

Research Steering Committee Charter

- **Working Title:** MnDOT Research Steering Committee
- **Responsible Officer:** Office of Research & Innovation Director
- **Date Approved:** February 23, 2023

This charter describes the purpose and duties of MnDOT’s Research Steering Committee, organization of its membership, and its operating procedures.

Purpose

Provide leadership, set strategic direction, and allocate funding for research to inform, improve and innovate transportation in Minnesota.

Scope

The Research Steering Committee is the governing board for the MnDOT State Research Program. Research Steering Committee members work to ensure that research supports [MnDOT’s Mission and Vision](#) and its [Research Strategic Priorities](#) – advancing equity, asset management, climate change and the environment, innovation and future needs, and safety.

Role and Responsibility

Committee members are charged with being an advocate and champion for research, sharing research information and results, and both representing the research needs of their respective areas as well as the overall research needs of MnDOT. Committee members are responsible for actively participating in and supporting MnDOT’s research program through idea generation, evaluation of research proposals, execution of research projects, and participation in local as well as national research.

Committee members work collectively to allocate research funds from federal, state, and other sources on an annual basis. These funds are used to conduct research and implementation projects that support Minnesota’s transportation community by meeting the innovation and information needs of practitioners. Committee members serve to optimize decision-making and use of research funds according to frameworks detailed in [MnDOT’s Strategic Operating Plan](#) and its [Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan](#).

In an effort to build a broader ecosystem for research, Research Steering Committee members are expected to engage at the national, state, and local levels through the [National Cooperative Highway Research Program](#),

relevant [FHWA pooled fund studies](#), the [Transportation Research Board](#), [AASHTO research](#) and technical programs, the [UMN Center for Transportation Studies Research Councils](#), and other research focused events and activities.

The research program addresses issues within multiple disciplines and topic areas including Materials and Construction, Planning and Policy, Traffic and Safety, Environmental, Maintenance Operations, Bridges and Structures, and Multimodal. Funding allocations to these topic areas varies from year to year, depending on state, national, and local needs, and priorities.

Operating Procedures

Chair

The Research Steering Committee Chair is the Director of the Office of Research & Innovation. The Chair arranges meeting planning and preparation, agenda development, agenda requests, and meeting minutes. In the case of an email vote, the Chair arranges communication with members and procedures for collecting votes and recording decisions.

Membership

The Research Steering Committee is composed of leaders from special offices and districts who serve as voting members representing areas of key research interest within MnDOT. Research Steering Committee voting members are appointed biennially (every two years) by their respective Division Director. In addition to voting members, the Research Steering Committee also includes non-voting members who serve in an advisory capacity. Members may be added to the Research Steering Committee by majority vote of current members and concurrence via appointment by the relevant Division Director.

In cases where a Research Steering Committee voting member is unable to attend a Research Steering Committee meeting, that member may delegate their voting rights to other MnDOT staff with prior notification to and permission from the Chair.

Voting Members

Specialty Offices

1. Bridge
2. CAV-X
3. Environmental Stewardship
4. Maintenance
5. Materials and Road Research
6. Project Management and Technical Support
7. Research & Innovation – Committee Chair
8. State Aid for Local Transportation
9. Sustainability and Public Health

10. Traffic Engineering
11. Transit and Active Transportation
12. Transportation System Management
13. Transportation Systems Management & Operations

Districts

1. District 1
2. District 3
3. Metro District

Non-Voting Members

1. Federal Highway Administration
2. MNIT Transportation

Committee Support

Staff from the Office of Research & Innovation assist the Chair with developing agendas, facilitating meetings, recording meeting minutes, communicating activities with committee members, and responding to member requests outside of meetings.

Additional staff resources will be called to attend meetings, or part thereof, as determined by the Chair.

Quorum and Voting

- A quorum for the purposes of conducting business is at least 50 percent of voting members (or their assigned proxy) plus one.
- Assuming a quorum, approval requires an affirmative vote of the majority of voting members present (or their assigned proxies). Proxies are permissible for voting members unable to attend a meeting.
- Email voting is acceptable at the discretion of the Chair if the urgency of a decision precludes the standard meeting schedule. Email votes will be recorded and retained in the minutes.

Meeting Schedule

The Research Steering Committee will meet a minimum of four times per year coinciding with key milestones in the research solicitation process – idea evaluation, need statement development, research proposal evaluation, and research project selection. Additional meetings may be called under the direction of the Chair to conduct required business and off-cycle funding requests. Participation in meetings includes virtual (online), in-person and hybrid options, as determined by the Chair.

Meeting Materials

The Office of Research & Innovation provides administrative support for the Research Steering Committee. Meeting materials are distributed to Research Steering Committee members no later than one week in advance of meetings. Relevant meeting materials, including agendas and minutes, technical review team evaluations and ballots are housed on the Office's Research Steering Committee SharePoint site or its replacement. The Committee also utilizes a Teams Channel. Minutes capture decisions and action items of each meeting and are reviewed and approved at the subsequent Research Steering Committee meeting.