that make bicycling safer, more equitable and more desirable. Special care will be given to ensure that there are ample and appropriate opportunities for public health partners to engage with the SBSP.

## Additional Stakeholders

A stakeholder of the SBSP is defined as a person, group, or organization with a specific interest in the project. Bicycle advocacy groups and community-based organizations with relationships among priority populations are two examples of potential stakeholders. Past work related to bicycling will influence a list of known stakeholders developed early in the public engagement planning process. This will not be considered an exhaustive list, and additional stakeholders could be added based as the project team's awareness grows.

Different stakeholders will have differing levels of interest and energy to commit to the planning process. A variety of different opportunities for engagement will be offered, and stakeholders will be able to select those opportunities that feel most appropriate for their level of interest and availability.

## Public

People in Minnesota are the ultimate beneficiaries of the SBSP. It is critical that engagement activities provide varying opportunities for involvement in the SBSP based on a person's interest level. Considerable effort should be made by the project team to limit the amount of energy that an interested person in Minnesota needs to expend to participate in the planning process. Engagement events will include refreshments, children's activities, interpreters (to assist people with limited English), easy access, hearing devices, and other appropriate services as applicable and necessary. When possible, events should be held at community centers, places of worship, or other gathering places that feel welcoming to community members. All engagement materials will be ADA accessible and plain language. A variety of potential engagement strategies are listed in Section 5.0.

## A Note on Transportation Equity

During the 2022 update of the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan, MnDOT developed a [Commitment to Transportation Equity](#). This commitment includes an acknowledgment of past harms, a statement on the agency's ongoing journey to address transportation equity, the importance of individual agency employees in supporting the commitment, and how the agency defines transportation equity. Transportation equity requires ensuring underserved communities, especially Black, Indigenous and People of Color, share in the power of decision making.

The SBSP will build on the innovative targeted engagement strategies used during the development of the Statewide Pedestrian System Plan and other statewide engagement efforts to ensure voices that have historically been left out of the transportation planning process are meaningfully included and elevated. This will require customized engagement activities to garner trust between MnDOT and the targeted communities and elicit substantive feedback.

A non-exhaustive list of priority populations requiring additional and tailored engagement includes:

- People in small rural communities
- Children and youth
- BIPOC residents including members of Minnesota's 11 federally recognized Indian Tribal nations
- People with low incomes living in urban communities

- Recent immigrants
- Non-English speakers
- Older adults
- People with disabilities

It is a priority that engagement activities reach a cross-section of Minnesotans representative of the state's diversity, the priority populations outlined in the Public Participation Plan, and additional targets as identified by the Diverse Bicycling Perspectives Advisory Committee. A successful engagement effort will deliver feedback from priority populations at least proportionate to state demographics. Therefore, the team will collect optional, anonymous demographic data throughout our engagement efforts and compile evaluations of engagement to understand who we are hearing from and adjust our engagement methods if there is underrepresentation of groups in the planning process.

## 4.0 Project Development Process

### Project Management Team

The SBSP's Project Management Team (PMT) is a core group of individuals who will work most closely with plan development activities. Two representatives of MnDOT's Office of Transit and Active Transportation will serve on the PMT along with two representatives from the selected consultant team. The PMT will meet on a weekly basis and are tasked with overseeing all work associated with the plan update and supervising work conducted by the broader project team.

### Project Advisory Committee

The contractor will coordinate and collaborate with a Project Advisory Committee (PAC) made up of internal and external stakeholder groups with key roles to play in advancing walking throughout the state. The PAC will serve as a sounding board for plan activities before they are put into practice. The SBSP PAC will meet no more than once every other month, typically scheduled around times when a critical deliverable of the plan is ready for review by the PAC.

### Diverse Bicycling Perspectives Advisory Committee

The Diverse Bicycling Perspectives Advisory Committee (DiBiPAC) will consist of at least six, but no more than 15 members representative of people who bike, or would like to bike, in diverse and underserved communities, especially Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, and people with disabilities. The contractor will collaborate with MnDOT staff to suggest candidates for committee membership based on existing relationships with priority populations, facilitate meetings with DiBiPAC, and incorporate their perspectives into planning and engagement. In partnership with the project team, DiBiPAC will review engagement evaluations and suggest changes to engagement strategies as appropriate.

## District Advisory Committee

The District Advisory Committee will include MnDOT staff and regional transportation partners such as RDCs, RDOs, and MPOs representing each district. This committee will provide technical guidance and expertise from their district context. The contractor will facilitate meetings with DAC and incorporate their perspectives into planning and engagement.

## Project Stages

The SBSP, like other statewide transportation plans in the MnDOT Family of Plans, will include a number of different stages in the planning process. Each stage offers opportunities for the SBSP's audiences to engage with the process. The types of engagement and opportunities available will be determined by the project team to best reflect the feedback being sought and the techniques to be used.

