

Fiscal Year 2017-2018

State Non-Motorized Transportation Advisory Committee Report

April 2018

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Legislative Request

This report is issued to comply with [Minn. Stat. Sec. 174.37, subd. 4.](#)

174.37 Advisory Committee on Non-Motorized Transportation

Subdivision 1.Purpose. (a) The commissioner of transportation shall establish an advisory committee on nonmotorized transportation. The committee shall make recommendations to the commissioner on items related to nonmotorized transportation, including safety, education, and development programs. The committee shall review and analyze issues and needs relating to operating nonmotorized transportation on public rights-of-way, and identify solutions and goals for addressing identified issues and needs.

(b) For purposes of this section, "nonmotorized transportation" includes bicycling, pedestrian activities, and other forms of nonmotorized transportation.

Subd. 2.Members. The advisory committee must consist of the following members:

(a) The commissioner of transportation shall appoint up to 18 public members, as follows: one member from each of the department's seven greater Minnesota districts; four members from the department's metropolitan district; and no more than seven members at large. Each of the members at large must represent nonmotorized interests or organizations.

(b) The commissioners of each of the following state agencies shall appoint an employee of the agency to serve as a member: administration, education, health, natural resources, public safety, transportation, and pollution control. The chair of the Metropolitan Council shall appoint an employee of the council to serve as a member. The director of Explore Minnesota Tourism shall appoint an employee of the agency to serve as a member. The division administrator of the Federal Highway Administration may appoint an employee of the agency to serve as a member.

(c) Members of the committee shall serve four-year terms.

Subd. 3.Meetings. The commissioner of transportation's designee shall convene the first meeting by January 15, 2009. The committee shall elect a chair from its membership, and shall establish a meeting schedule and meet at least annually.

Subd. 4.Reports. The committee shall issue an annual report to the commissioner of transportation. §

Subd. 5.Expenses. Members of the advisory committee serve without compensation, but members who are not employees of government agencies must be reimbursed for expenses in the same manner and amount as authorized by the commissioner's plan adopted under section 43A.18, subdivision 2. The commissioner of transportation shall provide department staff support to the committee. §

Subd. 6.Expiration. The committee expires June 30, 2018.

The cost of preparing this report is less than \$5,000.

Activities of the Committee in 2017-2018

An update to the State Non-Motorized Transportation Advisory Committee's vision statement occurred in January of 2018. The updated vision statement is:

All people in Minnesota have the opportunity to utilize safe, connected, and inviting non-motorized transportation.

Meetings

In 2018, efforts continued to establish a regular meeting schedule for the State Non-Motorized Transportation Advisory Committee. Further recruitment also continued to fill out remaining vacant seats on the committee.

SNTC committee meetings were held on the following dates during 2017 and 2018:

- Jan. 12, 2017
- March 9, 2017
- May 11, 2017
- July 13, 2017
- Sept. 15-16, 2017
- Nov. 9, 2017
- Jan. 11, 2018

The regular committee meetings featured speakers discussing timely, non-motorized projects including presentations from stakeholders with a vested interest in making Minnesota a better place for people to walk and bicycle. Some presentation topics from the last year include:

- Pedestrian Crossing Improvements Letter
- MnDOT District Bicycle Plan
- MnDOT Metro District Project Selection and Outreach
- Active Transportation Program Development
- MnDOT Cost Participation Policy
- Rethinking I-94
- Bicycle + Pedestrian Counting Initiative
- MDH Statewide Health Improvement Partnership Grants
- Walking Audit

Accomplishments

The committee worked with state agencies and organizations over the past year to increase the incorporation of non-motorized transportation modes into the transportation network throughout Minnesota.

Pedestrian Crossing Safety Letter

In late December 2017, the State Non-Motorized Transportation Advisory Committee sent a letter to the commissioner of transportation detailing pedestrian safety improvements that could be made at signalized intersections. The letter was motivated by a large increase in pedestrian fatalities from crashes during 2016. The letter contained recommendations for short and long term changes that could be made to improve pedestrian safety, including:

- Additional crossing time on signals near schools, senior housing and assisted living centers
- Protecting walk signals with red arrows instead of flashing yellow arrows
- Significantly reducing the reliance on the use of activation buttons for walk signals
- Increased use of “No Right Turn on Red” signage
- Considering potential pedestrian trips rather than using only existing counts
- Re-establishing a research committee to focus on pedestrian safety issues

Minnesota State Bicycle Map

Minnesota’s 2017 state bicycle map made its debut at the 2017 Minnesota State Fair. The map shows key characteristics that people use to make decisions about bicycle routes, including traffic volumes, shoulder widths and pavement type. The latest edition of the map has the many features, including:

- the addition of Minnesota’s second U.S. Bicycle System Route -U.S. Bicycle Route 41
- federal, state and regional bike trails
- a key with color-coded road segments showing
 - roads based on average daily traffic
 - roads with shoulders that are more than 4-feet wide

Communities that received bicycle friendly community designations since the last map was published are also included in the new map.

