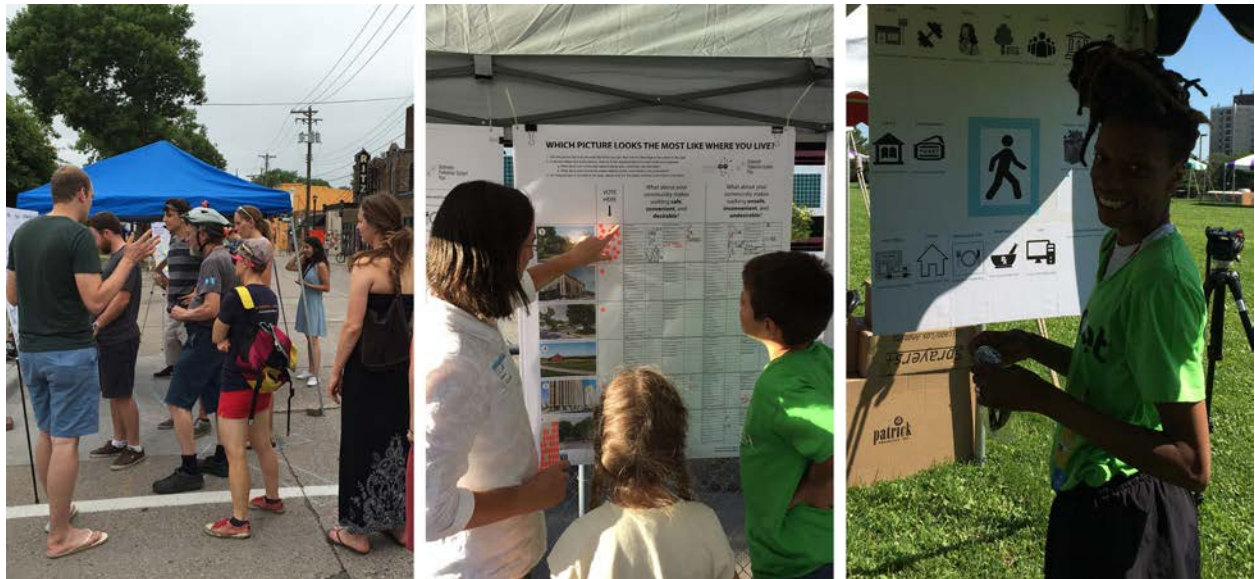




Community Engagement Report

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for the Minnesota Department of Transportation and the Minnesota Department of Health

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From July to December 2015, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) undertook an extensive community engagement process to gather input on walking¹ in communities across the state. The goals of the community engagement process were three-fold:

1. Clarify the challenges, barriers, and opportunities to walking throughout Minnesota;
2. Engage and build relationships with those identified in [Minnesota Walks](#) (PDF) as “priority populations”^{2*} as they must often rely on walking as a mode of transportation and are most affected by the walking environment; and
3. Build and strengthen relationships with practitioners and policy makers around the state to lay the groundwork for policies, programs, processes, and projects at the state, regional, and local levels to improve walking.

Image 1: A large group of people participate in the activities at a community gathering in Northfield.



Over the course of six months, the project team and its partners engaged with over **6,000 people** across Minnesota. The phased community engagement process was multi-faceted, with a number of strategies aimed at engaging with and learning from the priority populations. The project team developed a community gathering engagement toolkit (toolkit), which included a series of activities to collect input on walking destinations and characteristics that make walking safe, convenient, and desirable. The project team and partners used the toolkits to gather input at **33 community gatherings** (including the Minnesota State Fair with participation from more than 3,000 people). **Two online surveys** reaching hundreds of people were developed to supplement the in-person engagement and to better understand pedestrian comfort levels with different roadway treatments. The project team facilitated **14 focus groups** with the goal of having a robust dialogue with people about walking. **Two teen workshops** were conducted

¹ In this report, when the word “walking” is used, it means walking with or without a mobility device.

² Minnesota Walks identified priority populations for pedestrian-level improvements because they are more likely to rely on pedestrian infrastructure: Small Rural Core Communities, American Indian Populations, Low-Income Urban Populations, Older Adults, Persons with Disabilities, Children and Youth.

in Saint Paul to gather perspectives on walking issues from Minnesota teenagers. Lastly, ***eight practitioner-oriented walking workshops*** were conducted to identify and prioritize walking issues and barriers in communities throughout the state from the perspective of professionals who regularly work on walking.

After engaging thousands of people across the state, there were a number of topics that emerged around walking issues. However, there was one overarching theme that arose:

Put pedestrians first.

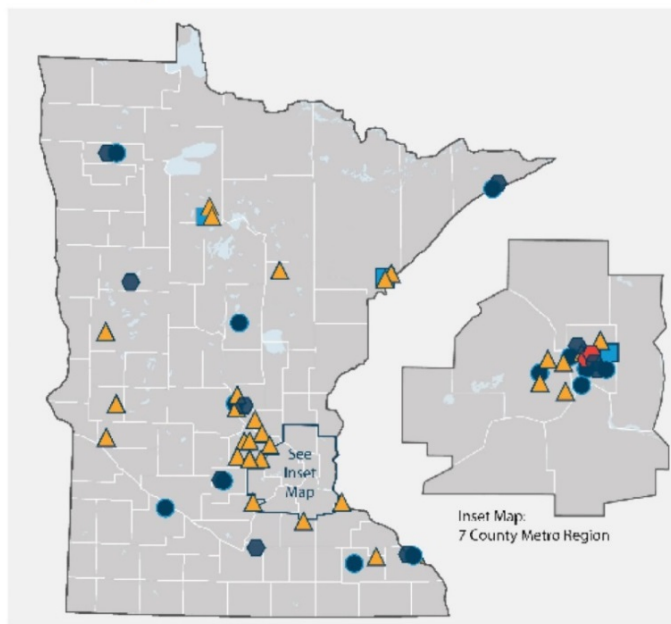
Participants expressed the general feeling that people walking with or without a mobility device do not receive enough priority in the planning and design of our streets and communities. Participants throughout the engagement process agreed with this position and conveyed a desire for walking to have a higher priority among transportation modes. This overarching theme is supported by community input, which is organized into nine supporting themes:

- ***Universal Design*** – Plan and design streets so that all people are able to safely and comfortably walk or roll to their desired destinations.
- ***Roadway and Street Design*** – Design roadways and streets to emphasize pedestrian safety and comfort. This includes all elements of roadway design and engineering –roadway geometry, urban design, landscaping, street furniture, crosswalks, wayfinding, signage, and more.
- ***Land Use and the Built Environment*** – Better coordinate multimodal transportation networks and land use decisions to improve characteristics of the built environment that impact walking, such as design and the location of destinations.
- ***Maintenance*** – Maintain year round walking infrastructure by making necessary ongoing repairs and clearing snow and ice in a timely fashion.
- ***Community Engagement*** – Engage the people of Minnesota in future planning and roadway design projects, and throughout the next phase of developing the Minnesota Statewide Pedestrian System Plan (Plan).
- ***Funding*** – Allocate more funding for pedestrian-related projects and programs.
- ***Partnerships and Coordination*** – Leverage existing partnerships and create new ones to enhance coordination for developing and implementing programs, policies, and projects across the state.
- ***Technical Resources*** – Develop “how-to” resources for practitioners around the state to make it easier to implement walking programs, policies, and projects in their communities.
- ***Integrated Planning*** – Emphasize the importance of integrating pedestrian planning with other planning efforts such as comprehensive plans, corridor plans, neighborhood plans, transit plans, safe routes to school, food access initiatives, social services, etc. at the local, regional, and state levels.

GOALS

- 1 // Clarify the challenges, barriers, and opportunities to walking throughout Minnesota;
- 2 // Engage and build relationships with those identified in Minnesota Walks as “priority populations” as they must often rely on walking as a mode of transportation; and
- 3 // Build and strengthen relationships with practitioners and policy makers around the state to lay the groundwork for policies, programs, processes, and projects at the state, regional, and local levels to improve walking.

ENGAGEMENT REACH



HIGHLIGHTS

Top five walking destinations

- Grocery store
- Park
- School
- Home
- Bus/transit

Top five elements that positively contribute to a walking experience

PRESENCE of other PEOPLE **Good sidewalks or trails**

quiet streets & low traffic **good snow & ice removal**

shade



#mnwalks

INTRODUCTION

Minnesota Statewide Pedestrian System Plan

The purpose of the Minnesota statewide pedestrian system planning process is to develop plans and prioritize recommendations for policies, programs, processes, and projects at the state, regional, and local levels. The result will be two documents: the Minnesota Statewide Pedestrian System Plan (Plan) for the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), and their partners; and a technical document focused on Minnesota Department of Transportation's (MnDOT) internal processes. These efforts aim to achieve a broader vision: Walking³ is safe, convenient, and desirable for all in Minnesota.

The vision was developed during a project meeting held in St. Paul in August 2014. The meeting's purpose was to identify a collective vision for a pedestrian-friendly Minnesota and to identify related partner and participant goals. The 50 participants represented various agencies and organizations including MnDOT, MDH, American Association of Retired Persons, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, Explore Minnesota Tourism, Greater Minnesota metropolitan planning organizations, the development community, Federal Highway Administration, law enforcement, Local Public Health Association, Metropolitan Council, Minnesota Chapter of the American Planning Association, Minnesota Department of Education, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Department of Public Safety – Office of Traffic Safety, MnDOT Americans with Disability Act staff, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota's aging population, American Society of Landscape Architects MN, Ramsey County, St. Paul Riverfront Corporation, St. Paul Walks from St. Paul Smart Trips, University of Minnesota, citizen representation from the State Non-motorized Transportation Committee, and local governments.

MnDOT and MDH set a tone for an emphasis on community engagement and long-term relationships by embarking on developing the Plan jointly. Instead of only addressing pedestrian issues from a transportation perspective, MnDOT and MDH recognized the connection between health and transportation, and the strength in addressing the pedestrian environment as equal partners.

The first step in developing the Plan was to research the existing conditions of health and transportation as they relate to walking, summarized in Minnesota Walks, and create a vision for the Plan.

The second step in developing the Plan was to engage with people throughout the State of Minnesota and gather input on walking issues in their communities. This included development of a Community Engagement Plan (Appendix A) to guide the engagement process.

The third step in developing the Plan will be for MnDOT and MDH to have a dialogue with their partners and the community regarding the findings and starter ideas from the community engagement process documented in this report. The result of additional dialogue will be documented in the Plan that will outline the vision, goals, and specific policies, programs, processes, and projects to improve walking throughout the state. In addition, the creation of a statewide pedestrian plan will help advance the Minnesota GO 50-Year Vision for Transportation: to maximize the health of people, the environment and our economy and support the Minnesota Department of Transportation's commitment to providing safe, multimodal transportation options.

³ In this report, when the word "walk" is used, it means walk with or without a mobility device.

Community Engagement Goals

The purpose of the Community Engagement Report is to describe the community engagement goals, approach, and results.

The goals of the community engagement process were three-fold:

1. Clarify the challenges and barriers to walking throughout Minnesota;
2. Engage and build relationships with those identified in Minnesota Walks as “priority populations”⁴ who of all of Minnesotans most often rely on walking as a mode of transportation and are most affected by the walking environment; and
3. Build and strengthen relationships with practitioners and policy makers around the state to lay the groundwork for policies, programs, processes, and projects at the state, regional and local levels to improve walking.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

MnDOT and MDH set an example for partnering to coordinate an integrated engagement approach – unprecedented in the realm of pedestrian planning at the state level.

Image 2: Workshop participants in Grand Marais discuss walking issues on a large map.



