



#gompls

EQUITY IN TRANSPORTATION CONVERSATIONS

Minneapolis Transportation Action Plan | Department of Public Works | November 2020

THE MINNEAPOLIS TRANSPORTATION ACTION PLAN

The draft Transportation Action Plan was released in March 2020, before COVID impacts and the death of George Floyd while in police custody and the subsequent uprisings were felt throughout the city. In response, during August of 2020, Public Works staff conducted conversations with 9 local community organizations to discuss each one’s work in the community as it relates to racial justice, equity in transportation and best practices for community engagement. These conversations helped better evaluate the approach to racial equity within the draft plan and influenced the Progress section of the plan. Public Works recognizes that these 9 conversations represent a small, but important, continuation of the conversation around racial equity and transportation that will continue to evolve as the plan is implemented.

KEY MESSAGES HEARD FROM THE ORGANIZATIONS

In response to ‘what does racial equity in transportation means to you/your organization’, we heard the following themes...

1. Frequent, reliable and convenient transit service

Many of the organizations discussed the need for transit access to basic goods and services. Many pharmacies and grocery stores were closed or badly damaged as a result of the unrest that followed George Floyd’s death. Other stakeholders noted that clients often have trouble accessing the services that their organizations provide. Some clients are unwilling to take transit because of long trip lengths or because they’re unsure how to use the system.

Organizations that engaged in conversations with Public Works include:

- » Avivo
- » Asian Media Access
- » Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio (CLUES)
- » The Alliance
- » Little Earth Residents Association
- » Voices for Racial Justice
- » Hope Community
- » Encouraging Leaders
- » Urban League Twin Cities





2. Lower fares/fare-free transit and solutions for unbanked customers

The cost burden of transit was noted for many of the organizations' clients. One stakeholder noted that resources meant to improve access do not always fulfill the needs of those they are meant to serve because of the costs or requirements associated with them. A similar sentiment was shared regarding bike share and car share systems as great transportation options, but unbanked customers cannot access the systems.

3. A transportation system where users feel safe

Many conversations stressed the importance of safety in terms of both personal safety and security, as well as infrastructure such as the need for better lighting on sidewalks and near transit stops. Some stakeholders noted the lack of safe bicycle facilities to their services, which causes people to bike on the sidewalks. Another stakeholder mentioned the need for quick solutions like traffic calming in neighborhoods to reduce vehicle speeds.

4. Better transportation access to jobs and housing

Stakeholders commented on the jobs and housing imbalance that exists in the region. Many jobs are located far from where employees live. Some people have reverse commutes to work, which makes traveling by transit more difficult since transit schedules typically accommodate those who work traditional business hours in the major employment areas of the downtowns.

5. Reduced costs associated with access to a vehicle

In areas where transit or other transportation modes are inconvenient or inaccessible, a car is a major necessity. However, car ownership incurs costs that can be out of reach for many individuals.

In response to 'what kind of engagement should the City be doing around transportation', we heard the following themes...

1. Building capacity and fostering long-term partnerships with the community

Stakeholders emphasized the need to view community engagement as a partnership that requires investments in time and dedicated staff that can build and maintain relationships with the community. Engagement should be seen as a long-term process that can take years to establish meaningful relationships with different communities.

2. Establishing feedback loops with the community

Many stakeholders noted the importance of establishing a feedback loop with the community. Community members invest their time in providing feedback and want to know how their information is being incorporated and how it is influencing the direction of a plan or project.

3. Cultural sensitivity via tailored engagement

Understanding the nuances of different cultures was mentioned repeatedly among many stakeholders. Stakeholders noted the importance of tailoring

Walking



Bicycling



Transit



Technology



Freight



Street Operations



Design



engagement to accommodate differences among age groups and within ethnic groups and stated that it is not a “one-size-fits-all” approach. For example, some stakeholders expressed the need for language translation of materials, classes, and in-person events.

4. Using age and audience appropriate tools to attract various audiences

Another theme was how engagement approaches differ when dealing with youth. Social media and Tik Tok can be effective tools to attract younger audiences. Many organizations already work with youth and could leverage their relationships to obtain feedback.

5. Developing and using community-based metrics on transportation projects

Two stakeholders mentioned their role in developing the [Equitable Development Principles & Scorecard Transportation Edition](#). This scorecard focuses on four principles that are essential to creating equitable and inclusive transportation improvements: Local Vision, Community Power, Inclusive Design, and Priority and Connectivity.

RESPONDING TO EQUITY CONVERSATIONS IN THE MINNEAPOLIS TRANSPORTATION ACTION PLAN

These conversations were one of many efforts over the course of the past three years of engagement that have contributed in the development of the strategies and actions of the Progress section of the plan, including the following strategies:

Strategy 1: Implement a racial equity framework for transportation

Strategy 2: Build trust and achieve greater outcomes through equitable engagement

Strategy 3: Create transparent and accountable measures for evaluation of plans, programs and projects