[Minnesota’s state bicycle map](#) is updated and printed every two years and can be accessed online or is available through an [online ordering system](#).

U.S. Bicycle Route 41

Building on years of planning, outreach and engagement with local partners and stakeholders along the route, U.S. Bicycle Route 41 was officially opened with a ribbon-cutting ceremony in St. Paul on May 20, 2017. The

ribbon-cutting kicked off a six-day bicycle tour on the route, spanning from Saint Paul to Grant Portage State Park on the Minnesota/Canadian border. More on U.S. Bicycle Route 41, also known as the North Star Route, can be found at the [U.S. Bicycle Route 41 website](#).

Safe Routes to School

The Safe Routes to School program was successful in reaching out to organizations to improve walking and bicycling within schools and communities for children. Listed below are some accomplishments from the past year:

- Planned and executed the Walk to School Day and Bike to School Day Events. Registration for Bike to School day quadrupled from 47 schools in 2015 to over 200 in the 2016-2017 school year.
- Implemented the [Minnesota SRTS Resource Center](#).
- Advanced the Walk!Bike!Fun! pedestrian and bicycle safety curriculum. In partnership with the Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota, MnDOT trained 549 teachers and educators, reaching more than 53,000 students annually. Additional Safe Routes to School accomplishments can be found in the [2016-2017 Report on Safe Routes to School](#).

Bikeable Community Workshops

State Non-Motorized Transportation Advisory Committee members, MnDOT and the Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota partnered to host bikeable community workshops all across the state. These workshops train local transportation professionals, community leaders and advocates ways to plan and support more bicycle friendly communities. Training participants learn about how the six E's of equity, engineering, education, enforcement, encouragement and evaluation -are used to improve the safety of bicycling in communities, traffic laws related to bicycling, collaboration opportunities and how to promote bicycling using existing resources. Eight bikeable community workshops are planned in 2018.

Minnesota Bicycle and Pedestrian Counting Initiative

The Minnesota Bicycle and Pedestrian Counting Initiative is a program managed by MnDOT and supported by several state and local partners. In 2017, counters were installed at 3 new sites bringing the statewide number of permanent sites to 29 on varying facility types. Using the continuous counts these provide, MnDOT is beginning to identify metrics, factors and trends about walking and bicycling. MnDOT has 14 permanent counters in the Metro district.

In addition to the permanent counting sites, MnDOT also has 16 portable counters (two in each MnDOT district) that partners and stakeholders can use to count and collect their own data. Portable counters were used 29 times in all districts except Metro. While no MnDOT-owned portable counters were used in Metro district during 2017, many of MnDOT's partners (Department of Natural Resources, Parks and Trails Council, Hennepin County and Minneapolis) own their own equipment and share data after counting. The prevalence of MnDOT permanent counters in the Metro may also contribute to no portable counters being used in 2017.

An updated manual detailing the best ways to collect bicycle and pedestrian data is found on [MnDOT's website](#).

America Walks National Walking Summit

Many members of the SNTC attended and presented at the America Walks National Walking Summit held in St. Paul. The event was held Sept. 13 - 15.

Committee Revitalization

In 2017 the committee worked to significantly reduce the number of vacant seats remaining on the SNTC roster. A workgroup provided recommendations to refresh the committee's bylaws, making them more inclusive and better articulating the ways that the committee can provide meaningful guidance on non-motorized transportation issues in the state. The updated bylaws were approved by the committee in Jan. 2018.

Additional Ongoing Initiatives

- Active Transportation Program development
- Bicycle Design Manual
- MnDOT District Bicycle Plans
- Minnesota Walks implementation guide
- Bike+Walk MN Conference Steering Committee
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety/Education task force
- Rural pedestrian behavior research in tribal communities

The committee asks MnDOT to provide consistent statewide policies to increase walking and bicycling opportunities within the state, provide funding of facilities and offer safety guidance and solutions to reduce pedestrian and bicycling fatalities and injuries.