At the core of the project team’s approach was to engage people in multiple ways, and a concerted effort was made to engage in meaningful conversations to foster ongoing, long-term relationships for the benefit of the greater community. Woven throughout the engagement strategies is the “bring the meeting to the people” approach and

⁴ Minnesota Walks identified priority populations for pedestrian-level improvements because they are more likely to rely on pedestrian infrastructure: Small Rural Core Communities, American Indian Populations, Low-Income Urban Populations, Older Adults, Persons with Disabilities, Children and Youth.

meeting people where they are, like an existing meeting or community gathering place. This approach helped the project team garner input from people with different perspectives and personal experiences, and different professional backgrounds and expertise.

The following section outlines the community engagement approach.

Minnesota Walks

As one of the first steps in the planning process, MDH and MnDOT jointly conducted background research about the state of walking in Minnesota and documented their work in [Minnesota Walks](#) (PDF). This document was integral to the engagement project team's decisions about engagement audiences, formats, and locations.

Minnesota Walks includes information about how some populations are more likely to rely on pedestrian infrastructure and yet have fewer opportunities to safely and conveniently walk than others. Additionally, it identifies certain populations that are more likely to rely on walking: children, older adults, persons with disabilities, and households with limited incomes or no access to a vehicle. The following populations are identified as priority populations who would most benefit from pedestrian projects, programs, and policies throughout Minnesota:

- American Indian populations
- Children and youth
- Low-income urban populations
- Older adults
- Persons with disabilities
- Small rural core communities (5,000 or less in population)

Image 3: A mother and son identify their walking destinations at a community health fair in Duluth. *Credit: Jarrett Valdez, ARDC*



Communities are defined in many ways. Some are geographically based (e.g., towns, cities, counties), some are topic based (e.g., advocacy organizations focused on the built environment or walking environment), and some are based on similar backgrounds (e.g., socio-economic status, ethnicity, age). The project team employed a range of engagement strategies and communication tactics to reach many different communities in Minnesota. The project team also adapted messages and activities as it learned from participants how to be more effective when engaging a range of communities.

Community Engagement Plan

At the beginning of the engagement process, the project team developed a Community Engagement Plan (CEP) to guide the development of engagement strategies and outline goals for engagement to provide the foundation for the Plan's recommendations (the full CEP is available in Appendix A). The guiding principles included a variety of community engagement best practices: harness existing relationships, make engagement opportunities convenient, foster peer-to-peer conversations, and review and evaluate engagement throughout the process. The CEP also identifies topics for engagement: what works and doesn't work, what needs to happen, how to garner support for walking, and how to empower people to influence decisions to shape and create more walkable communities. The majority of the CEP focuses on audience and strategies for engagement. Strategies are detailed in the section below.

The CEP set the initial direction for the community engagement process, but it was written with the intention to be a living document and allow for flexibility in implementation. The project team approached the community engagement process with an emphasis on the end goals and finding the best ways to engage priority populations. When deciding where to spend time and resources for engaging people at community gatherings, the project team considered the location of the events and the likely attendees. The engagement strategies evolved as the team found ways to improve them. For example, activities were tested at two community gatherings before a "final" format for the community gathering engagement toolkit was produced. Similarly, after the first couple of focus groups, questions were rewritten to be simpler and allow for participants to have more control over the conversation.

Strategies

This section describes the strategies used in the community engagement process. It includes information about the purpose of the engagement strategy, a description of how it was applied, and a summary of the advantages and disadvantages in different contexts and applications.



Figure 1: The three phased approach to engagement.

The project team conducted a phased approach to engagement (Figure 1). The project team progressed from gathering general input at community gatherings and through surveys, to facilitating robust dialogue through priority population focus groups, to action-oriented workshops with practitioners. Additionally there was sustained guidance throughout the entire engagement effort from the project team and Project Advisory Committee.

Ongoing Engagement Guidance

TRACK, REFLECT, AND ADAPT TO MEET GOALS

The project team met weekly to provide updates on engagement opportunities, communications, and populations reached. The check-ins also provided the opportunity to discuss modifications to the engagement approach, tools, and techniques.

ENGAGE PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Project Advisory Committee (PAC) is composed of a wide range of participants and practitioners representing a variety of interests and areas of expertise. The PAC provided guidance to the project team throughout the community engagement process (Appendix B consists of PAC meeting notes). PAC members were also called upon to disseminate information about engagement opportunities and assist the project team in reaching communities throughout the state.

Image 4: Project Advisory Committee (PAC) members discuss walking issues during a PAC meeting in Saint. Paul.



Engaging the PAC was effective for providing feedback on engagement strategies, in fostering peer-to-peer learning, and in connecting the project team with people and organizations interested in helping with or participating in the community engagement process.

The project team also engaged two internal project advisory committees: one comprised of MnDOT staff and one comprised of MDH staff. The purpose of the MnDOT internal committee is to provide advice regarding MnDOT's needs for infrastructure, statewide planning, policies, and project development. The purpose of the MDH committee is to provide advice regarding MDH needs related non-infrastructure policy, programs, processes, and outreach.

ENGAGE EXISTING AND POTENTIAL COLLABORATORS

The project team engaged with existing and potential collaborators such as local public health practitioners working on health improvement, planners from local government agencies, Regional Development Organization (RDO) planners, Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) staff, MDH staff, MnDOT staff, and others with a stake in the development and implementation of a statewide pedestrian plan. The purpose of engaging with partners and collaborators through this process was to get advice about how and where to engage communities, and to understand what plan content would be most useful to them. The purpose was also to ask them to engage people with whom they have existing relationships or regularly scheduled events.

Image 5: Participants engage in the activities at Celebrate Snelling in Saint Paul.



The project team hosted an educational webinar and invited existing and potential collaborators to participate. During the webinar, the project team provided information about the Plan, engagement process, and the community gathering engagement toolkit (described below). The project team encouraged webinar participants to use the community gathering engagement toolkit at local community gatherings. In addition, MDH used online platforms and webinars to provide project updates and to solicit engagement help from local public health practitioners.

The project team also participated in existing regional meetings convened by MDH for local public health practitioners working on health improvements to engage people in two-way conversations about pedestrian topics. The meetings were also opportunities to discuss ways they could engage the communities they serve in conversations and activities around walking during other parts of their work. As a result, representatives from local public health agencies engaged over 300 community members at a dozen community gatherings in conversations and activities about walking.

PROVIDE INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

The project team encouraged partners to communicate information about the engagement opportunities and overall Plan development. To do so efficiently the project team developed a variety of easy to use communication materials. The project team developed a project website, used email listservs, and created informational posters and postcards to distribute information. The following are descriptions of the informational materials developed for the engagement process:

Project Website

The custom-designed, interactive project website was hosted by Citizing! at www.minnesotawalks.org. The website (Figure 2) allowed people to be informed and provided engagement opportunities – ask questions to project staff, retrieve information, suggest priorities, engage in surveys – without having to attend a focus group or in-person discussion. There were two websites: a general site and a Students Speak Out (SSO) site, which focused exclusively on bringing teens into the discussion.

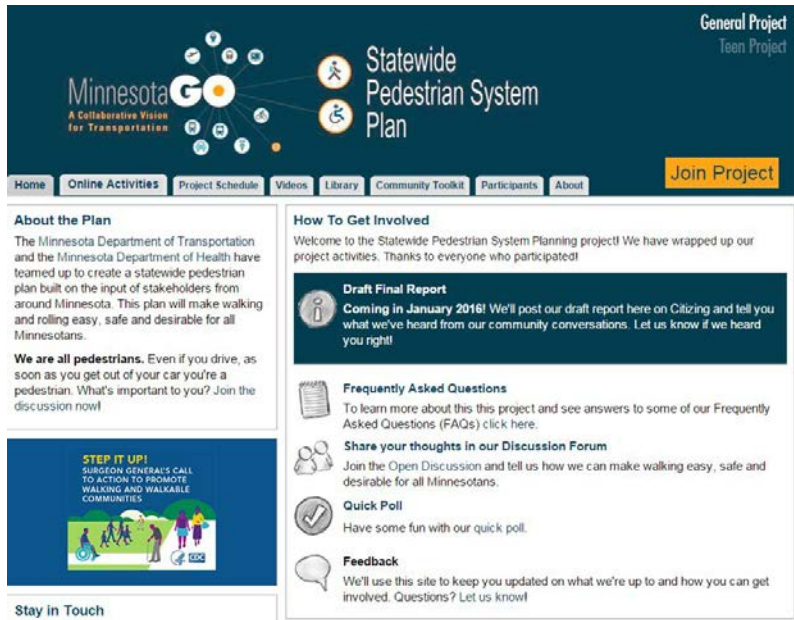


Figure 2: The project website, including project information and activities.

The general site was launched in June 2015 and the student-focused site launched in October 2015. Approximately 100 people from across Minnesota visited these two sites over the course of the project based on log in information from Citizing. The websites featured the following:

- Summary and detailed project information
- A library containing relevant documents and links (i.e., *Minnesota Walks: Current and Future Steps Towards a Walkable Minnesota* document, pedestrian-related organizations, other pedestrian plans, etc.)
- A project schedule
- Quick polls and an online quiz on walking
- The community gathering engagement toolkit
- A moderated Open Discussion Forum where visitors could ask questions or suggest priority areas
- Links to the two online surveys

GovDelivery, Making It Better Log, and Basecamp

MnDOT established an email listserv through GovDelivery to update subscribers on pedestrian-related updates. The list features over 1,700 email addresses. MDH used a similar approach for disseminating information with their Making It Better Log with 650 subscribers and Basecamp⁵ with 375 subscribers.

These platforms were used to send information about the kick-off of the engagement process in the spring, online surveys in the summer, and other pedestrian-related news like the U.S. Surgeon General's call to action on walking and walkable communities.

This tactic was effective in disseminating information to a broad audience, including the general public and practitioners working on efforts related to walking.

⁵ Basecamp is a web-based project-management tool <https://basecamp.com/>

Informational Poster and Postcards

Project postcards were developed to share general project information, including a link to the project website to access surveys and online discussions. The postcards (Figure 3) were shared at engagement events and were effective in providing non-project team members information about the Plan beyond their existing knowledge.



Figure 3: The front page of a postcard advertising project information and website.

An informational poster with general project information and an invitation to visit the project website to participate in surveys and online discussions were provided in the community gathering engagement toolkit. The poster also provided information about the benefits of walking and statistics about walking in Minnesota.

Image 6: Sticky notes were used to describe walking characteristics at the first pilot engagement event in Minneapolis.



Phase One: Gathering high level information

The first phase of the community engagement process focused on gathering general information about walking destinations and environments. The project team developed basic questions for people to quickly answer that could be easily replicated and summarized to inform the Plan. Each strategy is described in greater detail below.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

At the beginning of Phase One, the project team developed a community gathering engagement toolkit. The intent was to create engagement activities for use at community gatherings that were easy for:

- Engagement hosts (project team and project partners) to set up
- Participants to provide input
- Engagement hosts to record input, and
- The project team to synthesize the input into useful information for MnDOT and MDH as they develop the Plan

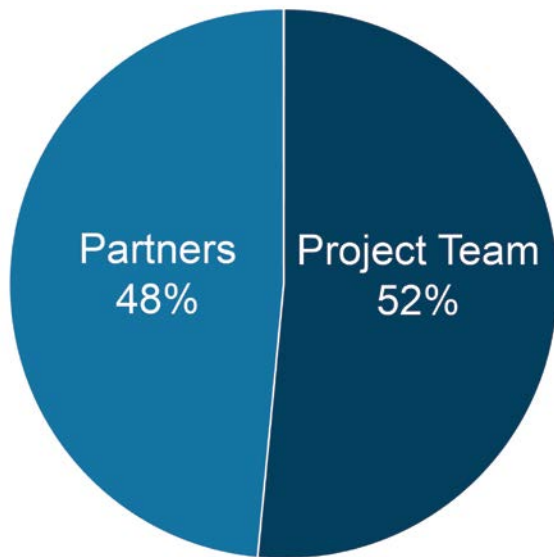


Figure 4: The project team facilitated 52% of community gatherings and our partners facilitated 48%.

