

Stakeholder and Public Participation Plan for the 2022 Statewide Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Deployment Plan

This document outlines how the Minnesota Department of Transportation plans to connect with the public, stakeholders and partners for the Statewide Electric Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure Deployment Plan, which will identify locations for EV chargers along designated Alternative Fuel Corridors (AFCs) in Minnesota.

What is the Statewide EV Infrastructure Deployment Plan?

The National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Formula Program was authorized under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which was signed on November 15, 2021. The \$5 billion NEVI Formula Program will provide dedicated funding to States to strategically deploy EV charging infrastructure and establish an interconnected network to facilitate data collection, access, and reliability. Initially, funding under this program is directed toward installing DC fast chargers along federally designated AFCs.

The current federal appropriation for this program in Minnesota is approximately \$68 million total over federal fiscal years 2022-2026 and requires a 20% non-federal match and state legislative spending authority to receive the funds. A compliant plan is required to be submitted no later than **August 1, 2022**, by MnDOT for the state to be eligible for federal NEVI Formula Program funds.

Key elements of the scope of work for the plan include:

- **Stakeholder Engagement:** A workgroup will guide plan development. MnDOT will also coordinate 4 virtual workshops with stakeholders.
- **Public Engagement:** MnDOT will coordinate 4 in-person sessions for the general public statewide and target disadvantaged communities, and a survey to gather input.
- **Corridor Identification and Prioritization:** MnDOT will help identify and prioritize potential locations for EV chargers along existing AFCs (I-94 and I-35) and the Interstate and up to three highways on the National Highway System and seek stakeholder input.
- **Plan Production:** The project team will prepare the final plan according to the NEVI program guidance.

The plan will also be used to support federal discretionary EV charging grant applications that will be awarded through a competitive process. Guidance for the discretionary funding program is expected later in 2022.

What are the public engagement requirements for the Plan?

The [NEVI Formula Program guidance](#) provides the following requirements for public engagement on the Plan:

- States should engage stakeholders and communities to ensure the deployment, installation, operation, and use of EV charging infrastructure achieves equitable and fair distribution of benefits and services.
- Plans should be developed through engagement with rural, underserved, and disadvantaged communities to ensure that diverse views are heard and considered throughout the planning process.

Why engagement matters

People have a right and deserve to be involved in decisions that impact their lives. Transportation has a vast impact on people, the environment and the economy. MnDOT provides a variety of inclusive and meaningful ways for people to help deliver the best transportation system possible.

Engagement in our current context

People making transportation decisions need to consider how their policies and actions will impact society. Processes should balance owning the complexity of our past, recognizing current conditions and aspiring for a future that honors people and place.

We acknowledge the place we now know as “Minnesota” is located on the homelands of tribal nations. It is important to recognize the long history and enduring relationship between Indigenous peoples’ connection to “Mni Sota” and the lasting impacts of policies detrimental to the balance of nature. Mutually respectful relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples are founded on long-term relationship-building, learning processes and developing solutions.

Not all people experience outcomes equitably. The global COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately affected Black people, Indigenous people and people of color due to ongoing systemic health and social inequities. These inequities combined with the police killing of George Floyd have highlighted the need to focus on racial and social justice. We recognize that being involved in large, long-term studies is not at the top of many Minnesotans’ minds.

The outsized impact of transportation on peoples’ lives has the potential for vast change. Challenges like colonialism, systemic racism and the pandemic combined with climate change are a significant threat to our people, communities, land and economy. Our goal is to have meaningful, inclusive, accessible and impactful interactions with Minnesotans while understanding demands from these overlapping public health crises.

Public engagement remains a high priority for MnDOT. We aim to ensure that we hear and reflect the voices of Black people, Indigenous people, people of color and other priority populations and under resourced communities in our work. In addition, we will specifically seek out the voices of people with disabilities, lower incomes, who do not own a vehicle, and youth and older adults. We will do this through the lenses of equity and empathy.

We recognize we are living in extraordinary times. However, our goal to engage Minnesotans meaningfully and authentically in this project remains. We will strive to create opportunities to connect with and hear from Minnesotans. Throughout this project, we are committed to evaluating our work, learning how we can improve and changing accordingly.

Guiding principles

MnDOT's Strategic Plan echoes the agency's commitment to strengthen relationships with our community members. We deliver this commitment through open decision-making that includes opportunities for the public to influence process. The principles guiding the EV Infrastructure Plan engagement are as follows:

- Identify clearly when stakeholders and the public can influence transportation decisions
- Implement an appropriate timeline and process for the public and stakeholders to engage based on capacity and time available
- Use a variety of methods and platforms
- Inform policies, strategies and investment direction (as applicable)
- Use easy to understand language and graphics and culturally responsive practices
- Comply with federal and state requirements

Our engagement approach will clearly identify when and how Minnesotans can influence decisions that are part of this plan. We will be transparent about what level of influence a person has related to each decision. The level of influence will vary by audience and range from obtaining feedback on topics or decisions to collaborating with groups on final decisions with MnDOT's partners.