Appendix A: Active Transportation Program Framework Recommendations

Under the [Laws of Minnesota 2017, 1st Spec. Sess. Chap. 3, Art. 3, Sec. 136](#) the Minnesota Department of Transportation is required to consult with the State Non-motorized Transportation Advisory Committee to develop and submit recommendations to the Commissioner of Transportation regarding the project evaluation and selection processes for the Active Transportation Program. This newly created program was established under [Laws of Minnesota 2017, 1st Spec. Sess. Chap. 3, Art. 3, Sec. 95](#).

Program Description

When funds are made available to the Active Transportation Program, the program will be divided into non-infrastructure and infrastructure categories before application materials are made available to the public. The SNTC will divide the available funds based on consideration of the following:

- More non-infrastructure funding should be available in early years of the program to assist with developing active transportation plans. This guidance responds to the Statewide Bicycle System Plan’s strategy to “fund the development of community bicycle plans” and Minnesota Walks’ strategy to “develop and adopt local pedestrian plans.”
- As communities continue to develop active transportation plans it is assumed that the majority of the funding offered through this program will transition to a focus on infrastructure projects.

All grant recipients will be required to submit a post-grant evaluation report about the use of grant funds and a discussion of lessons learned.

Application Process

Applicants will submit a letter of intent through a coordinated application system that also serves the Transportation Alternatives grant program, the proposed Active Transportation Program and the Safe Routes to School program. Applicants will indicate the programs they intend to apply for on their letter of intent and will complete one formal application. Projects may apply for funding through multiple programs in one solicitation.

Eligible Projects

Infrastructure Improvements or Enhancements - Projects that improve or expand the physical infrastructure to incorporate or improve access to non-motorized modes of transportation including: sidewalks, bicycle lanes, shared-use paths, transit stop amenities, bicyclist and pedestrian amenities, pedestrian crossings, intersection upgrades, bicycle/pedestrian signal improvements, bicycle parking, right-of-way purchase, ADA compliance improvements and bike-share expansion or establishment, etc.

Non-Infrastructure Programs – These programs will include projects that increase awareness and understanding of the specific needs of users of active transportation modes including active transportation planning, public outreach efforts, bike-share system programming and education and training programs.

Match Requirement

Local match requirements are determined by how much of the project falls within an [MPCA Environmental Justice Areas of Concern](#). Infrastructure projects where more than 50 percent of the improvements are located within Environmental Justice Areas of Concern would qualify for reduced match. Non-infrastructure project applications must demonstrate that the project will enhance active transportation in environmental justice areas and what will be done to measure the project’s success to qualify.

Figure 1: Example of Possible Determinations for Match Funding for Projects

Environmental Justice Area of Concern Criteria Met	Local match for infrastructure projects	Local match for non-infrastructure projects
Yes	5% or demonstrated history of project success	5% or demonstrated history of success in related projects
No	20%	20%

Scoring Criteria

Projects will be scored on the following criteria:

- **Existing conditions** – demonstrates clearly why existing conditions are insufficient, or fall short of creating an environment where active transportation can thrive
- **Support for the SNTC’s vision** – demonstrates how this project advances the State Non-Motorized Active Transportation Committee’s vision of “All people in Minnesota have(ing) the opportunity to use safe, connected and inviting non-motorized transportation.”
- **Demonstrated local support** – includes letters of support from government entities, schools, businesses, non-profits, the district’s SNTC representative and other community organizations
- **Support for statewide active transportation policy** – demonstrates how this project will advance the vision of the Statewide Bicycle System Plan and Minnesota Walks
- **Policy/planning actions** – demonstrates the presence of an active transportation, pedestrian or bicycle plan in the applying community
- **Past project success** – demonstrates that previous projects the applicant has received funding for were successful and the applicant completed post-grant evaluation reporting

Scoring Committee

The application scoring committee will consist of:

- SNTC representation:
 - 1 at-large representative
 - 1 Greater Minnesota representative
 - 1 MnDOT Metro District representative
- 1 representative from MnDOT – Office of Transit & Active Transportation
- 1 representative from MnDOT – State Aid
- 1 representative from Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
- 1 representative from Minnesota Department of Health
- 1 accessibility advocate (Minnesota State Council on Disability)

Appendix B: Members

The committee is comprised of citizen representatives from across the state, representatives from state and regional governmental agencies and representatives from user and advocacy groups. The committee is staffed by MnDOT.

The members bring a diverse set of skills and personalized knowledge to the committee. They offer new perspectives to the agency, whether through knowledge of private sector, efficiency and regional differences in mobility needs and innovative technologies. Above all, they inject an element of reason and practicality into decision making.