- **Plan Scope Development:** Developing the SBSP scope of work included considerable engagement with internal and external stakeholders to better understand the needs that the project should meet. The scope of work was vetted by MnDOT's Planning Management Group before being released through a request for proposals (RFP).
- **Public Participation Plan:** MnDOT and the Consultant will produce a draft Public Participation Plan (PPP) for review by stakeholders before initiating engagement activities. Feedback from review of the PPP will inform any necessary changes to ensure that the SBSP's engagement efforts meet the expectations of [MnDOT's Plan Development Guidelines](#).
- **Engagement:** The first phase of public engagement for the SBSP will focus on understanding what Minnesotans expect of the places that they bike in terms of safety, infrastructure, and environmental preferences. Questions will be asked about both biking along and across the trunk highway system. Engagement techniques are outlined in section 5.
- **Engagement Reporting:** For each phase, the contractor will produce two engagement evaluations, one at the midpoint and one at the end of each phase, tracking who has been engaged, summarizing feedback, and assessing whether engagement reflects the demographic diversity of Minnesota. At the conclusion of the first engagement round the contractor will produce a summary of feedback heard during engagement activities to share with stakeholders, partners, and the public.
- **Draft Documents:** After collecting engagement feedback from the public, the contractor will begin to develop draft deliverables for the SBSP. Continuing engagement, especially with key partners, will continue to occur as drafts are created. All stakeholders will have the opportunity to review and provide comments on the draft information available in the draft SBSP documents. A second phase of public engagement will commence with the release of draft SBSP documents to ensure that partners, stakeholders, and the public see their priorities reflected in the SBSP. A public hearing will be conducted to gather comments on the draft documents.
- **Final Document:** Final plan documents will be developed considering engagement heard from the partners, stakeholders, and the public during the second phase of engagement. The final version of the SBSP as adopted will reflect the priorities of Minnesotans expressed during review of draft documents. Responses will be developed to all comments received in the previous stage of SBSP development.

## 5.0 Engagement Techniques

### In-Person Engagement

Successful in-person engagement activities will be dynamic, hands-on, and accessible to people at a variety of bicycling skill levels. They will generate excitement about biking and help people envision biking in their communities.

The project team will use a variety of different in-person engagement tactics to reach diverse groups of Minnesotans.

### Experiential Biking Activities

Biking with people in their communities is an effective way to get people thinking about biking and gather feedback in context. Bike audits engage with the public while traveling throughout an area and discussing the biking experience within existing infrastructure. "Rodeo" events provide experienced and novice riders opportunities to try out different modes of bicycle/bike-like transportation, like bikes, e-bikes, and e-scooters, and to experience mock-up safety improvements. These events can be targeted to any or all age groups. Bicycle infrastructure pop-ups can be combined with these activities to provide opportunities to experience and react to different types of facilities. The project team should coordinate with the District Advisory Committee (DAC) as appropriate to facilitate pop-ups along MnDOT trunk highways.

### Classroom Activities

Classroom activities are a way to engage children and youth in transportation planning projects. The project team has partnered with schools on several occasions throughout Minnesota to engage students in the planning, design, and construction process, get their input on the project as well as to spark their interest in careers in the transportation industry. While classroom activities vary by age group and class partnership, some potential activities include pedestrian I-Spy, role playing prioritization activities, or streetscape cutouts.

### Listening Sessions

Listening sessions are an effective strategy for gathering more detailed information from a small group of people. They also allow people who would be less comfortable or apt at sharing information via a paper or online survey to share with the project team. While listening sessions are beneficial with all stakeholder groups, the project team has found listening sessions to be particularly impactful as we have worked with Native American groups. Listening sessions with Tribal Communities could be coordinated with the work that MnDOT is doing with the Advocacy Council for Tribal Transportation (ACTT) on improving bicycle safety on tribal lands.

### In-person Surveys

Surveys are an important way to gather public input, especially for projects with a large study area. The project team will develop a survey to gather public input on topics such as bicycle safety issues, preferences and



expectations for bicycle infrastructure, and how bicycle infrastructure improvements should be prioritized. The survey will be written in plain language, and complementary ADA accessible online and PDF surveys will also be available. In addition to asking those we interact with in person to fill out a survey, extra paper surveys will be available so that those we interact with can share with others.

## **Safe Routes to School Coordination**

Building on the project team’s extensive Safe Routes to School work, our team will use previously developed relationships to engage students, parents, teachers, and school administrators in the SBSP.

## **Pop-Up Engagement at Community Gatherings**

Engaging people at events is an excellent strategy for interacting with large numbers of people or targeted groups of people, depending on the type and location of community gathering. Potential community gatherings may include concerts, festivals, markets, or celebrations. Engagement events for other, related projects are another opportunity to reach target audiences. Those who stop by will be invited to take a survey and participate in a brief activity. Project business cards will also be handed out to encourage continued involvement and online participation.

## **Project Business Cards**

The project team will create a project business card that will be distributed at in-person engagement activities. The project business cards show how people can stay engaged with the project. Cards can be distributed through networks to make more people aware of the planning process.