It was not possible for the project team to conduct engagement in every corner of the state, but the toolkit provided an easy way to broaden the reach and have partners to conduct engagement in their local areas.

The toolkit was distributed to partners around the state via listservs, the project website, and personal email requests. The project team used the toolkit at a range of community gatherings throughout the state. The project team documented all of the engagement gatherings (Appendix D).

Engagement activities in the toolkit were developed with guidance from the PAC, and were tried at two events: Open Streets in Northeast Minneapolis and Rondo Days in Saint Paul. The purpose of using the toolkits before finalizing the content was to test the instructions to make sure they were easy to follow, test the activities to make sure participants could easily provide input, and test the ease of recording the input received. The activities used at Open Streets in Northeast Minneapolis were improved upon before the final toolkit was successfully used at Rondo Days in Saint Paul.

The final toolkit included:

- Set-up instructions
- Activity instructions
- Materials list
- Recording instructions
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- Activity One printouts
- Activity Two printouts
- Materials list
- Email script for volunteer/staff (invitation, instructions, thank you)
- Staff schedule template
- One-pager about the project/talking points
- "Walk This Way" informational postcard
- Informational poster
- Kids activity game board
- Sign-in sheet


Image 7: Participants place sticker dots on Activity 2 at Rondo Days in Saint. Paul.




















Activity One: It is important that I am able to walk to...


IT IS IMPORTANT THAT I AM ABLE TO WALK TO....

1. Review the destinations on the board, and think about the top three most important destinations for you to be able to walk to.
 2. Rank your three most important destinations! Write a number 1, 2 and 3 by your three most important walking destinations.
 3. If there are additional walking destinations that are important to you, please write them down on the poster under "Other Destinations".



Statewide
Pedestrian System
Plan

<p>Home</p>  <p>VOTE HERE:</p>	<p>Pharmacy</p>  <p>VOTE HERE:</p>	<p>School</p>  <p>VOTE HERE:</p>	<p>Place of Worship</p>  <p>VOTE HERE:</p>	<p>Grocery Store</p>  <p>VOTE HERE:</p>	<p>Entertainment</p>  <p>VOTE HERE:</p>	<p>Post Office</p>  <p>VOTE HERE:</p>	<p>Restaurant/Café</p>  <p>VOTE HERE:</p>	<p>Job</p>  <p>VOTE HERE:</p>
<p>Library</p>  <p>VOTE HERE:</p>	<p>Bank</p>  <p>VOTE HERE:</p>	<p>Friends</p>  <p>VOTE HERE:</p>	<p>Convenience Store</p>  <p>VOTE HERE:</p>	<p>Fitness</p>  <p>VOTE HERE:</p>	<p>Park</p>  <p>VOTE HERE:</p>	<p>Doctor</p>  <p>VOTE HERE:</p>	<p>Bus/Transit</p>  <p>VOTE HERE:</p>	<p>Other Destinations? <small>Please write them below!</small></p>



For more information, please visit:
www.minnesotawalks.org | [@minnesotago](https://twitter.com/minnesotago) #mnwalks
facebook.com/MinnesotaGO

Figure 5: Activity One

MnDOT and MDH wanted to better understand key walking destinations, therefore, the purpose of this activity was to clarify the most important destinations people want to access by walking. Understanding this can help inform where to prioritize walking investments and inform other decisions like land use policies.

Participants were given three sticker dots to place next to destinations that were their most important walking destination. At most events, three colors were used to rank the level of importance (1st, 2nd, and 3rd). There was also space to write-in destinations that may not have been on the activity board. Destinations were represented as icons to make it easier to understand by people with limited English reading skills (Figure 5).




Activity Two: What makes your community walkable?

The purpose of this activity was to understand what characteristics influence walking in communities. The activity consisted of two large boards with 11 images of residential contexts (Figure 6). Participants identified which image looked the most like where they live and then placed a sticker in the table next to that image. Next to each image there were two tables, one table that consisted of characteristics that make walking safe, convenient, and desirable, and the other table with characteristics that make walking unsafe, inconvenient, and undesirable. Participants were asked to identify characteristics in each table that apply to the walking environment in their communities.

WHICH PICTURE LOOKS THE MOST LIKE WHERE YOU LIVE?

1. Find the picture that looks the most like where you live, then vote for that image in the column to the right.
 2. In the two tables next to that picture, mark up to five characteristics from each of the two categories:
 a. What about your community makes walking safe, convenient, and desirable?
 b. What about your community makes walking unsafe, inconvenient, and undesirable?
 3. If a characteristic is not listed in the table, please write it in the space provided at the bottom of the table.




	VOTE HERE ↓	What about your community makes walking safe, convenient, and desirable?	What about your community makes walking unsafe, inconvenient, and undesirable?																																																																								
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For more information, please visit:
www.minnesotawalks.org | [@minnesotago](https://twitter.com/minnesotago) | facebook.com/Minnesotago | [#minnesotago](https://instagram.com/minnesotago)

Figure 6: Activity Two

Participants were given pens or pencils to make tally marks next to each characteristic that influenced the safety, comfort, or desirability of walking in their community. Participants were not limited to the number of tally marks they could make.

The two activities were simple, easy, quick to complete, convenient for participants, and also sparked conversations among other participants and facilitators. They were effective in gathering a large volume of input on destinations and built-environment characteristics. After a few weeks of deployment, the project team began to see many of the same responses emerging, indicating common themes (described in the next section Overarching Themes) about what makes a community walkable – one of the goals of the CEP.

The toolkit was also successful in short-term and long-term relationship building among agency staff, and between agency staff and community members. For example, health and transportation professionals were active participants

and facilitators in the engagement activities, which meant they were hearing first-hand from many of their constituents rather than simply being informed by MnDOT or MDH about what they had heard through the engagement process. Many of these professionals found they interacted more meaningfully with their communities and reached new community members because of the “bring the meeting to the people” approach.

The toolkit was also effective in reaching people that may not have participated through typical engagement strategies such as online surveys or open houses that require someone to go out of their way to participate. A full description of community engagement events and results by event are available in Appendix D.

“This information and toolkit are very helpful for some of our local plans within the region. It was a great and fun way to engage community members who would possibly not participate in other traditional outreach settings.” Jarrett Valdez, Associate Planner, Arrowhead RDC

ONLINE SURVEYS

The project team developed two online surveys to supplement in-person activities and gather feedback on how different roadway treatments affect personal comfort levels while walking. The surveys were an effective tool in quickly reaching a broad audience across the state. The surveys were easy to share and distribute in electronic media, whether on the project website, social media, emails, or newsletters. The two surveys are explained below.

What makes your community walkable?

This online survey was designed to replicate the questions from the activities in the toolkit (Figure 7). The survey reached over 700 people, and the responses were able to be merged with the responses from those who engaged in the in-person activities.

What features improve your walking experience?

This online survey was intended to evaluate the effect of pedestrian infrastructure treatments on pedestrian comfort level. The survey included a series of photos of pedestrian crossing treatments and treatments along sidewalks. Participants were asked to rate their comfort level on a Likert scale with statements ranging from “I would feel so uncomfortable that I would not walk here” to “I would feel so comfortable that I would definitely walk here.”⁶ This survey provided information about what specific features contribute to their walking experience and augmented some of the themes that emerged in Activity Two, as discussed in the Key Topics section. For example, participants were asked to select statements about how comfortable they would feel using various infrastructure features such as crosswalks, medians, and sidewalks with buffers. The survey reached over 700 people (For more detailed information and results on this survey see Appendix E).

Phase Two: Hosting community conversations

Phase two of the community engagement process builds upon the themes that emerged from the phase one engagement (community gatherings and surveys) by discussing the themes in greater detail through interviews and focus groups with community members. This phase also provided an opportunity for engagement with priority populations that had not been reached through the phase one engagement strategies. For example, while it was possible to identify community gatherings oriented to older adults or children, this was not a reasonable approach for

⁶ A Likert scale is a five (or seven) point scale which is used to allow the individual to express how much they agree or disagree with a particular statement

reaching persons with disabilities. Rather, engaging advocacy groups or existing advisory committees in a focused conversation was more effective.

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

In order to find the best strategies for engaging with priority populations, the project team sought advice from people knowledgeable about and have experience engaging with priority populations. These took the form of telephone interviews and in-person meetings. Interviewing experts helped the project team identify the best ways to engage with populations that are often underserved and underrepresented in typical transportation planning processes. To appropriately engage with children and teens, the Citizens League developed and conducted youth-centered engagement activities that were similar in nature to the more adult-focused engagement opportunities. For persons with disabilities and rural core communities, Heidi Hamilton (PAC member and Disability Services Legislative Policy Coordinator) provided insights and advice based on her recent statewide engagement process with people with disabilities in rural communities for the Minnesota Department of Human Services. Pam Moore, program director for Transportation Options at Transit for Livable Communities shared best practices in her experience engaging and empowering low-income and young-adult participants. Ed Fairbanks, MnDOT Tribal Liaison, met with the project team multiple times to advise on approaches for engaging American Indian tribes.

Image 8: A participant engages in activity one at the Farm to School Event in Minneapolis.



Interviewing population experts was effective in connecting the project team with champions and partners in communities where the project team may not yet have an established relationship. The project team was also able to learn and adapt messages, communication styles, and activities that were more respectful and effective than they would have been without the interviews. Appendix F provides details on the advice gained from priority population experts.

FOCUS GROUPS

The project team facilitated 14 focus group discussions, 60-90 minutes in length, in communities throughout the state. The intent was to gain a deeper understanding of pedestrian issues and priorities through two-way dialogue. Focus groups were critical to meeting the goal of engaging populations prioritized by MnDOT and MDH. The focus group discussions started with some very general opening questions to encourage a rich dialogue around walking. Facilitators allowed for the conversation to emerge and asked follow up questions for clarification. By allowing for a

more free-flowing conversation, participants were able to provide great information on what works and what doesn't relative to walking in their community through personal stories and examples. This was an important approach to engage with those who traditionally are not engaged in planning processes. Additionally, the project team was able to conduct some focus groups during regularly scheduled meetings which meant participants were not asked to carve out additional time in their busy days to meet with the project team. The small group setting was an effective way to create a safe space for people who may not be comfortable sharing their opinions in places where they or their opinions may be in the minority.

The focus groups fell into three general categories: people whose work relates to walking, people whose transportation options require walking, and people who are interested in increasing walking trips but still have other transportation options. While each focus group had its own character and composition, common themes emerged. Within each theme, some focus groups shared unique stories, or revealed nuanced perspectives.

Image 9: Walking workshop participants on a sidewalk in Madison Lake.



Focus group participants were asked "If you were the "Walking Czar" of Minnesota, what would you do to make Minnesota more walkable?" The purpose of this question was to understand what policies, programs, and projects people envisioned for making lasting improvements to how walking is valued and addressed in Minnesota communities. Participants were encouraged to think beyond current constraints (like policies and funding rules) in order to express ideas for meaningful change. This strategy was especially important for focus groups comprised of priority populations because it is important to understand not just what is possible today, but what would truly bring more empowerment to people often marginalized in decision making processes. This also helps MDH move towards their goals of health equity. Refer to Appendix G for focus group summaries.

Phase Three: Discussing how to address issues from a practitioner perspective

Image 10: A project team member facilitates a discussion outside at a walking workshop in Grand Marais.



The third phase of the community engagement process focused on engaging with health and transportation practitioners in half-day work sessions.

WALKING WORKSHOPS

The project team conducted half-day walking workshops in all eight of MnDOT's districts, engaging both internal and external partners and community members. The workshops provided a forum for cross-discipline discussions between transportation and health professionals with a clear focus on walking. Participants included MnDOT district staff, MDH regional staff, and key external partners such as walking advocates and representatives of cities, counties, local public health practitioners, school districts, American Indian tribes, organizations representing disabled communities, and more.