Members:

MnDOT District 1	Russell Habermann
MnDOT District 2	Daniel Hannig
MnDOT District 3	Kurt Franke
MnDOT District 4	Jason Artley
MnDOT District 6	Pete Connor
MnDOT District 7	Vacant
MnDOT District 8	Steve Brisendine
MnDOT Metro District	Ann Rexine
MnDOT Metro District	Tony Drollinger
MnDOT Metro District	Clark Biegler
MnDOT Metro District	Julia Curran
Law Enforcement	Cameron Hintzen
Bicycling Club	Vacant
Higher Education	Ingrid Schneider
Metropolitan Planning	Vacant
State Advocacy Organization	CJ Lindor
Industry	Vacant
Department of Administration	Anne Johnson
Pollution Control Agency	Jen Jevnisek
Department of Natural Resources	Andrew Korsberg
Explore Minnesota Tourism	Brian Fanelli
Metropolitan Council	Steve Elmer
Department of Health	Ellen Pillsbury
Department of Education	Julie Belisle
Department of Public Safety	Terri Pieper
Department of Transportation	Mark Vizecky
Federal Highway Administration	Tim Anderson

Appendix C: Pedestrian Crossing Letter

12/19/2017

Dear Commissioner Zelle,

The State Non-Motorized Transportation Advisory Committee serves as the central advisory body to develop non-motorized transportation, goals, policies and standards in Minnesota. As authorized by [Minnesota Statute 174.37](#), we advise and make recommendations to the commissioner of transportation. In this capacity we are highlighting several issues pertaining to MnDOT policies and guidelines that affect the safety of people who walk, bicycle and roll. This letter is focused in particular on the topic of state trunk highways, but we believe that local roadway authorities would also benefit from adopting the ideas that follow.

Over the last three years, there has been a dramatic rise in pedestrian fatalities across Minnesota. The latest numbers show that 2016 was the deadliest year for pedestrians since 1991. Because of this, we request changes to Minnesota Department of Transportation policy that will improve the safety, comfort, mobility and ease of access for people walking and rolling in their communities. The SNTC requests that the following reasonable, low-cost improvements be prioritized and made to pedestrian crossings at signalized intersections:

Short-term improvements

- Schools, senior housing and assisted living centers have some of the most vulnerable populations who often have little choice but to walk. We are requesting to default to increased pedestrian crossing times within a walkable radius of these facilities. The current standards allow for an increase based on this standard, but they do not default to a longer walk time.
- Flashing yellow arrow signals can help protect pedestrians by showing a red arrow during the “walk” phase of a pedestrian signal. This would reduce the chance of pedestrians being hit by vehicles making left-hand turning movements, especially at night or during times of reduced visibility. We request that traffic signals default to this type of signal operation where flashing yellow arrows are used.
- Wherever possible, we request that the policy be changed so that the pedestrian walk light turns on without needing to press the button. Current policy requires pedestrians to opt-in to access safe crossings.
- Waiting for the pedestrian walk light can be unreasonably long for a person walking or rolling, as they are also exposed to the elements. When the pedestrian button is pushed, we request that pedestrians be allowed to cross the street as soon as possible.
- Turning vehicles can create difficulties for people crossing at traffic signals. We ask that leading pedestrian intervals be used more often.
- Re-evaluate the guidelines governing when “No Right Turn on Red” signs are appropriate. We request they be implemented more often to increase pedestrian safety, especially where pedestrians have a leading interval.

Long-term process improvements

- We request that operating standards be reviewed to determine where they could be more pedestrian friendly. The SNTC offers itself as a resource in these efforts to improve the safety of our streets for non-motorized travelers.
- Increase the amount of effort expended to engage existing and potential users of pedestrian facilities when changes are considered.
- Policy changes should take into consideration not just existing pedestrian counts, but also include the potential number of pedestrians who would use facilities if conditions were improved.
- MnDOT should commission a study to investigate the effect of pedestrian volume on safety and related topics underrepresented in recent research by bringing back the dormant research committee. SNTC would like to be represented on that committee if revived.
- Stay apprised of technology advances in pedestrian counting and modeling to address questions about pedestrian travel.

We understand that some of these measures may affect motor vehicle operation, but we believe that MnDOT realizes the importance of creating an environment where people can walk comfortably and safely.

We appreciate your attention to this matter. We are available to discuss these issues with you further. We look forward to your response regarding MnDOT's willingness to address the recommendations above.

Sincerely,

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