



Great Places

We manage and improve the city's infrastructure for current and future needs

What strategies are working?

SOME FUNDING SOURCES ARE STABLE.

- A stable funding source for sanitary sewers, storm sewers and drinking water is crucial for long-term planning. Because funding is stable, we are able to have a 10-year plan in place to maintain and improve this infrastructure.
- Stable funding allows us to think beyond preservation and plan for functional upgrades and future needs.

WE HAVE A SOLID SYSTEM FOR PEDESTRIANS AND BICYCLISTS.

- Minneapolis has a good sidewalk system with sidewalks on both sides of the streets. Our well-maintained sidewalks enable access to mass transit. This is important because we're all pedestrians at some point.
- Our skyways work to circulate downtown pedestrians.
- We have an excellent bike network.

SERVICE DISTRICTS MAKE DESIGNATED AREAS MORE APPEALING FOR PEDESTRIANS.

- The Downtown Improvement District has made downtown safer and more attractive and walkable. The Downtown Improvement District is a huge success. Visitors often comment on how clean the city is.
- Special service districts are doing a good job of maintaining the pedestrian realm.

COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS IMPROVE OUR PLANNING PROCESS.

- The City and the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) work well together on State roadways that go through Minneapolis. As the landlord of these roadways, the State maintains these roads while remaining open to new uses such as street cars. Both sides understand that, while tradeoffs are never easy to make, cooperation is crucial. MnDOT is receptive to listening to the community and finding ways to use its real estate to better meet community needs. MnDOT is open to partnerships.
- MnDOT, Hennepin County, Metro Transit and the City have a collaborative working relationship.
- Minneapolis and its partners are actively planning how to adapt our existing infrastructure to meet needs 50 years from now.
- Minneapolis has learned to have a plan ready even when no funding is available so we're ready to act when money becomes available.
- Minneapolis has a plan for I-35W south of downtown that envisions it not just as a freeway but as a transit corridor. The plan works because all agencies figured out a common goal to fully use the corridor and adapt the existing infrastructure when money becomes available.
- Good working relationships among the City, Verizon, USI Wireless and Qwest have given residents good service at a reasonable cost.

What strategies are not working?

PARTNERSHIPS DON'T WORK WHEN RESPONSIBILITIES AREN'T CLEARLY SPELLED OUT.

- Snow on corners and at bus stops isn't removed consistently because it's not always clear who is responsible.
- The approach to the Green Line platform behind KSTP has no sidewalks, so students are walking in the street to get to the train. Since this area borders Saint Paul and Minneapolis, it's unclear which entity should address the sidewalk issue.

DOWNTOWN SIDEWALKS AREN'T INVITING AND SKYWAYS ARE CONFUSING.

- Downtown sidewalks are too narrow and lack greenery.

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- Sidewalks are not always passable for pedestrians trying to get to buses and trains.
- Skyways pull pedestrians off downtown sidewalks and reduce activity at street level.
- Skyways are a jumble of operating hours because they are privately owned and governed.
- It's unclear how to get into the skyways from street level.

TRANSIT SERVICES NEED IMPROVEMENT.

- The Green Line trains are too slow.
- There are lots of "bus doesn't stop here" signs on Nicollet Mall but no signs stating where they do go. There are no electronic signs on Nicollet Mall and other transit corridors telling people when the next bus is coming or where it goes. Good signs shouldn't be limited to the commuter buses on Marquette and Second avenues.
- There should be more route and destination information on trains and platforms.
- Although we are ready for bus rapid transit, we haven't initiated it.

WE ARE MISSING PLANNING AND POLICY OPPORTUNITIES.

- Other jurisdictions tie transit to housing density, but Minneapolis doesn't.
- There is no plan for 35W north of downtown, and Minneapolis is not at the table for the discussion about it. We need realistic planning — not dreamy stuff that won't fly. There is no sound plan in place that could attract funding. We can't wait to begin planning until we have the money.
- There is no plan for I-94 through Minneapolis.
- Planning for I-94 east of Saint Paul to Woodbury isn't broad enough. The plan needs to go beyond getting people from Woodbury to St. Paul. Planning needs to encompass the segment between Saint Paul and Minneapolis. People want to get to both downtowns.

WE FACE AGING INFRASTRUCTURE AND TIGHT FUNDING.

- Minneapolis has a lot of aging bridges that need attention. Bridges are expensive, and our strategy of cobbling together funds isn't working. We have had to turn back federal funds because we can't cobble together enough funds in time to meet federal deadlines.
- Delays related to the approval process for historic bridges have made us lose funding opportunities. The Midtown Greenway bridges are just one example.
- Freeways through Minneapolis — I-94, for example — are more than 40 years old and need work. I-94 could be a \$700 million project, and we don't have the money.
- We shouldn't depend on federal transportation money. The federal highway trust fund has a structural problem.
- Federal dollars are too prohibitive and favor the interstate system and national highways. Funds are needed for local roads and bridges.
- The federal funding formula was designed to accommodate an agricultural economy and shortchanges metropolitan areas.

Working in partnership, what strategies could we pursue?

IMPROVE SERVICES TO PEDESTRIANS AND TRANSIT USERS.

- Install better bus service signs that include information about expected bus arrivals, destinations and trip times.
- Provide a higher level of snow and ice removal at pedestrian corridors that link to transit so pedestrians have safe and uninterrupted access to buses and trains.
- Regulate skyway operating hours so all skyways are open for a minimum number of hours.

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- Install signs for pedestrians on sidewalks to see how to get into skyways.

ADVOCATE FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING.

- Advocate through the State legislative process for more State funds for metropolitan area roads and bridges.
- Work with lawmakers to revise the revenue disbursement formula to better accommodate our modern economy and urban needs. Or consider linking the funding dedication formula to use.
- Lobby for funds to install landscaping and greenery along downtown sidewalks.
- Lobby for additional federal funds and/or gas tax revenue to care for infrastructure.

IMPROVE OUR PLANNING PROCESS.

- Adopt a policy that governs transit oriented development around mass transit.
- Instead of automatically rebuilding infrastructure the same way, assess its needs and changing functionality.
- Set aside more time for planning so projects are shovel-ready when funding becomes available.
- The days of just resurfacing a roadway are gone. We need at least a year or two of advance planning to hear and address community expectations for bike lanes, transit options and neighborhood needs.
- Develop a process with other jurisdictions for general approvals or early vetting to make agreements in time to qualify for federal money.
- Develop a long term financial strategy for infrastructure so we can prioritize and plan around specific known funds.
- Begin planning for 35W north of downtown and I-94 through downtown.
- Develop a strategy for dealing with the State historic preservation office. It should allow for preservation of historic and cultural resources while letting us move forward on transit, bike and pedestrian improvements.
- Send a joint letter to our U.S. senators arguing for a more flexible approach to improving historic bridges.

This conversation had representatives from Minneapolis City Council, Mayor's Office, Public Works, Information Technology, City Coordinator's Office, Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) and Pedestrian Advisory Committee.