The purpose of the workshops was to engage practitioners from various regions around the state, educate them on the goals of the Plan and early findings, discuss principles that improve walking, and gather input on walking issues and priorities in their communities. The workshops engaged agencies and organizations that have some policy and/or implementation influence or responsibility related to pedestrian facilities and programs.

See Appendix H for results of the walking workshops.

For more detail on how the various strategies were used to engage the priority populations from Minnesota Walks, see Appendix I. For additional details on youth engagement efforts see Appendix J.

Lessons Learned

Throughout the engagement process, the project team learned many ways to improve, adjust, and reframe engagement strategies to meet the engagement goals. This section describes what worked, what didn't, and provides some reflection that may be helpful for engagement in future planning efforts.

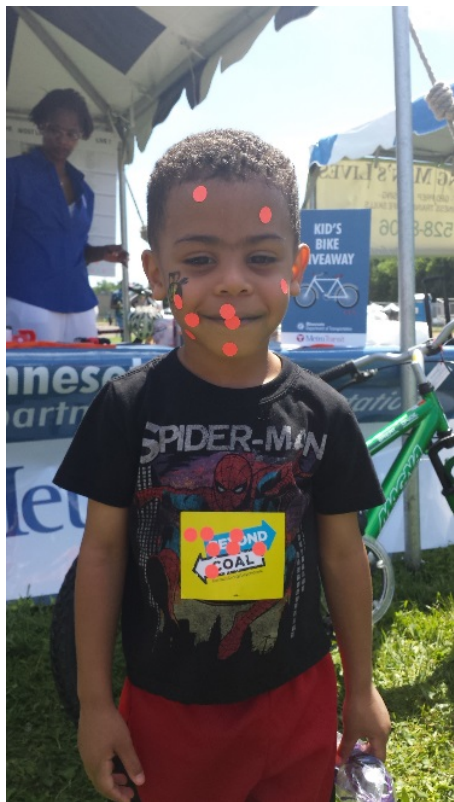
PILOT AN IDEA

The investments of time and energy into engagement tactic “pilots” are worthwhile. The first two community gatherings at Open Streets Northeast and Rondo Days allowed the project team to make needed adjustments to the activities that the project team could only discover through field experience. The activities used at Open Streets in Northeast Minneapolis were improved upon before the final toolkit was successfully used at Rondo Days in Saint Paul. The project team also tested the ease of processing the information gathered. Testing the activities is especially important if a specific engagement tactic is planned to be replicated across the state, which is typical for a statewide agency.

MEASURING SUCCESS

Quantifying results and measuring reach is valuable, but must be balanced with the community engagement goals. For example, reaching priority populations is often best done with methods that do not require participants to record demographic information such as focus groups or community gatherings. In addition, sample sizes in scientific research are not always necessary in a community engagement process. During this engagement process common themes that were raised in the first few focus groups were repeated in most subsequent focus groups; reaching thousands of people isn't always necessary in order to uncover common themes and meeting the goal of clarifying challenges to walking.

Image 11: A child at Rondo Days in St. Paul smiles with stickers from the engagement activity.



COMPLEMENTARY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Using engagement tactics with a range of depth and breadth is important to reach a variety of people. It is important the strategies are complementary so that the information gathered through an engagement process provides good information for the end result, creating a relevant, usable Plan. The following outlines some of the lessons the project team learned in online engagement, the use of surveys, focus groups, walking workshops, and community engagement in general.

Online engagement is a necessary tactic for a statewide agency to reach people across Minnesota and it requires a communication plan to reach target audiences. The instantaneous nature of digital engagement is a double edged sword. The speed and ease of engaging online is appealing but also sets high expectations for the end-user. The project team learned that a website that requires a log-in, has a busy interface, is available in one language, or requires too many steps can result in losing the interest of people not already passionately engaged in the subject. Simple is better, even if it means less detailed information, especially when trying to meet the goal of engaging a range of participants. Additionally, online surveys typically reach a small segment of the population. In this engagement project the majority of survey respondents identified themselves as white and female.

Focus groups and walking workshops resulted in the richest conversations. While perhaps lacking in quantifiable metrics, these strategies resulted in quality, detailed, nuanced, and meaningful information. Concentrating more on two-way conversations in a small group setting can obtain richer information from fewer people and should be emphasized over reaching more people through input activities at community gatherings and online surveys that tend

to limited opportunities for two-way conversations. Focus groups were a successful strategy for meeting the goal of engaging and building relationships with people identified in [Minnesota Walks](#) (PDF) as “priority populations” because the format encouraged participants to steer the conversation to what is most important and unique to them.

The CEP identified a goal to empower more people in the conversation about walking. While the goal of relationship-building was integrated in the process by bringing people together in conversations at walking workshops, meetings, and focus groups, achieving empowerment through a six-month community engagement process is difficult. Empowering partners and communities to participate and influence policy, programs, and projects is an ongoing process. While the community engagement process was successful in laying the groundwork for initial connections and conversations, the process of empowerment must be ongoing. The next phase of the planning process will be an opportunity to develop strategies for how to achieve this in the short, medium, and long term.

Finally, involving community engagement experts early and throughout the entire process is important. The project team was successful in engaging key informants through individual interviews early in the process, which is recommended in future planning efforts. This could have been done even earlier for discussions around priority populations and the best language to use. For example, near the end of the community engagement process, a PAC member asked if Low Income Urban was code for specific ethnic populations and suggested a more explicit description of the target populations could have resulted in a more straightforward approach to engage with the populations most often affected by walking environments. It will be important for the project team to be thoughtful about community engagement in the next phases of Plan development. To meet the goals of engaging and building relationships with people identified in [Minnesota Walks](#) (PDF) as “priority populations”, the project will benefit from re-engaging many of the same participants for developing starter ideas and responding to proposed policies, programs, processes, and projects.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: OVERARCHING THEME AND SUPPORTING THEMES

Put pedestrians first.

This statement became the clear overarching theme heard throughout the entire engagement process involving a variety of participants and partners who described what works well and what they would like to see changed for walking in Minnesota. Over 6,000 people participated in a community gathering activity, online survey, focus group, interview, online forum, or walking workshop.

Image 12: A group of workshop participants stand at a corner adjacent to a wide highway with no crosswalk in Grand Marais.



Subsequent sections go more in depth on what the project team heard throughout community engagement by theme. There are nine themes that support the overarching theme:

- Universal Design
- Roadway and Street Design
- Land Use and the Built Environment
- Maintenance
- Community Engagement
- Funding
- Partnerships and Coordination
- Technical Resources
- Integrated Planning

The themes describe what works well, what does not work well, and what needs to be done to improve walking. The themes reinforce and refine the original vision for the Plan: Walking is safe, convenient, and desirable for all in Minnesota.

Within each theme, there are suggestions for “starter ideas to explore” which highlight potential processes, policies, projects, and programs to address the issues identified in the topics that were brought up throughout the engagement process, especially at focus groups and walking workshops. The starter ideas to explore are just that: ideas that could be further explored by MnDOT, MDH, and partners to develop recommendations for the overall Minnesota Statewide Pedestrian System Plan.

OVERARCHING THEME: PUT PEDESTRIANS FIRST

Throughout the entire community engagement process, people across Minnesota reinforced many walking related topics from Minnesota Walks. For example, participants highlighted the health benefits of walking, issues with

challenging walking environments, and the shared value of safe and comfortable places for pedestrians in communities. But participants expanded upon ideas expressed in Minnesota Walks by adding reasons to elevate walking, uncovering the most effective ways to achieve that, and describing changes they want to see in Minnesota at the state, regional, and local levels. The engagement results point to a central theme and call to action: pedestrians should become a higher priority in the planning and design of our roadways and communities.

Image 13: Participants engaging in the activities at a youth-focused event in Hill City.



Community members and professionals affirmed the importance of the Plan to better support safe, convenient, and desirable walking conditions in communities throughout the state. While most community engagement input pointed to the same theme - that pedestrians should always be considered first - focus group and workshop participants shared different reasons for this emphasis. Some understand that through addressing walking environments their communities will experience additional benefits: walking is good for the physical, social, and economic health of communities. Yet others expressed the same interest in prioritizing pedestrian needs and walking environments but did so from a different vantage point: *community members rely on walking as a means of transportation and without better environments their safety and welfare are potentially in jeopardy.*

Focus groups provided the most input on the topic of why walking should be prioritized. In each focus group, participants were asked why they walk to understand what currently works well for walking in Minnesota. Some groups (mainly practitioners or the general public) described influencers on the choice to walk like financial and health motivations. Many participants explained that they walk to meet their basic needs, accessing work, transit, health care, and or groceries on foot. This was especially the case for people who are not able to drive for a variety of reasons. The conversation in focus groups that engaged persons with disabilities, older adults, and teens revealed these groups walk more out of necessity. Many described walking as their only option to meet basic needs. In other words, without walking access to their main destinations, some trips may not be made. Minnesota Walks acknowledges that the consequences of not addressing pedestrian barriers in the state affect some more than others. Participants in the community engagement process reinforce this, and indicate that the Plan goals need to

extend beyond a desire to increase walking; the goals should emphasize that walking trips may be the only transportation option for accessing basic needs and services.

Regardless of whether people walked for need or choice, all focus groups demonstrated an understanding of the physical and psychological benefits to walking by either citing research or sharing personal anecdotes. Many participants described how fresh air, nature, and just being outdoors relieved stress and relaxed them. This came up especially for people with developmental and intellectual disabilities as something they are able to do independently. Some participants also described the walking experience as playing a role in their happiness, specifically when done in scenic places where “you just want to be” or places where one can walk side-by-side with someone. During a focus group for Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) grantees working on healthy eating and active living in the metro area, participants said the pedestrian environment is more than interaction with cars, it’s about wanting to be in an attractive place.

Focus group participants also described that walking creates a feeling of connectedness. By walking in their community, they are able to easily see and converse with people in their neighborhood. Walking and feeling connected to the community was emphasized in groups where independence isn’t as easy to achieve due to physical or mental health limitations; sometimes walking is the one opportunity they have to be independent and not rely on others. More than one participant said that the presence of other people positively influences the walking environment.

Image 14: A family with young children participate in the activities at a community gathering in Northfield.



In each focus group, participants were asked to describe why they do not walk. The initial purpose of this question was to understand factors that influence people to choose a mode other than walking to reach destinations or why they choose to participate in an activity other than walking. Some of those factors include strong winds, cold weather, impassable sidewalks (snow, ice, bumpy), long distances, and fear of being targeted for crime. Participants who have fewer or no choices about how to get around independently said these factors impact their decision to make a trip or accomplish a daily task at all. In essence, factors that discourage walking were similar across the board, but for those

without other choices, the impact is greater. For people who must walk in order to meet their basic needs, barriers to walking became barriers to transportation overall, which in turn hinders access to basic goods and services and participation in their communities.

Socio-economic and personal barriers were raised more in focus groups where driving is not a choice, so certain barriers to walking often mean that a trip is not taken. For example, focus group participants that rely on transit described instances where they would like to take more walks during the day, but much of their downtime is spent waiting for a bus or a ride. Going for a walk on the front end of the transit trip means missing their ride, and when the transit takes a long time, some feel too tired to walk at the end of the day or feel unsafe walking alone at night.

Focus group discussions reinforced that for many, the choice they have is not between making a safe trip by walking or another mode. The choice is about whether or not they will make a trip at all. Whether people walk for health, leisure or need, many feel they are in danger as a pedestrian. The question “why don’t you walk” prompted similar answers between the participants who have choices and who that don’t, but the implications of preventing a walking trip are not the same - barriers to safe walking mean barriers to trips themselves.