The intended outcome is that Minnesotans have actively participated in the project process and assisted MnDOT in drafting the plan. A secondary outcome is that there is broad buy-in and ownership, internal and external to MnDOT, of the EV Infrastructure Plan. More detail on engagement outcomes is included in the Evaluation section of this Public and Stakeholder Participation Plan.

Audiences

MnDOT understands that not every person shares the same ability, capacity and level of interest in the planning process. It is important to offer a variety of opportunities for different levels of involvement. The project team will work to connect with interested people in ways that are meaningful and accessible to them.

It is important to distinguish public, stakeholder, partner and internal input. All are important but the expectations and tactics for participation differ. Partners generally provide more detailed technical expertise than the public.

Public

The public is a key audience for this plan. For this plan, the general public includes individuals or groups not necessarily associated with decision-making power or special interests but *may* have an interest in the outcome of a decision. MnDOT will employ a variety of outreach techniques to reach a broad and inclusive audience to help Minnesotans learn about the plans, provide input, connect with this process to meet their interest and capacity to participate. Specific input tools and communication channels are included in the Engagement Phases section.

The project team will listen closely to voices from rural, underserved, and disadvantaged communities. MnDOT will use the [Justice40](#) definition¹ of underserved and disadvantaged communities. The project team will design engagement strategies that target these communities and identify specific strategies to include these voices.

Stakeholders

A stakeholder is a person, group, or organization with a specific interest in a project, but not necessarily in a decision-making role. Key interest groups identified in the NEVI Formula Program guidance include organizations such as labor, real estate industry groups, minority- and women-based organizations, relevant environmental justice, equity, environmental protection, and other community advocacy organizations, EV industry organizations and EV advocacy groups, taxicab and ridesharing companies, and emergency management and public safety agencies.

Partners

Many agencies and organizations in Minnesota play a key role in advancing EV infrastructure deployment. These include Metropolitan Planning Organizations, non-metropolitan officials (e.g., townships, cities, counties, and transit agencies), and agencies responsible for economic development, environmental protection, energy, land management, and motor vehicles. These organizations are considered partners because they are/will have a direct role in planning and developing an EV infrastructure network for Minnesota.

Partners include but are not limited to:

- Area Transportation Partnerships
- Federal and state agencies (e.g. Federal Highways Association, Minnesota Department of Commerce, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota Department of Economic Development)
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations
- Public Transportation Operators
- Regional Development Organizations
- Townships, cities, and counties

EV Infrastructure Deployment Partners

MnDOT will work with partners to install, operate, and maintain charging stations on publicly accessible public or private property. The agency will partner with the private sector to incorporate perspectives from entities that are likely to have a role in EV infrastructure deployment. For example, close coordination with utilities will ensure that potential EV charging station locations align with existing electricity distribution capacity or planned improvements. Key EV infrastructure deployment partners include:

- Utilities
- Gas station owners and operators
- EV installers

¹ The US Department of Transportation definition of disadvantaged communities includes a) certain qualifying census tracts b) any tribal land and c) any territory or possession of the United States. Qualifying census tracts are designated based on 22 indicators that are grouped into 6 categories: transportation access disadvantage, health disadvantage, environmental disadvantage, economic disadvantage, resilience disadvantage, and social disadvantage.

Tribal Coordination

There are 11 reservations and 12 federally recognized tribes in Minnesota. Each tribe is a separate sovereign nation and has an independent relationship with the United States and the State of Minnesota. This unique relationship is recognized in federal requirements, Governor Executive Order 13-10 and MnDOT Policy AD005, Minnesota Tribal Nations Government-to-Government relationship with MnDOT: Providing for Consultation, Coordination and Cooperation. The Executive Order notes that state agencies will work directly with tribes when developing or implementing policies or programs that directly affect Indian tribes and their members. The MnDOT Sustainability and Public Health Division will coordinate with the MnDOT Tribal Liaison to engage tribes on the plan.

MnDOT

Broad coordination will be needed across MnDOT to implement the Plan. It is important that MnDOT staff engage in the planning process to anticipate and address issues that might arise during plan implementation. The Plan and implementation will be led by the Sustainability and Public Health Division with support from the MnDOT offices of Transportation System Management, Financial Management, State Aid, Environmental Stewardship, Chief Counsel, Land Management, and MnDOT District staff who will serve on the workgroup to guide plan development. MnDOT District public engagement staff will be asked to share engagement materials in their general outreach. MnDOT leadership will be involved in coordinating with other state DOTs to ensure regional continuity of investments and review and approve the final Plan.