## **Online Engagement**

In order to reach a broader audience than would be possible through solely in-person engagement techniques, the project team will use a variety of online engagement tools:

### **Online Survey**

The project team will develop an online survey in addition to paper surveys that will be available and distributed as in-person engagement activities. The questions will be the same as the paper survey to allow for cross tabulation and will be designed in an interactive and ADA accessible manner. MnDOT’s Let’s Talk Transportation platform can be used as appropriate.

### **Interactive Tools**

The project team will develop an interactive online tool. Interactive online tools can be an engaging way to gather community insights, especially related to specific locations e.g. a platform where Minnesotans can identify barriers to biking in their communities.

## Social Media Posts, Advertisements, and Surveys

Social media posts, advertisements, and surveys will also be used to engage more Minnesotans in the SBSP. The project team will use MnDOT's existing social media channels to share about upcoming in-person engagement opportunities as well as promote and advertise the online survey. Social media advertisements will be targeted toward priority populations or demographic groups that are underrepresented in the SBSP planning process. Social media surveys will also be used to gain insight from MnDOT's social media network.

Social media is an essential and effective channel for connecting with most of the SBSP's intended audiences organically and through targeted advertising. The social media plan will provide for a social media calendar using necessary messages and graphics with the assistance and approval of MnDOT. All aspects of the campaign will be monitored and include reporting of metrics. The project team will use analytics and split testing to drive engagement. The team will also test images and graphics to discover the most effective content for the project.

## Project Emails

The project team will create project emails to send out at key points throughout the project. These will be designed with both MnDOT and project branding and will advertise ways to engage with the project or that deliverables are available for review. Emails will be sent to MnDOT's contact list, which the public and stakeholders will be able to opt into throughout the project.

## Engagement Representation and Evaluation

The contractor should conduct evaluation of engagement activities to assess their effectiveness, document feedback received, and demonstrate to the communities engaged that their insights have been heard and considered. Two engagement evaluations will be produced in each phase, one halfway through the phase and another at the end of the phase.

It is a priority for the project team to connect with the public and stakeholders across Minnesota that are representative of the population of Minnesota as well as MnDOT's priority populations. Therefore, the team will collect optional, anonymous demographic data throughout our engagement efforts to understand who we are hearing from and adjust our engagement methods if there is underrepresentation of people groups in the planning process.

## Minimum Engagement Deliverables

- Up to four (4) in-person engagement activities in each MnDOT district (split across two rounds of engagement)
- One (1) project website, updated approximately monthly
- One (1) in-person project survey
- 1,000 project business cards
- One (1) online survey
- Eight (8) social media posts/polls; two (2) rounds of advertisements
- Six (6) project email blasts

- Four (4) engagement evaluations (two per phase)
- Phase 1 engagement summary (Phase 2 engagement summary will be incorporated into final plan documents)
- One (1) infographic summarizing both phases of engagement

## 6.0 Public Engagement Schedule

### Phase 1 Engagement

Phase 1 of engagement for the SBSP will begin in February 2025 and continue into October of 2025. A more refined schedule will be developed once work on the plan begins. Engagement activities will be selected from the following techniques:

- Bicycling Workshops, Audits, Rodeos, Etc.
- Classroom Activities
- Listening Sessions
- Surveys
- Safe Routes to School Coordination
- Pop-up Engagement at Community Gatherings
- Project Business Cards
- Online Surveys
- Social Media Posts, Advertisements, and Surveys
- Project Emails

### Phase 2 Engagement

Phase 2 of engagement for the SBSP will begin in April of 2026 and continue through the completion of the plan in Fall 2026. This timeline is subject to change as the plan progresses. Engagement techniques will be selected from a similar list to the activities available in Phase 1:

- Bicycling Workshops, Audits, Rodeos, Etc.
- Classroom Activities
- Listening Sessions
- Surveys
- Safe Routes to School Coordination
- Pop-up Engagement at Community Gatherings
- Project Business Cards
- Online Surveys
- Social Media Posts, Advertisements, and Surveys
- Project Emails
- Public Hearing

## 7.0 Evaluation of Efforts

The project team will collect optional, anonymous demographic data from people who participate in engagement activities. This data will be used to create engagement evaluations assessing who is participating in available engagement opportunities and will be made available for review by the Diverse Bicycling Perspectives Advisory Committee. This information will allow the project team to adjust its approach if there is underrepresentation of priority populations during the planning process.

Judging the overall effectiveness of the engagement process will occur during the second phase of public engagement when key components in the draft plan are brought back to the public for review. What the project team hears from the public during this phase of engagement will help to assess whether the policies and strategies proposed in the SBSP align with Minnesotans' vision for bicycling in the State. Changes will be made to the plan at this phase as necessary to ensure the plan aligns with how people in Minnesota want MnDOT to advance biking in the state.

## 8.0 How to Comment

Comments on the Statewide Bicycle+ System Plan's Public Participation Plan may be directed to:

Caroline Ketcham  
Active Transportation Planner

651-366-4180  
caroline.ketcham@state.mn.us