Focus group conversations reinforce the theme from Minnesota Walks: walking is important. But it gives that statement more weight. In addition to walking’s importance to the economy and to one’s physical health, it is also critically important for independence, mental health, and accessing basic needs.

Community engagement results reinforced the themes in Minnesota Walks to set the direction for the Plan. The community engagement results also reinforced that the Plan should not just be about increasing walking trips. It should improve existing walking trips and that the consequences of *not* prioritizing the pedestrian are more impactful for the many who walk to meet basic needs.

Starter Ideas to Explore

- Examine opportunities to elevate pedestrian considerations in planning and project processes
- Apply Complete Streets policy to decision-making processes at MnDOT
- Develop pedestrian plans separately from bicycle and other transportation plans
- Encourage communities to create pedestrian plans through funding and/or technical assistance
- Fund pedestrian improvements proportionately to the importance and vulnerability of pedestrians
- Continue to educate practitioners, internally and externally, about the importance of walking to the health of people, the environment, and economy

The following sections discuss the topics that fall under the overarching theme of the community engagement results: put pedestrians first. Often, topics that came up repeatedly in surveys or community gatherings also came up in focus groups and walking workshops. Each topic was identified as the result of the synthesis of multiple engagement strategies. Each topic includes some starter ideas for MnDOT and MDH to explore in the next phases of the Plan development for policies, programs, and processes to address the specific topic.

Supporting Themes

This section describes recurring topics that came up throughout the engagement process. The supporting themes are organized hierarchically, based on the amount of comments and input received throughout the community engagement process.

- ***Universal Design*** – Plan and design streets so that all people are able to safely and comfortably walk or roll to their desired destinations.

- **Roadway and Street Design** – Design roadways and streets to emphasize pedestrian safety and comfort. This includes all elements of roadway design and engineering – roadway geometry, urban design, landscaping, street furniture, crosswalks, wayfinding, signage, and more.
- **Land Use and the Built Environment** – Better coordinate multimodal transportation networks and land use decisions to improve characteristics of the built environment that impact walking, such as the design and the location of destinations.
- **Maintenance** – Maintain year round walking infrastructure by making necessary ongoing repairs and clearing snow and ice in a timely fashion.
- **Community Engagement** – Engage the people of Minnesota in future planning and roadway design projects, and throughout the next phase of developing the Plan.
- **Funding** – Allocate more funding for pedestrian-related projects and programs.
- **Partnerships and Coordination** – Leverage existing partnerships and create new ones to enhance coordination for developing and implementing programs, policies, and projects across the state.
- **Technical Resources** – Develop “how-to” resources for practitioners around the state to make it easier to implement walking programs, policies, and projects in their communities.
- **Integrated Planning** – Emphasize the importance of integrating pedestrian planning with other planning efforts such as comprehensive plans, corridor plans, neighborhood plans, transit plans, safe routes to school, food access initiatives, social services, etc., at the local, regional, and state levels.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN

Plan and design streets so that all people are able to safely and comfortably walk or roll to their desired destinations.

Streets and pedestrian spaces should be accessible for all people. This is one topic that continued to surface at every walking workshop, during many focus group discussions, and in many conversations during other engagement activities.

Walking workshop participants emphasized how important accessible street designs are for people with limited physical mobility and other disabilities such as blindness or vision impairment. Participants noted the lack of existing compliance with ADA guidelines and the need for increased training for construction inspectors to ensure ADA compliancy. Moreover, several workshop participants stressed the importance of “universal design.”⁷ This means going a step further than just ADA compliance in that streets, sidewalks, and public spaces are designed to be accessible for all.

⁷ For more on universal design refer to the Center for Universal Design: <https://www.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud/>

Image 15: A person in a wheelchair crosses a roadway with a painted crosswalk in Minneapolis.



At nearly every focus group, specific intersections or crossings conditions were described as problematic for walking. Many people noted things like crossing many lanes of traffic, long distances, long wait times for pedestrian crossing signals, short signal timing, and busy highway crossings as barriers to walking. More than one participant at the Marshall focus group said they avoid intersections and find a gap in traffic to cross midblock because they feel safer away from the fast vehicle turning movements (Appendix G). Long crossing distances and short signal timing were specifically mentioned as major barriers for people who use wheelchairs, or other mobility devices, and for seniors. Many participants described crossing a highway or busy road as one of the most important factors in deciding against taking a walking trip, citing vehicle speed and lack of marked crossings as reasons they were deterred.

The value of improved crossings was reinforced by the results of the online survey about features to improve the walking experience. Thirty-four percent of participants found the presence of a crosswalk would prompt them to cross a specific roadway. Fifty-six percent of participants responded positively to raised crosswalks, 50 percent to flashers, 58 percent to pedestrian signals, 47 percent to bump outs, 87 percent to pedestrian bridges, and 46 percent to pedestrian tunnels. See Appendix E for more detailed results of the survey.

An important component of designing streets for all is the inclusion of high visibility crosswalks. Crosswalks were a reoccurring topic at engagement events, including a desire for crosswalk design guidelines. Other topics relating to accessibility were the inclusion of curb ramps, warning signage for crosswalks, rapid flashing beacons, appropriate traffic signal timing for pedestrians, leading pedestrian intervals, and the elimination of “beg buttons” (the button that requires pushing to activate a pedestrian crossing signal).

In sum, people desire streets that are designed to meet the needs of all people through good driver behavior, convenient and safe crossings, and all walking trips possible for persons with disabilities.

Starter Ideas to Explore

- Design intersections and crossings to maximize accessibility and pedestrian safety and comfort
- Encourage [Universal Design](#) that goes beyond ADA compliance
- Investigate the role of enforcement in addressing ADA violations
- Evaluate the allocation of funding to pedestrian infrastructure and consider increasing funds allocated to projects that improve safety for all pedestrians

ROADWAY AND STREET DESIGN

Design roadways and streets to emphasize pedestrian safety and comfort. This includes all elements of roadway design and engineering – including roadway geometry, urban design, landscaping, street furniture, crosswalks, wayfinding, signage, and more.

The design of roadways, streetscapes, and spaces in the public realm largely contribute to the comfort and experience of people walking in those places. This was one of the most discussed themes during all phases of community engagement, but it is also the broadest theme and encompasses everything from streetscaping and landscaping to roadway and intersection geometry. The walking workshops were especially focused on topics of roadway and street design, which included a wide variety of comments relating to the importance of streetscapes designed for pedestrian safety and comfort. Many comments at the walking workshops related to the design and placement of sidewalks and streetscape features that accompany sidewalks. Participants expressed their preference for wider sidewalks (5-6 ft. minimum) with a comfortable buffer zone between the sidewalk and vehicular traffic. Providing a buffer zone increases pedestrian comfort by allocating more space between people and fast moving traffic.

Image 16: Arrowhead Pharmacy located on a street corner near a marked crosswalk in Grand Marais.



Buffer zones also provide space for other participant suggestions like trees and landscaping, enhanced lighting, benches and street furniture, bus shelters, and other public realm improvements. This was reinforced in the survey about features to make communities more walkable: 81 percent of participants rated the sidewalk with buffer “so comfortable I would definitely walk here.” During a focus group held at a senior center in Thief River Falls, seniors expressed the need for more seating in the public realm. They cited their need to rest during their walk due to fatigue

and the difficulty of finding a place to sit and rest along sidewalks. Buffer zones not only physically separate sidewalks from the roadway but they also provide space for street furniture that allow pedestrians to stop and rest.

Workshop participants also commented on the need to revisit roadway and right-of-way width, including “road diets” (removing travel lanes to increase pedestrian space) where appropriate. Other roadway design priorities from the walking workshops include the provision of bump-outs (or bulb-outs) to reduce pedestrian crossing distance, reducing travel speeds, sidewalk requirements, rapid flashing beacons, and other signage for pedestrians and motorists.

During focus groups, some people told personal stories about good walking experiences related to personal safety, the presence of other people, and nature. People also appreciated polite drivers that they could trust to watch out for their safety. This was reinforced at community gatherings and through surveys where people identified fast car speeds and poor driver behavior as the top two factors that made walking feel unsafe, inconvenient, and undesirable, while presence of people and quiet streets were in the top five factors for making walking safe, convenient, and desirable.

In focus groups with practitioners and MnDOT staff, participants discussed the need to remove barriers to addressing pedestrian needs from project development processes. For example, oftentimes funding for projects lacks flexibility for what is eligible. Participants also discussed guidance that helped address pedestrian needs such as trainings and manuals, but sought clearer guidance in design, decision-making, and prioritization. For example, participants from the MnDOT internal advisory committee asked about visual perceptions and wanted to understand how pedestrian amenities encourage walking.

At focus groups, when people described places that felt safe and comfortable, they described the built environment – especially planners, engineers, and public health practitioners. Things like pedestrian-scale lighting, bump outs, safe crossings, sidewalks buffered from the road, and slower traffic speeds (and traffic calming) were brought up on a consistent basis. When participants described hostile walking environments, specific characteristics included fast vehicle speeds, distracted driving, conflicting modes, a sense of invisibility to drivers, obstructions along the walkway, and personal safety issues stemming from lack of lighting and areas devoid of other people.

Image 17: Walking workshop participants crowd around a crosswalk near a wide highway in Winona.



The results of community engagement events/surveys also highlighted some of the most important factors in the design of the walking environment. Participants identified good sidewalks and trails, the presence of other people, low traffic streets, good snow and ice removal, and short distances to destinations as top factors that make their communities safe, convenient, and desirable for walking (Figure 8). Similarly, the top factors that contribute to

unsafe, inconvenient, and undesirable walking environments were fast car speeds, poor driver behavior, icy and snowy sidewalks, poor sidewalks, busy streets, and poor pedestrian crossings (Figure 9).

In sum, people seek roadways and streets that have low speeds, encourage good driver behavior, include wide sidewalks with buffer zones, and invite the presence of people.

Starter Ideas to Explore

- Consider using a Vision Zero⁸ approach to planning and design, a road safety approach that aims to achieve a roadway system with no fatalities or serious injuries
- Expand school zone designations and design
- Explore opportunities to allow funding to be used on things like furniture zones and sidewalk buffers to enhance pedestrian safety and comfort
- Incorporate best practice guides from places like the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center, etc. into MnDOT practices, and at the regional and local levels
- Continue and expand the MnDOT training module, Advanced Flexibility in Design, and consider holding training sessions in Greater Minnesota

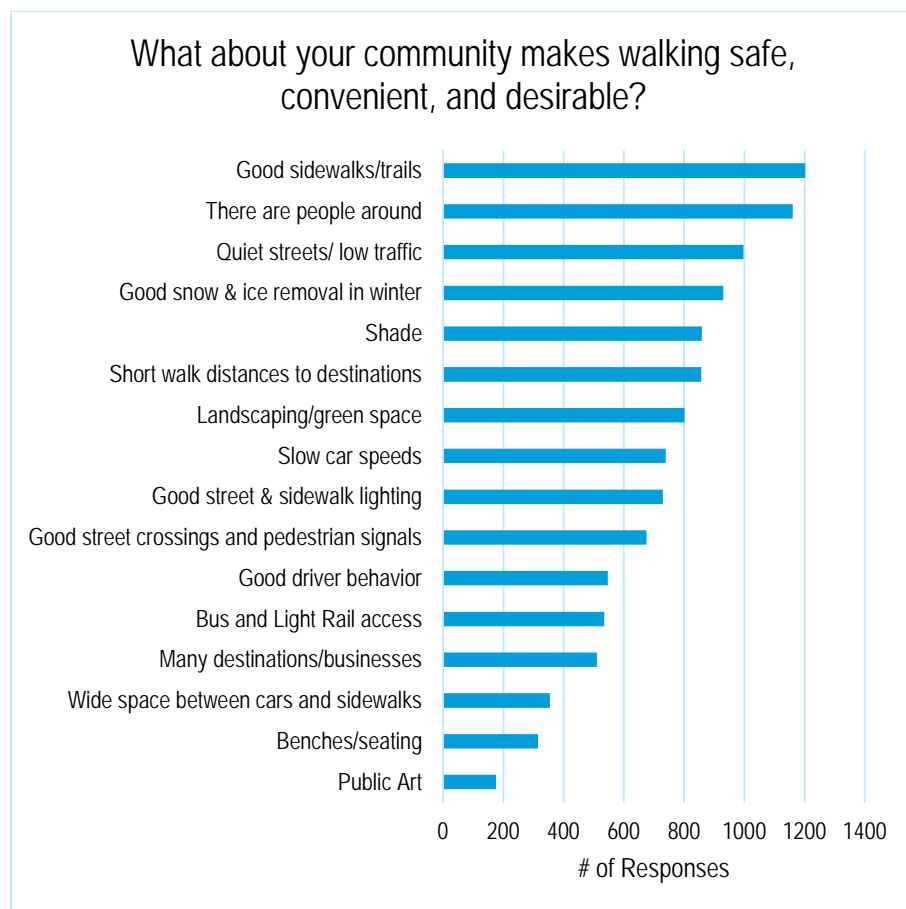


Figure 7: Results from community engagement events/surveys for characteristics that make walking safe, convenient, and desirable.