Engagement Topics

Public Engagement

The following questions will be included in a virtual survey that will be available for the general public in April 2022. MnDOT will use survey input to help identify potential Alternative Fuel Corridors and locations for DC-fast chargers.

Key questions

- Rank the criteria MnDOT should use to prioritize federally funded DC fast charger corridors.
 - Interstate highways
 - Traffic volumes
 - Address gaps in the existing charging network
 - Need for more charging in rural Minnesota
 - Need for more charging in disadvantaged communities
 - Job centers
 - Tourist destinations
 - Long distance trips
- Rate the importance of the following amenities for NEVI-funded DC fast charging stations.
 - Lighting
 - Restrooms
 - Shade/shelter
 - Retail

- Food/beverage
- Customer service for payment or light maintenance (WC)
- 24-hr access
- What are the benefits and disadvantages of DC fast chargers for you and your community, business, or organization?
- How can we distribute the benefits of DC fast chargers equitable and fairly?

Input tools – How we will collect input

- Online survey for the general public on the Let's Talk Transportation project website
- Interactive map on the Let's Talk Transportation project website to gather input from the general public
- General comment form available online on the Let's Talk Transportation project website
- Four geographically distributed in-person community engagement sessions that are open to the general public and target disadvantaged communities
- Presentations by MnDOT project team or District engagement staff on the planning process with input collected through discussion and notes

Communications channels – How we will inform people of the opportunity to provide input

- Social media postings (e.g., MnDOT Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn)
- Social media targeted advertising to priority populations (note: populations living along 35 and 94 and rural, underserved, and disadvantaged populations)
- Community organization distribution (e.g., template emails for distribution or newsletter)
- Monthly plan update email newsletter, sent to individuals who sign up to receive it

Stakeholder and Partner Engagement

Key questions and topics

- What are the opportunities, challenges, and or questions MnDOT use to prioritize NEVI-funded DC fast charger corridors and locations?
- Where are opportunities to add NEVI-funded DC fast chargers to MnDOT projects?
- What is the role of cities, counties, MPOS, and tribes in NEVI-funded DC fast charger deployment?
- What are the recommended amenities for NEVI-funded DC fast chargers?
- Where is additional electrical capacity needed to meet the needs of proposed DC fast charger installations?
- What are the anticipated demand charges that operators will pay for NEVI-funded DC fast chargers?
- How can we future proof NEVI-funded EV charging stations?
- How can we distribute the benefits of EV infrastructure equitable and fairly?
- What is the preferred contracting approach for NEVI-funded fast chargers?
- What criteria should MnDOT use to select NEVI-funded DC fast charging projects?

Input tools

- General comment form available online at project website
- Four virtual workshops targeted to utilities, potential EV installation partners, cities/counties, and tribes
- Presentations by MnDOT project team or District engagement staff on the planning process with input collected through discussion and notes

Communications Channels

- Direct emails to MnDOT staff and partners
- Direct emails to stakeholders
- Monthly plan update email newsletter, sent to individuals who sign up to receive it

Ongoing Engagement

- **EV Sub-group of the Climate and Resilience Workgroup:** A workgroup will be convened to guide the overall Plan development process, including identifying and prioritizing locations for NEVI-funded DC fast chargers. Workgroups members include representatives from MnDOT, state agencies, FHWA, cities and counties, MPOs, RDCs, EV advocacy organizations, environmental organizations, gas stations and convenience stores, labor, and utilities. The workgroup will meet approximately monthly between April and July.
- **Project Website:** The project team will create a project website on the Let's Talk Transportation platform and a link will be provided on the Sustainability and Public Health – Electric Vehicles webpage. The website will include general project information and highlight opportunities to provide input. Features of the site will include links to the survey and general comment form, links to key documents or background information, and reports on overall project progress. The website will be updated twice monthly.
- **Newsletter:** The project team will develop and distribute a project-specific newsletter throughout the Plan development process. The newsletter will provide regular project updates and share opportunities to connect. Interested individuals will be able to sign up to receive the project newsletter at the project website.

Engagement Schedule

Approximate timing for the updates is provided, but dates may shift depending on adjustments to the overall project schedule.

General Web Updates: April 25 – July 29

- Week of May 16: Project status update in newsfeed (identifies any additional AFCs that will be nominated), Newsletter shared with listserv promoting upcoming engagement events
- Week of May 30: Newsletter shared with listserv

- Week of June 6: Project status update in newsfeed (includes stakeholder workshop recording), Newsletter shared with listserv
- Week of June 13: Project status update in newsfeed (identifies preliminary potential EV charging station locations), Newsletter shared with listserv
- Week of July 4: Project status update in newsfeed, Newsletter shared with listserv
- Week of July 25: Project status update in newsfeed (includes final plan), Newsletter shared with listserv

Corridor Identification: April 4 – May 13

Objective: Select the corridors that meet a minimum standard of importance for new DCFC investment through funding from the NEVI Formula Program. This step will define the corridors for this analysis and will inform Alternative Fuel Corridor nominations.