⁸ Vision Zero is a Swedish approach to road safety thinking based on the principle that no loss of life is acceptable. <http://www.visionzeroinitiative.com/>

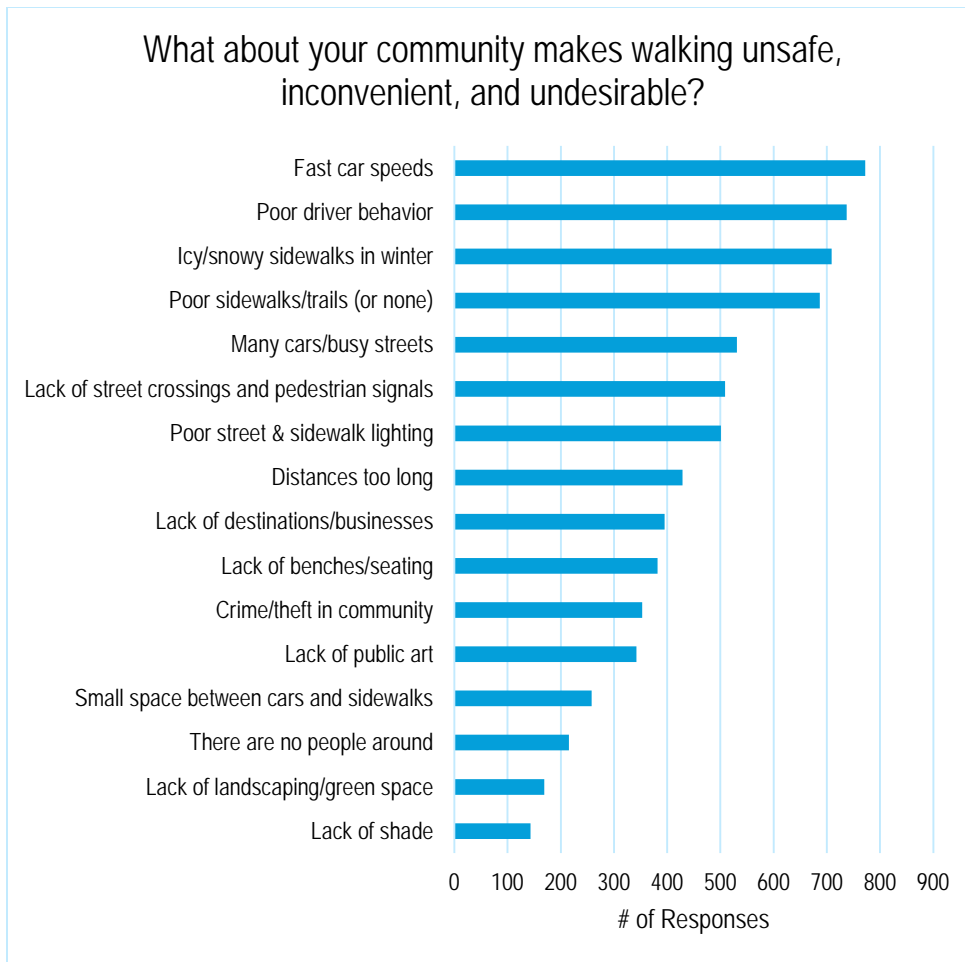


Figure 8: Results from community engagement events/surveys for characteristics that make walking unsafe, inconvenient, and undesirable.

LAND USE AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Better coordinate multimodal transportation networks and land use decisions to improve characteristics of the built environment that impact walking, such as design and the location of destinations.

Land use and many other factors contributing to the built environment all have a major impact on the walkability of communities. Building configuration, driveway placement, zoning, and density all contribute to the walking experience. Land use and the built environment were frequently discussed during walking workshops and focus groups. Workshop participants emphasized the importance of building access management and driveway design. Participants frequently described the inconvenience of walking from a bus stop to a storefront through a large parking lot, and the unpleasantness of walking alongside a parking lot. The placement of parking lots was also brought up multiple times in workshops. Participants suggested the placement of parking lots in the rear or side of buildings wherever possible, which reduces the distance between sidewalks and buildings and creates a more pleasant atmosphere for walking.

Focus group participants discussed the importance of walking to destinations for groceries, a haircut, and basic needs as well as walking for leisure to a nearby park – these ideas were reinforced in the community gatherings and survey results (see Figure 10). The commonality was that people expressed a desire for places that are nearby. For

those who had limited choices about how to reach destinations, walking on inadequate facilities happens more frequently than for those choosing to walk but who had other options (e.g. driving or transit). Participants who walk for necessity described that they experience poor conditions in areas where they regularly walk (for jobs, errands, transit, etc.) but they still walk there because it is somewhere they need to go.

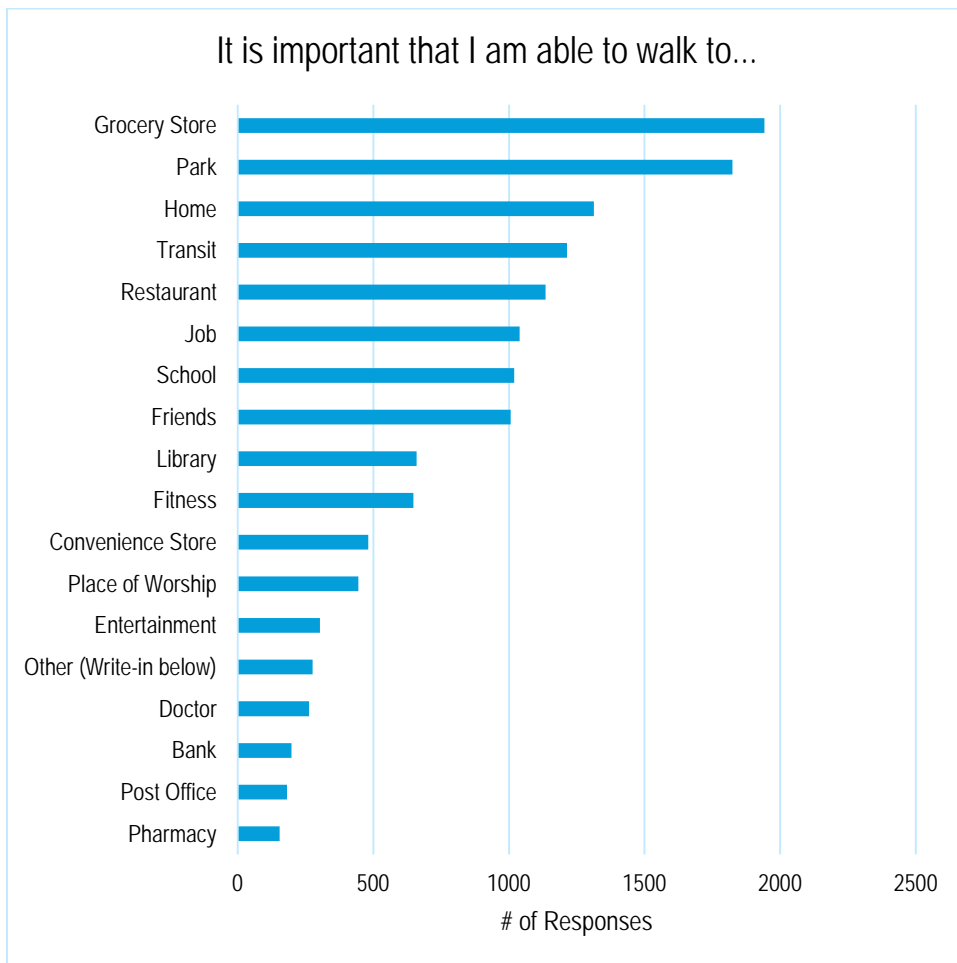


Figure 9: Results from community engagement events/surveys displaying results for top walking destinations.

Focus group discussions revealed that destinations themselves are frequently inaccessible or unfriendly for walking. For instance, participants noted that building placement on a site is a determinant for walking: walking across parking lots to get to a building is unsafe, inconvenient, and undesirable. Participants also described maintenance issues at building sites where businesses and residences are inconsistent in shoveling practices. Some participants expressed frustration at making a long walking or transit trip only to find the destination itself is the biggest barrier to pedestrian access. Practitioner focus groups also described the limitations of only focusing on streets and the public right-of-way to improve the pedestrian environment.

People with physical disabilities expressed frustration with not being able to access destinations safely and comfortably after they had traveled a long distance to get there. For example, transit stops are often at the edge of a parking lot, requiring those who take transit to cross through a large asphalt parking lot with no sidewalk to get to the front door of the business. This was discussed at the Marshall focus group when participants described the transit stop near Walmart. The location and design of buildings that people likely need to visit frequently were also described

as especially critical. For example, participants understand that grocery stores and schools need to be visited regularly, so locating the buildings far from residential neighborhoods limits the ability to walk there.

Many focus group participants suggested that decision makers and professionals involved in transportation, land use, and community development should be discussing and addressing the connection between land use and transportation far earlier in the planning and community development processes. To address walking barriers like distances to destinations, large parking lots between sidewalks and buildings, and helpful features like benches, many participants suggested non-transportation professionals should work to support walkable communities.

For example, in the Marshall focus group, one transit provider described a transit stop that was located in the parking lot of a big box store. Riders had been picked up at a location where they had to walk from the store to the stop with all of their bags. Many needed to use shopping carts to walk that distance with their bags, but shopping cart clutter became an issue once riders had boarded (the cart corral was far from the transit stop, so there was no time to return the cart before the bus could leave). Rather than move the transit stop to a cart corral or force riders to carry their bags without a cart, the transit agency coordinated with the store to install a cart corral at the transit stop.

Many public health practitioners described comprehensive planning as an opportunity to address the interdisciplinary aspects of walkability. Many participants were interested in seeing things like density, zoning, parking lots, site plan design, and healthy food access evaluated with a pedestrian lens.

Connectivity was often discussed in both walking workshops and focus groups. Conversations highlighted the importance of connectivity between sidewalks and buildings, to public transit stops, and generally between destinations. Completing sidewalk networks and reducing gaps are critical to increasing continuity and connectivity so that safe walking trips can be made seamlessly.

In sum, people are affected by poor site designs such as parking lot locations and distances to important destinations, and desire more holistic, interdisciplinary coordination so that walking is considered more comprehensively.