- Week of April 11 – Project Website Launch, Public survey and comment form opens
- Week of April 11 – MnDOT led engagement with key stakeholders and partners as needed, including coordinating with District engagement staff to promote survey as part of general outreach
- Week of May 2 – Public survey closes
- Week of May 9 – EV Subgroup of the Climate Resilience Workgroup meeting to review proposed approach to corridor prioritization

High Level DCFC Network Vision: May 2 – May 13

Objective: Illustrate the full DCFC build-out of the corridors under analysis if no fiscal constraints were in place. This subtask identifies current and future priorities for DCFC corridors across the State and may be used to inform discretionary grant applications.

- Week of May 2 – Draft of unconstrained Network Vision developed by project team and sent to EV Subgroup of the Climate Resilience Workgroup for review and feedback

Corridor Identification and Prioritization for NEVI Build Out: May 2 – May 13

Objective: Determine which of the corridors under analysis will be targeted for installation of DCFC infrastructure through funding from the NEVI Program. This subtask should address how to balance the benefits of a more extensive network of coverage with fully meeting projected demand and providing redundancy along key corridors.

- Week of May 2 – Project team coordinates with utilities to review potential corridors and identify areas of excess capacity that could support EV chargers or capacity gaps that wouldn't be conducive to EV chargers; The project team will partner with Department of Commerce, Minnesota Rural Electric Association, and Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association to ensure the appropriate contacts at utilities are included.
- Week of May 2 – MnDOT coordinates with tribes to gather input on potential corridors
- Week of May 9 – EV Subgroup of the Climate Resilience Workgroup meeting to review preliminary priority corridors identified based on analysis and input from utilities and stakeholders
- May 13: MnDOT submits nominations for any additional AFCs

Identify Approximate Charging Station Locations for NEVI Build Out: May 16 – June 13

- Week of May 23 – Project team leads four targeted virtual workshops with utilities, potential EV installation partners, cities/counties, and tribes to gather input on potential charging station locations
- Weeks of May 30 and June 6 – Project team leads four in-person workshops with disadvantaged communities to gather input on proposed locations
- Week of June 13 – EV Subgroup of the Climate Resilience Workgroup meeting to review draft charging station locations along I-94 and I-35
- Week of June 13 – Potential charging station locations along I-94 and I-35 posted on project website for input
- June 27 – Input on fast charger locations along I-94 and I-35 closes

Development of EV Charging Investment Program: June 13 – July 1

Objective: Develop an investment program for DCFC on the corridors selected as highest priority that includes suitable locations for DC fast chargers, how many DC fast chargers are needed at each site, and what year they will be built.

- Week of June 27 – EV Subgroup of the Climate Resilience Workgroup meeting to review EV charging station cost estimates

Plan Production: April 4 – July 29

- July 7: Compile draft plan
- Week of July 7: MnDOT review of draft plan begins, Email draft to EV subgroup, MnDOT leadership groups and Governor's Office
- Week of July 11 – Present to MnDOT Senior Leadership Team; Email feedback due from Senior Leadership Team, EV Subgroup, Climate and Resilience Workgroup, and Planning Management Group, Governor's Office
- July 19: Final plan complete
- Aug 1: Submit plan to Joint Office of Energy and Transportation

Evaluation

MnDOT will evaluate engagement on the plan to identify successes and opportunities to improve future engagement activities at the project level and on other statewide EV planning efforts.

The project team will evaluate engagement on the plan based on the following questions:

- Was the public engagement plan implemented as planned? If not, what changed?
- Did stakeholders, the general public or underserved and disadvantaged communities experience any particular challenges regarding their engagement in the process?
- Did stakeholders and the general public or underserved and disadvantaged communities that participated in this project represent the demographic characteristics of the target audiences?

- Did the plan use the appropriate engagement methods to reach underserved and disadvantaged communities?
- Did the plan comply with federal and state requirements for public engagement activities?

Project staff will collect optional, anonymous demographic data from people who participate in engagement activities and will also track the number of people interact with the plan via:

- Stakeholder workshops (virtual stakeholder meetings, informal presentations, community events),
- Let's Talk Transportation engagement page (how many views),
- Responses and response rates for online engagement tools (surveys, public comments, questions, etc.),
- Demographic questions,
- Project Updates email sign ups and
- Social media