Starter Ideas to Explore

- Invest in pedestrian environments near top ranking destinations: grocery stores, parks, residential areas, restaurants, transit stations, jobs, and schools
- Integrate [Universal Design principles](#) into design guidance, site planning requirements and subdivision codes at the local level
- Revise school siting policies⁹ so that distances between residential areas and schools are walkable for students
- Encourage land use and zoning policies that result in walkable distances for “everyday destinations” as identified in the community engagement process
- Provide good examples of local codes for pedestrian-friendly site planning and building design and provide these as example best practices, including form-based codes, and other resources from the [Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center](#).¹⁰
- Require state, counties, cities to prepare speed management plans

⁹ See Minnesota Safe Routes to School Strategic Plan, Strategy 15: By 2020, research and review school siting guidelines and renovation policies. <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/saferoutes/pdf/mn-srts-strategic-plan-draft.pdf>

¹⁰ For an overview of form-based codes see: <http://formbasedcodes.org/definition>

MAINTENANCE

Maintain year round walking infrastructure by making necessary ongoing repairs and clearing snow and ice in a timely fashion.

Pedestrian infrastructure is only useful when it is properly maintained. Various topics relating to maintenance surfaced throughout the engagement process. Maintenance includes the ongoing repair of sidewalks and other pedestrian infrastructure, and it also includes winter snow and ice removal. Snow and ice accumulation is a perennial barrier to walking for many Minnesotans. Addressing sidewalk conditions and snow and ice removal is an important step in ensuring existing infrastructure is usable during all seasons.

Image 18: A Main Street sidewalk cleared of snow on a winter day in Hutchinson.



The community engagement input indicates that maintenance, or a lack thereof, is a top factor for improving or damaging the walking environment (Figure 8 and Figure 9). This finding was reinforced in focus groups and walking workshops.

In almost all focus group discussions, participants shared their frustrations regarding inconsistent snow removal practices and the ability to easily report maintenance issues to the responsible party. Participants suggested Minnesota maintenance programs should reflect community values and priorities – that the pedestrian should come first, especially considering that many people may rely on walking to meet their basic needs.

Image 19: Workshop participants attempt to walk around a large puddle of water between a parking lot and a sidewalk in Grand Marais.



Participants described their frustration with the difficulty of alerting public officials of unclear walkways and uneven pavement conditions, as well as frustrations with the lack of responses. For some, it was not just frustrating, but meant they could not walk to necessary destinations and contributed to the sense that those who walk do not matter in their communities. In some focus groups, participants with physical disabilities and seniors with concerns about falling spoke about how it was often impossible to get around in the winter. Though he does not have a physical disability, one participant in the ARC Greater Twin Cities described regularly walking through deep snow that became packed down and icy in order to walk to his job because he has no choice.

Many participants suggested developing a “one-stop shop” for reporting snow and ice clearance issues. Many felt that finding out who is responsible for maintenance should not be the responsibility of the end user, but rather an agency that will follow-up and address the issue. For example, many focus group participants had at least one story about calling in a snow clearance issue and getting passed around to various departments and never getting the snow cleared. The time investment to track down the responsible party is challenging, and many said they often didn’t see the issue resolved. Participants who rely on walking and transit for transportation emphasized the desire to be heard because the impact of snow and ice is greater on them than those with other choices.

Participants also mentioned frustration that public funds are used for plowing roadways and not typically used for clearing sidewalks, curb ramps, or transit facilities. Sidewalks are part of the right-of-way, yet it is the part of the transportation system that adjacent property owners typically need to fund (if only in part) and regularly maintain. Some participants suggested stricter enforcement of property owners that don’t shovel, and some argued that a fine and reprimand still do not achieve a clear sidewalk. Many participants suggested public funds be used to clear walking routes the same way they are used to clear other motor vehicle routes.

Those who must walk for transportation and, in turn, must walk in unpleasant environments on a daily basis become frustrated with chronic snow clearance issues. For example, when people witness public funding used to clear roadways, but don't see walking routes cleared in a timely manner, or sometimes at all, they sense that safe and accessible walking is not a community priority. Workshop participants suggested reviewing ordinances and policies that address snow and ice removal.

In sum, ideas for solving maintenance issues are twofold: making it easier to report walkways with snow, ice, and pavement maintenance issues and revisiting snow, ice, and pavement maintenance policies and programs.

Starter Ideas to Explore

- Consider the State of [New Hampshire's approach](#) to sidewalk maintenance that requires towns and cities to clear snow and ice from roads, bridges, and sidewalks and also requires sidewalks and public roads to be maintained by municipalities at no additional cost to adjacent land owners. Similarly, the city of Richfield, Minnesota plows all City-owned sidewalks and parking lots.
- Compile a list of best practices, policies, and methodologies for prioritizing snow clearance on sidewalks
- Create a "hot line" similar to 311 for people to call/contact regarding snow and ice removal issues. The responsible party would be contacted by the hot line operator.

Image 20: Participants engage in Activity Two at the Kirkbride Festival in Fergus Falls. *Credit: Andrew J. Besold, West Central Initiative*



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Engage the people of Minnesota in future planning and roadway design projects, and throughout the next phase of developing the Plan.

During the community engagement process, many people wanted to discuss community engagement itself. For example, the first thing said by a participant from the ARC Greater Twin Cities focus group was a request for follow up and an explanation of how the input would be used. Community engagement for planning and design was one of the top three priorities at the walking workshop in Saint Cloud. In all of the focus groups, participants discussed strategies for engagement, target audiences, and the importance of engaging communities in decisions that impact

their lives. These groups also discussed innovative ways to reach people, the importance of community engagement in projects that don't require it, the desire to continue to engage priority populations, resources available for effective community engagement, and recommendations for how community engagement should continue during the development and implementation of the Plan.

Almost every group expressed a desire to build stronger relationships and increase participation with government agencies that affect the pedestrian environment. Participants often expressed this desire by asking a lot of questions about how to get involved in projects, how MnDOT planned community engagement for the statewide pedestrian plan project, how engineers are trained to consider pedestrians, and how to effectively communicate pedestrian needs in a project. Some suggested new processes such as conducting a community needs assessment for a project – regardless of the project scope – to identify opportunities that may improve the community. Others expressed frustration with limited communication from MnDOT about projects and opportunities for input.

Image 21: Walking workshop participants walk through a concrete gas station parking lot in Frazee.



Some participants who were familiar with the community gathering engagement activities from this project (mostly planners and public health practitioners) suggested using similar engagement strategies on other projects, embodying the “bring the meeting to the people” approach to gain perspective on the pedestrian issues in different contexts. People saw the value in generating input by meeting people where they are rather than hosting an open house. For example, planning partners from the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission used the toolkit at a Safe Routes to School event and expressed an interest in using the “bring the meeting to the people” technique in future planning efforts. Many participants who had been part of a walking audit in the past expressed the importance and effectiveness of visiting a site as a pedestrian to better understand the context and opportunities to make improvements in a project. Participants mentioned that walking audits with a variety of participants and partners should be conducted more often as a way to better understand pedestrian needs and encourage cross-disciplinary conversations.

Some focus group participants pointed out that there are transportation projects that don't require community engagement even though they are projects where pedestrian facilities could be improved (e.g. mill and overlay projects at MnDOT). Focus group participants also suggested strategies that would be more helpful in engaging a wider range of participants. Many pointed out that public meetings and online surveys don't reach the people who have limited access to the internet, lack of time, or no knowledge about opportunities to provide input. On the other hand, public health practitioners described their greatest engagement success at events where they drew people in by handing out flashlights, providing meals, and advertising language interpreters.

Participants appreciated that in this engagement process, MnDOT and MDH made a concerted effort to engage with populations that are typically not engaged in decision making around transportation issues. Some participants reinforced the fact that each community is different, so employing tailored strategies for engagement must be considered at the forefront of future planning processes. Additionally, some planners and public health practitioners suggested taking a similar approach to engagement in their efforts by bringing priority populations to the forefront of their outreach processes in other projects.

In every focus group with public health practitioners, participants asked how they can be at the table to either inform decisions on projects in the public realm, or how they can facilitate community engagement. Some participants suggested engaging local public health practitioners as a starting at the beginning of a project. By engaging them, they can help MnDOT or other agencies leverage relationships local public health agencies have with the community to include more community members in the decision-making process. Participants also expressed a desire for more organized pedestrian advocacy to expand the influence of public health practitioners and highlight community desires for walkable communities.

Perhaps most immediately applicable to this planning process is the desire for sustained engagement. For example, one of the first questions asked at the ARC Self Advocates focus group was how their input would be used, and when they would get an update about the project's findings. Engagement participants emphasized the importance of continuing to be engaged in this process, not just to ensure their ideas are incorporated into the Plan, but also to continue to build trust with organizations engaged in this process. Engagement should continue in the planning process and plan implementation actions.

In sum, people see the value of intentional, targeted, and sustained engagement in this Plan, in transportation projects, and in projects in general.

Starter Ideas to Explore

- Continue to engage with priority populations in meaningful conversations about the transportation system, built environment, and health of communities
- Encourage more planners and project managers to bring the meeting to the people or host "open houses" at community gatherings
- Continue to engage with a variety of participants and partners, including the priority populations, throughout the rest of the Plan development process
- Improve transparency in project and planning processes at the state, regional, and local levels
- Provide resources for people seeking a way to organize and advocate for more walkable communities

FUNDING

Allocate proportionate funding specifically for pedestrians, and incorporate dedicated funding for pedestrian improvements in all projects.

Funding will be critical to address the topics that emerged in the community engagement process. Workshop participants called for increased funding for pedestrian realm improvements. Funding was also discussed in almost every focus group. Most participants suggested funding should be structured so that investing in pedestrians is the easy choice. All 14 focus groups suggested all projects involving the built environment should require the consideration of pedestrians first. In other words, all transportation, development, and redevelopment projects should be planned and designed with safe and comfortable pedestrian accommodations. Many discussed opportunities for process changes that prioritize pedestrian investments – not just in transportation. In transportation planning, project managers should be encouraged to scope projects for pedestrian improvements even if there isn't yet funding identified for implementation. Discussions of cost and funding rules limit conversations from getting started, such as MnDOT's Cost Participation Policy.

In focus groups with planners, the project team heard that the project development processes often undervalues pedestrian considerations. For example, at MnDOT Internal Project Advisory Committee Meeting Focus group, participants were interested in ways to encourage project managers to include pedestrian facilities during the project scoping process. Similarly, in the Planning Management Group discussion, participants identified many stages during the project delivery process when pedestrian-related decisions are made.

Image 22: A project team member facilitates a discussion during a walking workshop in Frazee.



Participants in walking workshops and focus groups mentioned even the way we speak about our transportation system is a barrier to prioritizing pedestrians, and this is something that can be easily addressed. For example, walking is typically referred to as an “alternative mode of transportation” or pedestrian accommodations are described as an “amenity.” Using this type of terminology relegates it to the margins of conversations and funding opportunities.

In sum, the input from focus groups and walking workshops on funding reinforced the overarching theme that walking feels unfairly undervalued as a mode of transportation. Allocating appropriate funding to pedestrian planning and design is one way agencies can demonstrate their commitment to providing for all modes of transportation.

Starter Ideas to Explore

- Remove barriers to using funding for pedestrian safety and comfort
- Require new roadway construction projects to address pedestrian improvements
- Set targets for pedestrian improvements
- Continue to support and create new grant programs dedicated to pedestrian infrastructure projects in the state
- Research and consider creative funding mechanisms such as cost-sharing across agencies to address pedestrian improvements in public and private projects

PARTNERSHIPS AND COORDINATION

Leverage existing partnerships and create new ones to enhance coordination for developing and implementing programs, policies, and projects across the state.

Inter-agency coordination and partnerships between organizations will be essential to make walking safe, convenient, and accessible for all in Minnesota. Walking workshop participants suggested improving inter-agency coordination by streamlining grant application processes. Focus group and walking workshop participants also stressed the importance of transportation education, educating everyone who uses any part of our transportation system about the rights of all users, applicable laws, and the importance of a “share the road” mentality for everyone who occupies the roadway. Many participants expressed a desire to see more frequent classes for drivers, such as the AARP refresher course. For example, participants at the Winona Friendship Center focus group said the AARP refresher course teaches techniques for driving safely as an older adult and teaches the new laws. Education efforts are often best if they are developed and deployed by multiple agencies.

Image 23: Members of the project team explain the activities to participants at Rondo Days in Saint Paul.



Partnerships and coordination were also themes that emerged during focus groups. A common theme among participants in planner-focused or public health-focused groups was the desire to see more collaboration between planners and engineers in transportation, between public health practitioners and planners in land use, and people with expertise in health and any aspect of comprehensive planning. Many saw opportunities for leveraging common goals around safety, walking, and health. For example, participants at the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee focus group emphasized engaging the League of Minnesota Cities in transportation and health plans for the state because they are an established group that regularly shares resources and peer-to-peer exchanges.

Inter-agency and inter-departmental coordination that better aligns transportation and land use planning efforts is critical to creating the walking environments many people described in the community engagement efforts. Walking to transit as a destination was one of the most popular destinations reported in community engagement events and online surveys. All transit users begin and end their trips as pedestrians, so ensuring connections to transit stops is important. Many participants at focus groups also described barriers of being transit-dependent. For example, long wait times for a bus or ride means getting home later and feeling too tired or hungry to go for a walk. Other effects of having long wait times for transit included getting home after dark when it doesn't feel safe to walk and having to stand in one place so that one does not miss their ride. Darkness was especially a concern for people with developmental and intellectual disabilities because of a heightened concern about vulnerability and personal safety. This time could be used for walking, but missing their transit connection is too much of a risk.

Image 24: Planners from the Duluth area pose next to the community gathering engagement toolkit activities at the Duluth Health Fair. *Credit: Jarrett Valdez, ARDC*



The connection between transit and the pedestrian realm should be clearer for agencies to coordinate. For example, Metro Transit in the Twin Cities has data about which transit stops use wheelchair lifts and where those stops see a decline in ridership in the winter. Information could assist maintenance programs with prioritizing snow and ice clearance.

In sum, people see the value of multiple agencies working together in education campaigns, leveraging public health practitioner capacity for community engagement, and opportunities for collaboration on site design.

Starter Ideas to Explore

- Encourage partnerships across agencies and organizations to create road safety education that has a broader reach in terms of content and audience
- Partner with other agencies who are involved in improving personal safety such as community police models like Bike Cops for Kids
- Apply Safe Routes to School strategies to other vulnerable populations such as older adults, to people with developmental and intellectual disabilities such as “walking schools buses,” etc.
- Sustain and expand the collaboration between MnDOT and MDH around pedestrian planning and design
- Research regional and local partnerships that are successful in pedestrian planning and design and provide these as best practices examples
- Collaborate with driver education agencies to address continued education about driver behavior and pedestrian safety

TECHNICAL RESOURCES

Develop “how-to” resources for practitioners around the state to make it easier to implement walking programs, policies, or projects in their communities.

Many practitioners understand the benefits of walking and the types of strategies used to increase walking and improve walking environments, however, they may not have the technical knowledge to implement the appropriate strategies. The creation of technical resources and tools can assist practitioners in planning, designing, and implementing better walking environments and programs. Technical resources can take many forms, but all serve as a sort of “how-to” resource for implementing programs, policies, processes, and projects to improve walking. During the walking workshops, participants expressed a desire for more guidance on various pedestrian policies, as well as technical guidance around infrastructure design and engineering. For example, several participants suggested more guidance on the design of crosswalks and crossing islands. Guidance on other technical topics was also suggested, including intersection geometrics, curb radii design, and when to separate bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Image 25: Workshop participants in Grand Marais discuss walking issues on a large map.



Focus group participants also discussed the need for technical resources. For example, planners and engineers described an interest in the development of tools and resources that could be used for quantifying the benefits of investment in pedestrian infrastructure, identifying the top investment priorities (by type and location), and a summary and collection of research on effective walking treatments and amenities. Participants in other focus groups recommended clear information about how decisions are made about development and transportation so that they can get involved and have a voice in the process. This suggestion came from most focus groups, including participants from public health agencies. The suggestions included transparency in decision-making for design and funding.

Image 26: Workshop participants discuss walking issues on a snowy day in Thief River Falls.



Participants shared ideas for how to grow interest and support for walking investments by educating people about the benefits of better walking environments. Some suggested developing strategic campaigns for garnering support for better walking environments at the local, regional, and state levels. Ideas included communicating about physical activity's effect on student performance, local business benefiting from walkers more than automobile traffic, personal health benefits, and social equity for access to transportation.

Participants from all types of engagement events and activities described the benefit of being able to share resources, including successful project and program examples. This was suggested by community members as well as professionals.

In sum, most people are seeking some sort of "how to" for their specific role and the ability to share success stories.

Starter Ideas to Explore

- Integrate best practices for walking into MnDOT design manuals
- Provide materials with return on investment information for transportation planners/engineers that shows both monetary and non-monetary costs/benefits of investment decisions

- Integrate pedestrian measures into existing performance measures targets (e.g. transit ridership, safety)
- Create a resource sharing portal, which would summarize pedestrian treatments and amenities research and provide practitioners and professionals with a platform to share experiences and knowledge from their communities, similar to the [Minnesota SRTS Resource Center](#)

INTEGRATED PLANNING

Emphasize the importance of integrating pedestrian planning with other planning efforts such as comprehensive plans, corridor plans, neighborhood plans, transit plans, safe routes to school, food access initiatives, social services, etc. at the local, regional, and state levels.

Participants at the walking workshops suggested developing local pedestrian plans for towns, cities, or regions to develop and prioritize pedestrian improvements. Workshop participants suggested the inclusion of pedestrian needs assessments in local plans, which would help identify and prioritize pedestrian needs at the local level. Moreover, they felt that local planning efforts should integrate existing plans, such as Safe Routes to School or active living plans.

Developing local pedestrian plans can address the important task of addressing land use, filling gaps in the local sidewalk network and improving connectivity to and between important destinations. A lack of connected sidewalks can prevent needed trips or discourage walking as a mode choice. Most focus groups expressed frustration about a lack of connected sidewalks. Participants stressed the importance of sidewalk continuity, which ensures that people will not be forced to walk in the street if a sidewalk terminates abruptly. Impassable sidewalks (or sidewalks with a dead end) make a trip especially prohibitive for a person with a mobility device. There was also a lot of concern about the safety of children walking to school or the park because they are forced into the roadway in areas where there are no sidewalks. Many groups talked about a particular path or trail in their community that was disconnected from the sidewalk network. Planning efforts that focus on the pedestrian can address these issues.

In sum, people value the role of local planning and local coordination to address walking and seek ways to further support these efforts.

Starter Ideas to Explore

- Encourage cities and counties throughout the state to develop local pedestrian plans, or incorporate pedestrian recommendations within other plans
- Provide guidance and recommendations on the development of local pedestrian plans, including technical resources and a "How-To" guide to developing a plan
- Provide small grants to communities to develop pedestrian plans

NEXT STEPS

Through the extensive engagement process MnDOT and the MDH have set the stage to collaboratively create better walking environments throughout Minnesota. While this engagement phase is concluding, the planning process and additional opportunities for engagement will continue. MnDOT and MDH will be developing the Plan in the spring and summer of 2016 (Figure 11).

The Plan will include prioritized recommendations for new projects, policies, programs, and processes that will improve the walking environment at the state, regional, and local levels. Additionally, the Plan will provide recommendations to clarify the various roles and responsibilities of partners involved with creating better walking

environments in Minnesota. The Plan will be the first-ever Minnesota Statewide Pedestrian System Plan. MnDOT, MDH, and their partners know that the Plan is just the first step in working toward the vision of making walking safe, convenient, and desirable for all in Minnesota. Achieving the vision will take concerted, sustained efforts and a commitment that pedestrians, the most vulnerable users of the transportation system, are considered first.

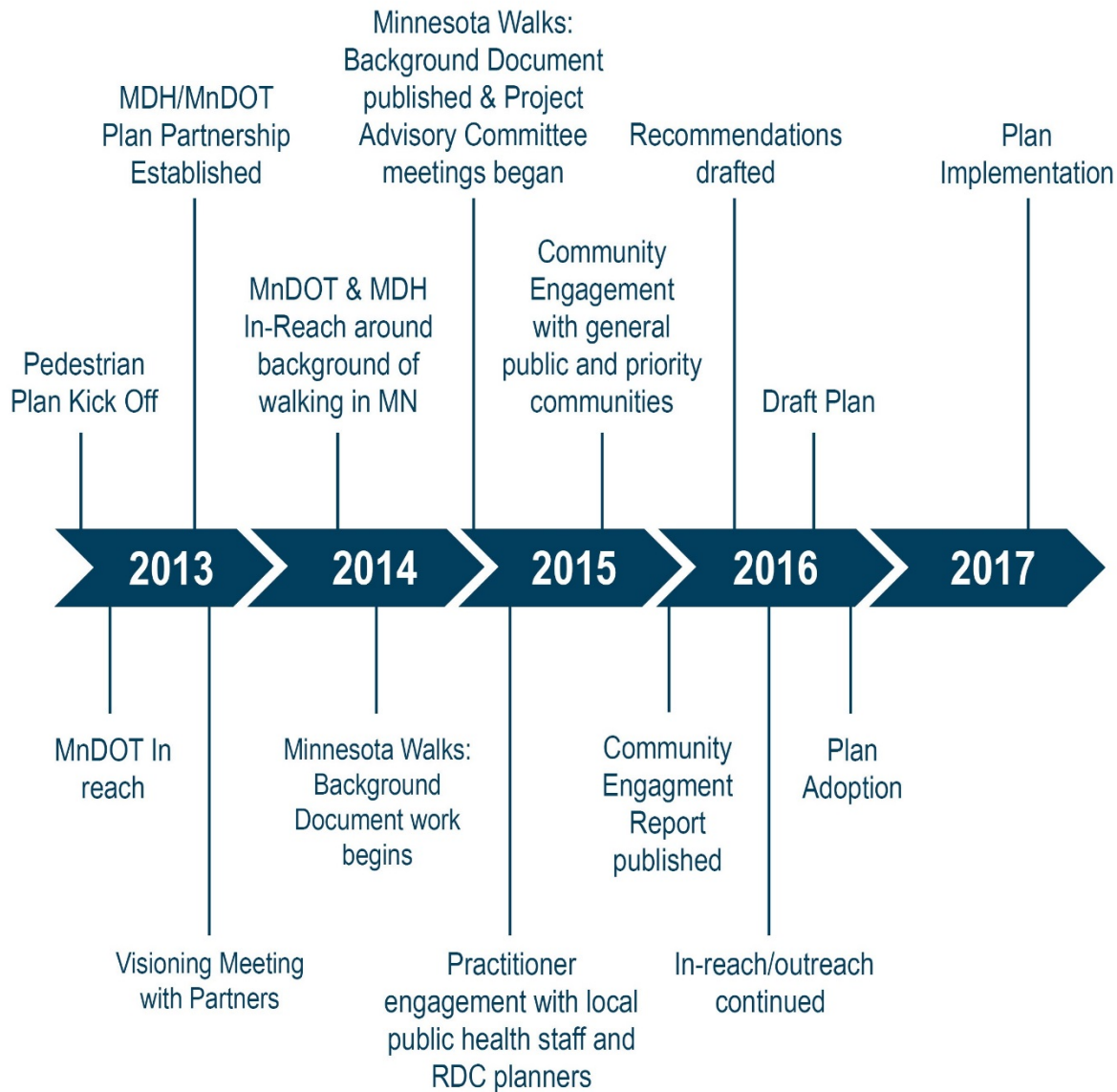


Figure 10: Project timeline displaying various stages of the development of the Statewide Pedestrian System Plan.